



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 19, 2015

CITY OF PORTAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

A G E N D A

**February 19, 2015
(7:00 p.m.)**

Portage City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

* February 5, 2015

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

* 1. Preliminary Report: Ordinance Amendment #14/15-A: Auto Repair and Service Station Regulations

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT:

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED

January 20, 2015 City Council regular meeting minutes
January 20, 2015 City Council Committee of the Whole meeting minutes

Star (*) indicates printed material within the agenda packet.

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PLANNING COMMISSION

February 5, 2015

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of February 5, 2015 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Welch led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael West, Senior City Planner; and Randy Brown, City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. West called the roll and the following Commissioners were present: Patterson (yes), Stoffer (yes), Welch (yes), Felicijan (yes), Bosch (yes), Schimmel (yes) and Richmond (yes). A motion was made by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the roll excusing Commissioners Dargitz and Somers. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the January 22, 2015 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. Commissioner Richmond stated she was not present at the meeting and would be abstaining. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 6-0-1 with Commissioner Richmond abstaining.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Special Land Use Permit: Michigan Dog Center, 6740 Quality Way. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated January 2, 2015 regarding a request by Mr. Dean Lathrop, on behalf of the Michigan Dog Center, to establish an indoor dog training and fitness center within the existing building located at 6740 Quality Way. Mr. West indicated the applicant was proposing to reuse the warehouse portion of the building (approximately 7,500 square feet) primarily as a one-on-one dog training and fitness facility operating between the hours of 5:00pm-10:00pm (Monday through Friday) with occasional Saturday events. Mr. West indicated the indoor facility would include large matted dog training areas with rings, gate and jumps and dog fitness areas with treadmills and an exercise pool. Mr. West stated the application fulfilled the requirements for issuance of a special land use permit pursuant to Section 42-280.C.10 and Section 42-462 of the Zoning Code and was recommended for approval subject to the four conditions listed in the staff report.

Ms. Sherry Sibert of the Michigan Dog Center (owner/operator) was present to support the special land use permit application. The public hearing was then opened by Chairman Welch. No citizens spoke regarding the proposed application. A motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0. A motion was then made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the Special Land Use Permit for Michigan Dog Center, 6740 Quality Way, subject to the following conditions: 1) All dog training and fitness activities be conducted indoors with no outdoor activities/events allowed (with exception of outdoor dog "potty" area to

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operate as detailed in the application materials); 2) No overnight boarding or kenneling of dogs be permitted; 3) Compliance with all applicable City of Portage Code of Ordinances including Community Quality (Chapter 24) related to the operation of this use including noise, odors, sanitation and health; and 4) All building related permits be obtained for any proposed modifications to the interior of the building. The motion also included a finding that the proposed use fulfilled the criteria for issuance of a special land use permit as detailed in the Department of Community Development staff report dated January 2, 2015. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

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 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael K. West, AICP
Senior City Planner

TO: Planning Commission

DATE: February 13, 2015

FROM: Vicki Georgeau, ^{VJ} Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report: Ordinance Amendment 14/15-A, Auto Repair & Vehicle Fueling Station Regulations

I. INTRODUCTION:

During the December 18, 2014 and January 22, 2015 Planning Commission meetings, the Commission discussed recommended changes to regulations for auto repair facilities and vehicle fueling stations. The changes are being considered as part of the Planning Commission approved FY2014-15 Work Program, which included Zoning Code amendments pertaining to several topics. Amongst the Zoning Code amendments to be prepared for consideration were revised/updated regulations pertaining to “Auto Service Station” and “Gas Station.”

This report provides historical background information pertaining to auto-related services, recommended changes to regulations for auto repair facilities and auto fueling stations, a summary of previous Planning Commission discussions and concludes with ordinance language.

II. AUTO REPAIR FACILITIES:

Regulations regarding automobile repair/servicing have remained basically unchanged since comprehensive zoning of the city in 1965. Between 1965 and 2003, the Zoning Code established two categories for auto repair/servicing: Auto Service Station that permitted “...the servicing of and minor repair of automobiles” and Auto Repair Station that permitted “...general repair, engine rebuilding, rebuilding or reconditioning of motor vehicles; collision service, such as body, frame or fender straightening and repair; overall painting and undercoating of automobiles.” Since auto repair activities and gasoline stations were commonly conducted together in the 1960s, the Auto Service Station and Auto Repair Station categories also allowed the sale of gasoline/engine fuels as an associated, on-site use. An Auto Service Station (minor repairs) was a use permitted in the B-3, general business district subject to review and approval of a special land use permit by the Planning Commission and as a permitted use in the I-1, light industrial district. An Auto Repair Station (major repairs) was permitted as a special land use in the I-1 district.

In 2003, the Zoning Code was amended to separate auto repair activities into two types: major and minor. The 2003 amendment also recognized the marketplace change that vehicle fueling stations were becoming less associated with auto repair and more associated with convenience shopping needs such as food and beverages. The definition of Auto Repair Station was replaced with Auto Repair Station – Major (description remained the same) and Auto Repair Station – Minor with the following description change, “...where the following services may be carried out such as minor repairs, incidental replacement of parts, or motor service to passenger automobiles and trucks not exceeding three tons gross vehicle weight; provided, however, there is excluded any repair or work

included in the definition of Auto Repair Station – Major. The definition of Auto Service Station remained basically unchanged to include vehicle fueling/gasoline stations that also may include the sale of minor accessories and the servicing and minor repair of automobiles. Currently, Auto Repair Station – Minor is allowed as a permitted use in the B-3 district and a special land use in the B-2 and I-1 districts, while Auto Repair Station – Major is allowed as a special land use in the I-1 district.

A survey of auto repair facilities currently located in the B-3 zoning district indicates most offer comprehensive automotive repair and servicing activities that include some form of what is considered major repair work such as engine, transmission or other vehicle component repair. Since major auto repair activities are only permitted in the I-1 and I-2, industrial districts, auto repair businesses located in the B-3 district that offer major repair services may not be completely in conformance with the Zoning Code requirements.

Recognizing that many local auto repair facilities offer comprehensive services, staff visited several businesses to compare external impacts associated with the operation of minor and major repairs. The visits revealed few external differences between businesses with major and minor repair activities. Several sites had a minimal amount of discarded auto parts outdoors such as used tires and a couple of sites had inoperable vehicles that had apparently been on-site for an extended period of time. Minor repair facilities such as Belle Tire or Midas Muffler had few, if any, vehicles left on-site after business hours while several of the facilities that offer more comprehensive services had several vehicles on-site, often located within a fenced enclosure. Based on the review of existing repair facilities, the potential adverse land use impacts of major repair facilities are similar to those of minor repair facilities. Engine and/or transmission rebuilding activities, for example, can often be less impactful than some minor repair activities (e.g. noise associated with removing/replacing exhaust systems and tire repair/replacement) since rebuilding related activities including assembly, disassembly and/or machining of automobile related components are performed indoors with precision machines and tools in a controlled environment. The primary impacts associated with both types of auto repairs is outside storage and vehicle parking.

During the December 18, 2014 and January 22, 2015 Planning Commission meetings, the Commission discussed the recommended changes to auto repair facility regulations. At that time, the Commission had no specific revisions to proposed regulations concerning auto repair facilities.

III. VEHICLE FUELING STATION:

As the Commission will recall, a recent 2014 application for an “Auto Service Station” (gasoline/vehicle fueling station) redevelopment project at the former Centre Street Market site, 710 and 732 East Centre Avenue, generated significant controversy, concern and discussion regarding the appropriateness of this use when adjacent to a single family residential neighborhood and/or a child day care/preschool facility. While this “Auto Service Station” (gasoline/vehicle fueling station) proposal was eventually withdrawn by the applicant and the property subsequently rezoned from B-3, general business to B-1, local business, the issue of the appropriateness of this land use adjacent to a residential uses and child day care facility and/or school still remains. Since 1965, gasoline/vehicle fueling stations (“Auto Service Station”) have been allowed in the B-3 and I-1

zoning districts as special land uses without specific conditions. For Commission information, attached is a map that shows the location of existing fueling stations in the City of Portage.

In reviewing the East Centre Avenue gas station proposal, staff and the Planning Commission relied heavily on the General Standards for Review of Special Land Uses provisions of the Zoning Code (Section 42-462) in reviewing potential impacts from the proposed gas station on the adjacent single family residential neighborhood and child day care/preschool facility. In order to address the impacts associated with the operation of gas stations, specific ordinance standards are recommended.

