

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, August 4, 2016

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Gute 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 6-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to approve the June 2, 2016 minutes, with the condition that the minutes are revised to reflect the names of the workshop attendees. On a voice vote, the motion carried 6-0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review – 608 S. Clinton Street, O’Reilly Auto Parts

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the site plan is for the construction of a 7,225 square foot O’Reilly Auto Parts retail building with related site improvements at 608 S. Clinton Street. The subject property is the south, approximately 1 acre of the former McDonald’s property on S. Clinton Street which has been divided into 2 separate parcels of land. There is a vacant, approximately ½ acre parcel located between the O’Reilly Auto Parts parcel and the retail center to the north that will be available for future commercial development.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the proposed landscape plan does not demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. She said that the landscaping buffer between the parking lot and the front property line must contain 28 shrubs, with a minimum starting size of at least 24 inches in height and spread at the time of planting. The buffer area must also contain 5 canopy trees with a minimum starting size of 3½ caliper inches. The proposed landscape plan shows 2 trees with a 2½ inch caliper starting size. No shrubs are shown on the plan. In addition, 6 parking lot trees with a minimum starting size of 3½ caliper inches are

Planning Commission Minutes

August 4, 2016

Page 2

required. Such trees must be evenly distributed throughout the parking lot. The proposed landscape plans shows 4, 2 ½ inch caliper trees along the perimeter of the parking lot.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the original 608 S. Clinton Street parcel contains 2 driveway cuts to S. Clinton and a joint use driveway connection with the parcel to the north. The site will continue to be accessed via the existing driveway at the south end of the site and via a connection to the retail center further to the north. The northern driveway on the original parcel will be eliminated. Section 220-74 of the Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum distance of 150 feet between driveways along S. Clinton Street. The driveway that will be retained is located approximately 110 feet from the driveway that currently exists on the property to the south. While the driveway does not comply with the separation distance requirement, staff is recommending that the location be approved.

Ms. Stachowiak said that a photometric plan has not been received and the proposed dumpster enclosure (wood fence) does not comply with the Zoning Ordinance. She said that the City Engineer had a number of items that need to be addressed. The applicant has submitted a revised plan addressing those comments and it is in the process of being reviewed. Ms. Stachowiak said that the other issue is that several Planning Commission members have expressed concerns about the building itself. She said that it is a steel building, whereas, the other buildings in the area are of masonry construction.

Mr. Doty said that the O'Reilly Auto Parts store in Owosso is very nice looking, as is the one in St. Johns. He said that the one that is being proposed for Grand Ledge is similar to the one on N. Larch Street in Lansing. It is an unattractive steel building. Mr. Doty said that despite not having any architectural standards to require a better looking building, he would ask that O'Reilly Auto Parts be a good neighbor and upgrade the building to one that fits in with the other brick buildings in the area. Mr. Doty said that he is not able to support approval of the site plan at this time.

Mr. Kane agreed with Mr. Doty. He said that there are a number of things that still need to be addressed including landscaping, lighting, the dumpster enclosure and bicycle parking. Mr. Kane said that he welcomes O'Reilly Auto Parts to the community but is very disappointed in the structure that they are proposing. He said that all of the other buildings in the area are brick and while Grand Ledge does not have an ordinance requiring a brick building, he cannot support approval of a building that does not fit in with the character of the area.

Mr. Rademacher asked the applicant's representative how O'Reilly decides which façade to use since they appear to have several.

Dylan Gideon, Anderson Engineering, stated that O'Reilly has about 4,000 stores and 5 different building designs. He said that unless there are architectural guidelines that they are required to meet, O'Reilly generally utilizes the steel building prototype. Mr. Gideon said that it is primarily because of the significant cost associated with constructing a brick building as opposed to a steel building.

Planning Commission Minutes

August 4, 2016

Page 3

Mr. Stevens said that the building design is very important to the Commission. He asked that Mr. Gideon express the Commission's concerns to O'Reilly.

Ms. MacDowell agreed. She also said that the site plan does not provide for a loading zone.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that loading zones are not required. She said that most deliveries occur outside of business hours and therefore, they can use the parking lot for loading and unloading.

