

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

**May 16, 2013**

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of May 16, 2013 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. One citizens was in attendance.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None.

### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Paul Welch and Dave Artley.

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services; Michael West, Assistant City Planner and Randy 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 May 2, 2013 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was offered by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **SITE/FINAL PLANS:**

1. Portage Brewing Company, 7842 and 7908 Portage Road – sidewalk deferment. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated May 9, 2013 and discussed the previous site plan conditions of approval including the requirement for installation of a 5-foot wide concrete sidewalk along the full frontage of Portage Road. After the September 2012 site plan approval and as part of the preparation of the FY 2013-2023 Capital Improvement Program, Mr. Forth indicated that a major street reconstruction project was identified for Portage Road, from East Centre Avenue to East Milham Avenue. Mr. Forth stated the roadway project is scheduled for FY 2017-2018 and will include widening of Portage Road to accommodate a left-hand turn lane from East Centre Avenue to the Zoetis driveway. Mr. Forth indicated the widening of the roadway will impact public improvements located in the right-of-way, including the sidewalk. While detailed engineering plans have not yet been prepared for this project, Mr. Forth stated it is likely an easement will be needed for the sidewalk installation adjacent to the Portage Brewing Company site. Mr. Forth indicated the owners of the Portage Brewing Company are aware of this future roadway construction project, support deferring installation of the sidewalk and will work with the city during the roadway project engineering design phase.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Reiff, to amend the previously approved site plan for Portage Brewing Company, 7842 and 7908 Portage

Road, to not require installation of the sidewalk at this time, but instead be coordinated with the Portage Road reconstruction project scheduled to occur during FY 2017-2018. The motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Reschedule – July 4, 2013 regular meeting. Chairman Cheesebro discussed the regular meeting scheduled for July 4<sup>th</sup> and asked what the preference and availability of the Commission was regarding canceling and/or rescheduling this meeting. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Reiff, to move the July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to July 11<sup>th</sup>. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Proclamation for Chairman Cheesebro. Secretary Stoffer indicated this was Chairman Cheesebro's last meeting and read a proclamation to Chairman Cheesebro recognizing his 9+ years of service to the Planning Commission. Chairman Cheesebro thanked his fellow Commissioners, staff and Attorney Brown for all their support, contributions and friendship over the years.

7:15pm - The Commission took a short recess.

7:20pm - The Commission reconvened the meeting in City Hall Conference Room No. 1

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. City of Portage 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Recognition of Portage Businesses. Mr. Forth referred the Commission to a draft communication and information prepared by Commissioner Dargitz regarding the Passbook promotion for area businesses. Mr. Forth indicated that Commissioner Dargitz has done a tremendous amount of work on the Passbook; however, full Commission understanding of the level of involvement was necessary in order to ensure success of the program. Commissioner Dargitz explained her intent for the Passbook and how she envisioned it being implemented. Commissioner Dargitz stated she was still hoping that the details of the Passbook could be worked out by the Commission so that a general article could be included in the June edition of the Portager. Mr. Forth reviewed issues and concerns identified by staff regarding how the Passbook concept would be implemented including the need for full Commission participation, business inclusion, promotion and advertising, monthly prize drawings vs one prize drawing, Passbook details, raffle drawing and prize distribution. Commissioner Dargitz elaborated on concerns and questions identified by staff and the Commission discussed various issues and details. The Commission concurred that the Passbook should be open to all businesses and no purchase was necessary for a citizen to participate. The Commission discussed other issues including where and how to make the Passbook available, how individual businesses would confirm a visit (stamp, sticker, signature, etc), developing a FAQ sheet with answers to commonly asked questions, monthly update of the Passbook on the city website, size of the Passbook and whether or not to identify businesses by geographic area of the city.

Attorney Brown provided advice in three specific areas of concern: 1) Equal protection, 2) Constitutional provisions, and 3) Use of the city web site. Attorney Brown indicated that all interested businesses should be allowed to participate in the Passbook promotion regardless of business type and/or affiliations. Attorney Brown also indicated that public money could not be used to promote or advertise private businesses. Finally, Attorney Brown stated that no links to specific businesses should be placed on the city web site and the Passbook should only include a generic listing of participating businesses with no special highlighting or emphasis. Attorney Brown and Mr. Forth both expressed the importance of keeping the Passbook concept simple and to finalize operational details before making the Passbook public. For simplicity purposes, Mr. Forth suggested additional Commission discussion of a single drawing, as opposed to several monthly

drawings. Commissioner Felicijan asked if staff would be available to be the contact for citizen and business owner questions. Attorney Brown stated that the City Administration should not be involved in the implementation of the Passbook promotion.

The Commission next discussed advertising ideas for the Passbook including the Portager and Kalamazoo Gazette, along with utilizing other volunteer organizations to assist with the promotion. Commissioner Dargitz stated she would like to begin monthly drawings in June, or July at the latest. Commissioner Bosch and Chairman Cheesebro expressed some concern about monthly drawings and suggested maybe two drawings, one in September and one in December. Commissioner Dargitz stated she believes monthly drawings are necessary to keep momentum going and discussed how monthly Passbooks could be easily updated through use of the city website. The Commission discussed whether or not to divide the businesses into geographic area and whether to reduce the number of businesses that need to be visited each month. Commissioner Dargitz indicated that she believes dividing the Passbook into geographic areas would encourage citizens to visit businesses that are outside of their normal shopping area.

Commissioner Dargitz stated that staff has been extremely helpful in this process; however, believes City Council has given the Commission little direction or resources to implement the Passbook concept. Mr. Forth discussed the need to flush out all operational details of the Passbook before promoting the concept on the website and in the Portager and/or Kalamazoo Gazette. Mr. Forth stated the Passbook was an idea of the entire Commission and all Commissioners need to fully understand the level of involvement and support the program. Likewise, Mr. Forth indicated that City Council also needs to fully understand the Passbook proposal in anticipation of questions from citizens and businesses should the Passbook come to fruition. Commissioner Dargitz indicated it was unclear to her whether City Council simply wants to be informed of the Passbook details, or reviews and approves the proposal. Commissioner Bosch concurred that direction on the process has been unclear, and it was unfair to assume that the Planning Commission could do everything in regard to this Passbook idea without some assistance. Mr. Forth again expressed the importance of finalizing all the operational details of the Passbook, advise City Council and suggested the Commission step back from the expectation that the program must be launched in June/July and consider a more reasonable launch date. Once the details have been finalized, Mr. West stated the Passbook could be launched with the September edition of the Portager and there could be four months of participation including the holiday shopping season.

After additional discussion, the Commission concurred that the subcommittee (Commissioners Dargitz, Stoffer and Felicijan) would meet next week to finalize Passbook details and then present the information to the full Commission for further review and discussion at a special meeting the last week in May, possibly May 30<sup>th</sup>. With the concurrence of the full Commission and if the Passbook was ready, Mr. Forth indicated that the information may then be conveyed to City Council for review at the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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