

PLANNING COMMISSION

May 3, 2012

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of May 3, 2012 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Approximately 12 citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Miko Dargitz.

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:

Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the April 19, 2012 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was offered by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Prairie Edge Christian Reformed Church, 9316 Oakland Drive (Parking plan and request to exceed maximum parking requirement). Mr. West summarized the staff report dated April 27, 2012 regarding a request by Prairie Edge Christian Reformed Church (Prairie Edge) to approve a parking plan that exceeds the maximum number of parking spaces allowed. Mr. West indicated that Prairie Edge was requesting to increase the current number of existing parking spaces from 125 to 164. Mr. West reviewed the documentation provided by Prairie Edge in support of the parking request. Based on the information provided by Prairie Edge, Mr. West stated the additional 39 parking spaces are necessary for the use and will not adversely impact the subject property, surrounding properties or related natural features.

Mr. Dave Broekema, representing Prairie Edge, was present to support the application. Mr. Broekema discussed the sanctuary attendance, vehicular patterns and the demographics of Prairie Edge and indicated the additional parking spaces would address parking shortages that have occurred over the past couple years. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to approve the parking plan and request to exceed the maximum number of off-street parking spaces for Prairie Edge Christian Reformed Church, 9316 Oakland Drive, with a finding that the additional parking is necessary based on documented evidence provided by the applicant. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application #11-04 (expanded), East Centre Avenue between Lakewood Drive and Garden Lane. Mr. West summarized the preliminary staff report dated April 27, 2012 regarding the expanded rezoning consideration of several properties located along the north side of East Centre Avenue, between Lakewood Drive and Garden Lane. Mr. West discussed the original application that was received from owners of six properties and the Planning Commission decision of April 5, 2012 to expand the rezoning application to consider four additional properties located within this section of East Centre Avenue. Mr. West stated a zoning change from R-1A, one family residential and R-1B, one family residential to OS-1, office service was being considered. Mr. West indicated the four additional property owners that were included in the expanded rezoning consideration were personally contacted by the Department of Community Development to further explain the proposed zoning change. However, Mr. West stated the individuals contacted have not yet expressed support or opposition to the proposed zoning change. Mr. West next reviewed the Comprehensive Plan designations for the subject properties, surrounding land use/zoning pattern and suitability of the current R-1A and R-1 B zones and proposed OS-1 zone.

Mr. Thomas Rogers, applicant and owner of 775 and 801 East Centre Avenue, was present to support the rezoning application. Commissioner Stoffer discussed the Future Land Use Map designation for this area and how the southern portion of the long, narrow parcels are designated for office, while the northern portions are designated for low density residential. Commissioner Stoffer asked whether Mr. Rogers was requesting the entire parcel be rezoned to OS-1. Mr. Rogers stated he and the other applicants were requesting the entire depth of the parcels be rezoned to OS-1. Mr. Rogers indicated the long, narrow nature of these parcels will likely require combination of one or more parcels for office redevelopment. Mr. Rogers indicated a split zoning arrangement for these long, narrow parcels would complicate future redevelopment and likely render the rear portion of these parcels with no practical use.

