

THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION OF THE COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023 BY MAYOR DEAN

PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin
Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Greg Patterson
Councilmember Jessica Vilani (arrived at 7:05)
Mayor Bridget Dean
Commissioner Dahlin
Commissioner Hamameh
Chair Kempner
Commissioner Passalacqua
Commissioner Woods (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

ABSENT:

Councilmember Steve Baker
Councilmember Michael Dooley
Commissioner Joseph Bartus

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Matthew Baumgarten
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Councilmember Gavin moved to approve the Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Patterson
Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Dean, Dahlin, Hamameh, Kempner, Passalacqua, and Woods
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

REGULAR AGENDA:

DISCUSSION: Matter of discussing ordinance language, policies, and procedures related to parklets.

Megan Masson-Minock, AICP, Principal Carlisle Wortman Associates, facilitated a discussion regarding parklets. She was accompanied by intern Jessica Hobbs from the University of Michigan.

Ms. Masson-Minock opened the work session discussing the definition of a parklet including the following points:

- Temporary outdoor service areas
- Within commercial area
- Converted from on-street parking spaces
- May be connected to outdoor service areas on adjacent sidewalks
- Maintained by adjacent business

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed the varying widths of our sidewalks in relation to parklets.

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed items that could be regulated including:

- Parking spots adjacent to sidewalks
- At least one parking space away from a corner
- Leaves a minimum five-foot pedestrian walkway
- On streets with lower speed limits (25-30 mph)
- A limited number of spaces allowed per business or per city block

Ms. Masson-Minock stated parklets have enclosures, which could be wheel stops, that may be required to protect along with railings to separate parklets from the pedestrian paths. She stated there are specific requirements when alcohol is served. She discussed different distances from vehicle traffic.

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed costs and fees including:

- \$10k-\$20K to construct
- Application requirements
 1. Parklet permit required
 2. Encroachment permit
 3. Possible building permits for platforms

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed additional aspects including:

- Timing
- Noise
- Street furniture and lighting
- Alcohol regulations
- Temporary shelters
- Accessibility
- Ramps and platforms
- Visibility
- Maintenance Requirements - usually businesses' responsibility

Ms. Masson-Minock asked everyone to vote with their feet. She asked everyone to stand in an area spanning from I'm ready right now for a parklet to this is a horrible idea. Other categories included neutral and need more discussion.

Everyone in the group had concerns/questions to discuss further. Questions related to reducing parking, noise pollution, could you share or "gift" a parklet, is there any return on investment, storage, design standards, whether there would be extra costs for DPW, walkability, space on sidewalks due to varying widths of the sidewalks, etc.

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed different ways other communities attacked this ranging from completely shutting down a street to accommodate parklets to Downtown Development Authorities funding parklets to providing uniformity guidelines for smaller parklets that are individually designed and constructed.

Ms. Masson-Minock commented that our downtown is unusual as it is about two miles long on 12 Mile Road. She suggested they consider where they would want these spaces to be.

City of Berkeley Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski explained that many lots are shallow so this could provide additional space. Director Kapelanski discussed different parking options and on-street parking. She also threw out the idea of one-way traffic at certain times of the year.

City Councilmember Dennis Hennen asked about businesses that are already short in parking. He said he wouldn't support those businesses losing their on-street spots. Ms. Kapelanski said since they are currently conducting a parking study, requirements could change.

Planning Commission Chair Lisa Kempner said some people haven't learned how to use the road diet correctly yet.

City Councilmember Jessica Vilani said Berkeley is a walking school district and the high school is an open campus producing a lot of foot traffic. She said we have to be aware of that in relation to scenarios where pedestrians may not always be paying attention.

The left turn at Catalpa was discussed.

Ms. Masson-Minock summarized the main concerns of the group as noise, parking, politics, economic concerns, parking variances, Coolidge needs to be used properly or bump-outs, the heavy pedestrian area near schools, speed, and the width of sidewalks (12 Mile Road).

