

City of Grand Ledge  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Minutes from Meeting Held on  
Thursday, June 6, 2013

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

**Attendance:** Mike Stevens, Bob Doty, Jamie Malecki, Steve Willobee, Todd Gute, Bill Kane, Steve Baribeau, Ron Graber, Eric Morris & Council Representative Thom Sowle. Also present: Zoning Administrator Sue Stachowiak.

**Pledge of Allegiance** – Mr. Morris led those present in the pledge of allegiance.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gute to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried 9 - 0.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Mr. Doty stated that the minutes need to be corrected to reflect that he rather than Mr. Stevens chaired the meeting.

Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gute to approve the minutes with the correction noted by Mr. Doty. Motion carried 9 - 0.

**Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts** - None

**Business from the Floor** - None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Site Plan Review – 111 W. Washington Street – New Parking Lot**

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the site plan is for a new parking lot at 111 W. Washington Street to provide additional parking for Riverside Accounting located adjacent to the subject property at 321 N. Bridge Street. She stated that the decorative grasses cannot be used as a substitute for the 7 required shrubs. She also stated that the fence needs to be extended along the east and west property lines as described in the staff report in order to soften the view of the parking lot from the adjoining residential uses. Ms. Stachowiak stated that in addition to the items mentioned in the staff report, there are a few technical details noted in the City Engineer's review that need to be addressed. She recommended approval of the site plan subject to addressing these items.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that no additional lighting is proposed and the handicap parking space is located in the existing parking lot at 321 N. Bridge Street. Ms. Stachowiak also said that curb will have to be extended around the entire parking lot.

Mr. Kane stated that he had a difficult time trying to identify the drainage plan because it was not very clear. He also said that there is a conflict on the plan between the common names on the planting list and the number and quantity of the plants shown on the plan. He said that this will need to be addressed in the revisions. Mr. Kane stated that the fencing and a dumpster location needs to be shown.

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Jim Foster stated that the fence along the west property line goes up to the corner of the garage at 117 W. Washington. He said that it stops there because if it were to be extended to the north, it would prevent access to the door to the garage. He stated that this is also the reason why the curb is not extended along the west property line. It would create a step-down for people coming out of the garage. Mr. Foster said that a fence in this location would hinder access to the combined driveway for this site and the property at 117 W. Washington.

Mr. Morris asked if a fence is required around the entire site.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it is not required around the entire site. She said that she recommended that it extend along the west property line to a point even with the front wall of the house at 117 W. Washington and along the east property line, even with the north wall of the building at 327 N. Bridge Street. She said that a dense shrub row would look even better along the east property line and would be sufficient to comply with the ordinance.

Mr. Foster said that there is already a fence along the west property line at 117 W. Washington.

Ms. Stachowiak asked if there is any way to place some shrubs along the west property line.

Mr. Foster said that there is some room in that area that could accommodate some shrubs.

Mr. Gute asked if there has been any discussion with the adjoining owners.

Ms. Stachowiak said that these (117 W. Washington and 327 N. Bridge) are absentee landlord situations that the City has had code enforcement issues with in the past.

Mr. Foster said that the drainage for the property at 117 W. Washington sheet flows onto the subject property.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the City Engineer could modify or waive the requirement for curb and gutter based on the drainage patterns in the area.

Mr. Morris recommended extending the curb and gutter along the south side of the lot.

Mr. Foster stated that the revised site plans show curb along the entire south side of the lot.

Mr. Stevens stated that the Commission made McDonalds install standard curb around the entire parking lot.

Mr. Gute and Mr. Morris stated that they support the curb plan as shown on the revised site plan.

Mr. Foster stated that he is working with Consumer's Energy to get the power pole relocated. He said that it only services the building at 327 N. Bridge.

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baribeau to approve the site plan prepared by Ziemnick Foster Engineering, LLC, dated June 5, 2013 for a new parking lot at 111 W. Washington Street, subject to compliance with the applicable items contained in the staff report, the City Engineer's letter dated May 30, 2013 and the Public Service Director and Grand Ledge Area Fire Department's letters. On a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Public Hearing – Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Section 220-70, Exterior Lighting**

Ms. Stachowiak stated that no changes have been made to the amendments since the last time the Commission saw it.

