

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
PLANNING-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF LOWELL, MICHIGAN**

For the Regular Meeting of the Planning-Citizen Advisory Commission October 22, 2007 at 7 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair LaPonsie and the Clerk called the Roll.

Present: Commissioners, Berry, Dimmick, Doyle, Hodges, Jahnke, Noall and Chair LaPonsie.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager David Pasquale, City Clerk Betty Morlock, and City Councilmember Jeanne Shores.

IT WAS MOVED BY DOYLE and seconded by DIMMICK to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of September 24, 2007 as corrected.

YEA: 7. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Commissioner Berry suggested Item 6 (B) (joint signage ordinance with Lowell Township) be removed until January, 2008.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by BERRY to approve the agenda as modified.

YEA: 7. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #2. **PUBLIC HEARING.**

A. **Master Plan – Presentation, Public Hearing and Consideration of Adoption.** Jim Breuckman of McKenna Associates provided a presentation on the proposed City Master Plan.

Community Survey Results:

- Ninety percent of respondents value the downtown area.
- Fifty percent of respondents thought it was important to concentrate on the West Side of Main Street.
- Ninety-two percent thought the downtown area was an important area and we should be concentrating our efforts on.
- Housing for seniors and affordable homes was the most desired housing style.
- Balanced development approach was preferred. This included a mixture of residential, retail, commercial, commerce and industry.

Breuckman presented a map from the Grand Valley Metro Council which was assembled for the regional perspective. Breuckman noted some of the issues the GVMC found to be important to the community include: promoting compact livable developments, centers with stores, jobs, institutions, public space, interconnected network of streets with small blocks, mixed housing types and having definite edges which indicate when leaving or entering a district.

When assembling a future land use plan, Breuckman took into consideration what presently exists today and what is likely and not likely to change. In order to implement this plan, the Zoning Ordinance will likely have to be amended in a few places. Ultimately, it comes down to a downtown centric plan.

Breuckman went on to review the land use categories.

Commissioner Berry commented on emphasizing walkability downtown. There is a problem with pedestrian street crossing. Is this included in part of the walk? Breuckman responded much of what goes into creating walkability has benefits because it slows down traffic.

Commissioner Doyle inquired regarding the construction at the west of town with all separate drives. Is it possible to make this area more walkable? Breuckman responded yes. This is another section within the Zoning Ordinance which needs to be reviewed.

Chairman LaPonsie suggested the issue of City Cable Television be removed from the draft plan.

Breuckman noted this is the first step of a 20 year process.

Pasquale mentioned there are funds in the budget for Breuckman to return to the Commission to answer further questions.

Dimmick stated he liked what the community and McKenna Associates has done. There needs to be much cooperation with the townships if the City is going to embark on some of the suggestions.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIMMICK and seconded by DOYLE to adopt the Master Plan as presented.

YEA: 7. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Pasquale suggested the City Council also review the Master Plan. Breuckman agreed to meet with the City Council on November 5, 2007.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIMMICK and seconded by JAHNKE to request City Council concurrence of the Master Plan.

YEA: 7. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #2. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. SITE PLAN REVIEW – None.

B. VARIANCES – RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – None.

Item #3. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ON GOING BUSINESS.**

A. Business recommendations for temporary signs – continued discussion. Rodger Garner of Good Chevrolet indicated he has had discussions regarding temporary signs with several businesses. It seems the more he talks with people the more they try to push less restrictions further. He noted businesses are in agreement with an annual bond.

City Manager Pasquale stated in general there was discussion regarding the signs being allowed for a maximum of 60 days and a bond on an annual basis. However, the bond would be waived for non profits, but still paying the application fee.

If the Planning Commission is interested in these changes an ordinance amendment can be established. Chair LaPonsie suggested a draft amendment be presented at the next meeting.

LaPonsie believed the language for allowing temporary signs and banners needed to be cleaned up. Currently, it does not state businesses are allowed to do this. She referred to Section 20.07.

Garner referred the last Chamber of Commerce meeting where there was discussion regarding what is being done to attract businesses and residents to Lowell. Everyone reviewed the Master Plan. However, without knowing the Planning Commission's thoughts and desires, it is difficult to figure out what the City needs and wants. Pasquale suggested Chamber representatives be present during the implementation meeting.

Commissioner Jahnke wanted the Master Plan available electronically and should be available on the City web site. Pasquale noted it already is.

B. Civil Infractions Ordinance. City Manager Pasquale stated he spoke with City Attorney Richard Wendt who indicated an ordinance needs to be in place. Therefore, the issue will be left on the agenda.

Item #4. **BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT.** Building Inspector Doug Hopkins was unable to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Berry questioned the issue mentioned at the last meeting involving a code issue at 402 Kent Street. City Manager Pasquale stated the issue would be mentioned to Hopkins.

Commissioner Jahnke commented on the balloons at Car City. Pasquale stated the business

received a 21 day permit. Jahnke mentioned the height of the balloons.

Item #5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS.** Scott McDowell of Rockford, Michigan is considering the purchase of the home at 610 E. Main Street. He wishes to turn the house into a window and siding business.

Currently the property is zoned R3 – Single Family Residential. City Manager Pasquale believed the entire block needs to be considered.

Chair LaPonsie stated he would not be changing the outside structure. Therefore, this use would fit into what is being considered in the Master Plan.

McDowell questioned the length of time before a recommendation would be made. Pasquale stated at least a few months.

Pasquale said the business would have to be noted as a special use within the R3 District. He suggested C3 zoning also be considered which is immediately west. Pasquale suggested the entire block be considered. Commissioner Jahnke proposed the Keisers lot also be included.

Pasquale believed McDowell would have to abide by the current zoning.

Jahnke suggested the issue be placed on the November 26, 2007 meeting agenda. This could be considered without a completed application from the potential property owner, if the Commission believes it fits. Pasquale noted the current zoning ordinance needs to be used at this point. A public hearing can be established for November 26, 2007 and would include the block as well as Keisers.

McDowell said the garage would be used for storage.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by NOALL to set a public hearing for November 26, 2007 for consideration of rezoning three lots within the 600 block on the south side of M21 along Main Street plus any and all lots which are consumed by Keisers from R3 (Multiple Family Residential) to C3 (General Business).

YEA: 7. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

McDowell questioned 126 N. Hudson. Pasquale stated this is zoned R3 and would be the same process.

Item #6. **COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS.** Commissioner Jahnke questioned Jim Breuckman of McKenna and Associates regarding the concept and how rezoning the 600 Block of E. Main would affect the area. Breuckman stated the City has a good future land use map which will be a valuable tool when rezoning requests are made. City Manager Pasquale indicated this is an interim step. If the property is zoned C3, there is nothing to say it can't be rezoned once the new master plan is adopted.

Commissioner Dimmick suggested the ordinance include a prohibition of flashing lights.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Maryalene LaPonsie, Chairman

Betty R. Morlock, City Clerk