

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, February 2, 2012

Vice-Chairman Bob Doty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Bob Doty, Ann Lawrence, Bill Kane, Steve Willobee, Steve Baribeau, Todd Gute and Jamie Malecki. Absent: Mike Stevens and Ron Graber. Also present: Zoning Administrator, Sue Stachowiak, Assistant City Administrator, Ameer King and City Council Representative, Jon Bonofiglio

Pledge of Allegiance – Ms. King led those present in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda - Mr. Gute made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Lawrence seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes – Mr. Doty pointed out that page 3 states that Ms. Norris read several letters when in fact she only read 1 and the others were just supposed to be entered into the record. Mr. Baribeau made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on January 5, 2012 with the change noted by Mr. Doty. Mr. Willobee seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor

Assistant City Administrator Ameer King, 9648 Hartel Road, stated that she is happy to do the minutes any way the Commission desires however, there are a few issues that need to be addressed. Ms. King said that when the Commissioners do not speak directly into the microphones, she cannot hear what they are saying. She also said that minutes are not intended to be a transcript of the meeting but rather a record of the actions taken by the Commission. She stated that too much information in the minutes leaves it open for things to be misstated which could create legal problems for the city.

Mr. Gute stated that minutes should simply include the motion, the findings of fact and a brief statement as to why the members voted for or against the motion.

The other Commissioners agreed with Mr. Gute's assessment of what should be included in the minutes.

Ms. King stated that Mr. Bayless is in the process of scheduling a meeting with MDOT to discuss the Jefferson Street project.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing – Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Article XIX – General Exceptions

Ms. Stachowiak stated that primary purpose of the amendments is to:

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1. Require the review and approval of the "Planning Commission" rather than the "Board of Appeals" for essential services,
2. Remove an inconsistency in the ordinance with regard to the front yard setback requirement for porches in residential districts,
3. Clarify the ordinance language prohibiting nonconforming lots from being further reduced below the minimum dimensional standards, and
4. Eliminate the 50 foot width requirement for use of existing residential lots.

Mr. Doty opened the public hearing at 7:25. Seeing no one wishing to speak, Mr. Doty closed the public hearing at 7:25.

Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gute to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to Article XIX of the Zoning Ordinance. On a roll call vote, the motion carried (7-0).

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Sections 220-4, Definitions & Section 220-79, Keeping of Animals

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the proposed ordinance. She said that the Commission should hold another public hearing on the amendments before sending it to Council because the ordinance is very different from the one that the hearing was held on last month.

The Commission agreed that "unless the adjacent property owner consents in writing" should be stricken from the paragraph (C) (3).

There was discussion about how the City would enforce a restriction on the number of cats. Ms. Stachowiak said that it would be very difficult to enforce, however, if the cats are being kept in the house like they should be, it would never be an issue. In other words, the ordinance would be in place to address extreme cases where cats are being hoarded at a particular residence and causing a problem for the neighbors.

Mr. Baribeau questioned why there is a 10 foot setback for chicken enclosures when dog enclosures can be located right on the property lines.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that all of the ordinances that she reviewed from other communities has the 10 foot setback.

Mr. Kane stated that dogs can be housed inside of a residential dwelling whereas, chickens cannot.

Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gute to schedule a public hearing for the March meeting on the Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Section 220-4, Definitions. & 220-79, Keeping of Animals. On a voice vote, the motion carried 7-0.

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Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willobee to schedule a public hearing for the March meeting on the Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Section & 220-79, Keeping of Animals. On a voice vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Parking Lot Requirement.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she made substantial changes to the ordinance since the last meeting. She included a section allowing one utility trailer to be parked outside on a residential parcel of land.

She also changed the proposed ordinance to make bicycle parking incentivized rather than mandated. The incentive is relief from the vehicular parking requirements.

Mr. Gute said that the businesses should be required to at least put in one or two bicycle racks and they could be given relief for those as well as additional bicycle racks that may be provided. The Commission agreed to revise the ordinance language accordingly.

Mr. Baribeau stated that since the existing ordinance language regulating commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods has worked well for the city in the past, there is no reason to change it. The Commission agreed to leave the ordinance as is, except for the regulation on utility trailers.

Mr. Kane stated that he is concerned that the ordinance amendments will not be requiring enough parking spaces for multiple family residential uses. The Commission decided to require 2 parking spaces for each multiple family residential unit, regardless of the number of bedrooms.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she would make the changes that were discussed at this meeting and bring back a revised ordinance for the March meeting.

Child Care Centers in the CBD, Central Business District

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she prepared some ordinance language that would permit child care centers in the CBD district, with conditions. She said that most of the properties in the CBD district would not be able to comply with the conditions since one of them is the provision of on-site outdoor play area. She also said that the CBD district is intended for customer oriented businesses.

Mr. Kane stated that he is not sure that it would be appropriate to allow child care centers in the CBD district since there are very few sites that could provide outdoor play area and a proper location for pick-up and drop-off of children.

Several other Planning Commissioners agreed with Mr. Kane and stated that a store front in the downtown does not seem like a good environment for child care.

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The Planning Commission asked that Ms. Stachowiak refer this matter to the Downtown Development Authority to get their input as to whether child care centers should be permitted in the CBD district.

OTHER BUSINESS

Review of Violation Report

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the violation report.

Mr. Bonofiglio stated that there is indoor furniture on the porch next to 502 Jenne Street.

Mr. Doty stated that there is still one junk car at 176 McMillan Street and there are still two illegal signs on the north side of 119 S. Bridge Street

Mr. Bonofiglio asked about the status of 308 Union Street.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this matter went to court this afternoon and she would check with Dick Robinson to see what happened.

Zoning Administrator's Report -None.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report - None

Council Representative's Report - None

Mayor's Comments - None

Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Gute stated that he appreciates the grain elevator being demolished on N. Clinton Street. He said that it is a big improvement to that area.

Mr. Kane stated that he will not be in attendance at the March meeting.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Doty stated that Mr. Graber was unable to attend the meeting tonight because his dad passed away.

He also said that a site plan for a new medical building in Ledges Commerce Park may be submitted shortly.

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Adjournment

Ms. Lawrence made a motion, seconded by Ms. Malecki to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Ann Lawrence, Secretary
Planning Commissioner