Ms. Masson-Minock led an activity where city councilmembers and planning commissioners prioritized different questions and attributes pertaining to parklets with blue dots.

Consensus following the exercise facilitated by Ms. Masson-Minock included:

- Make sure parklet furniture doesn't block traffic
- Mixed-vote regarding accessibility in relation to ramps and platforms. Ms. Masson-Minock stated addressing platforms could be a policy decision. Platforms and space considerations along with cost were discussed
- All agreed that state standards should be followed if serving alcohol
- Most agreed regarding street furniture and lighting. Developing design standards was discussed
- Allow temporary shelters outside of November 1-March 31
- Most agreed on relying on the City's noise ordinance and creating design guidelines for raised platforms and enclosures
- Mixed-vote on whether the speed limit should be 25 mph or less or 30 mph or less. They discussed the impact of dropping the speed limit by 5 mph. Consensus is it would be great to lower 5 mph, but politically impossible
- Majority agreed on max number of parking spaces connected to parklets by businesses
- The majority agreed design guidelines are needed

A discussion took place regarding snow removal.

Consensus was reached on design guidelines for raised platforms and enclosures.

Commissioner Hamameh is not convinced parklets will work in Berkley. She discussed having a pilot program. Director Kapelanski said with a pilot program, it is hard to give someone something and then take it away. She also stated it would be hard to ask someone to make that type of monetary commitment for something that is temporary.

Ms. Masson-Minock discussed the seasonal timing of parklets/temporary shelters and other aesthetic options. She further discussed the possibility of enacting design guidelines.

There was a discussion regarding permitting. It was discussed if there would be a parklet permit and an additional building permit for raised platforms. Director Kapelanski said she would figure out a way to consolidate the two applications.

There was a discussion regarding the requirement of a 50-foot buffer. It was mentioned the point of the 50-foot buffer is to lessen the impact of any adjacent residential. A further discussion took place regarding instances where a 50-foot buffer is not available. Ms. Masson-Minock said they would go back and massage this issue with the intent to come back with a revision.

Mixed-use districts were discussed. Commissioner Passalacqua said he would throw into the side streets conversation, line of sight. That is his concern more than two-way traffic. He questioned would there be a certain amount of setback needed and would that eat into the 50-foot from residential use or zone.

There was a discussion regarding off-street parking in relation to parklets.

The group discussed if a parklet has to be in front of their business. Ms. Masson-Minock said usually parklets are in front of their businesses.

A question was posed about how cities deal with business owners who might be mad that an on-street parking space is lost by someone who converts a space into a parklet. Ms. Masson-Minock said business owners could have the adjacent business owner sign off, require administration approval, etc. She said the rubbing point is usually when parklets expand outside of right in front of an owners business.

Chair Kempner asked if Oakland County is going to let us do this on 12 Mile Road? It was stated the Road Commission for Oakland County is in charge of 12 Mile Road. Ms. Masson-Minock explained there are different rulings.

Chair Kempner asked about the timeline of when bump outs are coming. City Manager Baumgarten said he would check and follow up on the question. He mentioned temporary bump outs could be erected if needed.

Director Kapelanski asked should bike lanes be treated differently? There was discussion. Councilmember Hennen stated if there is a bike lane + 30 mph speed limit, then two-foot setback.

Ms. Masson-Minock thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

Ms. Masson-Minock said the next step is to talk to the road commission. If the Road Commission will not allow parklets on 12 Mile Road, then they will hold another joint workshop. If the Road Commission does allow parklets on 12 Mile Road, then work would begin on the ordinance. The group also discussed bringing back a map to identify potential sites.

Director Kapelanski brought up that as we kick off the zoning rewrite, another joint meeting would be needed to begin that process.

Ms. Masson-Minock said we could combine that work session and the parklets work session if needed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Gavin moved to adjourn the Special Work Session at 8:33 p.m.

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Gavin, and Dean, Dahlin, Hamameh, Kempner, Passalacqua, and Woods

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk