

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, September 8, 2016

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

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

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Salmon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morris to approve the agenda with the addition of “Charter Commission Update” under New Business. On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Morris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to approve the August 4, 2016 minutes, with the following corrections:

Page 6 – first line of last paragraph – change “see” to “sell”

Page 7 – second line of 4th paragraph – change “loft” to “soft.”

On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts

Mr. Salmon said that he lives directly adjacent to 205 W. Scott Street which is the property that is proposed for rezoning.

The Commissioners agreed that Mr. Salmon does not have a conflict of interest that would prevent him from participating in the discussion and voting on this matter.

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 was tabled at the August meeting as it was deemed to be incomplete. The original site plan did not include a photometric plan, dumpster enclosure detail, bicycle parking or an adequate landscape plan. In addition, the Commission expressed concerns about the steel building that was being proposed. Ms. Stachowiak said that the

revised site plan demonstrates compliance with all aspects of the Zoning Ordinance and the applicant has agreed to construct a building that has a masonry façade.

Mr. Morris asked if a pedestrian entrance to the dumpster enclosure is required.

Ms. Stachowiak said that it is not required.

Mr. Kane said that he is concerned that the Commission will not get the nice looking building that they are being shown.

Ms. Stachowiak said that they cannot deviate from the façade design as it is part of the Commissions' approval.

Joe Gentilozzi, Delta River Drive, Lansing, MI stated that the parking lot connection shown on the site plan is not what he has agreed to. He said that the agreement does not allow access from the proposed site across the vacant land to the north to the Family Dollar site further to the north. Mr. Gentilozzi showed the Commission a drawing of what was approved by him in terms of driveways and access. He said that the intent was to relocate the drive just south of Family Dollar a bit further to the south to align with Charlevoix Drive. This would result in no change to the number of driveways but would space them out better.

Mr. Stevens said that McDonald's had 2 driveways and one is being eliminated.

Mr. Morris said that the important part is that the Commission cannot approve anything beyond the property line and therefore, the important part is that the drive aisle stubs at the north property line to allow for a future connection to the property to the north.

Mr. Morris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kane to approve the site plan prepared by Esterly Schneider, dated June 17, 2016 and last revised on August 25, 2016, to permit the construction of a 7,225 square foot O'Reilly Auto Parts retail building with related site improvements, within the confines of the the property at 608 S. Clinton Street, subject to compliance with the items contained in the review from the City Engineer dated August 31, 2016 and the review from the Fire Department dated July 14, 2016. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

2. Public Hearing – Request to Rezone 205 W. Scott Street from “R-MD” Single Family Residential to “CBD” Central Business District

Ms. Stachowiak said that this is a request by Ann Duchene, on behalf of SGL Holdings, LLC, to rezone the property at 205 W. Scott Street from “R-MD” Single Family Residential district to “CBD” Central Business District. The applicant immediate plans for the building are to use it for administrative offices for her business office and at some point in the future, to renovate the historic church into a small, local inn. She said that the church building at 205 W. Scott Street was constructed in 1879. In 2003, the building was sold by the Church of God to Mid-

Michigan Tutoring Center, LLC and was used as a home schooling facility until 2013. The building has been vacant since that time. The applicant purchased the property on August 15, 2016.

Ms. Stachowiak said that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning. She said that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the future land use map contained in the proposed master plan. She also said that while the subject property is primarily surrounded by "R-MD" Single Family Residential zoning, the "CBD" Central Business district begins on the property just to the northeast of the subject property and therefore, the proposal will not result in a "spot zone" which it typically considered to be an unacceptable planning practice. She said that the "CBD" district would still allow the property to be used for a church but would also allow other uses that would be appropriate at this location, given the surrounding zoning and land patterns. Much like the subject property, most of the buildings in the downtown either adjoin or are located in very close proximity to residences. To that end, the uses allowed in the "CBD" district are restricted to relatively low impact uses that do not generate a great deal of noise, fumes, dust, vibrations and other nuisances that could diminish the quality of life for residents in the area. Ms. Stachowiak said that since the subject property does not have direct exposure from Bridge or Jefferson Streets, many of the uses allowed in the CBD district would not be practical at this location. Given its location, the site would be most appropriate for destination type uses such as offices, overnight lodging, photography studios and child care centers rather than the type of uses that depend on pass-by traffic for its customer base. She said that the allowable uses that would be practical for the subject property are also the type of uses that would be most compatible with the surrounding residential land uses as they are quiet and do not generate much traffic.

Mr. Stevens opened the public hearing at 7:43.

Gerry Cohoon, 2419 E. Saginaw Highway, stated that he owns a couple of properties in Grand Ledge, including the Corner Cone at 201 W. Jefferson Street and the property at 314 Harrison Street. He stated that he is not in support of the rezoning. Mr. Cohoon stated that it is not up to the City to ensure that a property owner makes money from the property. He said that this the rezoning should not be approved as it is a spot zone, would change the character of the area and there is no need for more land zoned "CBD" as there is already a lot of vacancies in the downtown. Mr. Cohoon stated that if the building at 205 W. Scott were to be demolished, the site could be developed into residential homes.

