

PLANNING COMMISSION

December 5, 2013

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of December 5, 2013 was called to order by Chairman Welch 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, Allan Reiff, Betty Schimmel, Brian Somers, Wayne Stoffer, Miko Dargitz and Paul Welch.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Dave Felicijan and Rick Bosch

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Welch led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the November 7, 2013 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Reiff, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was approved 7-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. City of Portage 50th Anniversary Celebration – November Passbook Drawing. Commissioner Dargitz conducted the November Passbook drawing: Margaret Hocesvar was selected the winner of a Vera Bradley zipper case and \$25 gift certificate to West Lake Drug.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

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| <p>7:05 p.m. - The Commission took a short recess. 7:15 p.m. - The Commission reconvened the meeting in City Hall Conference Room No. 2</p> |
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OLD BUSINESS:

1. 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Forth briefly summarized the documents related to the October 2, 2013 Public Open House that were included in the agenda and further elaborated on the list of the top ten community-wide issues identified during the open house. Chairman Welch noted that many of the participants recognized the value and importance of the recreational facilities, and in particular the multi-use trail system. During the past several years, the city has done an excellent job developing and connecting the multi-use trail system. However, it can be difficult to cross a 4-5 lane roadway such as South Westnedge Avenue at Garden Lane. Several Commissioners agreed and discussed methods to improve pedestrian safety when crossing a major road such as adjusting pedestrian signal timing, construction of a refuge island and/or bump-outs, and pedestrian overpasses.

The Commission also discussed mixed-use development projects in the city centre area, maintaining and improving residential neighborhoods and housing units (Mr. Forth provided a brief overview of the Housing Assistance Program), and enhancement of the Lake Center Business Area (Mr. Forth briefly explained the proposal to reduce some sections of Portage Road to three lanes). The Commission also discussed defining the boundaries of the South Westnedge Avenue commercial core area where adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods (e.g. north of West Milham Avenue), aging in place options such as allowing “granny flats,” and the balance between preserving natural areas and encouraging/facilitating economic development.

Mr. Forth indicated the consultant is finalizing the Existing Conditions report and will likely be ready for Commission review on December 19, 2013. Chairman Welch asked that the Commission members review all material before the scheduled meeting dates and if there are questions/comments, should e-mail staff before the meeting so staff has time to consider and respond in advance of the meeting. Mr. Forth suggested that the e-mail should be copied to all Commissioners since others may have the same question/comment. Chairman Welch reminded to the Commission members not to engage in a discussion involving issues associated with the plan update outside of a public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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