

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

For the Regular Meeting of the Planning-Citizen Advisory Commission September 24, 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, DPW Director Dan DesJarden, and Building Inspector Doug Hopkins.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by BERRY to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of August 27, 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 eliminated until the Commission comes to a conclusion on the signage issue.

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. **Regulations of temporary storage units – recommendation to the City Council.** A proposed ordinance which regulates temporary storage units, such as one recently adopted in East Grand Rapids, was reviewed by the Commissioners at the last meeting. The ordinance provides limitations on size, location, number (1), security, conditions, length of time (30 days), and prohibition on occupancy and waste.

Commissioner Jahnke suggested the proposed text be changed 8'5" x 16'. This is the width which can be driven on the road.

Chair LaPonsie explained there are three companies who service the area. Go Mini's provide an 8 X 8 X 20 foot container box cart, 8 X 10 X 7 ½ and mobile mini's which are 8 x 20 foot. She suggested allowing a larger unit as long as it fits in the driveway. The storage company can determine how to deliver the unit.

Jahnke stated he did not wish to revisit the issue and have to change the ordinance if the units

are built larger in the future.

LaPonise found two companies who have 20 foot long containers and one company who has a 10 foot wide container.

Jahnke noted he would have no problem expanding the height to 10 feet.

City Manager Pasquale confirmed the Commission agreed to allowing the units to be 10 feet in height, 8'6" in width and 20' in length.

Commissioner Doyle questioned if the units had locks. LaPonsie responded most units have doors on the front with locks.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by DOYLE to recommend adoption of the ordinance to City Council regulating temporary storage units with the changes in dimensions to include 10' in height, 8' 6 " in width and 20' in length.

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

Item #3. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. SITE PLAN REVIEW – None.
- B. VARIANCES – RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – None.

Item #4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ON GOING BUSINESS.**

- A. Business recommendations for temporary signs – continued discussion. Commissioner Berry stated he has not spoken with Lowell Township. However, some changes have been discussed. Once these are determined, he will contact the township.

Chair LaPonsie questioned if additional information was provided from Rodger Garner of Good Chevrolet. City Clerk Morlock stated she spoke with him. However, no new information has been given.

LaPonsie suggested special event signs also be reviewed. It had been pointed out in Section 20.02 of the ordinance, special event signs are considered a temporary sign containing public messages, regarding special events sponsored by governmental agencies or non profit organizations. A permit for 21 days is required. Also, section 20.07 states "government signs not exceeding the size permitted by similar signs within the same zoning district". She explained one section refers to government signs being special event signs, while the other section refers to government signs being exempt. LaPonsie suggested this issue also be reviewed to determine which way is correct.

Commissioner Berry questioned the definition of government signs. Building Inspector Hopkins

responded page 2116 (Section 20.02 E) of the ordinance refers to government signs as temporary sign or permanent sign directed by City of Lowell, Kent County, State, or Federal Government. It also refers to political signs on page 2117 (Section 20.02 N) as a temporary sign used in connection with an official of the City of Lowell, school district, county, state or federal election or referendum.

LaPonsie believed this should be cleaned up. Currently, under Section 20.07 when referring to the use of balloons, strings, lights, pennants, streamers, banners, sidewalk and sandwich board signs, this should only be used to advertise special events, religious, state or national holidays. Currently, as written, it does not appear that businesses should be using these kinds of signs. Hopkins noted there was an amendment to the sandwich board signs several years ago for the C2 District, at which point the DDA requested the option to govern the location of these signs.

Commissioner Jahnke suggested eliminating the bond requirement for a non profit organizations. LaPonsie agreed and requested the issue be placed on the agenda for the October meeting.

Commissioner Doyle inquired regarding the banners which are placed across Main Street referring to such issues as kindergarten round up. What is the time limit and who takes care of these signs? Pasquale stated a permit is required through MDOT and does not fall under City jurisdiction.

- B. Master Plan Update. A public hearing on the Master Plan will be held by the Commission at the next meeting, Monday, October 22. Jim Breuckman of McKenna Associates will be present.

Item #5. **BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT.** Commissioner Doyle commented on Huntington Bank – West Town branch being completely torn down. Chair LaPonsie noted three outside walls are what remains of the building. Building Inspector Doug Hopkins stated the bank has kept the same basic footprint of the building. This is not all uncommon.

Commissioner Noall referred to the minutes from the last meeting when LaPonsie noted Noall was also concerned about the parked semi truck at Dollar General. LaPonsie explained Commissioner Dimmick is also concerned. If the Commissioners are interested, the issue can be placed on the next agenda and discussed further. Noall noted the semi truck appears to sit for great amounts of time. LaPonsie would have no problem requiring some sort of buffer in a residential area. She also noted the individual who originally complained about the issue stated he contacted the headquarters of Dollar General who indicated the truck is not supposed to sit all weekend. LaPonsie stated she would check to see if other cities have ordinances against this.

The Commission also referred to the gas station along Main Street which is deteriorating.

Commissioner Dimmick asked if Hopkins has heard anything from Lowell Raymor of 402 Kent (shed in violation of setback requirement). Hopkins stated the letter was received back unclaimed on August

22, 2007. Hopkins will do a follow up on this as well as the issue on Hunt Street. LaPonsie requested City Attorney Richard Wendt could provide an update next month on civil infractions.

Item #6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**. No comments were received.

Item #7. **COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**. Commissioner Noall thanked the Commissioners for excusing her absences. Her class is finally finished.

Chair LaPonsie questioned the lighting ordinance was still in progress. LaPonsie also commented on the Citizen Planner Classes. This is a good program and she would be in favor of continuing such classes.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIMMICK to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

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Maryalene LaPonsie, Chairman

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Betty R. Morlock, City Clerk