

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, August 1, 2013

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

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

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willobee to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried 6 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Doty stated that the Mr. Sowle needs to be listed as absent on Page 1 and on Page 4, the minutes need to be corrected to reflect that the building inspector is handling the carport issue at 442 Union Street.

Mr. Baribeau made a motion, seconded by Ms. Malecki to approve the June 6, 2013 minutes with the corrections noted by Mr. Doty. Motion carried 6 - 0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

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 there was some discussion at the last meeting about whether this Section is even necessary. She said that she reviewed a lot of other ordinances and some had access management requirements and others did not. She stated that even though the spacing requirements typically have to be varied by the City Engineer, they have resulted in the elimination of a lot of unsafe driveways along M-43. Ms. Stachowiak said that there has to be a standard so that a site designer has something to work with. She also said that having standards allows the City Engineer to deny an access point if the standards are not met and the access location is not appropriate or in the best interest of the City.

Mr. Morris agreed that there needs to be standards, even if they frequently need to be varied by the City Engineer.

Mr. Baribeau questioned whether the standards have any validity given how many times they have been varied.

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Ms. Stachowiak stated that a variance from the City Engineer to the access management standards is not the same a variance granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. She said that the reason a variance to these standards is solely at the discretion of the City Engineer rather than the Zoning Board of Appeals is because the City Engineer is a licensed civil engineer and design professional who has the expertise to determine whether a modification to the ordinance standards is appropriate from a traffic management standpoint and will not create an unsafe situation.

The Planning Board agreed to delay scheduling a public hearing until the Commissioners that are not in attendance at this meeting have a chance to provide input.

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

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she made substantial changes to the ordinance since it was last reviewed by the Commission. She said that she just tried to make it very clear, using plain language, as to what is permitted in terms of recreational vehicles on residential lots. Ms. Stachowiak also stated that she provided a new definition of “residential vehicles”.

The Commission agreed that the “and/or” in paragraphs “C” and “D” should be changed to just “or”. The Commission also agreed Section “G” should be changed to a 7 day time period rather than 14.

There was significant discussion regarding the language in Section “F”. The Commission agreed that the ordinance should allow the storage of one vehicle in a side or rear yard, if the vehicle is 10 feet wide and 30 feet in length or larger. If the vehicle is smaller than these dimensions, than the number of vehicles is not restricted but the total amount of storage of recreational vehicles in a side or rear yard cannot exceed 10 percent of that area.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joint Planning Committee Report

Mr. Doty provided the Commissioners with copies of the development plan for Jaycee Park. He reviewed the various aspects of the plan which include a farmers market, new boat launch, a 500 seat amphitheater, new rest rooms, play area and tennis courts. Mr. Doty said that the existing parking would be removed and new parking would be provided along River Street.

Mr. Doty stated that there will be several public hearings and meetings with the various Board and Commissions on this proposal. He stated that the boat launch project is already funded and approved.

Mr. Morris asked about a splash pad for the kids.

Mr. Doty said that he would mention it although he is not sure where it would go.

Mr. Doty stated that the City authorized the DDA to pursue a grant for the new market.

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Mr. Doty stated that the Committee received the report on the dam. He said that the report outlines several options which include doing nothing, replacing the gate structure and repairing the spillway, removing the dam completely and removing the gate structure and replacing it with a rock lined channel. Mr. Doty said that the Committee will continue to review these options.

Review of Violation Report

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the violation report.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Mr. Graber reported that the ZBA will meet in August to consider a variance for a front yard fence at 532 Spring Street.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that Mr. Gute suggested a tour of the Greenwood building at the next Planning Commission meeting. The Commissioners agreed that they would meet at city hall, take care of the business on the agenda and then go over to Greenwood for a tour.

Council Representative's Report - None

Mayor's Comments - None

Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Baribeau stated that the N. Clinton Street entrance to the City looks awful. He said that it looks better since the grain elevator was removed but it still presents a very bad image for the City. He also said that the sign on N. Clinton is in bad shape.

Mr. Willobee stated that the Grand Adventure Race will be held on September 22, 2013. He said that this is a good opportunity to get people to the park. Mr. Willobee stated that a lot of people from all over the state participate in this event. He also stated that they can always use more volunteers.

Mr. Graber stated that he recently read an article about bike paths and how data is starting to be accumulated for about 125 cities.

Mr. Baribeau stated that he will provide pictures of the bike paths in Indianapolis.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Doty stated that the former Mervyns at the Lansing Mall has been demolished and a new state-of-the-art theater will be constructed in its place. He also said a Longhorn Steakhouse is going in to the Lansing Mall instead of an Olive Garden.

Mr. Doty stated that a lot of work has gone into the restrooms at Fitzgerald Park and yet they continue to be vandalized.

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It was suggested that some surveillance cameras might be helpful in this regard.

Mr. Doty stated that Mr. Pantera asked about the possibility of constructing 8-12 apartments on the north side of River Street between Russell Street and the parking lot at the Opera House.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is contrary to the Master Plan which designates the south side of E. River Street for row houses that would overlook the river.

The Commission discussed this matter and agreed that apartments on the north side of River Street, east of the Opera House would not be appropriate.

Adjournment

Ms. Maliki made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baribeau to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Jamie Malecki, Secretary
Planning Commissioner