Mr. Gute asked if there is a light on the west side of the building. He said that if so, a photometric plan will be required to ensure that it does not glare into the neighborhood to the west. He also asked about the required landscaping.

Mr. Gideon said that they will comply with the landscape requirements. He also said that they will provide a photometric plan. Mr. Gideon stated that all of the issues that are being raised are trivial and very easy to address. He also said that the City does not have any architectural standards and therefore, the building is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Gideon asked that the site plan be approved, conditioned upon addressing the items mentioned in the staff report.

Mr. Stevens said that there is too many things lacking to do a conditional approval.

Mr. Gute said that it would be good access management to have a parking lot connection with the future Speedway site to the south. He said that there is a significant grade differential between the 2 sites and therefore, the slope/grade change for the driveway connection would have to be on the Speedway site and would have to level off at it adjoins the O'Reilly property. Mr. Gute asked that Ms. Stachowiak address this issue with Speedway, possibly as part of the pre-construction meeting. He said that all property owners involved will benefit from having the sites connected.

Mr. Gute asked if the driveway connection through the vacant parcel connecting the O'Reilly property with the strip mall property will be installed as part of this project or not until the vacant parcel develops at some time in the future.

Mr. Gideon said that they would like to have driveway connections to both the Speedway site and across the vacant property to the north. He said that O'Reilly will not own the parcel of land that it is building on but rather, will lease it from the current owner. Therefore, O'Reilly has no control over when the driveway connection to the north will get constructed.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she will address this issue with Mr. Gentilozzi who owns all 3 parcels in question.

Mr. Kane said that he is not happy with the site utilization. He said that there is vacant land to the south on the Speedway property and now there will be a vacant lot north of the proposed

Planning Commission Minutes

August 4, 2016

Page 4

auto parts store. Mr. Kane said he is just not comfortable with the use of the land as it is being proposed. He also said that, in the interest of being a good neighbor, he hopes that O'Reilly will provide a better architectural design for the building.

Mr. Gideon said that O'Reilly is only using what land it needs to make their project work in accordance with City codes.

Mr. Gute mentioned that a bicycle rack will be required. He also said that, although there is no ordinance restricting it, he is not a fan of having pavement right up to the building wall. Mr. Gute said that it is much better to have some landscaping between the pavement and the building. He asked Mr. Gideon to consider making this change. Mr. Gute asked about storm drainage.

Mr. Gideon said that they have provided storm water calculations to the City Engineer for review and are waiting on a response. He said that they will be providing detention and retention under the parking lot. Mr. Gideon said that they have addressed all of the engineering issues in the revised site plan that the City Engineering is in the process of reviewing.

Ms. MacDowell asked Mr. Gideon if there is any way that we can get a brick building inasmuch as we do not have an ordinance addressing building standards.

Mr. Gideon said that O'Reilly wants to be a good neighbor. He asked that Ms. Stachowiak provide a list of the remaining issues to be addressed and ask for a building design that the Commission feels is more appropriate for the site and he will take it back to O'Reilly. Mr. Gideon said that O'Reilly has about 5 different prototype buildings.

Mr. Doty said that all of the buildings in the area are brick which is why the proposed building will not fit in with the character of the area.

The Commissioner's agreed that they would be willing to have a special meeting to review the revised site plan so that the applicant does not have to wait until the September 8, 2016 meeting.

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to table the site plan for a new O'Reilly Auto Parts Store at 608 S. Clinton Street, pending receipt of a revised site plan that addresses the items contained in the staff report. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Mr. Rademacher asked why the City does not have architectural guidelines.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the City has generally not been in favor of much regulation.

Mr. Gute asked Mr. Mulder if he would discuss this matter with the City Council to see if they would be open to architectural guidelines, using O'Reilly as an example of why they are needed.

Planning Commission Minutes

August 4, 2016

Page 5

Mr. Mulder said that he would bring it up at the next Council meeting. He said that people should have a right to decide what their building is going to look like. Mr. Mulder asked if a metal building is really better than a masonry building.

Mr. Gute said that a masonry building is definitely better than a metal building.