The most significant ordinance change involves the location of a vehicle fueling station in relation to a residential zoning district, day care center, public/private school or religious institution (many religious institutions operate child day care facilities). Two alternatives were presented to the Commission. The first alternative recommended that a fueling station not be adjacent to or abut one of the land uses noted above. The second alternative recommended a fueling station not abut or be within 300 feet of the protected land uses referenced above. The location requirement that a fueling station not abut or be within 300 feet of a residential land uses, child care, school and church facilities reduced the number of locations suitable for a new vehicle fueling station, while providing additional protections for these nearby land uses. With the 300-foot separation standard, the attached map illustrates there are still over 200 parcels available for new vehicle fueling station development, in addition to the 16 existing fueling stations within the community. During the January 22, 2015 meeting, the Commission voted to proceed with an ordinance amendment that would require fueling stations to be located in either the B-3 or I-1 zoning districts to be at least 300 feet away from a residential land uses, child care, school and church facilities.

In an effort to address existing vehicle fueling stations that would not meet the new locational requirements, language has been added to consider these facilities conforming. Also, the proposed fueling station regulations are not applicable to existing fueling stations located in the PD, planned development or CPD, commercial planned development districts. These fueling stations include BP, 4421 West Centre; Sam's Club, 7021 South Westnedge; and a proposed fueling station for Wal-Mart, 8350 Shaver Road. Impacts, if any, associated with fueling stations located in the PD or CPD districts can be addressed during the tentative/conceptual plan review process, which is subject to the public hearing process before the Planning Commission and City Council.

IV. PROPOSED ORDINANCE LANGUAGE:

Staff has researched many other community ordinances related to auto repair facilities and vehicle fueling stations, discussed the proposed auto repair amendments with several local business owners, and has considered public comment received and administrative/Planning Commission decisions concerning these uses. As a result of these research efforts, staff is recommending auto repair facilities no longer be classified as either minor or major and two new/updated definitions be established: Auto Repair and Auto Collision/Body Shop. Staff is also recommending that the definition of Auto Service Station be changed to Vehicle Fueling Station and the definition be revised to reflect the current operational characteristics.

Attached is draft ordinance language prepared by the staff and the City Attorney. The attached draft ordinance language identifies proposed revisions in underline (red font=new text) and strikeout (deleted text) format. A “clean” version without the underline and strikeout text is also provided. The proposed changes are summarized below.

Section 42-112, Definitions

Auto Repair Station – Minor, Auto Repair Station – Major and Auto Service Station. These three definitions are proposed to be rewritten and replaced with the following:

Auto Repair: A place where general automobile repair; servicing; or rebuilding engines, transmissions or similar vehicle components; and incidental replacement of parts occurs.

Auto Collision/Body Shop: A place where automobile repair, collision and/or auto body services such as general repair, rebuilding or reconditioning of motor vehicles; body, frame or fender repair; painting; and undercoating of automobiles occurs.

Vehicle Fueling Station: A place where gasoline or any other vehicular engine fuel (stored only in underground tanks), kerosene or motor oil and lubricants or grease (for operation of motors vehicles) are retailed directly to the public on the premises. Services may include the sale of minor auto accessories; retail sales of non-automotive related products including sundries such as gum, candy, beverages, newspapers, magazines and other individually packaged convenience items.

These modifications separate auto repair uses from auto collision/body shop and vehicle fueling station uses. The modifications also recognize that auto collision/body shops typically have more potential adverse land use related impacts such as long term outdoor storage of damaged vehicles, body and frame straightening, reconditioning of automobiles, painting and undercoating. Auto collision/body shops would be allowed only in the industrial zoning districts.

Section 42-261. B-2, community business district

C. Special land uses (Items 2. and 4.)

Changes have been made to this section to eliminate references to “minor” and “major” auto repair and replace with new definitions and terminology. Auto repair facilities would continue to be permitted use in the B-2 district (without being limited to only minor repairs) as a special land use subject to conditions.

Section 42-262. B-3, general business district

B. Principal permitted uses (Item 4.)

C. Special land uses (Items 1. and 4.)

Changes have been made to these sections to eliminate references to “minor” and “major” auto repair and “automobile service stations” and replace with newly defined uses. Auto repair facilities would continue to be a permitted use in the B-3 district (without being limited to only minor repairs) as a separate facility or associated with a vehicle dealership, and as a permitted use in the I-1 and I-2 districts. In regard to Auto Repair, operational conditions were added that: require all repair activities to be conducted completely within the building; restrict the length of time a vehicle awaiting repair or inoperable vehicles may be outdoors; and screening requirements for outside storage of parts and other material.

In regard to Vehicle Fueling Stations, the location requirement that a fueling station not abut or be within 300 feet of a residential land uses, child care, school and church facilities has been added. Other conditions have also been included such as location of air compressors and vacuums stations, outside storage/display areas, and a provision to protect existing stations that may not be able to comply with the new locational standards. Finally, language has been incorporated that clarifies when an existing fueling station must comply with the requirements applicable to air compressors and vacuum stations, and outdoor storage and display. Compliance with the ordinance is required when a building permit for an addition, structural alternation or repair exceeds 25% of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation. This ordinance language is similar to the language contained in Section 42-571 concerning landscaping and screening.

Section 42-280. I-1, light industrial district

- B. Principal permitted uses (Item 20.)
- C. Special land uses (Item 2.)

Changes have been made to these sections to eliminate references to “minor” and “major” auto repair and “automobile service station” and replace with newly defined uses. Changes also include allowing Auto Repair as a permitted use in the I-1 district (currently a special land use) with the same operational conditions related to the length of time a vehicle may be located outdoors. Vehicle fueling stations are also allowed to continue in the I-1 district with the same conditions applicable within the B-3 district.

Auto Collision/Body Shops continue to be allowed as a special land use in the I-1 district with the added requirements that the zoning lot not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in the PD zone and that all vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street be enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. Additionally, language has been added to protect existing auto collision/body shops that do not meet the locational requirements, while adding clarifying language as to when an existing auto collision/body shop must comply with the requirements for screening outdoor storage of vehicles.

Section 42-281. I-2, heavy industrial district

- C. Special land uses (Item 7.)

Currently, Auto Collision/Body Shop is not specifically referenced in the I-2 district so changes have been made to add this use as special land use in the I-2 district. Auto Collision/Body Shops include the requirements that the zoning lot not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in the PD zone and that all vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street be enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. Finally, language has also been added to protect existing auto collision/body shops that do not meet the locational requirements, while adding clarifying language as to when an existing auto collision/body shop must comply with the requirements for screening outdoor storage of vehicles.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the Planning Commission policy of accepting public comment at the initial meeting and continuing the discussion involving the proposed ordinance amendments at a subsequent meeting, the Commission is advised to receive public comment during the February 19, 2015 meeting and adjourn the public hearing to the March 5, 2015 meeting.

