

PLANNING COMMISSION

September 20, 2012

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of September 20, 2012 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Three citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Stoffer, Bill Patterson, Dave Felicijan, Rick Bosch, Miko Dargitz, David Artley, Allan Reiff and James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

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 September 6, 2012 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. Commissioner Dargitz indicated she would be abstaining from voting since she was not present at this meeting. A motion was offered by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Felicijan, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was approved 7-0-1.

Chairman Cheesebro introduced and welcomed new Planning Commissioner David Artley.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1 Height Modification: Mueller Plastics (silos), 6700 South Sprinkle Road. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated September 14, 2012 regarding a height modification request for approval of three existing silos and two proposed silos up to a height of 60-feet. Mr. Forth stated the three existing silos at the site were installed sometime during the 1980s, prior to Mueller Plastics acquiring the property, without the necessary height modification approval. Mr. Forth indicated these three silos are 50-feet in height (with a 3.5 foot safety railing on top), while the two proposed silos are 60-feet in height (also with a 3.5 foot safety railing on top). Mr. Forth discussed the proposed setback distances of the silos from adjacent property lines and the land use and zoning of adjacent parcels.

Mr. Bob Goodheart of Pathfinder Engineering and Mr. Brendan Caffrey of Mueller Plastics were present to support the application. The public hearing was opened by Chairman Cheesebro. No citizens spoke in regard to the proposed height modification. A motion was then made by Commissioner Artley, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved. After a brief

discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to recommend to City Council that the Height Modification for Mueller Plastics, 6700 South Sprinkle Road, be approved to allow three existing 50-foot tall silos and construction of two new 60-foot tall silos. The location of the silos in relation to the existing manufacturing building and distance from property lines mitigate potential adverse impacts on surrounding properties and land uses consistent with the Zoning Code provisions. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan: Portage Brewing Company, 7842 and 7908 (portion thereof) Portage Road. Chairman Cheesebro stated he would be abstaining from discussion and voting on this agenda item due to a conflict of interest.

Mr. West summarized the staff report dated September 14, 2012 regarding a request by Mike and Ruth Stoddard to construct an approximate 9,700 square foot micro-brewery/restaurant and associated site improvements. Mr. West stated the applicant has a purchase agreement pending with the current owner of 7842 Portage Road and has recently secured a license agreement with Consumers Energy Company to use a portion of 7908 Portage Road for "vehicle parking and lawn area." Mr. West also indicated that the applicant was in the process of acquiring a 5-foot strip of land from the adjacent property to the north (7840 Portage Road) to accommodate the required setback for the proposed micro-brewery/restaurant building. In conjunction with the site plan review, Mr. West indicated the applicant is also requesting approval to exceed the maximum parking provision of the Zoning Code: A total of 100 parking spaces are proposed. Mr. West stated the applicant has submitted written documentation in support of these additional parking spaces. Mr. West also summarized the applicant's request to defer sidewalk installation along the Portage Road frontage until sidewalks are installed on adjacent property. Mr. West reviewed the sidewalks that exist along East Centre Avenue and Portage Road south of East Centre and the number of people who either live or work in the area that may choose to walk to the Portage Brewing Company. Given the surrounding area characteristics, Mr. West indicated that staff believes installation of sidewalk along the Portage Road frontage was appropriate with the development project.

The applicant, Mr. Mike Stoddard, was present to support the site plan and explain the request to exceed the maximum parking provision of the ordinance and the requested sidewalk deferment. Mr. Stoddard stated the sidewalk installation would cost approximately \$5,000 and he believes most of the patronage of the micro-brewery/restaurant will occur by people driving to the location. The Commission, Mr. Stoddard and staff discussed various aspects of the development project including parking, planned outdoor seating area, sidewalk installation and the staff recommended conditions of approval.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the Site Plan for Portage Brewing Company, 7842 and 7908 (portion thereof) Portage Road, subject to the following conditions: 1) Administrative review and approval of a lot line adjustment application for 5-foot strip of land proposed to be transferred from 7840 Portage Road to 7842 Portage Road; 2) Approval of the request to exceed the maximum parking requirement for the use and allow construction of 100 total parking spaces based upon documented evidence provided by the applicant that the additional parking is necessary and will not adversely impact the subject property, surrounding properties or related natural features; 3) Installation of a 6-foot tall screening fence and deciduous tree plantings (minimum 2½ inch caliper, 30-foot on-center) or a staggered row of 6-8 foot tall evergreen trees spaced ten feet on-center along the western portion of 7842 Portage Road; and 4) Installation of a 5-foot wide concrete sidewalk along the full frontage (7842 and 7908 Portage Road) of the zoning lot. The motion was subsequently approved 7-0-1 with Chairman Cheesebro abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. City of Portage 50th Anniversary Celebration. Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the draft memo to City Council that was included in the agenda packet and asked if Commissioners had any additional ideas or suggestions for the upcoming City of Portage 50th Anniversary celebration. Commissioner Dargitz reviewed her suggestions that were included in the draft memo. Commissioner Felicijan indicated a school contest or competition such as a “quiz bowl” would be an excellent way of educating school children of the history of Portage. Commissioner Artley stated that Portage has a large senior citizen population with a living history/knowledge of the city and suggested involvement of these senior citizens in the 50th Anniversary celebration. The Commission next discussed how stories and experiences of these senior citizens could be captured through written narratives or oral recordings for future generations to enjoy. Commissioner Stoffer suggested a smaller version of an “art prize” type contest or competition to help capture the history of Portage. After additional discussion, Mr. Forth indicated the draft memo would be modified with additional Planning Commission ideas and suggestions and forwarded to City Council.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher T. Forth, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services