

## PLANNING COMMISSION

January 20, 2011

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of January 20, 2011 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Two citizens were in attendance.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Miko Dargitz, Wayne Stoffer, Rick Bosch, Paul Welch, Mark Siegfried, Bill Patterson, Allan Reiff, and Chairman James Cheesebro.

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None.

### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Jim Pearson.

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; 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 January 6, 2011 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the minutes as submitted. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **SITE/FINAL PLANS:**

None.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. Preliminary Report: Ordinance Amendment #10-B, Home Occupations. Mr. Forth summarized the January 14, 2011 staff report regarding the home occupation ordinance that was revised by City Council and referred back to the Planning Commission for review. Mr. Forth referred the Commission to the January 16, 2011 e-mail communication from Commissioner Pearson and stated the inconsistency regarding signage for active home occupations has been corrected. In regard to the suggestion from Commissioner Pearson to allow a one square foot sign for passive home occupations, Mr. Forth stated staff prefers to retain the current ordinance language that does not allow signage. Mr. Forth indicated that passive home occupations are intended to be low profile uses with no outside employees, generate no pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic beyond what is normal for the neighborhood and create no nuisances. Since passive home occupations are low intensity uses with no impact on surrounding residential uses, a permit is not required under the revised ordinance language referred by City Council.

The Commission and staff discussed various aspects of the revised ordinance including the differences between a passive and active home occupation, whether or not signage was necessary for a passive home occupation, use of swimming pools for instruction, Michigan Right-to-Farm Act and roadside fruit/vegetable stands and the use of accessory buildings for home occupations. Chairman Cheesebro opened the public hearing.

No citizens spoke during the public hearing. A motion was then made by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission discussed whether action on the ordinance amendment should be adjourned to the February 3, 2011 meeting or whether the second meeting should be waived and a recommendation to City Council developed. Commissioner Welch stated he does not believe signage should be permitted for passive home occupations. Commissioner Welch also suggested the Planning Commission should waive the second meeting and develop a recommendation given the amount of previous review/discussion by the Commission and lack of public comment at tonight's meeting. Commissioner Welch noted additional opportunities for public comment will be available during the City Council public hearing. Commissioner Dargitz stated she prefers additional discussion of signage for passive home occupations and suggested the public hearing be adjourned to the February 3, 2011 meeting. Commissioner Patterson noted a minor typographical error in the definition section. Mr. Forth indicated the error would be corrected. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to recommend to City Council approval of Ordinance Amendment #10-B, Home Occupations. The motion was unanimously approved.

**PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

7:45 p.m. – The Commission took a short recess.	7:50 p.m. – The Commission reconvened the meeting.
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**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Planning Commission Training: "Community Planning and the Commissioner". Mr. Forth discussed the continuing efforts of staff to provide the Commission with supplemental training regarding roles, responsibilities and duties. Mr. Forth reviewed a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Community Planning and the Commissioner." Mr. Forth provided a historical overview of community planning, reviewed State of Michigan legislation related to planning and zoning, discussed the differences between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance and summarized the primary duties of the Commission including development and implementation of the Master Plan, review/approval of site plans and special land use permits and review/recommendation of subdivisions, zoning ordinance text and map amendments and Capital Improvement Program.

**STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Forth, AICP  
Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services