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TO: Mayor Cusson and City Council Members  
FROM: City of Linden Planning Commission  
DATE: January 23, 2020  
RE: 2019 Planning Commission Annual Report

The City of Linden Planning Commission is pleased to provide this Annual Report of its activities for calendar year 2019. This report is being submitted in compliance with Section 19 of the Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended. The Act states that: *A planning commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development.*

The Planning Commission enjoyed a successful 2019, accomplishing numerous tasks and approving a variety of development projects. The following is a summary of the Commission's activities in 2019:

Administrative Site Plans Approved

- 1007 N. Bridge Street (Crown Castle Tower) – Cellular tower equipment
- 204 E. Broad Street (Miracle on Broad Street) – New photography studio

Preliminary Site Plans Approved

- Pine Valley Two – Single-family residential condominium
- Beacon & Bridge Market – Gas station & market redevelopment

Final Site Plans Approved

- Sandal Wood Village – Senior housing condominium

Special Land Uses Approved

- Beacon & Bridge Market – Gas station & market redevelopment

Rezoning Approved

- Beacon & Bridge Market – Gas station & market redevelopment (Conditional Rezoning)

Sign Applications Approved by the Sign Review Committee

- 116 W. Broad Street (The Little Rose Café) – Signage
- 123 N. Bridge Street (Prime Real Estate) – A frame sign

- 117 N. Bridge Street (The Blue Door) – Wall sign
- 208 N. Bridge Street (EZ Kayak) – A frame sign
- 707 N. Bridge Street (Loose Senior Center) – Ground sign
- 175 N. Main Street (The Loft) – Wall sign
- 126 N. Bridge Street (Rykeley House) – Signage

Looking ahead to 2020, the Planning Commission expects to be working on various initiatives related to planning, zoning and/or land use within the City. These initiatives are summarized below:

- Redevelopment Ready – In December, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) completed Linden’s “RRC Baseline Evaluation” and provided its findings in a report that includes recommended actions to assist the City in ultimately achieving RRC certification. (The RRC is a free technical assistance program offered through the MEDC which aims to help communities incorporate best practices in planning, zoning and economic development to encourage redevelopment and new investment.) Related to the Planning Commission’s jurisdiction, the following key items were flagged for the City to address in order to better align with best practices outlined by the RRC program:
  - The City Master Plan should be updated “to include more information on complete streets, updated priority redevelopment areas and a strong implementation section with responsible parties and timelines.”
  - “Implement an annual review and update process for the CIP to remove old projects and ensure it always covers at least six years.”
  - Update the City Zoning Ordinance definitions “to include specific types of multi-family housing that fit in with the city’s vision and determine where those types could be built by-right around the downtown (as indicated in the city’s master plan).”
  - “Adopt clearer direction on where the city requires sidewalks to be built.”
  - Formalize/update the City’s development review process to include the development of a comprehensive “Guide to Development” document.
  - “Develop a city-wide economic development strategy in coordination with the city’s economic development partners.”
  - “Develop a documented marketing strategy to coordinate the efforts of the city and its partners.”
  - Identify priority sites for redevelopment and actively market at least one site “in accordance with the city’s marketing strategy.”

In 2020, the City Council and Planning Commission will need to consider if and how to address these RRC flagged items. A new master plan could be prepared by the Planning Commission to address the RRC noted items, including an evaluation of priority redevelopment sites. An economic development strategy and marketing strategy could be prepared as elements of the master plan, or as stand-alone documents. The Planning Commission and DDA would work together to prepare the master plan, economic

development and marketing strategies. *Please note that MEDC technical assistance funds could be available to support the development of a new master plan and/or other RRC related initiatives. There is a 50/50 state/local match requirement for MEDC technical assistance funds.*

- Education and Training – Members of the Planning Commission will be notified of and may consider attending planning and zoning related training opportunities throughout the year. Various training opportunities are available through organizations such as the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Association of Planning.

The Planning Commission welcomes any thoughts that the City Council may have related to the Commission's proposed 2020 work plan. If you would like the Planning Commission to address any additional topics, please let us know.

cc: Zoning Board of Appeals  
Downtown Development Authority  
Historic District Commission