

PLANNING COMMISSION

November 6, 2014

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of November 6, 2014 was called to order by Vice-Chairman Felicijan at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Approximately 12 citizens were in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Vice-Chairman Felicijan led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services; Michael West, Senior City Planner; and Randy Brown, City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Forth called the role and the following Commissioners were present: Patterson, Felicijan, Dargitz, Somers and Stoffer. Vice-Chairman Felicijan indicated he did receive requests from Chairman Welch and Commissioners Bosch, Schimmel and Richmond to be excused from the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approve the role excusing Chairman Welch and Commissioners Bosch, Schimmel and Richmond. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chairman Felicijan referred the Commission to the October 2, 2014 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. Commissioner Somers indicated he was not present at this meeting and would be abstaining. A motion was made by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 4-0-1 with Commissioner Somers abstaining.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan: Airway Lanes (Ropes Course), 5626 Portage Road. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated October 30, 2014 regarding a request by Airway Lanes to construct an outdoor ropes course along the east side of the existing Airway Lanes facility. Mr. West stated the climbing structure would be a maximum of 35-feet in height and would occupy an approximate 1,600 square foot area within the existing parking lot, between the outdoor miniature golf course and the Airway Lanes building. Mr. West indicated the 12 parking spaces located along the east side of the building would be eliminated and the area gated to prevent vehicular access. Mr. West discussed the initial review and approval of the climbing structure by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Michigan Aeronautics Commission (MAC), however, indicated the height identified in the original application was inadvertently referenced as 32-feet tall. Mr. West stated the applicant has since contacted the FAA to request a revised determination for construction of the climbing structure to a maximum height of 35-feet. Mr. West indicated that FAA determination of this revised request was still pending.

Mr. Marc Weise (applicant) was present to support the site plan and indicated a new application to FAA was needed for the climbing structure height change from 32-feet to 35-feet. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approve the Site Plan for Airway Lanes (Ropes Course), 5626 Portage Road, subject to the following conditions: 1) The climbing structure not exceed 35-feet in height, and, 2) FAA/MAC approval of the 35-foot tall climbing structure prior to issuance of building permits. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Active Home Occupation Permit (Adela Strautkalns), 6820 Lovers Lane. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated October 30, 2014 regarding the request from Ms. Adela Strautkalns for an Active Home Occupation Permit to establish an approximate 132 square foot sales office within a portion of her single family residence located at 6820 Lovers Lane. Mr. West indicated the sales office serves the adjacent Lovers Lane Storage & U-Haul Rental facility located immediately to the north at 6800 Lovers Lane, which is also owned by Ms. Strautkalns. Mr. West stated the application satisfies the requirements for issuance of an Active Home Occupation Permit and was recommended for approval.

Ms. Adela Strautkalns (applicant/owner) was present to support the Active Home Occupation Permit application. After a brief discussion, the public hearing was opened by Vice-Chairman Felicijan. No citizens spoke regarding the proposed Active Home Occupation Permit. A motion was made by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0. A motion was then made by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Somers, to approve the Active Home Occupation Permit for Ms. Adela Strautkalns (sales office), 6820 Lovers Lane. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0.

2. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application #14/15-2, 4713 and 4707 (west 10-feet) West Milham Avenue. Mr. Forth summarized the preliminary staff report dated October 30, 2014 regarding a request from Bickford Cottage to rezone 4713 and 4707 (west 10-feet) West Milham Avenue from B-2, community business to OS-1, office service. Mr. Forth indicated the rezoning would facilitate future expansion of the Bickford Cottage senior living facility currently located at 4707 West Milham Avenue. Mr. Forth discussed the previous rezoning for the Bickford Cottage, the surrounding land use/zoning pattern, Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map designations for the subject property and differences between the existing B-2 and proposed OS-1 zoning districts. The Commission and Mr. Forth briefly discussed the surrounding zoning pattern, past and present Future Land Use Map designations and previous rezonings in the immediate area.

Richard Eby (applicant/Bickford Cottage representative) was present to support the proposed rezoning application. Mr. Eby discussed the success of the Bickford Cottage facility since construction approximately nine years ago and plans for an approximate 8,000 square foot, 16-unit memory care expansion if the rezoning request was approved. Mr. Eby indicated letters explaining the proposed rezoning and planned expansion were hand delivered to neighbors to the south that abut the Bickford Cottage senior living care facility.

The public hearing was opened by Vice-Chairman Felicijan. Two citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning application: Dave Szybala (4836 Golden Ridge Trail) and Brian Menz (4736 Golden Ridge Trail). Both Mr. Szybala and Mr. Menz spoke in support of the proposed OS-1 zoning and the planned expansion of the Bickford Cottage senior living facility. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to adjourn the public hearing for Rezoning Application #14/15-2, 4713 and 4707 (west 10-feet) West Milham Avenue, to the November 20, 2014 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0.

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,

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