The public hearing was opened by Chairman Cheesebro. Two citizens (Craig Binder, 743 East Centre Avenue and Brian Mahoney, 7911 Lakewood Drive) were present and spoke in regards to the proposed rezoning. Mr. Binder stated he had no opinion regarding a possible rezoning of his parcel, however, stated the Commission should consider the depth of OS-1 zoning for the long narrow parcels to the east. Mr. Mahoney also expressed concerns about the depth of any OS-1 rezoning for the long narrow parcels and suggested that the northern portions were retained in the R-1A zone to preserve trees and limit the intrusion into the neighborhood. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning. A motion was then made by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to adjourn Rezoning Application#11-04 (expanded), East Centre Avenue between Lakewood Drive and Garden Lane, to the May 17, 2012 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application #11-05, 7812, 7840, 7842 and 7908 (portion thereof) Portage Road. Chairman Cheesebro stated he would be abstaining from discussion and voting on this rezoning request since his employer was one of the applicants. Commissioner Stoffer also indicated he would be abstaining from discussion and voting on this rezoning request due to a personal relationship with one of the neighboring property owners to the west. Both Chairman Cheesebro and Commissioner Stoffer left Council Chambers for the duration of the discussion. Mr. West summarized the preliminary staff report dated April 27, 2012 regarding a request received from the owners of 7812, 7840, 7842 and 7908 (portion thereof) Portage Road from B-2, community business and I-1, light industry to B-3, general business and P-1, vehicular parking. Mr. West stated the rezoning was being requested, in part, to facilitate construction of a micro-brewery and restaurant at 7842 and 7908 Portage Road. Mr. West discussed the Future Land Use Map designation, surrounding land use/zoning pattern, differences between the B-2 and B-3 zones, suitability of the existing B-2 and I-1 zones and the potential impacts of the proposed B-3 and P-1 zones.

Mr. Joe Stoddard (son of Michael Stoddard, applicant) was present to support the rezoning request and explain his plans to redevelop 7842 Portage Road and construct a micro-brewery/restaurant at this location. Mr. Stoddard indicated a portion of the Consumers Energy Company property located to the south (7908 Portage Road) would also be used for vehicular parking. Mr. Stoddard stated the proposed micro-brewery/restaurant would add 50 new jobs to the City and hopefully provide an economic boost to the area. Mr. Stoddard indicated the existing house and garage would be demolished and a new building would be constructed for the micro-brewery/restaurant. Mr. Stoddard stated he has approached many of the adjacent property owners to discuss the project and address any concerns and has not encountered any objections to the rezoning. Mr. Stoddard reviewed preliminary site development plans and indicated the micro-brewery/restaurant was not intended to be a late night establishment.

The public hearing was then opened by Vice-Chairman Welch. One citizen, John Logan, 2215 East Centre Avenue (formerly addressed as 7891 Engle Court) spoke in regards to the proposed rezoning. Mr. Logan stated he was not opposed to the rezoning request, however, he and his neighbor, Jake Elzinga, 2217 East Centre Avenue (formerly addressed as 7905 Engle Court) wanted to protect their properties and had questions regarding the proposed micro-brewery/restaurant. Mr. Logan stated that vehicles, on occasion, drive from the parking lot at 7842 Portage Road, across the Consumers Energy Company property, to Engle Court. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning. A motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Felicijan, to adjourn Rezoning Application#11-05, 7812, 7840, 7842 and 7908 (portion thereof) Portage Road, to the May 17, 2012 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Modified Active Home Occupation Permit: Arrow Car Service, 3617 Wedgewood Drive – four month review. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated April 27, 2012 regarding the four month review of the Modified Active Home Occupation Permit that was approved for Arrow Car Service, 3617 Wedgewood Drive, on January 5, 2012. During the four month review period, Mr. West stated the Department of Community Development has conducted over 30 site inspections for purposes of determining compliance with the conditions of approval. Mr. West indicated no documented evidence of noncompliance was discovered during these inspections and also stated no citizen complaints have been received during this four month review period. Mr. West reviewed the Planning Commission conditions of approval and provided a summary of compliance based on the information provided by the applicant, inspections conducted by staff and the lack of citizen complaints.

The public hearing was convened by Chairman Cheesebro. No citizens spoke regarding the four month review of the active home occupation permit application. A motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Welch, to conclude the four-month review of the Modified Active Home Occupation Permit for Arrow Car Service, 3617 Wedgewood Drive, with no additional modifications to the conditions that were attached to the original January 5, 2012 approval with the exception of condition #5 (applicant no longer needs to provide the Department of Community Development copies of the daily run on a monthly basis). The motion was unanimously approved.

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 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael K. West, AICP
Assistant City Planner