

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, June 2, 2016

Chairman Mike Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Rademacher 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 8-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Ms. MacDowell to approve the May 6, 2016 minutes, with the following corrections to the last paragraph on page 3:

“Mr. Stevens said that he has built on 40 foot wide lots HOMES ON 56 FOOT WIDE LOTS. It allows for a 22 foot wide double garage with a 14 12 foot wide bedroom and a 6 foot wide porch. This allows for 10 feet between houses. Once the lot goes below 40 56 feet, it becomes really difficult to construct a home.

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

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Design Workshop/Charrette – Higher Density Single Family Residential Development Standards

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the purpose of the workshop is to obtain input from the public with regard to what type of housing the community desires in terms of higher density single family residential development. She said that under the current ordinance, the minimum lot size is 8,450 square feet and the minimum house size is 1,400 square feet. Ms. Stachowiak said that a lot of singles and empty nesters would like to be a home owner but do not need or want to maintain such a large home/lot. She said that she prepared a survey and asked that the attendees fill it out before they leave. Ms. Stachowiak said that she notified several individuals and companies of this meeting by regular mail. In addition, the notice was placed on the City's

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website, TV channel and Facebook page and in addition, the notice was sent to everyone in the Mayor's email address book.

Marsha Smith, 119 W. Jefferson Street, stated that there is very little 1-story condominium housing for anyone, not just seniors, within walking distance of the downtown. She said that when the time comes, she and her husband would like to be able to move into a 1-story condominium within the City. Ms. Smith stated that they would want to pay a condominium fee so that the mowing and other outside maintenance would be done by an association.

Mr. Gute reviewed a digital presentation of a development that contains higher density single family houses. He said that there are 3 different neighborhood designs. The first one has a traditional street with 45 foot wide, 100 foot deep lots. The houses have 2-car garages which does not allow for much of a front façade. The houses are a lot closer to the street. It is smaller houses on smaller lots.

Mr. Gute said that the second design is a condominium plan. This one has the garages extending out from the front wall of the house. He said that there is really nothing that the City can do to prevent this type of design.

Mr. Gute said that the last design is more of a traditional neighborhood design. It provides for alley access to rear garages. This design takes the cars out of the front yards of the houses.

Mr. Rademacher asked if the streets would be "through street" rather than cul-de-sacs.

Ms. Stachowiak said that it depends on the site.

Mr. Stevens said that the ordinance needs to be amended to provide for development options. He said that the housing market forces are changing and we need to allow for the broadest appeal. Mr. Stevens said that alleys would allow the main streets to be narrower.

Mr. Mulder said that narrow streets calm traffic. He said that a 30 foot road would allow for parking on one side of the street.

Ms. Smith said that the alley is a good thing. She said that as long as it there is a back entrance that could include patios and decks. The back yard provides for a small private space and with a condo association, there would be no maintenance for the property owner. Ms. Smith said that a 2-car garage is nice but a 1-car garage would not be a deal breaker. She would rather have a 3 bedroom rather than a 2 bedroom house with a 1st floor laundry room and a flat entrance into the house.

Mr. Morris said that alleys will take up a lot of room and will drive up the infrastructure costs.

Mr. Stevens said that alleys just need to be a development option.

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Mr. Kane stated that he would not purchase a house that did not have an attached garage.

Mr. Salmon said that the older neighborhoods have detached garages located in the back yards.

Joe Gentilozzi, 506 S. Clinton Street, said that residential housing really isn't what he does but he met with Mr. Doty the other day and thought he would come and listen to the presentation. He said that there will be 2 more offices going in on Charlevoix Drive. Mr. Gentilozzi stated that things are getting better and Grand Ledge does need more housing. He said that the ordinance needs to be flexible and let the market conditions dictate housing designs.

Mr. Stevens said that the housing market has changed over the last few years but the type of housing being discussed is very expensive and the Grand Ledge market may not support it.

Mr. Gute said that there are only a few locations in the City where a development with reduced lot sizes would fit in.

Mr. Gentilozzi said that there are a lot of specialty shops and services that want to come in to Grand Ledge and space is running thin. He said that the dialysis center by the Lansing Mall is overbooked and is looking for a new location.

Mr. Mulder said that Mr. Dible was unable to attend the meeting but provided some documentation for the Commission to consider. He said that the photographs are from a development in North Carolina.

Mr. Kane said that Mr. Dible's property north of Vision Collision would not be a "walkable" development.

Mr. Morris said that the problem regarding housing is now and we need to move forward with the ordinance.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she will finalize the draft for the July meeting so that the Commission can move forward with a public hearing if it so desires.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joint Planning Committee Report

Mr. Doty stated that he met with the City Administrator Adam Smith and the Mayor about the proposed boat launch. He said that they apologized for this project not being brought to the Planning Commission as required by the Municipal Planning Act, however, the project is a done deal at this point. Mr. Doty said that the City can apply for more grant funds in the future to make additional improvements to the boat launch, including parking and a canoe launch.

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Mr. Kane stated that the Commission should accept the apologies but ask that it not happen again in the future as it has happened too many times in the past.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak said that she met with Jim Foster to have the maps updated. She said that she will have full drafts of the Master Plan for the Commissioner's at the next meeting..

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Ms. MacDowell said that the ZBA did not meet in May.

Council Representative's Report - None

Comments from Commissioner's

Ms. MacDowell said that the Chamber of Commerce has moved into City Hall. She said that the former Chamber building at 220 S. Bridge Street will be renovated and will have a 2-story looking façade.

Mr. Stevens said that the DDA Façade Committee met last week with the new owner, David Sweet regarding façade renovations at 220 S. Bridge Street. He said that Mr. Kane designed the façade that currently exists. Mr. Stevens said that the Committee made some suggestions and raised several but the owner only needs to accept the Committee's input if he obtains funds from the DDA. He said that Mr. Sweet will be meeting with an architect and is proceeding with the interior tear-out. Mr. Stevens said that it will be a collectibles store and the owner does intend to keep the arcade entrance.

Mr. Doty asked if Ms. Stachowiak has received plans for the proposed O'Reilly Auto Parts Store.

Ms. Stachowiak replied "no".

Joe Gentilozzi stated that the site plan will be submitted shortly. He said that the lot split was just recently approved.

Mr. Doty asked about the status of Speedway. Mr. Stevens said that there is a soil erosion problem with the site just sitting there covered by raw dirt.

Mr. Gentilozzi said that Speedway is causing a drainage issue on his property to the north as well.

Mr. Salmon welcomed Mr. Rademacher to the Commission.

Mr. Doty asked about the status of the violations at 960 Degroff Street.

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Ms. Stachowiak said that they filed for a zoning permit and it has been denied. The owner has an open violation notice to remove the gravel.

Comments from Chairman

Mr. Stevens welcomed Mr. Rademacher to the Commission.

Adjournment

Mr. Stevens adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Lynne MacDowell, Secretary
Planning Commission