City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, June 4, 2015

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

Attendance - Present: Mike Stevens, Bob Doty, Bill Kane, Eric Morris, Jamie Malecki (arrived at 8:00), Todd Gute, Lynne MacDowell, Steve Baribeau & Matt Salmon. Also present: Zoning Administrator Sue Stachowiak, Council Representative Keith Mulder & Mayor Kalmin Smith.

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Kane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Doty to approve the agenda as printed. On a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baribeau to approve the May 7, 2015 minutes with the following change:

Page 5, Comments from Commissioner's, 2nd line, change "…will be" to "is considering".

On a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

Master Plan Update

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it is time to for the Planning Commission to begin its 5-year Master Plan update as required by the Michigan Municipal Planning Act. She said that she has prepared a memo listing a few items that need to be included in the Plan:

1. Jaycee Park Master Plan, use of Rounds Property, Scout building, boat launch, etc.

2. Access from High School/Middle School property to M-43

She said that she would also like to discuss the possibility of increasing the residential density levels called for in Plan as well as some possible changes to future land use map, including:

1. Areas designated on the map for industrial use (Grand Haven Manor, property at North and Madison Streets and on the south side of Wright Court)

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2. Property behind True Value Hardware and the south half of the commercial properties along M-43, east of M-100 (master planned for commercial use).

3. Dible property north of Vision Collision (master planned for residential land use).

Mr. Doty stated that the land that may be annexed into the City also needs to be included.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that Grand Manor Avenue is designated for industrial use even though it is a residential neighborhood.

Mr. Morris stated that it is an inappropriate location for a residential neighborhood as it is located between the railroad tracks to the south and industrial businesses to the north.

Mr. Stevens agreed. He stated that since it is a master plan, it should be designated for an appropriate land use, given its location, rather than just master planning it for what it is being used for currently.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the future land use plan shows industrial land use south of Pierson Court extending all the way from N. Clinton to West Street.

Mr. Doty said that ETM owns the property and has a building on it just west of the auto body shop.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the industrial use should not extend all the way to West Street as it is could adversely impact the residential neighborhood.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the reason she circled the area on Gulf Street on the future land use map is because there has been some interest in using the property just north of tracks for an industrial plumbing contractor business. She said that this is a difficult site as the road is unimproved and there are very limited utilities available to the property.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the property owned by Tom Dible north of Vision Collision was zoned R-HD, Multiple Family Residential when it was first annexed into the City. When Vision Collision was rezoned to I-1, Light Industrial, the property to its north was rezoned to OS, Office Service District. She said that the Master Plan designates the property for "Planned Residential" development. Ms. Stachowiak said that Mr. Dible is now considering a residential development on the site which is consistent with the Master Plan but would require a rezoning. She said that in order to make the development work, an increase in density beyond what is permitted in the current Zoning Ordinance or recommended in the Master Plan would be required.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the residential density levels being advanced in the Master Plan are very low. She said that the concept of "Smart Growth:" involves concentrating higher density land uses in Cities where utilities and other infrastructure systems are already in place rather than sprawling out onto greenfield sites. She said that the Zoning Ordinance does not accommodate condominium developments other than those like the expansion of Meadow Woods Subdivision which requires 8,450 square foot lots that are at least 65 feet in width with a minimum house size of 960 square feet.

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Ms. Stachowiak said that she has drafted a new Section in the Zoning Ordinance that would allow for a gross density residential development of approximately 9 dwelling units per acre as opposed to 4 dwelling units per acre currently allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. She said that she included some information in the packet that explains the benefits of higher density residential development and shows what these types of developments look like and how they are laid out. She said that this a higher density condo development seems to make sense on the property north of Vision Collision and even more so on the Gulf Street property where the development can take advantage of its proximity to the river.

Mr. Baribeau said that the Commission set the density levels for a reason and there does not seem to be any reason to change them. He said that the City does not want to change ordinances to accommodate high density apartment complexes that provide a marginal living environment and no benefit to the community.

Mr. Stevens said that apartments would not be the right land use for the property on the map designated for "Planned Residential" development but a medium density condo development would make sense in those areas. He said that he does not think that residential development is the best use of the property north of Vision Collision.

Mr. Morris said that the core residential area of the City, including where he lives, could not have been built under the current Zoning Ordinance as the majority of the lots do not meet the minimum lot size requirements.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that there also needs to be some discussion on the future use of the property behind True Value Hardware, particularly now that it has been rezoned to R-HD, Multiple Family Residential, and on the future use of the back half of the parcels that front along Saginaw Highway.

There was discussion about whether the South Access Road will even come to fruition.

Ms. Stachowiak said that it is mostly a matter of how it would get funded. She said that the City has already secured a number of the easements necessary to develop the road.

The Commission agreed that the best way to review the Plan to determine what changes need to be made is to go through it section by section.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the Commission could go through one or two sections at each meeting. She said that she will review it prior to the meetings and make recommendations on potential changes that need to be made.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Article V, R-LD, R-MD, One Family Residential Districts

Ms. Stachowiak said that as she already mentioned, she has prepared a new section that would permit "medium density" residential condominium development. She said that it would allow for smaller house sizes, lot sizes and reduced setbacks. She also said that it would allow for private roads so that there does not have to be a 66 foot right-of-way through the development.

