

PLANNING COMMISSION

September 1, 2011

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of September 1, 2011 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. No citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Patterson, Mark Siegfried, Miko Dargitz, Jim Pearson, Paul Welch, Wayne Stoffer, and Chairman James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rick Bosch and Allan Reiff.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services and Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Cheesebro led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the August 18, 2011 meeting minutes. A motion was offered by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Final Report: Rezoning Application #10-03, 1302, 1306, 1316 and 1330 East Centre Avenue. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated August 26, 2011 and indicated staff is recommending 1302, 1306 and 1316 East Centre Avenue be rezoned to B-1, local business and 1330 East Centre Avenue be rezoned to OS-1, office service consistent the Comprehensive Plan designation and surrounding zoning/land use patterns.

Chairman Cheesebro asked if any Commissioners had questions for staff. Commissioner Dargitz asked if staff had considered a buffer area along the south end of the properties. Mr. Forth indicated staff did discuss the buffer issue but noted when the rezoning of 1414 and 1422 East Centre to office service was before City Council, which included a proposal to incorporate a buffer area along the south end, Council decided to rezone the property to office service without incorporating the buffer. Commissioner Dargitz also asked if it may be premature to rezone the property before the update of Comprehensive Plan is complete in 2013. Mr. Forth

indicated he did not believe the designation of this area would change following the update of the Comprehensive Plan based on surrounding land use and zoning patterns.

Chairman Cheesebro reconvened the public hearing. No one was present to speak in support or opposition. There being no further public comment, the public hearing was closed.

The Commission discussed the letter in the final agenda from the attorney representing the Miller estate that owns 1330 East Centre, which indicates a preference for local business zoning. Commissioner Patterson indicated he could support local business zoning. Commissioner Stoffer commented on the Comprehensive Plan designation for office within the East Centre Avenue corridor and existing areas of commercial zoning that are not consistent with the Plan designation. Commissioner Stoffer stated that a change to local business may result in an over expansion of the commercial zoning and preferred that 1316 and 1330 be rezoned to office since there is other commercial zoning in the area. Commissioner Welch concurred with the staff recommendation: Commercial zoning at the intersection of Lovers Lane and East Centre Avenue is appropriate with a transition to office further east. Commissioner Welch offered a motion to recommend to City Council that rezoning Application #10-3 be approved and 1302, 1306 and 1316 East Centre Avenue be rezoned from R-1B, one-family residential and OS-1, office service to B-1, local business and 1330 East Centre Avenue be rezoned from R-1B, one-family residential to OS-1, office service. The motion was supported by Commissioner Dargitz. Commissioner Dargitz asked if any of the other Commissioners would support a buffer area along the south end of the properties. Chairman Cheesebro noted the properties are heavily wooded. Chairman Cheesebro asked staff what the setback is for the office and local business districts. Mr. Forth stated the rear yard setback for both zoning districts is 20 feet. Commissioner Patterson stated an additional buffer area shouldn't be necessary based on the existing Zoning Code provisions intended to minimize impacts on adjacent residents. Commissioner Patterson noted that retaining the existing trees would be more effective. Mr. Forth noted there are provisions in the site plan review and landscape/screening sections of the Zoning Code that allow the Planning Commission to increase screening provisions if determined necessary. Commissioner Dargitz noted that the office and local business zoning districts were low intense commercial zones and with the ability to consider additional screening during the site plan review process, a buffer area shouldn't be necessary.

Chairman Cheesebro called for a vote on the motion. The motion was approved 6-1-0 with Commission Stoffer voting in opposition.

PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY2010-2011 Final Work Program Update and proposed FY2011-2012 Work Program. Mr. Forth indicated the Planning Commission was provided with a final update of the 2010-2011 Work Program and a copy of the proposed 2011-2012 Work Program. Commissioner Dargitz suggested also adding the consideration of environmental issues to Assigned Goals and Objectives No. 1. After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed to modify work item No. 1 to include consideration and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. There being no further discussion, a motion was offered by Commissioner Dargitz and supported by Welch that the Planning Commission adopt the 2011-2012 Work Program. The motion was unanimously approved.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Forth, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services