

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, March 1, 2012

Chairman Mike Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Approval of the Agenda - Mr. Doty made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of “MDOT Presentation – M-100 Project” under New Business. Mr. Baribeau seconded the motion. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes – Ms. Malecki made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Gute seconded the motion. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

MDOT Presentation – M-100 Project

MDOT Representatives Rob Leppala and Greg Losch distributed a written synopsis of the project to the Planning Commission. Mr. Leppala reviewed the project and the time line. He stated that the project involves a reconstruction of the Jefferson Street roadway from Franklin Street to Bridge Street and Bridge Street from Jefferson Street to River Street. He stated that the design has just been completed and an April 6, 2012 bid opening is anticipated with a project start date of May 1st. There will be a detour in place between June 8, 2012 and August 31st. There are incentives for finishing the work early and penalties for finishing it late. While the project may continue after school begins, there will be no detours.

Mr. Leppala stated that MDOT is partnering with the city on several aspects of the project including water and sanitary sewer improvements, conduits and handholes for future street lighting and alterations to the Willow/M-100 intersection for the non-motorized pathway project. Mr. Leppala stated that 3 lanes will be continued from Jefferson Street through the Willow/M-100 intersection and that no trees along Jefferson Street will be destroyed by this project. He also said that the signals at the Jefferson/Bridge intersection will be in a box rather than a diagonal design.

March 1, 2012

Page 2

Mr. Stevens asked about the crosswalks along Bridge Street.

Mr. Leppala said that the crosswalk at Bridge and Jefferson Street will be defined but the one at River Street will remain as is. He also said that there will be a public information meeting on this project around the 3rd week of April, once the bid award has been made.

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

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the ordinance would allow up to 3 hens on a residential lot, subject to certain restrictions. She also said that the ordinance would limit the number of cats on residential lots to 3 and provide general guidelines pertaining to the keeping of all animals in residential districts.

Mr. Stevens opened the public hearing at 7:18

Raven Norris, 601 W. Jefferson Street, spoke in support of the proposed ordinance amendments and read the 4-H pledge.

Shannon Norris, 601 W. Jefferson Street, spoke in support of the proposed ordinance amendments. She said that Grand Ledge is surrounded by farming communities and just a couple of months ago, the Planning Commission voted in favor of a resolution to support greening and sustainability. She said that her family mitigated the concerns of the neighbors and the three hens she currently has on her property are not presenting any safety concerns.

Jim Marsh, Seymour Street, stated that there is no reason to try to fix something that is not broken. He said that cats help control the mouse and bird population and as long as people are taking care of their pets, it should not matter how many they have. He also said that it would be impossible to enforce a restriction on the number of cats.

Dan Fleming, 1116 Middlewoods Way, said that he was speaking on behalf of his daughter Ashley who is also a member of 4-H. He said that working on farms and caring for animals allows kids to acquire skills and experience. Mr. Fleming said that the city should not only allow chickens but other farm animals as well including horses if there is enough acreage. He also suggested that maybe farm animals could be permitted through the special land use permit process.

Leon Norris, 419 Taylor Street, stated that the city should not punish people who take care of their animals.

Ken Malecki, 233 W. Front Street, read the definition of livestock and stated that he is opposed to allowing chickens in the city because it opens the door for allowing other types of livestock to be kept as pets.

Sally Jo Nelton, 728 Maple Street, stated that she has 4 hens on her property although she is supportive of the ordinance that would allow 3 hens on a residential lot.

Planning Commission Minutes

March 1, 2012

Jerry Norris, 601 W. Jefferson Street, stated that he is supportive of the proposed ordinance.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:40.

Mr. Doty said that the ordinance addresses the slaughtering of chickens but does not address the sale of eggs.

Ms. Stachowiak suggested adding the following language to Section 220-79(C)(4): "...or sell any an animal product on a residential property." The Commission agreed.

Ms. Malecki stated that it is understood that enforcing the cat ordinance would be very difficult but that it would be nice to have something in place to deal with hoarding issues.

Mr. Graber stated this original issue was whether to allow chickens in the city and now we are adding cats to the mix. He said that restricting the number of cats is not enforceable and everyone that currently has more than 3 cats would be grandfathered in.

Mr. Baribeau said that we started out trying to resolve the chicken issue and now we have created an issue with cats. He suggested that the Commission concentrate on the chicken issue only at this time.

Mr. Willobee said that there is a process in place to enforce any requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.

The Commission agreed to eliminate the regulations on limiting the number of cats.

Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willobee to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Sections 220-4, Definitions and 220-79, Keeping of Animals with the addition of "...or sell any an animal product on a residential property." to Section 220-79(C)(4) and the elimination of all language restricting the number of cats, of the Zoning Ordinance. On a roll call vote, the motion carried (5-3). Mr. Doty, Mr. Graber and Ms. Malecki cast the dissenting votes.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Article XIX. General Exceptions.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the Council suggested that the regulations contained in Section 220-90 should apply to all commercial canopies rather than just gasoline stations. She said that she made this change and the revised ordinance amendment is included in the packet.

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lawrence to recommend approval of the revised amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Article XIX, General Exceptions. On a roll call vote, the motion carried (8-0).

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Parking Lot Requirements

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she changed the ordinance to require that businesses install one rack capable of supporting 2 bicycles in an upright position. Businesses that provide additional bike racks will be given a reduction in the amount of required vehicular parking spaces.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the ordinance has been changed to require 2 parking spaces for each multiple family residential unit, regardless of the number of bedrooms. The ordinance has also been changed to delete the proposed amendments regulating commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods. It was decided at the last meeting that the current language regulating commercial vehicles in residential neighborhoods has worked well for the city in the past and therefore, does not need to be changed.

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willobee to recommend approval of the ordinance amendments 8-0

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Off-Street Loading & Unloading

Ms. Stachowiak stated that Section 220-59(D) does not make much sense. The Commission agreed to change this section by eliminating “shall be provided” and “and such space”

Mr. Gute said that businesses that need loading and unloading, such as Meijer, provide it because it is needed, not because it is required. He said that offices only receive infrequent deliveries and should not be required to install loading space. Mr. Gute suggested that loading and unloading be required at the discretion of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she would make the necessary changes and submit a revised document to the Commission for the April meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Review of Violation Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it was agreed to not enforce the existing chicken violations while an amendment to the ordinance is being considered.

The Commission debated procedures for enforcing ordinance violations.

Ms. Stachowiak said that it is very rare that there is a violation that does not get corrected just by sending a letter or two. At this time, other than the chicken issues, the only unresolved violation is the one at 109 E. Lincoln Street and that is a complicated issue because the property is zoned “CBD” Central Business District.

Ms. Malecki said that the violation report contains an error as there are two different owners listed for violations at 205 West Street.

Planning Commission Minutes

March 1, 2012

Page 5

Ms. Stachowiak said that there was one violation at 205 W. Main and one at 205 West Street.

Mr. Bonofiglio suggested a spreadsheet that tracks the status of all violations.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she expects to receive a site plan for a new medical building in Ledges Commerce Park within the next couple of days.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report - None

Council Representative's Report

Councilman Bonofiglio thanked Planning Commission for their work.

Mayor's Comments - None

Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Doty asked what the next ordinance amendment will be.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she would like to start looking at the chapter on signs.

Mr. Graber stated that he hopes his comments have been constructive.

Mr. Baribeau said that he appreciated MDOT coming to the meeting to present the M-100 construction project.

Mr. Willobee stated that he is impressed with how the Planning Commissioners interact.

Chairman's Report

Adjournment

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Ms. Malecki to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Ann Lawrence, Secretary
Planning Commissioner