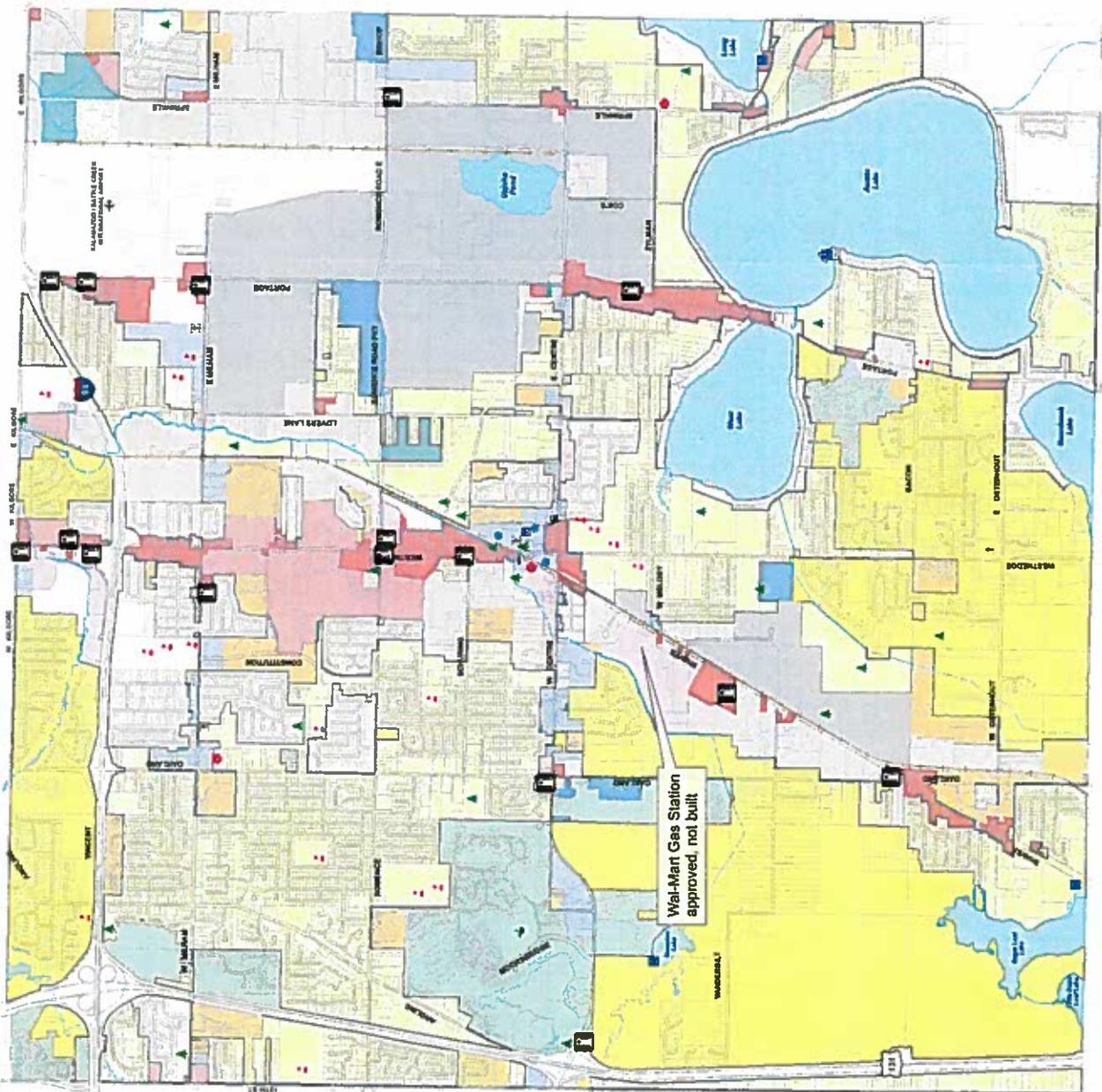
Attachments: Map of existing gas station locations
Map of potential gas station locations with 300-foot separation requirement
Ordinance Amendment (DRAFT)
December 18, 2014 and January 22, 2015 Planning Commission meeting minutes

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Gas Station Locations

- Gas Stations**
- B-1 Local Business
 - B-2 Community Business
 - B-3 General Business
 - CPD Commercial Planned Development
 - I-1 Light Industry
 - I-2 Heavy Industry
 - OS-1 Office Service
 - OTR Office Technology and Research
 - P-1 Vehicular Parking
 - PD Planned Development
 - R-1A One Family Residential
 - R-1B One Family Residential
 - R-1C One Family Residential
 - R-1D One Family Residential
 - R-1E Estate Residential
 - R-1T Attached Residential
 - RM-1 Multiple Family Residential
 - RM-2 Multiple Family Residential
 - MHC Mobile Home Community



Station Owner	Property Address
J DAVIS INC	4421 W CENTRE AV
MERCURY PETROLEUM LLC	507 W MILHAM AV
JFB REAL ESTATE LLC	7938 OAKLAND DR
JFB REAL ESTATE LLC	7938 OAKLAND DR
SPEEDWAY SUPERAMERICA, LLC	8379 PORTAGE RD
EMRO MARKETING CO	5974 PORTAGE RD
PORTAGE FAMILY REAL ESTATE, LLC	5318 PORTAGE RD
SHELL MARKETING RESOURCES, LLC	5128 PORTAGE RD
KAL-ORAKE INC	6950 SHAVER RD
AMERICAN GAS & OIL, INC	7025 S SPRINKLE RD
CAH LAND COMPANY, LLC	7480 S WESTNEDGE AV
SHELL MARKETING RESOURCES, LLC	7000 S WESTNEDGE AV
ADMIRAL PETROLEUM #28	5342 S WESTNEDGE AV
ENTERPRISES, INC	5231 S WESTNEDGE AV
EMRO MARKETING CO	5012 S WESTNEDGE AV
SHELL MARKETING RESOURCES, LLC	7000 S WESTNEDGE AV



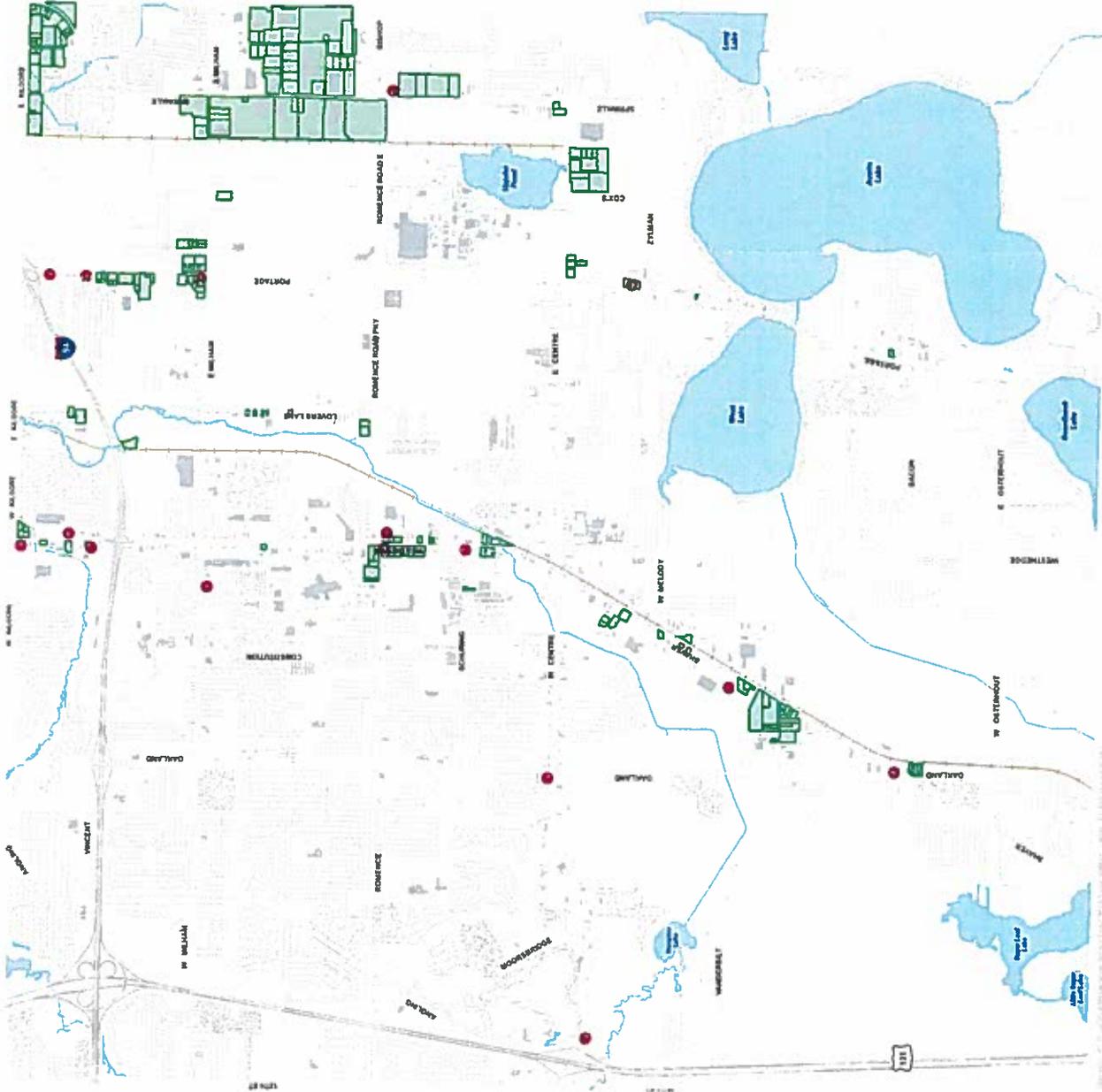
1 inch = 3,200 feet



Gas Station Locations

Regulated areas include additional 300' buffer areas

- Existing Gas Stations
- ▭ Properties meeting regulations
 - 216 existing Parcels meet criteria
 - 114 of these Parcels are 1 acre or more



1 inch = 3,200 feet
Date: 12/30/2014

[HIGHLIGHT & STRIKE VERSION]

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES
OF THE CITY OF PORTAGE, MICHIGAN
BY AMENDING SEC. 42-112, DEFINITIONS, SEC. 42-261, B-2, COMMUNITY BUSINESS
DISTRICT, SEC. 42-262, B-3, GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT,
SEC. 42-280, I-1, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, AND
SEC. 42-281, I-2, HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, OF ARTICLE 4, ZONING,
OF CHAPTER 42, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

THE CITY OF PORTAGE ORDAINS:

That Chapter 42 shall be amended as follows:

ARTICLE 4. ZONING.