Ann Duchene, SGL Holdings, LLC, 10445 S. Wright Road, Eagle, MI, spoke in support of her request. She said that she and her husband were attracted to the building because of its beauty and historic character. Ms. Duchene said that the building is currently empty on the inside and they are planning to invest a lot of money into the building to prevent any further deterioration. She said that eventually, they would like to have anywhere from 4-12 room in the building that would be available for overnight lodging.

Matt Salmon, 410 Harrison Street, stated that he lives directly adjacent to the property along Harrison Street. He said that if the property were to be rezoned to the "CBD" district, any of the permitted uses could potentially be established in the building. Mr. Salmon said that an "inn" would be acceptable but he would not want it to become a reception hall, a bar, or certain other uses that would not be compatible with the surrounding residential land uses. He stated that he appreciates that someone is willing to put money into the building to keep it from just continuing to sit vacant and deteriorate. Mr. Salmon said that he would love to see it continue to be a church but in lieu of that, the allowable uses need to be restricted to prevent any negative impacts on the residential area in which it is located.

Mr. Kane asked if the applicant intends to make any changes to the site.

Ms. Duchene said that they would like to make the side wing of the building that was constructed in the 1960's fit it better with the rest of the building in terms of historic character. She said that they also intend to do some landscaping. Ms. Duchene stated that the site does adjoin other CBD zoning and is a logical expansion of the district. She stated that they will operate their business in a manner that respects the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Dennis Duchene, 10445 Wright Road, spoke in support of the request. He said that they have no intentions of putting a reception hall in the building. Mr. Duchene stated that they would like to improve the town by providing overnight lodging, particularly near the downtown.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:55.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the allowable uses can be restricted via a conditional zoning agreement. The applicant has to agree to the conditions but she can prepare a proposal that would be very similar to what was approved when the former Doty Flower Shop property on Spring Street was rezoned. Ms. Stachowiak asked Ms. Duchene if she would be willing to consider a conditional zoning agreement.

Ms. Duchene responded affirmatively.

Mr. Mulder said that a conditional use agreement is imperative to protect the neighborhood from certain uses that would be potentially detrimental in this area. He said that the rezoning makes sense for the office and overnight lodging uses that the applicant is proposing but would not be an appropriate location for a bar/brewery, restaurant, reception hall, etc.

Mr. Morris said that the conditional use agreement should list the permitted uses rather than prohibitive uses. He also pointed out that the proposed future land use plan shows Mr. Salmon's house in the CBD district.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the conditions associated with a rezoning run with the land, not with the property owner.

Mr. Morris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Salmon to table the request to rezone the property at 205 W. Scott Street till the October 6, 2016 meeting to allow time for a conditional zoning agreement to be executed. On a voice vote (5-0-), the motion carried unanimously.

3. Higher Density Single Family Residential Development Standards

The Commission agreed to hold a public hearing on this matter at its October 6, 2016 meeting.

4. Charter Commission Update

Mr. Doty stated that the Commission has had 2 meetings and will meet again on September 21, 2016. The meetings are being held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. The Commission consists of 3 former Planning Commission members, 1 former Mayor, 3 local business owners, 5 former Councilmembers, a former DDA member, a former LDFA member, a reporter and an attorney. Mr. Doty said that they are setting up a website to keep the public informed and allow for questions to be answered. The minutes will be available on the website, meetings dates will be posted on the City TV channel and progress updates will be provided to the GL Independent. Mr. Doty said that the Commission is currently working on a set of rules for the Commission and on deciding which charter or charters to use for templates.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joint Planning Committee Report

Mr. Doty said that there will be a meeting on September 21, 2016.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak said that the City Council expressed general support for instituting architectural standards for nonresidential buildings. She said that she will have a draft prepared for the Commission for discussion at its October meeting.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she is requiring Speedway to grade and seed the site since construction does not appear to be anywhere on the horizon. She also said that the site plan for the Speedway construction will expire at the end of September and therefore, unless construction begins by that date, the site plan will have to be reapproved before it can begin.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

Ms. Stachowiak said that the ZBA did not meet in August.

Council Representative's Report

Mr. Mulder said that he did express the Commission's concerns about the lack of architectural standards to the City Council and that the response was generally favorable.

Mr. Mulder said that the Mayor appointed him and Councilman Jancek to the Commission as voting members until other appointments could be made but were then informed that as elected officials, they were not eligible to serve as voting members of the Commission.

Comments from Commissioner's

Mr. Morris said that he appreciates Mr. Doty and Ms. MacDowell's participation on the Charter Commission and their past participation on the Planning Commission. He asked about an open solicitation for Planning Commission members.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the Mayor would really like to have some names of people who would be interested in serving.

Mr. Morris and Mr. Mulder both said that they may have someone who would be interested.

Ms. Stachowiak said that Ms. MacDowell was the liaison between the Commission and the ZBA.

Mr. Rademacher said that he would be willing to serve as the liaison.

Mr. Salmon thanked the Commission for listening to his concerns about the rezoning.

The Commission congratulated Mr. Salmon on his promotion to detective with the Lansing Police Department.

Comments from Chairman - None

Adjournment

Mr. Stevens adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator