

PLANNING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

May 30, 2013

The City of Portage Planning Commission special meeting of May 30, 2013 was called to order by Chairman Cheesebro at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Two citizens were in attendance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Patterson, Paul Welch, Miko Dargitz, Allan Reiff, Dave Felicijan and James Cheesebro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Wayne Stoffer, Rick Bosch and Dave Artley.

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the May 16, 2013 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was offered by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

1. City of Portage 50th Anniversary Celebration – Recognition of Portage Businesses. Chairman Cheesebro referred the Commission to the May 30, 2013 draft memo and other passbook related information prepared by the subcommittee and included in the final agenda materials. Commissioner Welch complimented Commissioner Dargitz and Commissioner Felicijan on their hard work and efforts on the passbook, however, stated he believes the proposal is still too complicated and needs to be simplified in order for the Planning Commission to successfully implement the program, especially without staff assistance or funding. Commissioner Welch suggested reducing the number of drawings and making other changes/clarifications to simplify the program and reduce the work load on the Commission. Commissioner Welch indicated that given his work and family commitments, he would not be available to assist in the implementation of the passbook program. Commissioner Dargitz stated it was her thought that the subcommittee members (herself,

Commissioner Felicijan and Commissioner Stoffer) would be the primary people implementing the program and expressed her belief that the passbook program needs to be launched as soon as possible in order to capture the summer season. Commissioner Dargitz indicated she views the passbook as a “win-win” for local businesses regardless of the level of success that may result and indicated issues/concerns that may arise during the implementation of the program could be addressed as they occur. Commissioner Welch disagreed and stated the importance of addressing the operational aspects of the program and trying to anticipate questions and issues before the program is launched. Commissioner Reiff stated he agrees with Commissioner Welch that the passbook program needs to be simplified and operational issues addressed before launching the program. Commissioner Felicijan stated that he believes the recommendations outlined in the staff report, particularly Item 1, would actually make the program more complicated and result in more work for the Planning Commission. Additional discussion ensued regarding the passbook program.

Commissioner Felijican and Commissioner Dargitz expressed continued frustration, the decision of City Council not to allocate staff resources or funding and the expectation that the Planning Commission would be able to manage and implement the program, and now the City Administration’s desire to control the details of the program. Commissioner Dargitz indicated that staff has been extremely helpful in the process, however, the City Administration now appears to want to direct how the program should be designed and implemented. Commissioner Felicijan agreed and indicated the direction from City Council has been unclear and confusing from the beginning. Commissioner Dargitz and Commissioner Felicijan stated they believed the passbook program was the Commission’s idea to design and implement as the Commission desired. Mr. West discussed the December 2012 Planning Commission memo to City Council that indicated a report would be provided to City Council once specific details of the passbook program were finalized, along with the March 2013 Commission discussion that a draft communication to City Council would be prepared and provided to the full Commission for review. Mr. West indicated a draft version of the passbook program was not reviewed by the full Commission until the May 16th meeting and the revised materials included in the May 30th final agenda packet were provided earlier this afternoon. Mr. West again expressed the importance of addressing operational issues of the passbook, having the full Commission understanding and concurrence of the program and the need to convey the information to City Council for review/comment before launching the program to the public. Mr. West indicated there was still plenty of time to accomplish these important items and simply adjust the program launch date to correspond with the September edition of the *Portager*. Mr. West indicated a later program launch date would still capture the last quarter of the year and the holiday shopping season. Commissioner Dargitz and Commissioner Felicijan disagreed and expressed the importance of launching the program sooner, rather than later. Commissioner Dargitz and Commissioner Felicijan indicated they believe the idea/concept outlined in the May 30th draft memo is simpler and less complicated than the suggestions outlined in the staff report. Commissioner Patterson and Commissioner Welch agreed that a September launch date for the program appears to be the most realistic option.

After additional discussion which included the subcommittee intent that the other Planning Commission members would not be required to visit 10-20 businesses as suggested by staff and the desire to launch the passbook program in July and not September due to the start of the Comprehensive Plan update, a motion was made by Commissioner Reiff, seconded by Commissioner Felicijan, to forward the Planning Commission proposal for the passbook program (as presented in the May 30, 2013 materials submitted by the subcommittee) to City Council with a request to proceed as proposed with a July launch date. However and if an alternative version of the passbook program or an alternative launch date was desired by City Council, the Planning Commission would be unable to implement the program. The motion included a stipulation that if authorized by City Council, the passbook materials would be subject to final legal review by Attorney Brown. The motion was unanimously approved 6-0. The Commission requested the memo and passbook materials be forwarded to City Council for inclusion on the June 11, 2013 agenda.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael K. West, AICP
Assistant City Planner