Sec. 42-112. - Definitions.

~~Auto Collison/Body Shop repair station—Major: A place with or without the sale of petroleum products (excluding gasoline and diesel fuel for motor vehicles), where automobile repair, collision and/or auto body services the following services may be carried out such as general repair, engine rebuilding and rebuilding or reconditioning of motor vehicles; collision service, such as body, frame or fender straightening and repair; and overall painting; and undercoating of automobiles occurs.~~

~~Auto repair station—Minor: A place with or without the sale of petroleum products (excluding gasoline and diesel fuel for motor vehicles), where general automobile repair; servicing; or rebuilding engines, transmissions or similar vehicle components; and the following services may be carried out such as minor repairs, incidental replacement of parts occurs, or motor service to passenger automobiles and trucks not exceeding three tons gross vehicle weight; provided, however, there is excluded any repair or work included in the definition of "Auto repair station—Major."~~

~~Auto service station: A place where gasoline or any other vehicular engine fuel (stored only in underground tanks), kerosene or motor oil and lubricants or grease (for operation of motor vehicles) are retailed directly to the public on the premises. Services may include the sale of minor accessories and the servicing and minor repair of automobiles.~~

~~Vehicle Fueling Station: A place where gasoline or any other vehicular engine fuel (stored only in underground tanks), kerosene or motor oil and lubricants or grease (for operation of motors vehicles) are retailed directly to the public on the premises. Services may include the sale of minor auto accessories; retail sales of non-automotive related products including sundries such as gum, candy, beverages, newspapers, magazines and other individually packaged convenience items.~~

~~Vehicle repair, major: See "Auto repair station—Major".~~

~~Vehicle repair, minor: See "Auto repair station—Minor".~~

Sec. 42-261. - B-2 community business district.

A. through B. No change.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in the B-2 community business district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. No change.

2. Auto repair ~~station, minor.~~

- a. The minimum lot size shall be 30,000 square feet, with a minimum width of 150 feet.
- b. All services shall be performed within a completely enclosed building.
- c. No service bay shall open to or face any public street.
- d. Not less than 20 percent of the ground area of the site shall be landscaped as a green area pursuant to an approved site plan.
- e. In locations where the use abuts a residential district, the planning commission may require additional screening or landscaping to minimize any potential adverse effects, such as noise, dust, odor, etc.
- f. No auto collision/body shop ~~major vehicle repair~~ activities shall be permitted.
- g. When located within an integrated or planned cluster of establishments served by a common parking area, the use shall be located on the periphery in such a manner as not to create vehicular circulation obstructions or pedestrian movement conflicts and shall be designed so as to integrate the use with the site plan and architecture of the cluster of establishments. No additional curb openings onto a public street shall be permitted.
- h. No outside storage of parts and/or materials shall be allowed.
- i. No overnight outdoor storage/parking of automobiles that have been or are awaiting service or parts is permitted.

3. Automatic carwashes. No changes.

4. Vehicle dealerships, licensed by the state as a new vehicle dealer, for the sale of new motor vehicles, including accessory uses when related and incidental thereto, such as service areas and areas for the sale of used motor vehicles.

a. through g. No change.

h. Activities permitted at auto repair and auto collision/body shops as defined in Section 42-112 ~~Major and minor vehicle repairs shall~~ may be permitted

when conducted completely within the building, with no outside storage of parts and/or materials.

i. through l. No change.

5. through 7. No change.

D. No change.

Sec. 42-262. - B-3 general business district.

A. No change.

B. Principal permitted uses: In a B-3 general business district, no building or land shall be used, and no building shall be erected, except for one or more of the following specified uses, unless otherwise provided in this article:

1. through 3. No change.

4. Auto repair ~~station~~—Minor. subject to the following:

a. When conducted completely within the building.

b. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be located outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.

c. Outdoor storage of used tires, auto parts and other material shall not be permitted unless enclosed by an opaque screening fence or masonry wall not less than six feet in height and located in the rear yard. The enclosure shall be equipped with an opaque gate that is the same height as the screening fence or masonry wall. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. The height of the material stored outdoors cannot extend beyond the top of the screening enclosure.

5. through 15. No change.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in the B-3 general business district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. Vehicle dealerships, licensed by the state, for the sale and rental of new or used motor vehicles and/or recreational vehicles, including accessory uses when related and incidental thereto subject to the following:

- a. All vehicles that have been prepared for sale and are ready for sale shall be located in vehicle display areas, which shall be of asphalt, concrete or other hard surface and shall be graded and drained as to dispose of all surface water accumulated within the area.
- b. Ingress and egress to and from the outdoor sales area shall be at least 60 feet from the intersection of any two streets.
- c. ~~No major vehicle repair or refinishing shall be done on the site.~~ Auto repair activities are permitted subject to the following:

Form
Auto,

i. When conducted completely within the building.

ii. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be stored outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.

Form
Befor

iii. Outdoor storage of used tires, auto parts and other material shall not be permitted unless enclosed by an opaque screening fence or masonry wall not less than six feet in height and located in the rear yard. The enclosure shall be equipped with an opaque gate that is the same height as the screening fence or masonry wall. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. The height of the material stored outdoors cannot extend beyond the top of the screening enclosure.

2. through 3. Unchanged.

4. ~~Vehicle fuelingAutomobile service stations for the sale of gasoline, oil and minor accessories only, but not including major vehicle repair or other activities where any adverse external effects could extend beyond the property line~~ subject to the following:

a. The zoning lot does not abut or is not located within 300 feet of the following:

Form
Auto

i. a residential zoning district;

ii. land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district;

iii. child day care facility;

iv. public/private school; or

v. religious institution.

For the purpose of this subsection, "abut" means a zoning lot which borders upon the subject lot at any point. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 4(a) shall not be prevented from

reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming.

b. Air compressors and vacuum stations shall not be located in the front yard area.

c. Outside storage or display shall be adjacent to the building wall or the pump islands, and shall be displayed in a manner that does not create vehicular, pedestrian or emergency access hazards.

d. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsections 4(b) and 4(c) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

5. through 9. Unchanged.

D. Unchanged.

Sec. 42-280. I-1, light industrial district.

A. Unchanged.

B. 1 through 19, Unchanged.

20. Auto repair subject to the following:

a. All repair activities are conducted completely within the building.

b. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be located outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in an I-1 light industrial district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. Vehicle fueling ~~Automobile service~~ stations subject to the following:

a. The zoning lot does not abut or is not located within 300 feet of the following:

- i. a residential zoning district;
- ii. land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district;
- iii. child day care facility;
- iv. public/private school; or
- v. religious institution.

For the purpose of this subsection, "abut" means a zoning lot which borders upon the subject lot at any point. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 1(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming.

- b. Air compressors and vacuum stations shall not be located in the front yard area.
- c. Outside storage or display shall be adjacent to the building wall or the pump islands, and shall be displayed in a manner that does not create vehicular, pedestrian or emergency access hazards.
- d. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsections 1(b) and 1(c) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

2. Automobile repair stations (major and minor) Collision/body shops subject to the following:

- a. The zoning lot does not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 2(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming;
- b. Vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street are enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsection 2(b) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its

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improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

3. through 11, Unchanged.

D. Unchanged.

Sect. 42-281, I-2 heavy industrial district.

A. through B. Unchanged.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in an I-2 heavy industrial district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1 through 6, Unchanged.

7. Auto collision/body shops subject to the following:

a. The zoning lot does not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 7(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming;

b. Vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street are enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsection 7(b) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

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[CLEAN VERSION]

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES
OF THE CITY OF PORTAGE, MICHIGAN
BY AMENDING SEC. 42-112, DEFINITIONS, SEC. 42-261, B-2, COMMUNITY BUSINESS
DISTRICT, SEC. 42-262, B-3, GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT,
SEC. 42-280, I-1, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, AND
SEC. 42-281, I-2, HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, OF ARTICLE 4, ZONING,
OF CHAPTER 42, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

THE CITY OF PORTAGE ORDAINS:

That Chapter 42 shall be amended as follows:

ARTICLE 4. ZONING.

Sec. 42-112. - Definitions.

Auto Collison/Body Shop : A place where automobile repair, collision and/or auto body services such as general repair, rebuilding or reconditioning of motor vehicles; body, frame or fender repair; painting; and undercoating of automobiles occurs.

Auto repair: A place where general automobile repair; servicing; or rebuilding engines, transmissions or similar vehicle components; and incidental replacement of parts occurs.

Vehicle Fueling Station: A place where gasoline or any other vehicular engine fuel (stored only in underground tanks), kerosene or motor oil and lubricants or grease (for operation of motors vehicles) are retailed directly to the public on the premises. Services may include the sale of minor auto accessories; retail sales of non-automotive related products including sundries such as gum, candy, beverages, newspapers, magazines and other individually packaged convenience items.

Sec. 42-261. - B-2 community business district.

A. through B. No change.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in the B-2 community business district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. No change.

2. Auto repair.

a. The minimum lot size shall be 30,000 square feet, with a minimum width of 150 feet.

b. All services shall be performed within a completely enclosed building.

- c. No service bay shall open to or face any public street.
 - d. Not less than 20 percent of the ground area of the site shall be landscaped as a green area pursuant to an approved site plan.
 - e. In locations where the use abuts a residential district, the planning commission may require additional screening or landscaping to minimize any potential adverse effects, such as noise, dust, odor, etc.
 - f. No auto collision/body shop activities shall be permitted.
 - g. When located within an integrated or planned cluster of establishments served by a common parking area, the use shall be located on the periphery in such a manner as not to create vehicular circulation obstructions or pedestrian movement conflicts and shall be designed so as to integrate the use with the site plan and architecture of the cluster of establishments. No additional curb openings onto a public street shall be permitted.
 - h. No outside storage of parts and/or materials shall be allowed.
 - i. No overnight outdoor storage/parking of automobiles that have been or are awaiting service or parts is permitted.
3. Automatic carwashes. No changes.
4. Vehicle dealerships, licensed by the state as a new vehicle dealer, for the sale of new motor vehicles, including accessory uses when related and incidental thereto, such as service areas and areas for the sale of used motor vehicles.
- a. through g. No change.
 - h. Activities permitted at auto repair and auto collision/body shops as defined in Section 42-112 may be permitted when conducted completely within the building, with no outside storage of parts and/or materials.
 - i. through l. No change.
5. through 7. No change.

D. No change.

Sec. 42-262. - B-3 general business district.

A. No change.

B. Principal permitted uses: In a B-3 general business district, no building or land shall be used, and no building shall be erected, except for one or more of the following specified uses, unless otherwise provided in this article:

- 1. through 3. No change.
- 4. Auto repair subject to the following:

- a. When conducted completely within the building.
- b. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be located outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.
- c. Outdoor storage of used tires, auto parts and other material shall not be permitted unless enclosed by an opaque screening fence or masonry wall not less than six feet in height and located in the rear yard. The enclosure shall be equipped with an opaque gate that is the same height as the screening fence or masonry wall. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. The height of the material stored outdoors cannot extend beyond the top of the screening enclosure.

5. through 15. No change.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in the B-3 general business district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. Vehicle dealerships, licensed by the state, for the sale and rental of new or used motor vehicles and/or recreational vehicles, including accessory uses when related and incidental thereto subject to the following:
 - a. All vehicles that have been prepared for sale and are ready for sale shall be located in vehicle display areas, which shall be of asphalt, concrete or other hard surface and shall be graded and drained as to dispose of all surface water accumulated within the area.
 - b. Ingress and egress to and from the outdoor sales area shall be at least 60 feet from the intersection of any two streets.
 - c. Auto repair activities are permitted subject to the following:
 - i. When conducted completely within the building.
 - ii. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be stored outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.
 - iii. Outdoor storage of used tires, auto parts and other material shall not be permitted unless enclosed by an opaque screening fence or masonry wall not less than six feet in height and located in the rear yard. The enclosure shall be equipped with an opaque gate that is

the same height as the screening fence or masonry wall. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. The height of the material stored outdoors cannot extend beyond the top of the screening enclosure.

2. through 3. Unchanged.

4. Vehicle fueling stations subject to the following:

- a. The zoning lot does not abut or is not located within 300 feet of the following:
 - i. a residential zoning district;
 - ii. land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district;
 - iii. child day care facility;
 - iv. public/private school; or
 - v. religious institution.

For the purpose of this subsection, "abut" means a zoning lot which borders upon the subject lot at any point. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 4(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming.

- b. Air compressors and vacuum stations shall not be located in the front yard area.
- c. Outside storage or display shall be adjacent to the building wall or the pump islands, and shall be displayed in a manner that does not create vehicular, pedestrian or emergency access hazards.
- d. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsections 4(b) and 4(c) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

5. through 9. Unchanged.

D. Unchanged.

Sec. 42-280. I-1, light industrial district.

A. Unchanged.

B. 1 through 19, Unchanged.

20. Auto repair subject to the following:

- a. All repair activities are conducted completely within the building.
- b. Vehicles awaiting repair and/or inoperable vehicles (as defined in Chapter 24, Section 24-111) shall not be located outdoors for more than fourteen (14) days. All other vehicles shall not be located outdoors for more than ninety (90) days.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in an I-1 light industrial district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1. Vehicle fueling stations subject to the following:

- a. The zoning lot does not abut or is not located within 300 feet of the following:
 - i. a residential zoning district;
 - ii. land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district;
 - iii. child day care facility;
 - iv. public/private school; or
 - v. religious institution.

For the purpose of this subsection, "abut" means a zoning lot which borders upon the subject lot at any point. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 1(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming.

- b. Air compressors and vacuum stations shall not be located in the front yard area.
- c. Outside storage or display shall be adjacent to the building wall or the pump islands, and shall be displayed in a manner that does not create vehicular, pedestrian or emergency access hazards.

- d. Any vehicle fueling station existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsections 1(b) and 1(c) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).
2. Auto collision/body shops subject to the following:
- a. The zoning lot does not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 2(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming;
 - b. Vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street are enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsection 2(b) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

3. through 11, Unchanged.

D. Unchanged.

Sect. 42-281, I-2 heavy industrial district.

A. through B. Unchanged.

C. Special land uses: The following uses may be allowed in an I-2 heavy industrial district, subject to the conditions imposed in this section for each use, and subject further, to the review and approval of the planning commission in accordance with the provisions of division 5, subdivision 1 of this article:

1 through 6, Unchanged.

7. Auto collision/body shops subject to the following:

- a. The zoning lot does not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in a PD, planned development district.

Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment and not meeting the requirements of this subsection 7(a) shall not be prevented from reconstructing and/or expanding its facilities and, for the purpose of this subsection shall be considered conforming;

- b. Vehicles awaiting repair and visible from a public street are enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at least six-feet in height. The fence or wall shall meet the requirements of Section 42-576B. Any auto collision/body shop existing as of the date of the adoption of this amendment shall comply with subsection 7(b) whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25 percent of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the department of community development).

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance Amendment #14/15-A: Auto Repair and Service Station Regulations. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated December 12, 2014 regarding proposed changes to Zoning Code regulations pertaining to auto repair stations and auto service stations (gasoline stations). Mr. Forth indicated this first round of proposed ordinance amendments was consistent with the Planning Commission's FY 2014-2015 Work Program and Implementation Strategies contained in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Forth provided historical background regarding Zoning Code regulations pertaining to auto-related services and indicated that regulations have remained basically unchanged since comprehensive zoning of the City in 1965.