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Ms. Stachowiak said that she would not want to see higher density residential development on a site like what was just approved for Meadow Woods condos, however, there are areas where it would be appropriate. To that end, the way the ordinance is written, the site would have to meet certain criteria before it could be developed under this option:

> "Where a parcel proposed for use as a one-family medium density site condominium development abuts a one-family residential district, the planning commission must determine that the site complies with all of the following criteria:
>
> 1. The site has at least one property line abutting a nonresidential zoning district.
> 2. There is at least one vehicular access point to the site that is not through a residential neighborhood.
> 3. The site is irregular in size and/or shape to the extent that development under the one-family low density residential site condominium option is not reasonably practical."

Mr. Kane said that the road should be public so that they will be constructed to City standards and can be maintained by the City. He said that the width of the right-of-way can be reduced so it does not take up some much land in the development. Mr. Kane also said that more than one parking space needs to be required for each unit as most couples have 2 cars.

The Commission agreed that the roads should be public but with a reduced right-of-way.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she would do some research on what should be required.

Mr. Stevens said that the diagram on page 2 is unreadable.

The Commission discussed the home occupation section of the Zoning Ordinance and asked that Ms. Stachowiak provide the definition of a home occupation.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she would go back to the drawing board on this ordinance and present a revised draft at the next meeting.

<u>Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Section 220-80, Site Plan Review</u>

Ms. Stachowiak said that there is no rush to move this forward since there are already some ordinance amendments pending at the Council level.

The Commission decided to move forward with the ordinance since the Council is now moving forward on the other ordinances that are pending.

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baribeau to recommend approval to the City Council of the amendments to Section 220- 80. On a roll call vote, the motion carried 8-0.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Joint Planning Committee Report – No report

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the City Council, at its May 25th meeting, approved the site plan for the Speedway project and the retail center and the special land use permit for the gas station. She said that the Council also approved the Zoning Ordinance amendments to the Access Management Section.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Ms. MacDowell stated that Mr. Graber resigned from the Planning Commission and she has been appointed to the Planning Commission in his place as the Zoning Board of Appeals representative.

Ms. MacDowell said that the ZBA has not met since the last meeting.

Council Representative's Report – No report

Mayor's Report

Mayor Smith stated that with regard to the discussion about density, a lot of older people have to move out of the City when they want to downsize or do not want to have to have to shovel snow and mow lawns because the city does not have smaller site condos for them to move into.

Mayor Smith said that the City is moving forward with its public art project. He said that there is nice piece of public art across from Lickety Split.

Mayor Smiths said that the City is close to a 425 Annexation agreement with Oneida Township for the 154 +/- acre "Gilbert" property located on E. Saginaw southwest of the City's border. He said that they are still trying to figure out what the revenue sharing agreement should be but there is a good chance that the annexation will occur. Mayor Smith said that this is sort of a test run for other agreements with the Township including water rates for Oneida Township residents.

Ms. Stachowiak asked where the site is located.

Mr. Doty said that he has a map of the proposed annexation area that he will email to Ms. Stachowiak.

Mayor Smith said that Castle Ledges Estates was approved by the Township and then annexed into the City and it has not turned out as well as originally anticipated.

Mayor Smith said that the City is working to find businesses for the industrial park. He also said that the City has a purchase agreement for the former city hall. He said that the agreement has to sit for 28 days. He also said that the intent is to open up a brew pub and restaurant on the site.

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Mr. Kane stated that the environmental issues on the site should not be a problem.

Mayor Smith said that there is a company that monitors the site for contamination. He also said that the City Administrator has identified people who are knowledgeable of the environmental issues.

Mr. Smith said that the City is waiting for the State to approve an appraisal for the Rounds property. He said that anything over $150,000 will be the responsibility of the City.

Comments from Commissioner's

Mr. Gute stated that he participated in the MDOT bicycle event. He said that Gregory Newman was instrumental in setting it up. Mr. Gute said that it was mainly MDOT representatives but there was good representation by the City. He said that one of the things that came out of the event is that "wider is not always better" with regard to streets. Narrower streets tend to slow traffic which makes bicycling safer.

Mr. Stevens said that narrowing Jefferson Street has definitely slowed traffic.

Mr. Gute said that he lives at the end of Timbercreek Drive and someone, in the middle of the night, ran right off the end of the road. He said that he mentioned to Larry LaHaie that there is no sign indicating that the road ends and within a couple of weeks, he has a sign put up. Mr. Gute thanked Mr. LaHaie for his prompt response.

Mayor Smith said that MDOT may consider extending the bike path across the church property in the Township on the north side of Saginaw Highway to connect to the entrance to Fitzgerald Park.

Mr. Kane stated that this needs to be reflected in the Master Plan if it is ever going to occur.

Mayor Smith said that when two units of government join together to get something approved, it usually goes through must easier.

Mr. Gute asked about the second bridge to the island shown on the pathway plan.

Mr. Stevens said that the Commission did talk about this and a bridge connecting Fitzgerald Park to Island Park. He said that the Master Plan needs to be updated to reflect the second bridge to the island.

Mr. Morris said that he will be moving to Oneida Township. He said that he spoke with Mayor Smith and he can finish out his term which expires at the end of the year. Mr. Morris said that he and his family will be moving to Portland for the summer until they get into their new house.

Mr. Doty welcomed Ms. MacDowell to the Commission.

Comments from Chairman

Mr. Stevens said that he will not be available for the July meeting.

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Mr. Doty said that he will not be at the August meeting.

The Commission decided to cancel the July meeting and possibly the August meeting unless a site plan is submitted that requires action by the Commission in the meantime.

Mr. Stevens thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their continued participation on the Commission.

Adjournment

Ms. Malecki made a motion, seconded by Mr. Doty to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Jamie Malecki, Secretary
Planning Commissioner

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