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Excerpt from the Minutes of the January 22, 2007 Plan Commission Meeting

Special Item of Business: Discussion of the Department of Planning and Development Reorganization

The Plan Commission held a discussion of the Department of Planning and Development reorganization reports.

Following the discussion, the Commission, on a motion by Ald. Cnare and seconded by Thompson-Frater, moved to reconsider Legislative File ID 04859, amending Section 16.04 and relocating, amending, and renumbering Section 3.18 as Section 16.05 of the Madison General Ordinances to reflect the reorganization of the Department of Planning and Development as the Department of Economic and Community Development, etc. Members of the Commission expressed a desire to possibly make additional recommendations in the wake of their discussion of the reorganization reports that predicated the changes proposed in the ordinance.

The discussion started out with a presentation and overview of the process and reports by Janet Piraino, the Mayor's Chief of Staff. Following the presentation, Plan Commission members discussed the recommendations.

Commission member Bowser indicated that her concerns involved the consolidation of all of the special services commissions and the ability of the commissions to continue to get their work done. She indicated that there are disparate goals of the various commissions and she did not know how one commission could carry out all of the goals. She expressed some concerns about workload and the ability of one commission to maintain a balanced composition that didn't become overly weighted toward one set of goals versus another. She also expressed some concerns with lumping the services under the new Economic Development Unit.

Commission member Thompson-Frater expressed some concerns with the maintenance and improvement of City buildings, and the ability of the City to provide high quality services to neighborhoods. She indicated that some neighborhoods need a higher level of services and mentoring. She recommended that a process be established to allow individual neighborhoods to seek advice and help from other neighborhoods. She also wanted to go on record as being concerned about the presence of deed restrictions on private property and recommended that the City notify property owners of the presence of deed restrictions. She stated that it was very difficult for neighborhood associations to enforce private deed restrictions.

Ald. Golden made some comments on the concept of a one-stop-shop. He indicated that it is an interesting concept and there has been a lot of discussion about one-stop-shops, but that development would still involve review by multiple departments and staff, and that what we might be looking at is a point of contact approach with case managers assigned to projects.

He expressed some interest in the neighborhood indicators recommendation in the neighborhood staff team report. He also indicated he did not believe that an annual State of the Neighborhoods report was worth the effort.

Ald. Golden added that the City has continually allowed its funding decisions of not-for-profit agencies to be overly driven by service providers and that there needs to be better coordination between the service providers, the City and other units of government such as Dane County. He also recommended that the City needed to better coordinate services with the Department of Corrections.

Ald. Konkel continued to express concerns about the changes that are recommended that will result in improvements for neighborhoods. She also expressed some concern about how new Council members will become knowledgeable about the development process and be able to deal with new development given the number of Council members that are expected to change in April. She also expressed concerns about how the Plan Commission's comments would be forwarded to the Board of Estimates and Common Council. She asked whether a substitute ordinance would be developed which incorporated the Plan Commission's recommendations.

Janet Piraino indicated that she would work with the City Attorney's Office to have a substitute ordinance prepared.

Ald. Golden suggested that something more than just the minutes needs to be provided to the Common Council. He suggested that the appropriate way to consider the reorganization reports from the four staff teams would be to place the reports on the Common Council agenda for referral and eventual acceptance by the Common Council, or to have a resolution introduced accepting the reports.

Commission member Thompson-Frater suggested that a list of issues to be decided should be prepared for the next Plan Commission meeting. Janet Piraino indicated that she has a listing of all of the recommendations from the staff reports that are being implemented, which can be provided.

The matter will be scheduled for the February 5, 2007 Plan Commission meeting.