Mr. Forth reviewed current definitions that classify auto repair stations into two categories: Auto Repair Station (Minor) that is allowed in the B-3 district as a permitted use and in the B-2 and I-1 districts as special land uses; and, Auto Repair Station (Major) that is allowed in the I-1 district. The definition of Auto Repair Station (Major) includes auto collision/body shop activities and engine rebuilding activities. Mr. Forth indicated a survey of auto repair stations currently located in the B-3 zone indicates that most of these facilities offer comprehensive automotive repair and servicing that includes some form of "major" repair work such as engine, transmission or other vehicle component repair/rebuilding. Mr. Forth stated a further inspection of many of these facilities also discovered that external impacts associated with auto repair stations that conduct some form of "major" repair (e.g., engine and/or transmission rebuilding and repair) are similar to many "minor" auto repair activities (e.g., exhaust and tire repair and replacements). As a result and after researching several other community ordinances, Mr. Forth indicated staff was recommending the current definitions of Auto Repair Station (Minor) and Auto Repair Station (Major) be rewritten and replaced with Auto Repair Station and Auto Collision/Body Shop to clearly separate auto repair activities from auto collision/body shop activities. Mr. Forth stated Auto Repair Stations would be allowed as permitted uses in the B-3 and I-1 districts and as a special land use in the B-2 district, while Auto Collision/Body Shops would be allowed as special land uses in the I-1 and I-2 district. Mr. Forth indicated new operational standards were also proposed by staff that address auto repair activities being conducted completely within the building, restrictions on the length of time a vehicle awaiting repair may be stored outdoors and screening provisions for outdoor storage of parts, tires and other materials. Mr. Forth also stated a new locational requirement was also proposed for auto collision/body shops where the zoning lot does not abut a single family residential zoning district or land designated for residential use in the PD, planned development district. The Commission and staff briefly discussed the length of time provision for outdoor storage of vehicles awaiting repair, however, did not request any changes to the ordinance language at this time.

In regard to auto service stations (gasoline/fueling stations), Mr. Forth indicated staff was also recommending a modification to the definition to more clearly describe these uses. Mr. Forth indicated staff has prepared a new definition, Vehicle Fueling Station, that would replace Auto Service Station. Mr. Forth briefly discussed the recent controversial gasoline station redevelopment project at the former Centre Street Market property (710 and 732 East Centre Avenue) and stated that since 1965 there have been no specific conditions for locating a Vehicle Fueling Station in the B-3 or I-1 districts as a special land use. To address this issue, Mr. Forth indicated that staff was also recommending new locational and operational standards for Vehicle Fueling Stations including the requirement that a new Vehicle Fueling Station can not be adjacent to or abutting a residential zoning district, day care center, public/private school or religious institution.

Mr. Forth also presented maps that depicted the locations of existing Vehicle Fueling Stations across the city and areas that would be available for citing new Vehicle Fueling Stations based on proposed locational requirements. The Commission and staff next discussed various aspects of the proposed ordinance amendment including whether or not a minimum distance requirement (e.g. 300-feet) should be used for citing new Vehicle Fueling Stations from residential zoning districts, day care centers, public/private schools and religious institutions. After additional discussion, Mr. Forth indicated that staff would provide alternative maps and ordinance language that presented a minimum distance requirement for Vehicle Fueling Stations for further Commission review and discussion at the January 8, 2015 meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION



January 22, 2015

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of January 22, 2015 was called to order by Chairman Welch at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Three citizens were in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Welch led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development & 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 (yes), Stoffer (yes), Welch (yes), Felicijan (yes), Bosch (yes), Somers (yes) and Schimmel (yes). A motion was made by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the role excusing Commissioners Dargitz and Richmond. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the December 18, 2014 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Schimmel, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan: Pinefield (Phase 3), 6291 South 12th Street. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated January 16, 2015 regarding a request by Pinefield, LLC to construct Phase 3 of the Pinefield residential development. Mr. West indicated Phase 3 proposed construction of seven four-unit buildings and one two-unit building (30 units total), four detached storage buildings and associated site improvements on the vacant parcel located north of Pinefield (Phase 2). Mr. West discussed the proposed access to Phase 3, reconfiguration of the existing storm water retention basin and the applicant's plans to preserve existing mature evergreen trees along the northern property line and install supplemental evergreen and deciduous tree plantings along the northwest portion of Phase 3 where adjacent the single family residence located at 6255 South 12th Street.

Mr. Bob Deppe of Pinefield, LLC (applicant/owner) was present to support the site plan. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to approve the Site Plan for Pinefield (Phase 3), 6291 South 12th Street. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance Amendment #14/15-A: Auto Repair and Service Station Regulations. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated January 2, 2015 regarding proposed changes to Zoning Code regulations pertaining to auto repair stations and auto service stations (gasoline stations). Mr. Forth summarized changes made to the draft ordinance language since Commission review and discussion at the December 18, 2014 meeting. The

Commission did not have any additional comments regarding the proposed ordinance amendment. A motion was then made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to schedule a public hearing for February 19, 2015 to formerly consider Ordinance Amendment #14/15-A. The motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 20, 2015

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Richard Hertsel of the Centre Avenue Community Church of God provided an invocation. The City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Deputy City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Nasim Ansari, Richard Ford, Patricia Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the Special and Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2015. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Mayor Pro Tem Pearson to read the Consent Agenda. Mayor Strazdas asked that Item H.1, Authorization to Conduct a Public Session to Discuss Interest in Extending Leaf, Brush and Spring Cleanup Collection Programs to Private Streets, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Urban asked that items F.1 and F.2, Preliminary Condominium Subdivision for Copperleaf, Phase 1, and Engineering Plans for the Final Preliminary Condominium Subdivision for Copperleaf Phase 1, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda Motions as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF JANUARY 20, 2015:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of January 20, 2015 as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

REZONING APPLICATION #14/15-2: Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing and deferred to City Manager Shaffer who asked Director of Community Development, Vicki Georgeau, to provide background information and details related to the requested rezoning. Director Georgeau shared the history and details of the proposed rezoning and related development and informed City Council of City Administration and Planning Commission support for approving the application.

Mr. Richard Eby, Bickford Senior Living, 4707 West Milham Ave., spoke and shared that his business is asking for the rezoning so it can expand services related to memory care for seniors. Mr. Eby then shared and discussed details of the planned expansion. Councilmember Randall inquired how many jobs would be created and Mr. Eby replied that around six certified staff positions would result.

Don McCloud, 7421 Oak Shores, spoke in support of the rezoning and shared that he has a relative receiving care at Bickford Cottages and that he believes it to be the finest elder care facility in Kalamazoo County.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Urban, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve rezoning application #14/15-2 and rezone the west ten feet of 4707 West Milham Avenue and 4713 West Milham Avenue (excepting the west ten feet) from B-2, community business, to OS-1, office service. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

PRELIMINARY CONDOMINIUM SUBDIVISION FOR COPPERLEAF, PHASE 1:

Councilmember Urban stated that he was not supportive of the initial Tentative Plan for this development, that his concerns remain and cited pedestrian access at the site entrance as an example of one of his concerns. Community Development Director Vicki Georgeau spoke and shared some of the details regarding the development that is being presented and how it differs slightly from the Tentative Plan. She noted that this development was formerly known as Harbors West. Ms. Georgeau continued by stating that the plan is still in substantial compliance with the original proposal and discussed the connection of the development to Milham Avenue, the pedestrian system that is included in the development and how it will connect to Harbors West Park. Ms. Georgeau then shared two of the reasons for the change in access as being the desire to preserve several mature trees that the developer and adjoining property owner would like to maintain and grading issues on the west side of the entrance. Discussion followed on sidewalk widths, trail locations and compliance with the Tentative Plan.

Brian Wood, Allen Edwin Homes, 2186 East Centre Street, spoke with regard to the entrance to the development and how it coincides and is in alignment with a future roadway directly across the street on Milham Road. Mr. Wood then offered additional detail on the preservation of trees and elevation issues associated with prior development plans.

Councilmember Reid inquired if the islands included in the planned entrance were a design feature or a city requirement. Pat Flanagan, Ingersoll, Watson and McMachen, 1133 East Milham, an engineering firm associated with the project, spoke and shared the importance of keeping the entryway in alignment with the future entryway on the opposite side of Milham Road and of the dangerous traffic movements that would be created if the entryways were not aligned. He also stated that, if the islands were removed, the traffic lanes of the entryway would not substantially shift.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Ansari, to approve the Preliminary Condominium Subdivision for Copperleaf, Phase 1, subject to approval of detailed engineering plans for the public infrastructure improvements. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 1 with Councilmember Urban voting no.