Mr. Stevens opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. Seeing on one wishing to speak, Mr. Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:28 p.m.

Mr. Kane stated that he is concerned about how the lighting for the football field at the high school would conflict with item "C" on page 3.

Mr. Gute stated that the school is exempt from the Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Doty to recommend approval of the amendments to Section 220-70 of the Zoning Ordinance regulating exterior lighting. On a voice vote, the motion carried (9-0).

**Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Section 220-71, Corner Clearance – Section 220-72, Access to a Street – Section 220-73, Residential Entranceway & 220-74, Access Management**

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she made a couple of changes to the ordinance since the last meeting. She said that the Commission agreed that the height limitation should remain at 2 feet under "Corner Clearance" and that lines 5 & 6, item "B" under "Access Management" should read "...the City Engineer AND THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION...". The Commission also agreed that this should apply strictly to state trunklines.

Mr. Kane stated that there is a lot of verbiage that does not even apply to the Commission. He stated that he questions whether this section is even necessary.

Mr. Stevens stated that the Commission has managed to remove some dangerous driveways along M-43 and at the M-43/M-100 intersection.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that just about every development that has occurred on M-43 and M-100 has required a modification to the spacing requirements.

Mr. Morris said that what it does is provide a standard for the engineer preparing the site plan to try to achieve. He said that it is a safety issue. He also said that his concern is that if there are no standards, the engineers have nothing to work with.

Mr. Baribeau pointed out that the wording needs to be consistent throughout the ordinance. He said that the Commission should spend some more time on this to determine what needs to be in the ordinance and what does not.

Mr. Graber stated that the category "access management" seems to be important. He said that we just need to determine if everything needs to be included.

Mr. Morris said that it could just reference AASHTO guidelines.

Mr. Gute stated that the ordinance has the correct language in that it gives the City Engineer the ability to modify the requirements when the circumstances warrant an adjustment.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the ordinance has worked well for the City over the past 15 years.

The Commission asked Ms. Stachowiak to do some additional research on access management ordinance standards.

#### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Section 220-04, Definitions and 220-63, Recreational Vehicles**

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she has not made any changes to the ordinance since it was last reviewed by the Commission. She reviewed the proposed changes.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she does not like the way the ordinance is written with regard to one "item" of recreational equipment.

Ms. Malecki stated that the ordinance is very confusing as to what is permitted in terms of parking recreational vehicles in a driveway.

The Commission agreed that the language needs to be made more clear as to what is permitted.

Mr. Gute suggested using a heading "temporary parking".

Ms. Malecki suggested "if the recreational item exceeds...".

Ms. Stachowiak stated that all vehicles, including recreational vehicles, have to be legally parked.

The Commission suggested using the word "unit" instead of "item". They also suggested defining a "unit" of recreational equipment.

Mr. Kane stated that a trailer with 2 snowmobiles on it is one "unit". He said that if it has one hitch, it is one "unit".

Mr. Willobee stated that if the only complaints we are receiving are with regard to the parking of large motor homes, maybe that is the only issue that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Baribeau said that there has to be an ordinance, however, because if a situation does arise, there will be no way to address it. He said that it is being proactive.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the current ordinance is very restrictive and yet, it has not caused many issues over the years.

Mr. Willobee suggested seeking input from Council on this issue before it is referred to them in order to avoid having it returned to the Commission.

Mr. Graber suggested making some changes to the ordinance and then inviting comments from Council before a recommendation is made.

Mr. Kane stated that Ms. Stachowiak is always present at the Council meetings to explain the ordinance and answer questions but the problem is that the Council is not privy to all of the discussions that have taken place to arrive at the proposed amendments.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she could email it to the Council and request comments before it is referred.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Joint Planning Committee Report**

Mr. Doty stated that the joint meeting will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> at Scout Park in the pavilion and will be open to the public. He said that the Committee met with Vertalka out of Grand Rapids last month and there will be a meeting every month for the next 3 months to gather ideas. He said that the goal is to have a community meeting in October to obtain input and recommendations from the public.

