

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, July 12, 2012

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

Attendance: Mike Stevens, Bob Doty, Ann Lawrence, Bill Kane, Ron Graber, Steve Willobee, Todd Gute, and Steve Baribeau. Absent: Jamie Malecki and City Council Representative Jon Bonofiglio. Also present: Assistant City Administrator Ameer King and Zoning Administrator Sue Stachowiak (arrived at 7:45).

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Kane made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Baribeau seconded the motion. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Doty stated that "Mr. Stevens appointed himself to the Joint Planning Committee." should be added under Chairman's Report.

Mr. Kane made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on April 12, 2012 as amended. Mr. Doty seconded the motion. Motion carried 8 - 0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Child Care Centers in the CBD

Mr. Doty reported that Ms. Stachowiak forwarded an e-mail from the Mayor indicating that the DDA has reviewed the ordinance amendments on June 13, and had no objections.

Mr. Willobee made a motion to schedule the ordinance amendments for a public hearing. Mr. Doty seconded the motion. Motion carried 8 to 0.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Signs

Mr. Stevens stated that the DDA did not have time to discuss this ordinance. The Commission will review this item at a later date after the DDA has reviewed and responded.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments - Waste Receptacles

Mr. Doty stated that the DDA briefly reviewed this ordinance amendment. Two members expressed opposition and Chairman MacDowell asked that any recommendations be delayed until the next meeting. It was inadvertently left off the agenda for the July DDA meeting. One of the members that had concerns was Mr. Chris Fata. In speaking with Mr. Fata, the concern that he and others had was the added cost of putting in a pedestrian door. This was also discussed at the joint Planning Committee meeting. Mr. MacDowell stated that this would not work in the Central Business District where businesses are next to each other and they do not own property other than their building space. Mr. Smith stated that there are some communities that require the dumpster enclosure to be consistent with materials that are used for the building. Mr. Brown stated that the businesses on the north side do not use enclosures. They use Curby services only and it seems this language is across the board for usage.

The Commission will take these items into account and continue to work on this language.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments Exterior Lighting

Mr. Stevens stated this is the first time this language has been reviewed.

Mr. Gute stated that he felt that item E. should contain language for limitations of lighting in other areas, not just parking lots. The construction community seems to over light things such as gas stations in the canopy areas. There is a trend to go to the "Dark Sky Concept". Traverse City has implemented this concept into their ordinances. Mr. Gute will speak with electrical engineers to get some idea of what are acceptable levels of lighting.

The Commission requested that Ms. Stachowiak research additional language. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Doty stated that the DDA has placed 4 LED lights in front of Mya's and Enerco as a test for 90 days. They have requested input from others.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments Recreational Vehicles

Mr. Stevens stated that this is the first time this language has been reviewed.

Mr. Kane, Mr. Doty and several others stated that the dimensions should be adjusted as they seem to be too stringent.

Mr. Baribeau questioned not allowing row boats to be stored in back yards after October 1st, and changing boat to recreational vehicle.

Mr. Gute stated that the purpose of this ordinance is to define what a good neighbor is.

Mr. Baribeau stated questioned whether it is the Commission's place to define what people can own and have on their property?

Mr. Stevens stated that the intent is to limit the times/dates so that people don't have vehicles stored on their property all year long.

Mr. Graber stated that we also define how much storage people can have.

There was discussion as to what problems this ordinance could create.

The Commission requested that Ms. Stachowiak conduct additional research on these issues for discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Stachowiak arrived at 7:45 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

Review of Violation Report

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the violation report. Ms. Stachowiak stated that when she receives a complaint, she goes out to verify the complaint and then will send a letter to the owner. We usually get 70% compliance with the first letter. If necessary a second letter is sent. If it is junk accumulation or tall weeds, we send a contractor out to take care of it and bill the owner. The bill includes the contractor's fees and a \$50 administration fee. She said that the system works and that it is very rare that a ticket has to be issued or the City Attorney has to get involved.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that we have received the site plan for the expansion at Independence Village that will be on the next agenda.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Mr. Graber stated that the ZBA has not met.

Council Representative's Report - Mr. Bonofiglio was absent.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Smith stated that he is signing the Greenwood School closing documents tomorrow morning. Mr. Gute along with the City's Bond Counsel will be making a presentation to the Council at the July 23rd meeting. This is just the beginning of the process.

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Mayor Smith stated that everything's is on schedule with the E. Jefferson Street construction project and it is about half finished at this time.

Mayor Smith stated that the DDA met yesterday and discussed the library parking lot drainage. Jim Foster has completed a study. The DDA agreed to pay for some small fixes now and are looking at installing larger sanitary sewers down River Street.

Mayor Smith stated that Mark Sullivan is aware of the clock near the Opera House being incorrect and is working on getting it fixed.

The Council approved a contract with MDOT for the widewalk that will connect the Saginaw widewalk down to the River. It is expected to be done before winter.

Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Doty reported on the joint Planning Committee meeting of the Park & Recreation Commission, Planning Commission and DDA members. He said that the dumpsters and the child care center ordinance amendments were discussed and he read the comments from Mayor Smith as regards the action on these issues.

Mr. Doty stated that the Committee came up with a 9 item wish list, for the City as a whole and the asked that the Commissioners each prioritize the list.

1. Extend the river walk, from Island to Fitzgerald Park
2. Band Shell
3. Expand the Scout Park, i.e., bathrooms, upgrade playground and sports area
4. Open air structure for skating, farmers market, and bathrooms
5. Signage for wide walks
6. Downtown lighting & trees
7. Fitzgerald property for the Historical Society or Museum
8. Water and power for Scout park
9. Dam restoration

Mr. Baribeau suggested looking at the Master Plan to see if anything is missing.

Mr. Doty stated that the Joint Planning Committee reviewed the Boat Launch project but that the money has not been released yet.

Mr. Kane reported he will not be at the next meeting.

Mr. Gute stated that the City has 9 police cars.

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Mr. Graber asked how the public is notified when the Planning Commission changes an ordinance or if they are new residents, how they know what they can or cannot do?

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it is incumbent on the public to ask questions before they do something that may be regulated by code. She also said that she would see if an article could get placed in the newspaper advising the residents of new and existing ordinances that may be of particular interest to the public.

Mr. Baribeau questioned if the light at Jenne had been changed to allow for the additional traffic.

Mr. Doty said that the light has been changed and it does allow for longer turning times for traffic coming from Jenne Street onto Saginaw Highway.

Mr. Baribeau said that although it is out of our jurisdiction, the light at Nixon and M-43 should be activated only when there is traffic on Nixon Road needing to cross or turn onto M-43.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Stevens stated that the fireworks were fantastic this year.

Adjournment

Mr. Willobee made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lawrence to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Motion carried 8 to 0.

Submitted By:

Amee King
Assistant City Administrator

Ann Lawrence, Secretary
Planning Commissioner