ENGINEERING PLANS FOR THE FINAL PRELIMINARY CONDOMINIUM SUBDIVISION FOR COPPERLEAF PHASE 1: There being no discussion on the topic, Motion by Ford, seconded by Ansari, to approve detailed engineering plans for the Final Preliminary Condominium Subdivision for Copperleaf Phase 1. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **RESOLUTION NO. 4 FOR WEST OSTERHOUT SANITARY SEWER PROJECT #414-S:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to adopt Resolution No. 4 for the West Osterhout Avenue Sanitary Sewer Project #414-S, setting a public hearing on the Assessment Roll for February 10, 2015. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 407 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 45.

* **RESOLUTION NO. 4 FOR PINE VIEW DRIVE SANITARY SEWER PROJECT #415-S:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to adopt Resolution No. 4 for the Pine View Drive Sanitary Sewer Project #415-S, setting a public hearing on the Assessment Roll for February 10, 2015. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 411 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 45.

BOARD OF REVIEW APPOINTMENTS: Mayor Strazdas asked City Manager Shaffer to introduce the item and Mr. Shaffer provided his rationale and spoke in support of his recommended appointments to two Board of Review subcommittees. Councilmember Reid pointed out that the composition of one board is recommended to be the same as last year and wondered whether moving people around would be a better way to go. Discussion followed on reasons why and whether there would be a benefit to switching up the proposed compositions of the subcommittees and City Manager

Shaffer spoke in support of keeping the configuration the same as last year due to a record of success. Mayor Strazdas emphasized the importance of training and consistency for Board of Review members and inquired whether the composition of the subcommittees could be switched around should something happen which prevents a member from fulfilling his or her service. City Attorney Brown opined that City Council could make such a change provided it occurred before getting into the Board of Review sessions. He continued by stating that it would be more complicated to change subcommittee compositions once the Board of Review started hearing appeals.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Ansari, to appoint Lori Knapp, Michael Quinn and William Brandt to serve on "Sub-Committee One" of the Board of Review and to appoint Jay Woodhams, Keith Hearit and Wesley Mazurek to serve on "Sub-Committee Two" of the Board of Review. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **DECEMBER 2014 SUMMARY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY REPORT:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the December 2014 Summary Environmental Activity Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the Departmental Monthly Reports. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNICATIONS:

PRESENTATION BY THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Mayor Strazdas asked the Deputy City Clerk and staff liaison to the Youth Advisory Committee, Adam Herringa, to introduce the youth members present. Mr. Herringa introduced Youth Advisory Committee Chair Sami Ahmad, Vice Chair Amanda Croft and Secretary Grace Beverage. Mr. Ahmad referred to his communication to City Council dated January 12, 2015, and highlighted events and activities of the Youth Advisory Committee. Mayor Strazdas shared some of the history of the Youth Advisory Committee and thanked the members for their service. Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to receive the Annual Presentation by the Portage Youth Advisory Committee. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNICATION FROM MR. CHARLES AGOSTI REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF PORTAGE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 34, FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION, REFLECTING CHANGES IN THE 2012 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE: Mayor Strazdas shared that there would be an upcoming input session to afford the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Code of Ordinances and that action would not be taken until after the public has an opportunity to be heard. Mayor Strazdas then invited Mr. Agosti to come forward and share his thoughts and concerns on the topics identified in his communication to City Council. Mr. Charles Agosti, 1723 Romence Road, shared the recent history of the International Fire Code and why he believes certain changes have been made to it. He continued by stating that Portage currently utilizes the 2009 International Fire Code but that the City of Portage does not follow every aspect of the Code. Mr. Agosti stated that his biggest concern with the 2012 International Fire Code is related to costs that would be borne by business owners in order to comply with radio infrastructure requirements and that, to be in complete compliance, a business owner would need to make \$50,000 to \$60,000 in upgrades. He then expressed concern with how the planned Consolidated Dispatch operations would impact on the City of Portage's ability to enforce provisions of the International Fire Code.

Councilmember Urban pointed out that the equipment requirements of the 2012 International Fire Code would primarily affect new buildings and that City Council has a say as to when it would affect existing structures. Mr. Agosti replied that, while this was true, it is his belief that established buildings would need to upgrade if structural improvements are made.

Mayor Strazdas emphasized the importance of having a clear and concise policy and to be clear on costs. He continued by stating that a public input process is needed and thanked Councilmember Urban for raising concerns about adopting the 2012 International Fire Code at an earlier City Council Meeting.

City Manager Shaffer assured the City Council that there would be a public input session and that concerns that are expressed would be shared with City Council along with a recommendation. Discussion followed and Mr. Agosti inquired if the proposed changes to the Fire Code could be made available on the Internet. Motion by Urban, seconded by Ansari, to receive the Communication from Mr. Charles Agosti regarding the proposed amendment to the City of Portage Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, Fire Prevention and Protection, reflecting changes in the 2012 edition of the International Fire Code. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC SESSION(S) TO DISCUSS INTEREST IN EXTENDING LEAF, BRUSH AND SPRING CLEANUP COLLECTION PROGRAMS TO PRIVATE STREETS: Mayor Strazdas asked City Manager Shaffer to share some information and provide some background on the topic. Mr. Shaffer explained how the topic came about and that the City Attorney has written an opinion indicating there is no legal reason to prevent City Council from moving ahead with offering these services on private streets. Mr. Shaffer continued by stating that he would like to hold a public input session to hear from residents on the matter of expanding these services to private streets and that a report to Council would follow.

Mayor Strazdas discussed a report from City Administration regarding the potential of getting indemnification agreements with residents of streets that may be too narrow or that are not constructed to the same standards as public streets. He continued by stating that liability is a concern so there must be rules in place to protect both residents and the city. Mr. Shaffer emphasized the importance of making sure the program is safe and that proper rules and protocols are established and followed.

Councilmember Urban asked that a financial analysis be conducted that spans more than one year and would like to see an analysis that covers the life of the millage. Councilmember Reid stated that, according to materials provided to City Council on the topic, there is a requirement that individuals who received recycling service on private streets had to sign an indemnification agreement and wondered if that was still the case and how the provision of a service like leaf pickup would be any different. City Manager Shaffer responded that he would research the matter. Discussion followed on the appropriateness of having agreements in place with property owners v. homeowner associations.

Councilmember Randall inquired if there are current public streets in the City that do not measure up to current standards and cited some of the streets near the lakes as examples. Mr. Shaffer responded in the affirmative and confirmed that residents on these streets do receive the services in question. Councilmember Randall followed up and inquired if a fire apparatus would drive down a private street and Mr. Shaffer responded in the affirmative and stated that in an emergency the fire department is not focusing on whether a road is public or private.

Councilmember Ford expressed support for looking closely at the millage and whether it will be sufficient to meet future demand and that he believes, if proper agreements are in place, these services can be expanded to private streets.

Michael Jaeger, 7415 Byrne Court, spoke and shared that he had come prepared to advocate for expansion of the services on private streets but would be supportive of participating in a public input session on the topic. He expressed frustration with the current process for residents of his neighborhood to get leaves removed and shared his desire to see leaf, brush and spring cleanup services expanded on private streets.

James Falahee, 7463 Cottage Oaks, shared his experience with attempting to get these services expanded onto local streets in the past and expressed his support for extending leaf, brush and spring cleanup to private streets.

Councilmember Reid inquired as to the process of changing a private street to a public street and Attorney Brown provided his thoughts on the topic. Discussion followed on this topic along with the provision of city services on future private roads and the need to have a sound policy in place.

Councilmember Randall expressed her strong support for expanding the services especially since property owners on private streets have been paying for these services for years without receiving a benefit. She continued by stating that she would like to make it happen in 2015, provided some history regarding the initial implementation of the program and expressed support for moving forward.

Bob Bodzianowski, 7451 Byrne Court, shared his support for expanding services to private streets especially since they are paying taxes for them.

Mayor Strazdas emphasized that the matter of expanding leaf, brush and spring cleanup services to private streets needs a fair and equitable policy in place that works for the whole city.

Mr. Jaeger spoke with regard to the dedicated millage/fund that is used to pay for leaf, brush and the spring cleanup and likened it to the recycling millage/fund. He stated that the two are very similar and while his neighborhood receives recycling services, it does not receive leaf pickup. He then contrasted these dedicated funds with services provided for by the General Fund and noted snow plowing as an example. Mayor Strazdas stated that he agreed with Mr. Jaeger's logic but wants to make sure there are not lawsuits against the city by expanding services to private streets and that an equitable system for all is established.

