

PLANNING COMMISSION

March 15, 2012

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of March 15, 2012 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Four citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Patterson, Wayne Stoffer, Rick Bosch, Miko Dargitz, Dave Felicijan and Chairman James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Allan Reiff, Mark Siegfried and Paul Welch.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services; 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 March 1, 2012 meeting minutes. A motion was offered by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Final Plan for Alkhamis Financial, 7900 Kirkland Court. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated March 9, 2012 involving a final plan submitted by Walt Hansen, on behalf of Alkhamis Financial, to construct an approximate 4,200 square foot professional office building and associated site improvements. Mr. West stated the 1.2 acre site is zoned PD, planned development and located within Woodbridge Hills in an area designated for office use. Mr. West discussed the existing natural screening that was present along the eastern portion of the property (double row of evergreen trees and scattered deciduous trees) and indicated this screening will be preserved. Mr. West stated the final plan is consistent with the approved tentative plan for the Woodbridge Hills planned development.

Mr. Walt Hansen (Hansen Building & Design Corporation) was present to support and explain the office development project. No citizens spoke in regard to the development project. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to recommend to City Council that the Final Plan for Alkhamis Financial, 7900 Kirkland Court, be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Tentative Plan Amendment (Oakland Hills at Centre PD), 2275, 2301 and 2401 West Centre Avenue and 8080 Oakland Drive. Mr. West referred the Commission to the March 8, 2012 correspondence from Mr. Greg Dobson, American Village Development II, LLC, requesting the public hearing for the tentative plan amendment be adjourned to the April 19, 2012 meeting. Mr. West indicated the adjournment was being requested by the applicant to allow additional time to complete discussions with the neighboring property owner to the north and to more fully develop the mono-pine tower proposal. A motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to adjourn the public hearing for the Tentative Plan Amendment for the Oakland Hills at Centre Planned Development to the April 19, 2012 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application #11-03, Romence Road Parkway Corridor. Mr. Forth summarized the preliminary staff report dated March 9, 2012 regarding the Planning Commission initiated rezoning consideration of several properties located along the north and south sides of Romence Road Parkway, between Lovers Lane and Portage Road. Mr. Forth discussed the Planning Commission initial review of the Romence Road Parkway Corridor Study during the February 2, 2012 meeting and the proposed zoning change from I-2, heavy industry and R-1B, one family residential to OTR, office technology and research. Mr. Forth stated the property owners whose land is being considered for rezoning were personally contacted to further explain the proposed zoning change. Although none of the affected property owners provided written comments, Mr. Forth indicated the owner of 1901 Romence Road Parkway did not object to the proposed OTR zoning. Mr. Forth stated the Pfizer representative did not object to OTR zoning for Pfizer properties located on the north side of Romence Road Parkway but asked that the current I-2 zoning for properties located on the south side of Romence Road Parkway (7000 Portage Road and 7005 Lovers Lane) be retained. Mr. Forth indicated the other property owners also did not object to a zoning change but preferred the alternative OS-1, office service district given the small parcel size and OTR minimum project area and setback standards. Mr. Forth summarized the Research & Development/Technology Future Land Use Plan designation, the corresponding OTR, Office Technology and Research zoning district and potential impacts associated with an OTR rezoning. Commissioner Dargitz asked whether the Pfizer representative provided a reason why they did not want the zoning changed on the south side of Romence Road Parkway. Mr. Forth indicated that a specific reason was not provided.

The public hearing was opened by Chairman Cheesebro. Two citizens (Chad Learned, 6813 Gertrude Drive and Phil Merchant, 6822 Gertrude Drive) were present and spoke in regards to the proposed rezoning. Mr. Learned and Mr. Merchant expressed concerns about future development on the 1901 Romence Road Parkway property, whether vehicular access would be allowed to Gertrude Drive and whether the R-1B zoned strip along the northwest portion the 1901 Romence Road Parkway would be rezoned. Mr. Forth indicated that future development involving 1901 Romence Road Parkway would not be permitted access to Gertrude Drive to the north and retention of the existing R-1B zoned land located in the northwest portion of the property as a buffer area was previously discussed by the Commission. Mr. Forth also reviewed building setback requirements for any future development in the OTR district and the OTR review/approval process. Mr. Learned requested that the existing R-1B zoned area be retained and the mature tree line along the south side of Kromdyke also be preserved with any future development plans. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning.

The Commission discussed the two Pfizer owned properties along the south side of Romence Road Parkway and possible impacts if these properties were rezoned to OTR. Mr. Forth indicated that during development of the Research, Development and Technology Comprehensive Plan designation and OTR zoning district, Pharmacia (now Pfizer) representatives requested that pharmaceutical manufacturing be included in the descriptions. As a result, pharmaceutical manufacturing is permitted in either the I-2 or OTR districts. After additional discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz,

to adjourn Rezoning Application#11-03, Romence Road Parkway Corridor, to the April 5, 2012 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

7:30 p.m. – The Commission took a short recess. 7:35 p.m. – The Commission reconvened the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. 2012-2022 Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Forth and the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the March 15, 2012 staff memo that provided responses to Commissioner questions regarding the FY 2012-2022 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Mr. Forth explained the Vincent Drive/Oakland Drive realignment project planned for FY 2021-2022 and the use of general funds to address CIP debt. The Commission reviewed each category of the CIP with emphasis on the FY 2012-2013 budget year:

- Program Overview – The Commission did not have any further questions or comments regarding this category.
- Streets – The Commission did not have any further questions regarding this category.
- Sidewalks/Bikeways – Commissioner Dargitz noted the lack of funding for future sidewalk extensions in the CIP. Mr. Forth indicated that previous CIPs have included sidewalk projects and the majority of the major thoroughfares in the city have sidewalks on at least one side of the street.
- Water – The Commission did not have any further questions or comments regarding this category.
- Sanitary Sewer – The Commission did not have any questions or comments regarding this category.
- Police Category – Commissioner Dargitz asked whether the protective vests, identified in last year’s CIP, were purchased for the Police Department. Mr. Forth stated the vests were recently purchased.
- Fire Category – The Commission did not have any further questions or comments regarding this category.
- Public Facilities Category – The Commission discussed the Information Systems Improvements project in the current CIP and what items were purchased last fiscal year.
- Parks & Recreation Category – The Commission discussed the Eliason Nature Reserve Development project. Mr. Forth indicated the land was donated by the Eliason Family and a master plan will be developed for future park improvements. The Commission also discussed the Dog Park Development project and whether it was still necessary given the construction of other public and private dog parks in the surrounding area.
- Debt Services Category – The Commission did not have any further questions or comments regarding this category.

Chairman Cheesebro noted the City Administration has continued a conservative approach with CIP projects and debt reduction. After additional discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to recommend to City Council that the FY 2012-2022 CIP be approved (FY 2012-2013 budget year and remaining nine-year planning projects). The motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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