

PLANNING COMMISSION

November 4, 2010

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of November 4, 2010 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Five citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cory Bailes, Rick Bosch, Jim Pearson, Miko Dargitz, Wayne Stoffer, Bill Patterson, and Chairman James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Paul Welch and Mark Siegfried.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael West, Assistant City Planner and Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Planning Commission, staff and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the October 21, 2010 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Bailes, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the minutes as submitted. The minutes were unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan (re-approval): Fifth-Third Bank, 2610 East Centre Avenue. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated October 29, 2010 involving a site plan to construct an approximate 4,300 square foot bank building and associated site improvements. Mr. West indicated the site plan had been previously reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on May 21, 2009, November 19, 2009 and then again on May 6, 2010, however, construction had not yet commenced and the approval was scheduled to expire on November 6, 2010. Mr. West stated construction of the Fifth-Third Bank project has been delayed due to the construction schedule of the Centreport Commons infrastructure. Since the last re-approval (May 2010), construction of the Centreport Commons infrastructure has been completed and Mr. West indicated that Fifth-Third Bank is now ready to move forward with the project. Mr. West stated the site plan is being resubmitted for approval with no changes from the May 6, 2010 approval.

Mr. Craig Hondorp, Progressive AE, was present to support the plan. Mr. Hondorp stated that Fifth-Third Bank wants to keep the approval active and hopes to begin construction in 2011. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to re-approve the Site Plan for Fifth-Third Bank, 2610 East Centre Avenue. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Special Land Use Permit: Sackett's Fireplace, 7696 South Sprinkle Road. Mr. West introduced the item and summarized the staff report dated October 29, 2010 regarding the request by Mr. John Sackett, of Sackett's Fireplace, to establish a wholesale/retail outlet store within the Park Square Commons development located at 7696 South Sprinkle Road. Mr. West stated the applicant was proposing to establish a retail showroom, warehouse and offices in an approximate 3,700 square foot tenant space within the east 20,000 square foot building. Mr. West discussed the ordinance provisions for issuance of a special land use permit and indicated the proposal satisfies the criteria and was recommended for approval.

Mr. John Sackett (applicant, Sackett's Fireplace) was present to support the application. Chairman Cheesebro opened the public hearing. One citizen, Mr. Stanley Sackett (8201 Talaria Terrace, Kalamazoo, MI) spoke in support of the application citing a good synergy of uses between Sackett's Fireplace and the other uses in the Park Square Commons development and surrounding area. No additional citizens spoke during the public hearing. A motion was then made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bailes, to approve the Special Land Use Permit for Sackett's Fireplace, 7696 South Sprinkle Road. The motion was unanimously approved.

PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner Dargitz discussed traffic concerns expressed by the City of Kalamazoo during the 2008 review of the Valley Family Church - Kalamazoo (VFC-K) development at 2500 Vincent Avenue and asked whether an updated response has been received from the City of Kalamazoo. Mr. West indicated that the City of Portage has requested comments from the City of Kalamazoo, however, no response has yet been received. The Commission next discussed whether a formal written request from the Planning Commission should be drafted and sent to the City of Kalamazoo. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Dargitz asked that a copy of the staff letter to the City of Kalamazoo requesting comments be included with the final report.

Commissioner Stoffer asked whether additional information and an update on the noise complaints associated with the VFC-K development could be provided to the Commission. Mr. West stated that an update on the noise issue would be included with the final report. Mr. Stoffer also expressed concerns over whether the Commission has received adequate information from the adjacent neighbors regarding the VFC-K development and indicated the neighbors may not be comfortable coming forward with comments. Mr. West indicated the public hearing was noticed consistent with statutory requirements and in the same fashion as the original 2008 review and other special land use permits.

Chairman Cheesebro discussed the "No Right-Turn, Local Traffic Only" sign that was installed with the VFC-K project and a similar sign that was installed with the Walgreens development at the corner of South Westnedge Avenue and East Milham Avenue. Chairman Cheesebro asked if staff could include a discussion in the final report of this similarly installed Walgreens sign and whether or not there have been any issues or confusion with the sign.

Commissioner Stoffer asked if the Planning Commission would have extended the site plan approval for the Fifth-Third Bank project at 2610 East Centre Avenue to one year, instead of six month. Mr. West and Assistant City Attorney Bear discussed the specific ordinance provision and indicated that the Commission would not extend the length of approval beyond what was cited in the ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael West, AICP
Assistant City Planner