

City of Grand Ledge
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting Held on
Thursday, January 5, 2017

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

Attendance - Present: Mike Stevens, Bill Kane, Todd Gute, Matt Salmon, Eric Morris, David Rademacher, Rodney VanDeCastele & Stephen Rivet. Absent: Paul Viles. Also present: Council Representative Keith Mulder, City Administrator Adam Smith & Zoning Administrator Sue Stachowiak.

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rademacher to approve the agenda as written. On a voice vote, the motion carried (8-0).

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Gute made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morris to approve the December 1, 2016 minutes, with the following correction:

Page 3 – 4th line of the 7th paragraph – change “tired” to “tied”.

On a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

Notice of Agenda Items Conflicts - None

Business from the Floor - None

OLD BUSINESS

Commercial Building Architectural Standards

Ms. Stachowiak said that she made the following changes to the ordinance based on the discussion at the last meeting:

- Section 1: Change “Smooth-faced concrete block” to “standard faced concrete block”
- Section 2: Change “4 sides” to “exposed sides”
- Section 7: Remove “...and at least 10% of all side walls that are visible from a public street...”

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Mr. Morris asked why the architectural standards only apply to new buildings. He said that the way the proposed ordinance is written, someone could completely change the façade of a building in the downtown and they would not have to comply with any of the proposed standards.

Mr. Stevens said that he and Mr. Kane are on the DDA Façade Grant Committee and they can require compliance with the standards as part of their approval process, although it would only apply when grant funds are being sought for the façade improvements.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she changed “smooth-faced concrete block” as a prohibited material to “standard-faced concrete block”. She asked if that is consistent with what the Commission wanted. She also asked Mr. Gute is allowing the list of materials in section 1 as accent features covering not more than 25% of the exterior walls is acceptable.

Mr. Gute said that they do use standard-faced concrete block as an accent feature on buildings and that 25% seems reasonable. He also pointed out that the ordinance gives the Commission the ability to waive or modify any of the standards.

Mr. Stevens opened the public hearing at 7:28. Seeing no one wishing to speak, Mr. Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:28.

Mr. Stevens said that he was concerned about the words “...and maintained” in paragraph 8.

Ms. Stachowiak said that it was to prevent someone from altering the structure in a manner that is inconsistent with the proposed standards after it is constructed and has been given its final approvals.

Mr. Morris said that it is unlikely that someone would alter a building that complies with the proposed standards in a manner that does not, such as putting a lot of stucco on the building.

The Commission agreed to remove the words “...and maintained” in paragraph 8.

Mr. Gute asked Mr. Mulder if there was support on the City Council for establishing architectural design standards.

Mr. Mulder said that he has not spoken with the other Council member individually about it but the standards are pretty basic and only apply to new buildings. He said that he is supportive of the proposed standards and he is the one that is usually the most concerned about imposing a lot of regulations on property owners.

Mr. Morris made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gute to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance establishing architectural design standards for commercial and office buildings. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (8-0).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Article XI, B-1 Highway Service District

Ms. Stachowiak said that the only proposed change to this section of the zoning ordinance is regulations on food trucks. She said that there is one on the Red Salamander property right now but she has had inquiries about having them on other properties as well. Ms. Stachowiak said that the City Administrator has suggested removing the words "...required parking space..." from paragraph (J)(2) on page 4. She said that even though it says "required" parking, we would not want someone to have to install new pavement to accommodate a food truck when we already have seas of parking that never get used and are there just to fulfill a parking requirement.

The Commission agreed to make the change suggested by the City Administrator.

Ms. Stachowiak asked Mr. VanDeCastele if prohibiting vending within 15 feet of a fire hydrant is adequate.

Mr. VanDeCastele said that 15 feet is adequate.

Ms. Stachowiak asked if "grey water" should be included in the ordinance as one of the things that cannot be disposed of onto or into public property, including drains.

Mr. Gute said that it should be included as grey water should not be disposed of into the City's drain system.

Ms. Stachowiak said that one of the requirements is that the food trucks must observe the required setbacks for permanent buildings in the "B-1" district.

Mr. Morris said that the food truck at the Red Salamander does not comply with the side yard setback as it appears to be right on the property line. He said that the truck seems to be in a good location on that site.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she believes that food trucks should not be allowed in a required front yard but projecting in a required side yard setback does not seem to be a problem. She said that she would revisit that requirement.

Mr. Salmon said that there needs to be additional restrictions if food vendors are going to be permitted to operate on a public sidewalk in the downtown.

Ms. Stachowiak said that this section would only permit food trucks in the "B-1" district which is Saginaw Highway and S. Clinton Streets.

Mr. Stevens asked about food vendors that are only on a particular site, including public parking lots, for a special event.

Ms. Stachowiak said that those are regulated under the Zoning Ordinance as temporary uses. She said that she would make the necessary changes to the ordinance and bring it back to the Commission at its next meeting.

2. Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Article XII: P, Parking District

Ms. Stachowiak said that there are no properties in the City zoned “P” Parking. She said that the changes she made to the ordinance are relatively minor but she is questioning why this section is even necessary. Ms. Stachowiak said that the “CBD” allows parking lots and therefore, the regulations contained in the “P” district could just be folded into the “CBD” section of the ordinance. She said that no property owner is going to request that their property be rezoned to the “P” district because it would not make sense for them to do so since the only use allowed in the “P” district is parking.

The Commission agreed to fold the language from the “P” Parking district into the “CBD” section of the ordinance.

Ms. Stachowiak said that she would make this change and bring it back to the Commission at its next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Zoning Administrator's Report

Ms. Stachowiak stated that O'Reilly Auto Parts is requesting a modification to its approved site plan relative to the location of the driveway and the elimination of the parking lot connection stub at the north property line. She said that the Commissioners have a copy of the plan that was approved and a copy of the plan with the proposed changes. Ms. Stachowiak said that she told the applicant that the changes were too dramatic for her to approve administratively but that she would discuss the changes with the Commission at this meeting and get back with him tomorrow. She stated that the Planning Commission has the authority under the Zoning Ordinance to require access from one parking lot/site to another to reduce the number of curb cuts on public streets.

Mr. Morris said that even though Charlevoix Drive is right in and right out, the proposed driveway location is still too close to that intersection and could cause problems.

Mr. Gute said that he does not have a problem with allowing parking in the connection stub to the north as long as it is understood that the parking will have to be removed when the site to the north develops so that the parking lots can be connected.

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Mr. Morris said that allowing them to use the parking lot connection for parking will make it difficult to get it removed when the property to the north develops.

Mr. Gute asked if Speedway was receptive to installing a driveway connection from its site to the O'Reilly property.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that they will not be installing that connection. She said that it would be a fairly drastic change to their site because of the grade change that occurs at the Speedway/O'Reilly property line and was not requested during the site plan review process for the Speedway property.

The Commission agreed to deny the proposed changes and inform the applicant that the property must be developed in accordance with the approved site plan.

Zoning Board of Appeals Representative's Report

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

Council Representative's Report

Mr. Mulder said that the Council is developing a plan to get the pending zoning ordinance amendments approved. He also said that the items that were forwarded to the Council at the December meeting have been approved.

Comments from Commissioner's - None

Comments from Chairman - None

Adjournment

Mr. Stevens adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Submitted By:

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator