

**VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN
VILLAGE COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 8, 2019, 6:00 PM
FRANKLIN VILLAGE HALL – BROUGHTON HOUSE
32325 FRANKLIN ROAD, FRANKLIN, MICHIGAN 48025**

WORKSHOP & WALKING TOUR

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President, Pam Hansen, 6:00 PM at the Franklin Village Hall, Franklin, Michigan.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Fred Gallasch, Brian Gordon, Bill Lamott, Ed Saenz, Mira Stakhiv, Pam Hansen,
Mike Seltzer (arrived at 6:15 PM)

Absent: None

Also Present: Jim Creech, Village Administrator
Eileen Pulker, Village Clerk
Tad Krear, Land Design Studio

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

IV. PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

**A. Walking Tour of Village Downtown; Review of Land Design Studio Plan.
The tour will begin and end at the Village Hall.**

Hansen explained the purpose of the Special Meeting was to review the proposed draft of the downtown area streetscape rendered by Tad Krear, owner of the Land Design Studio, to meet with the Design Team, and then to have a walking tour of the specified area.

Krear explained this was the first phase of design and referred to it as a “framework plan” or a “concept phase”. It was important to note that there were many details which had not been agreed upon, such as, sidewalk materials, the width of the sidewalks, and if the Village elected to go forward, the question of whether there were any historical standards that needed to be adhered to. All of these and more should be resolved during the next phase. His firm was hired to do a streetscape which was in the public right of way, look at the private property and the access management behind the buildings, and how to interconnect driveways, how to provide better parking, and how to eliminate curb cuts on the road.

In addition to a slide presentation entitled, “Downtown Framework Plan Overview”, Krear also referred to a copy of the Streetscape Framework Plan which was laid out on the tables in the middle of the Council Chambers. He explained that he began this project by going through a series of the Village’s documentation and studies, including the previous parking studies, but particularly the updated 2015 Master Plan which listed its 1st goal being the Village character: Preserve, Promote, and Enhance the rural-like character of the Village. This had been the

underlining factor of all the designs he presented. It was also important to note that Franklin had a single downtown center which served as a gathering place, thus it was important for it to be safe and walkable for most residents.

Krear did a survey of the existing conditions of the downtown; met with residents, homeowners especially in the downtown, business owners, the Fire Chief, and the Police Chief to receive input. Issues have been identified, such as, Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation/Greening Shoulders, Lighting, Vehicular Signage, Street Trees, and Seasonable Landscape. In his presentation he raised and addressed pedestrian and vehicular safety concerns at particular sites and had included before and after slides demonstrating how he would remedy them. The proposed improvements in front of the four (4) existing residences were very important to the owners and further discussions with them would be scheduled. Details were needed to be worked on related to the costs of construction materials, utility locations, maintenance of the landscape areas, and more.

Mike Flevaris, owner of a residence on Franklin Road, expressed concern about the historic wall in front of his home which was built in 1903. He stated that by cutting down the trees along the street and removing the shrubbery, and by moving the wall back four (4) feet into his property it would be directly below some power lines. The tree canopy and shrubs which he planted about 30 years ago to hide the power lines, hide the Comerica Bank parking lot, as well as, to hide Fitness Driven would be disturbed. He also pointed out that passersby and traffic would then see power lines, little trees and shrubs that the resident would be responsible to maintain. According to Krear's plan there would be sidewalks across the gas station and fire department. Flevaris questioned the safety risk factor. Krear stated that the pavement in those locations would be demarcated, making a visual change and he remarked that he was trying to work with the challenges he had.

Krear acknowledged the comment about why there was not a connection all the way to 14 Mile Road. The difficulty of connecting was due to the sloping and grading on the west side of Franklin Road which he could remedy. The other problem was the 5-way intersection: the four (4) way stop and the entrance to the Cider Mill's parking area. During the fall this would be the last place he would want to put a sidewalk. He advised that pedestrians should cross on the east side and work their way back.

Gordon felt this was a shortfall in this plan if the sidewalk couldn't be continued on the west side. He acknowledged that it did get crowded during the fall at that corner; however, he thought that having this breakup of the walking route for those coming south from Bloomfield Township, as well as those Franklin residents walking north would be cumbersome. Franklin residents walking to the Cider Mill and beyond would have to walk on the proposed sidewalk on the eastside of Franklin Road, cross 14 Mile Road, cross Franklin Road at the Cider Mill, and then walk up the hill into Bloomfield Township on the west side of Franklin Rd. It was his opinion that the breakup of the walking route detracted from what he thought the Village was trying to accomplish. Currently, people were walking everywhere in every direction and he felt the crosswalk and the appropriate demarcation of the pavement at the Gas Station/Fire Department would be a vast improvement to solving this problem and add to the continuity of this community and the next community (Township). This would bring people from the north to our downtown.

He thought the overall plan was terrific but hoped this last part would be reconsidered and tweaked.

Motion by Saenz, seconded by Seltzer to start the Regular Franklin Village Council meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Ayes: Gallasch, Gordon, Hansen, Lamott, Seanz, Seltzer, Stakhiv

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried.

Cassius Drake, 10-year resident and business owner, stated it was not easy to get from his house, south of 13 Mile, to the downtown area on foot. He bought property in the heart of the Village to start a passion project to bring beauty and activity downtown. He had read the three versions of the Master Plan and concluded that it was a masterful guide, tremendously well-implemented which could be seen while driving around. It was working well to maintain rural character, the one improvement needed would be to increase the pedestrian access and increase access from other parts of Franklin to get downtown. He contended that people would walk in front of the four (4) houses and he didn't see that a sidewalk along the west side of Franklin Rd. destroyed the Village.

Stakhiv clarified that by law the Master Plan was updated every five (5) years.

Kathy Erlich, resident since she was 9 months old and currently a downtown business owner, noted areas where she thought a continuance of a sidewalk would be beneficial that being the area around the Cider Mill which could be dangerous. She understood the benefits of having a sidewalk connecting the south side of the Village on the Franklin Road between 13 Mile Road and the town, especially to make it easier and safer for children to get to town. What she didn't understand was the reason and the need to having sidewalks on the each side of the street. From her observation, working at her business on the east side of Franklin Road, she rarely saw anyone walking on the west side of the street. To her it did not appear to be congested or dangerous. There were a few businesses on the other side of the street which were opened for only a short period of time during the day, not the night, which could be reached by crossing Franklin Road. She saw no need for a sidewalk on the west side. She didn't understand where all this was coming from and why this was such a big deal. She liked the restoration of the tree canopy and the idea of the lighting but thought there was too much because the Franklin Grill was the only business opened at night. Referring to the four (4) historic houses on Franklin Rd., she stated how personally heart-breaking it would be if her house was being impacted and she posed that same personal question to the audience. Respect for those homeowners was important and cautioned that the unique character that Franklin has with these historic houses right on the edge of the downtown should be kept in mind. She concluded stating that she did not want to damage them in any way.

John Simon, resident for 49 years and business owner, expressed the importance of maintaining the designation and real authenticity of Franklin's Historic District. The proposed plan was very nice but it was more like Plymouth or Novi; beautiful and "semi-antique-ish" but not "real". To

make these changes was like trying to change it into something it was not and he was against it further noting that Franklin is authentically historic. He questioned if there had ever been any injuries of anyone walking on the west side. To him these decisions appeared to be part of a Main Street project and he felt they were not needed.

Gary Roberts, long-time resident, spoke to the historic district aspect of this project. From an architectural standpoint, the Village was in a very sound state and he felt that this plan did not distract from the historic nature. With the crosswalks, additional landscaping, random lighting, other thoughtful ideas and details, he thought these points elevated the Village's historic nature; elevated because they cleaned up some of the details. In his opinion, there was a fine line between being a little bit junky and being historic. Generally, the Village buildings were in good shape and now it was time to address the backdrop for them. Referring to the rolled curb which goes down the hill in front of the Van Every mansion, he acknowledged that safety was an issue. He had some suggestions which might solve this problem which would be even less impactful on the four (4) houses than shown on Krear's plan. He emphasized that the land being talked about was public right of way. He was in favor of continuing the sidewalk on the west side and connecting with that of the Township. Roberts did note that the plan to place pathways around the Village Green was not to his liking, and felt that the pathway along Franklin Road and along the southern side to match up with the Kreger House walkway would suffice. He urged Council to move forward with this plan.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Seltzer, seconded by Saenz to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Gallasch, Gordon, Hansen, Lamott, Seanz, Seltzer, Stakhiv

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M, and the walking tour commenced.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Beke, Recording Secretary

Eileen H. Pulker, Clerk

Pamela Hansen, President