2. Master Plan Update – Review of Final Draft

Ms. Stachowiak said that she provided the Commission with a description of the procedure for adoption of the Plan. She said that the City Council must authorize the distribution of the proposed Master Plan to those entities required to receive a copy of it in accordance with the Michigan Municipal Planning Act. All entities are given 63 days to respond with comments. After the 63 day time period, the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing. The Act gives the Planning Commission the sole authority to approve the Plan. The City Council endorses the Master Plan by authorizing its distribution.

Mr. Kane said that in the past, the Commission has forwarded the Master Plan to the City Council for formal approval as the last step in the process. He said that the Commission should do the same with this Plan.

Ms. Stachowiak agreed. She said that Council has, in the past, adopted a resolution approving the Plan as the final step in the process and the same should be done this time as well.

The other Commissioners agreed.

Ms. Stachowiak said that there is an error in the page numbering (2 page 24's). She also said that the quality of the photographs will be much better in the Plan once it has been adopted and all changes, corrections, etc. have been made.

Mr. Doty stated that the following corrections need to be made:

Page 6 – Delete the “Z” from the 3rd line in the last paragraph.

Page 8 – Table 5 – the chart does not match the numbers in the description.

Page 11 – 3rd paragraph – change 1990's to 1880's.

Page 47 – Remove “several” from the last line in paragraph 1.

Mr. Kane said that the following changes need to be made:

Page 4 – Remove everything except the first 2 lines.

Page 7 – Table 3 – switch the order between Charlotte and Mason

Page 15 – 2nd paragraph – Remove “former” from before “Holbrook” as the school is back in operation

Page 21 – 1st paragraph - add “... and upgraded in 2009” after 1975.

Page 43 – 2nd paragraph – remove “on the newly purchased land located south of the city limits” to “south of the bridge”.

Page 53 – 6th paragraph – change “sheriff’s” to “police”.

Page 63 – 1st paragraph – change “official” to “National Register”.

Map 2 – Show the Chamber of Commerce at City Hall rather than the Opera House.

Map 6 – Change “Possible crossing at Nixon Road” to “Possible crossing at Broadbent Road”.

Map 7 – Show existing pathways on Willow Highway.

Mr. Doty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to forward the draft Master Plan to City Council for its authorization to distribute the Plan in accordance with the Michigan Municipal Planning Act. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. Higher Density Single Family Residential Development Standards

The Commission decided to discuss this matter at its September 8, 2016 meeting.

Mr. Gute said that he attended a conference on the future trends of elder care. He said that in 2025, the 1st round of baby boomers turn 80. Mr. Gute said that this is a large segment of the population that will need appropriate housing for their age group.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joint Planning Committee Report

Mr. Kane said that there was a discussion about the boat launch.

Zoning Administrator's Report - None

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

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

Council Representative's Report

Mr. Mulder said that he will express the Commission's concerns about the lack of architectural standards to the City Council.

Comments from Commissioner's

Mr. Doty said that Rick Gilbert intended to see the property for the final phase of Fieldstone to a developer for construction. He said that the developer has backed out because of the high cost of installing the infrastructure. Mr. Doty said that it is about \$40,000 per lot.

Planning Commission Minutes

August 4, 2016

Page 7

Mr. Doty said that the trees at Dollar Tree appear to be less than our minimum required starting size. He said that they are very small.

Mr. Doty said that he will be at the September Planning Commission meeting but that may be his last as the first Charter Commission meeting is on the August 24, 2016 and there may be a swearing in of the members at that time. Mr. Doty reviewed the election results. He said that he spoke with the Mayor about the need to fill the vacancies on the Commission.

Mr. Doty said that Speedway intends to begin construction the week of August 8th. He said that he is hoping that there can be a driveway connection between Speedway and the new auto parts store.

Mr. Doty said that the boat launch project will begin on Monday. He said that his son is on the Parks Commission and he has spoken to them about a loft landing to accommodate canoes and kayaks. Mr. Doty said that the project came in under bid which would allow funding to construct the soft landing.

Comments from Chairman - None

Adjournment

Mr. Stevens adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Lynne MacDowell, Secretary
Planning Commission