Mr. Doty said that the Committee met with Greg Minshall regarding the dam issue. He said that Mr. Minshall verbally presented the issues. He has been asked to follow up at the June meeting with a memo as to the alternatives for the dam and what the recommendations are from the DEQ and DNR. Mr. Doty said that one of the alternatives was to open the locks for a year or 2. He said that the Committee did not feel that this was a good option as it would defeat the purpose of the river and the boat launch.

### **Review of Violation Report**

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the violation report.

Mr. Doty said that there are 2 violations that were left off. One is the carport at 442 Union Street and the other is the dead tree at 629 Maple Street.

Ms. Malecki stated that Image Projections put a banner on the front of their building. She also said that Don Keller has a large banner on the side of his building. She said that it is huge and cannot possibly comply with the ordinance.

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Ms. Stachowiak stated that she would look into it.

**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. Baribeau stated that he really appreciates how the Planning Commission functions and that there is a variety of expertise on the Commission which makes for some really good discussions.

Mr. Gute stated that the school has completely left the building and they will not be coming back. The contractor has done a lot of demolition, particularly in the police dept. area. They will be starting on opening the classroom area by taking out all of the partitions. This will take about two weeks to get this opened up. Mr. Gute said that the site work is progressing very well as the contractor is taking advantage of the good weather. The sidewalk work is taking place including the installation of the handicap ramps. The contractor is working on the installation of a canopy at the south entrance and will then work on the canopy along Greenwood and then finally the entrance along Clinton.

Mr. Stevens asked about the projected move-in date.

Mr. Gute said that it is still projected to be the end of the year. He said that he could arrange for the Commission to take a tour of the building.

Ms. Maleck asked if the police will be able to move in right away rather than having to wait for the city hall area to be finished.

Mr. Gute said that there is more work to be done for the police department area. He said that 3 of the 4 walls for the garage addition are up and they are waiting for the garage doors to be delivered before the front wall can be installed. Mr. Gute said that the police will likely move in the same time as city hall moves in.

Mr. Kane asked about the fence and about the auxiliary power at the current city hall.

Mr. Gute said that the city will install the new fence itself. The city is planning to recycle the fence that is there right now. He said that the city is not planning to move the auxiliary power or the radio antenna for the police department. Mr. Gute stated that the cost to move the auxiliary power is too great and so there will be a new generator. With regard to the radio antenna, the geography of the Greenwood site is very high and the radio tower at the Fire Department already has police frequencies in it so that the police department can tap into it.

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Mr. Gute stated that he attended the graduation ceremony at Breslin for his son and it was a very nice celebration. He said that instead of having a graduation speaker, they had 4 kids get up and speak about their experiences and it was very nice.

Mr. Willobee stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Grand Adventure Race will be in September in case anyone wants to participate or volunteer.

Ms. Malecki stated that she will be unable to attend the July meeting.

Mr. Doty stated that Olive Garden will not be going in to the Lansing Mall. The Garden Club this year dedicated 18 trees and the City donated an additional 45 trees. Mr. Doty said that the Mayor is looking to put an advisory Committee together to review the Charter to determine if it needs to be rewritten or revised. He has been asked to sit on the Committee as the Planning Commission representative. Mr. Doty said that the Charter needs to be updated.

Mr. Kane stated that Mr. Doty should be appointed to the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Charter Committee. He also said that he will not be at the July meeting.

Mr. Graber stated that there is a magazine called Grand Ledge Life that comes out monthly. There have been about 4 or 5 issues. The editor is a journalist and the company is in Pennsylvania. The magazine encourages input from the community. He said that they have done some nice articles and the last one was about the wedding chapel.

Mr. Willobee said that he would like to do an article about the Grand Adventure Race.

**Chairman's Report**

Mr. Stevens thanked the Commissioners for their service.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Malecki made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baribeau to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak  
Zoning Administrator

Jamie Malecki, Secretary  
Planning Commissioner