

PLANNING COMMISSION

December 1, 2011

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of December 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. Approximately 18 citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

None.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael West, Assistant City Planner and Randall Brown, City Attorney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Cheesebro led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

None.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Height Modification for Dicks Sporting Goods, 6355 South Westnedge Avenue. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated November 23, 2011 involving a request submitted by Dicks Sporting Goods to construct an architectural entry feature along the east side of the existing building located at 6355 South Westnedge Avenue to a height of 43.5 feet. Mr. West indicated the height modification request is being requested as part of the overall plan to redevelop the former Kmart building/site that has been vacant since 2009. Mr. West stated the proposed architectural feature involves 800 square feet, which is less than 1% of the total building footprint. Mr. West also indicated the proposed architectural feature is only slightly higher than the 35-foot building height standard established in the B-2 district and would be situated approximately 600-feet from South Westnedge Avenue, 200-feet from Gladys Street, 280-feet from the east property line and 380-feet from the nearest multiple family residential dwelling unit to the east. Given these site characteristics and consistent with other height modifications granted for other businesses in the South Westnedge Avenue corridor, Mr. West stated that staff was supportive of the request.

Mr. Edward Wade of Hershman Architects, Inc. (applicant representative) was present to speak in support of the height modification request. Mr. Wade indicated that Dicks Sporting Goods was excited about coming to Portage and would serve as a trigger for redevelopment in this area of the city. Chairman Cheesebro opened the public hearing. There being no public comment, a motion was offered by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to recommend to City Council that the Height Modification for Dick's Sporting Goods, 6355 South Westnedge Avenue, be approved to construct an architectural entry feature along the west side of the existing building to a height of 43.5 feet since the impacts are minimal due to the small area subject to the height modification in relation to the overall building and substantial setback distances from adjacent properties and public streets. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Preliminary Report: Tentative Plan Amendment – The Homestead Planned Development, 3821 West Milham Avenue. Commissioner Dargitz stated she would be abstaining from discussion and voting on this agenda item due to a personal acquaintance with the applicant, Mr. Patrick Lynch. Commissioner Stoffer also indicated he would be abstaining from discussion and voting on this agenda item since he lives within the 300-foot public notice distance from the subject property. Commissioner Reiff indicated he had a previous business relationship with Mr. Lynch over 20 years ago, however, would not be abstaining since he has no recent or present relationship that would impact his ability to render an impartial decision.

Mr. West summarized the staff report dated November 23, 2011 regarding the request by Mr. Patrick Lynch and American Village Development to amend the previously approved tentative plan for The Homestead Planned Development. Mr. West reviewed the original 2001 approved PD, planned development rezoning/tentative plan and the 2006 tentative plan amendment/final plan involving The Villas at Secret Gardens that was approved, however, never constructed. Mr. West summarized the proposed amendment that involves elimination of the attached residential condominiums, the addition of three single-family residential parcels along the north side of McGillicuddy Lane and reestablishment of the cottage offices along the northwest portion of the property, as previously shown and approved in 2001. Mr. West stated the tentative plan/narrative contained in the agenda packet was received late on Tuesday, November 22nd and staff was unable to provide a detailed review prior to finalization of the staff report. Mr. West indicated minor changes to the narrative and plan would be made prior to the final hearing. Finally, Mr. West discussed the need for the Historic District Commission to review and authorize the land divisions prior to Planning Commission final action on the tentative plan amendment; public street access from West Milham Avenue; and the recent installation of a sign at the south end of the pedestrian path from Arbutus Trail that prohibits non-Homestead residents from using the path.

Mr. Jack Gesmundo of American Village Development and Mr. Patrick Lynch were present to support the proposed tentative plan amendment. Mr. Gesmundo discussed the differences between the approved 2006 tentative plan amendment and the proposed 2011 tentative plan amendment. Mr. Gesmundo stated the amendment proposes to restore the cottage offices originally approved in 2001 and construct three additional single family residential home sites along the north side of McGillicuddy Lane that would visually and physically connect the residential portions of The Homestead. Mr. Gesmundo stated the review by the Historic District Commission was scheduled for December 7, 2011. Mr. Gesmundo briefly discussed the proposed public street access from West Milham Avenue and the pedestrian path sign and stated the few errors contained in the written narrative and tentative plan would be corrected and revised prior to the next Planning Commission meeting.

Chairman Cheesebro opened the public hearing. One citizen, Ms. Lee Berow (3608 Arbutus Trail), spoke in regards to the proposed tentative plan amendment. Ms. Berow expressed concerns about the recently installed "No Trespassing" sign at the trail from Arbutus Trail. Ms. Berow stated the path and neighborhood connection was required with the 2001 approval and her and many of her neighbors don't understand why the sign has now been installed. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed tentative plan amendment. A motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Reiff, to adjourn the public hearing for the Tentative Plan Amendment for The Homestead, 3821 West Milham Avenue, to the January 19, 2012 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michael West, AICP
Assistant City Planner