

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, December 3, 2015

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

Attendance - Present: Mike Stevens, Bill Kane, Bob Doty, Todd Gute, Eric Morris, Lynne MacDowell & Matt Salmon. Also present: Zoning Administrator Sue Stachowiak & Council Representative Keith Mulder. Absent: Steve Baribeau.

Pledge of Allegiance – Ms. MacDowell 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 printed. On a voice vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to approve the November 5, 2015 minutes, as printed. On a voice vote, the motion carried 7-0..

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Section 220-35- Accessory Structures & Hotels/Motels in the CBD District

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the ordinance amendments would permit accessory structures in the Central Business District, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Accessory structures are permitted in a rear yard only.
- (2) An accessory structure must be located directly behind the building containing the principal use to which it is associated.
- (3) No more than one accessory structure per parcel shall be permitted.
- (4) Accessory structures may not obstruct or in any way interfere with access to a building.
- (5) Accessory structures cannot be located on or in a trailer or other mobile device.
- (6) Accessory structures must be completely enclosed, unless they are intended to be used for human occupancy.
- (7) Accessory structures must be aesthetically compatible with the general character of the Central Business District.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the amendments would also permit “hotels/motels” in the Central Business District, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) At least one parking space is provided for each room either on the site or within 300 feet of the site.
- (2) 24 hour local management is provided when one or more of the rooms are occupied.
- (3) No guest shall establish permanent residence at a motel/hotel for more than 60 consecutive days within any calendar year.
- (4) Motel/hotel rooms may be permitted as a secondary use to a primary permitted use in the Central Business District.

Mr. Stevens opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Dennis Duchene spoke in support of the proposed ordinance amendment permitting and regulating hotels/motels in the downtown. He said that he and his wife already have a business in the downtown and are interested in establishing a “boutique inn” in the downtown as well. Mr. Duchene said that they have considered 4 sites, including the Fitzgerald House, the former Church building at 205 W. Scott and the former boarding house at 119 W. Front Street, but are focusing on the former Davis Professional building at 207 E. Jefferson Street. He said that they selected this site, in part, because it does have on-site parking. The while it will not be a bed and breakfast, it will function in a very similar manner. Mr. Duchese stated that he and his wife are supportive of the proposed conditions although they may not want to have 24-hour on-site management at the site, particularly if there are only one or two rooms occupied. He said that they would like to move on this site as soon as possible but do not want to get locked into something if the ordinance is not going to permit the overnight lodging.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:13.

Mr. Mulder stated that requiring 24 on-site management may not be practical for buildings that contain just a few units.

Mr. Morris asked what the City’s interest would be in having 24-hour on-site management.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it is just to ensure that there are no problems with the people who are staying there.

Mr. Salmon said that from a law enforcement standpoint, there is a benefit to having someone to go to that has access to all of the rooms.

Mr. Kane stated that he has stayed at Bed & Breakfasts where the owner has left them a key, an emergency contact number and then left for the evening to return in time to serve breakfast. He said that he questions whether it is necessary to require someone to stay at the site around the clock just because someone is staying in one of the rooms.

Planning Commission Minutes
December 3, 2015
Page 3

Mr. Stevens said that there really just needs to be someone locally that emergency service personnel or the lodgers themselves can get ahold of if there is an issue.

Mr. Gute said that the intent of zoning is to protect property values and ensure that people are good neighbors. He said that if there is an issue with Meijer, we contact the corporation and make them correct the problem but we do not tell them how many employees they must have in order to prevent potential problems in the first place.

Ms. MacDowell said that if she and her husband are out of town, they have someone who looks after the property.

The Commission decided to change condition number 2 to require "24 hour *local* management..."

Mr. Gute asked whether storefronts should be used for something related to the lodging or should the storefronts be required to be used for retail, office, restaurant or some other type of customer oriented use.

The Commission decided that it would be acceptable to allow an entire building, including the storefront, to be for a hotel/motel.

Mr. Mulder stated that item 7 under accessory structures seems very subjective. He said that who determines what is "...*aesthetically compatible* with the general character of the Central Business District."

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she had more specific regulations in the first couple of drafts but it was felt that they were too specific.

Mr. Morris made a motion, seconded by Ms. MacDowell to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to Chapter 220-35 of the Zoning Ordinance regulating accessory structure and allowing hotels and motels in the Central Business District, subject to certain conditions, with the change to condition number 2 under hotels/motels requiring 24 hour "local" management as opposed to 24 hour "on-site" management. On a voice vote, (7-0), the motion carried unanimously.

2015 Planning Commission Annual Report

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the proposed report:

- In addition to the amendments that were recommended for approval this evening, there are 4 ordinance amendments pending at the Council level including: Recreation Vehicles, Exterior Lighting, Nonconforming Lots, Structures and Uses and Site Plan Review. An amendment to allow higher density single family residential use is also in the process of being developed. The Zoning Ordinance update is approximately ½ complete.

- The updates to Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Master Plan are in the final stages and the Commission is beginning its review of Chapter 4. The Master Plan update is approximately 1/3 complete.
- The Commission approved the following in 2015:
 1. Speedway Gasoline Station - Special Land Use Permit & Site Plan
 2. Grand Ledge Retail Center- Site Plan
 3. Gilbert 425 Annexation Property Zoning
 4. Meadow Woods Condominiums – Phase 2
 5. Grand Ledge Library Addition
- The Commission continues to have 2 members (Bill Kane & Bob Doty) on the Joint Planning Committee.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals took action on the following cases in 2015:
 1. Approval of front & rear yard setback variances to permit 3 new storage buildings at 918 W. Jefferson Street (Comet Storage).
 2. Approval of a side yard setback variance to permit a carport at 222 W. River Street.
 3. Approval to permit 4 wall signs on the canopy and 8.5 square foot signs on the gas pumps for the future Speedway Station at 720 S. Clinton Street.
 4. Denial of a variance request to permit an increase in the allowable height for the proposed Speedway Station ground signs at 720 S. Clinton Street.
 5. Approval of a variance to permit a 6 foot high fence in the E. Kent Street front yard at 609 Liberty Street.
 6. Approval of a variance to the setback requirement to permit a new ground sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway.
- Recommendations (to the City Council):
 1. Process ordinance amendments that are pending at the Council level in order to ensure that the Zoning Ordinance can be updated in a timely manner.
 2. Work with the Planning Commission on matters of public improvements as required by the Michigan Municipal Planning Act.

Mr. Stevens stated that the ordinance amendments that are pending should be listed under recommendation number 1.

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to approve the 2015 Annual Report. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

2016 Work Plan

Ms. Stachowiak reviewed the proposed work plan for 2016:

1. Zoning Ordinance Update – Work with Council to get all of the pending ordinance amendments approved and continue to work on updating the use chapters of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Master Plan Update - Finish updating the Master Plan with the goal of having the revised document by the end of the year.
3. Coordinated Planning - Continued to work with the City Council and all other city Boards and Commissions on all matters of planning and zoning, primarily through continued participation by Planning Commissioners Kane and Doty on the Joint Planning Committee.

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morris to approve the 2016 Work Plan as written. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Master Plan Update

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she made the changes that were discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Doty stated that on page 5, first paragraph, 1.85 square miles does not include the newly annexed area.

Mr. Kane stated that the Master Plan needs to include a better description of the key points of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the entire Parks and Recreation Master Plan is included, by reference, as part of this Master Plan.

Mr. Mulder said that the City recently contracted with The Spicer Group to prepare a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Mr. Kane asked if anyone has looked at the covenants for the Industrial Park to see if they are out-of-line and possibly contributing to the lack of interest in the Park.

Mr. Stevens said that it is location. He said that the Delta Township industrial park is thriving because of its location and easy access to the freeway.

Mr. Mulder said that the City is currently trying to market the Industrial Park. He agreed that the development standards are too restrictive for an industrial park.

Mr. Doty stated that that the gates have been replaced on the dam and a new access road has been installed as well.

**Planning Commission Minutes
December 3, 2015
Page 6**

The Commissioners agreed on the following changes to the document:

Page 9, delete the “8” from the end of “Maintenance”

Page 22, delete the first 2 paragraphs

Page 32, last paragraph, line 2, delete “elementary”

Pages 38 & 39, delete references to options 1 and 2 from the 2014 Dam Study

Page 41, add an “S” to the end of Service at the top of the page

Include the proposed road through the school property and a signaled intersection aligning with Old Saginaw Highway.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she will make the changes noted by the Commissioners and provide a revised version for the January 7, 2016 meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Charter Update

Mr. Doty stated that the Charter update is expected to take 1-2 years to complete. He said that there is a dispute as to whether members of the Charter Commission can serve on other boards. Mr. Doty said that the City Attorney is saying no but there is an opinion from a former Attorney General saying that it is acceptable. He said that it is a 9 member Commission and there are already 6 people who want to serve.

Zoning Administrator's Report - None

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Ms. MacDowell said that the ZBA approved a variance to the setback requirement to permit a new ground sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway. She said that the new sign will be significantly smaller than the existing sign.

Council Representative's Report

Mr. Mulder said that the City has hired Jodie Willobee as the assistant to the City Administrator. He also said that the City has a new treasurer starting on January 1, 2016.

Mr. Mulder said that the City has authorized a contract to raze the Rounds building and the Scout building. He said that the Fire Department may use both of them for smoke training before they are demolished. He also said that the City may move forward with the new boat launch in the Spring of the year.

Mayor's Report - None

Comments from Commissioner's

Mr. Gute stated that he is looking forward to the Christmas parade.

Mr. Morris said that he will be at the January meeting. He also asked about a 5-year capital improvements plan that includes an analysis of the City's under and above ground infrastructure and a plan for use of the county road millage funds.

Mr. Kane stated that Larry LaHaie had a meeting with the City Council and the first round of millage funds will be used to repair roads that are already in pretty good shape in order to keep them that way.

Mr. Morris said that it is a smart strategy as it is cheaper to keep infrastructure in good shape.

Mr. Salmon said that Mr. Morris's expertise will be very valuable to the Commission as it works on the Transportation section of the Master Plan.

Mr. Doty said that he and the Mayor spent the day in Frankenmuth recently and one of the things that the Mayor is concerned about is allowing more housing options for seniors.

Mr. Doty said that the City is considering closing the recycling center as it is becoming too costly to maintain and Granger is handling recycling. He said that the yard waste section will still be available.

Mr. Doty wished Ms. Malecki well as she begins serving on the City Council.

Comments from Chairman

Mr. Stevens said that Jamie Malecki has been wonderful addition to the Planning Commission and he wished her the best in serving on the City Council.

Adjournment

Ms. Morris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Salmon to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Jamie Malecki, Secretary
Planning Commissioner