Councilmember Reid inquired if all residents on private streets would be notified of the input session and City Manager Shaffer responded that the City has the resources to notify and identify all properties that would be involved and to create notifications.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ansari, to accept the communication from the City Manager recommending that City Council authorize the City Administration to conduct a public session(s) to discuss the potential interest in extending leaf, brush and spring cleanup collection programs to private streets in the city with residential property owners and representatives with property interests in city private streets. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

*** MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** City Council received the minutes of the following Boards and Commissions:

Portage Historic District Commission of December 3, 2014.

Portage Human Services Board of December 4, 2014.

Portage Youth Advisory Committee of December 8, 2014.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) had not met but that recent minutes from CCTA had been shared with the City Clerk and asked that minutes such as these be included on the agenda and shared with City Council. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson also shared that, following a request from the Mayor, the City Attorney had provided an opinion indicating that the representatives from Portage on the CCTA are not obligated to vote in accordance with the wishes of the City Council. Mayor Strazdas concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and asked that meeting minutes be shared with City Council similar to minutes from the various boards and commissions.

Councilmember Ford shared that the Environmental Health Advisory Committee had met at the Household Hazardous Waste facility. He stated that there was little discussion at the meeting as it was more of a tour of the facility and deferred to City Administration with regard to Saturday hours at the facility.

NEW BUSINESS:

TOWING CONTRACT REVIEW: At the request of the Mayor, City Manager Shaffer shared that the city's Towing Contract is up for renewal in March and that he has asked the Department

of Public Safety to conduct a review of the performance of the city's towing contractor as it relates to performance, reliability, consistency of service and charges that have been levied on customers. Mayor Strazdas indicated that it was his understanding that this contract, along with the contract for police vehicle maintenance, was already undergoing routine audits and inquired if this was in fact occurring. He continued by requesting that the City Manager provide an audit schedule which includes these and other routinely monitored contracts. Mr. Shaffer replied that while the Department of Public Safety has been monitoring the towing contract, he would like to understand if the charges that are being levied are consistent with the contract especially since the contract is up for renewal on March 11th. City Attorney Brown commented that a monthly disclosure requirement is part of the contract and Councilmember Reid inquired if this audit is a result of any citizen complaints about the services provided under the present towing contract. Mr. Shaffer replied that he has not heard of any resident complaints. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared that he has heard from several Kalamazoo County Commissioners who received concerns regarding the company the City contracts with for towing and stated that he looked forward to learning the results of the audit.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to authorize the Administration to review the current contract with McDonald's Towing and Rescue, Inc. to ensure contract compliance and quality of service within the past year. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

BID TABULATIONS:

* **ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT FOR THE PINE VIEW DRIVE SANITARY SEWER PROJECT (BACON AVE. TO CHAUCER STREET):** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to award an engineering services contract for the Pine View Drive Sanitary Sewer Project (from Bacon Avenue to Chaucer Street) to Midwest Civil Engineers, P.C., of South Haven, Michigan, in the amount not to exceed \$22,250 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS:

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Jonathon Peer, 1030 Romence Road, spoke and thanked City Council for his appointment to the Park Board and expressed his regret that he was unable to attend the October Board and Commission interview session.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Reid shared that there are changes in government structure at the state and federal levels and cited the combination of the two largest departments in the State into a single department as an example.

Councilmember Randall shared that the *Portager* was returning to monthly distribution based in large part on the Community Survey in which 84% of residents found the *Portager* valuable. She then reminded residents that Property Assessment Change Notices would be mailed in mid-February and that sign up for Board of Review appointments would begin on March 2nd. Councilmember Randall complimented the City Manager and Office of the City Assessor on the tenor of an upcoming *Portager* article regarding property assessments and the Board of Review. Finally, she shared that she, along with the City Manager, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and Councilmember Ford, attended the Police and Fire holiday party and that it was a great opportunity to interact with public safety employees. She concluded by stating that she has heard a lot of optimism on the direction of the City.

City Manager Shaffer shared that longtime Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Services, Bill Deming, will be retiring in February. He also shared that Mr. Deming had helped to secure funding that would cover 30% to 40% of the costs associated with creating a dog park in the community. He also expressed optimism that additional private funds could be solicited in support of the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared his enthusiasm for obtaining private funding in support of creating a dog park and complimented Police and Fire on the overwhelmingly positive feedback they consistently receive in the Community Survey.

Mayor Strazdas recognized and thanked City Staff for their support of a recent food drive in which employees donated food for the Portage Community Center and congratulated the Police on being the department that donated the most. He then shared details about the Committee of the Whole meeting held earlier in the evening.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk

***Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION OF JANUARY 20, 2015

Mayor Peter Strazdas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Councilmembers Nasim Ansari, Richard Ford, Patricia Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Also present were Ron Kitchens, Executive Director of Southwest Michigan First, City Manager Larry Shaffer, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis, Director of Community Development Vicki Georgeau, and Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

Mayor Strazdas reviewed the rationale behind holding Committee of the Whole Work Sessions and shared that the topic for the meeting this evening was to look at efforts that can be undertaken by the City to enhance economic development with a special focus on balancing economic development with the city's natural environment, efforts that can be taken to promote the development of large undeveloped tracts of land within the city and to look at working with Southwest Michigan First on pre-approved development sites. Mayor Strazdas also stated that the topic for the next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be a continuation of the discussion on enhancing economic development but will include a review of the city's P.A. 198 Tax Abatement Policy. This meeting is planned for the evening of Tuesday, February 10th. Mayor Strazdas then invited the Director of Community Development, Vicki Georgeau, to share her thoughts and information related to the topics on this evening's agenda.

Director Georgeau highlighted the economic development efforts of the City over the years, shared efforts that are currently being undertaken, highlighted attributes of the community that make Portage a desirable place for development, and pointed out several recent economic development success stories.

Director Georgeau then highlighted several large parcels of land that are or could be prime for development provided that the current property owners are open to development or willing to sell their property to someone who is. Director Georgeau spoke specifically about a prime industrial development opportunity involving a parcel along Milham Avenue between Lovers Lane and Portage Road (referred to as Parcel #6). Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired if there have been any inquiries regarding this specific piece of property and Ron Kitchens, Executive Director of Southwest Michigan First, responded in the affirmative. Discussion followed on potential obstacles that may have to be overcome when it comes to developing this property, desire to keep it zoned for heavy industry and what the City has done to make this parcel prime for development.

Mayor Strazdas invited Ron Kitchens, Executive Director of Southwest Michigan First, to share his thoughts on the topics of the meeting. Mr. Kitchens stated his optimism with the City Council discussing the topic of economic development and with both City Council and City Administration expressing a willingness to make economic development happen. He continued by emphasizing the importance of creating primary jobs and that major employers have the most capacity to create quality jobs through which a person can create wealth. He also emphasized the importance of having a community that retains and develops talent and possesses and promotes quality schools and quality of life.

Mr. Kitchens then shared some current economic trends with City Council and pointed out, for example, that there is now a lack of building space in the entire region of Southwest Michigan and that there is far too much office space both locally and nationally. Relatedly, Mr. Kitchens strongly emphasized the need to have pre-certified sites so that the speed from which a development is proposed to the time it is ready to go is as expeditious as possible and termed this activity as “speed to market.” In some areas of the country, he stated, speed to market is such that a property can be sold and ground can be broken in as little as three days. He then reminded City Council that the City of Portage is constantly competing with other locations in the state and nation when it comes to enticing and landing a development and shared that Portage possesses one of the premier properties for development in the entire State of Michigan (Parcel #6). Mr. Kitchens cited Oakland County as an example of a community that has taken great steps to promote economic development.

In response to a question from Councilmember Ansari, Mr. Kitchens shared that Southwest Michigan First is involved in most every major development in the region and that, while Portage is not a member of the organization, has reaped numerous benefits of their efforts.

Councilmember Randall inquired as to what the City can do to promote the development of Parcel #6. Mr. Kitchens replied that the property is zoned correctly, that the property should be used as a single development (not divided up) and the City needs to make sure that development incentives are clear. Director Georgeau concurred.

Mayor Strazdas summarized that he has heard three “takeaways” from the discussion so far which include looking at the City of Portage becoming a member of Southwest Michigan First, getting incentives in place to promote “speed to market” for developments and that City Administration pre-plan as much as possible to be able to close deals as quickly as possible. Mayor Strazdas inquired if there is anything else the City should focus on and Mr. Kitchens replied that the City must be aggressive and clear so that a company knows up front that if they, for example, create so many jobs what the corresponding benefit will be. Mayor Strazdas then added to his list of “takeaways” that City Administration should get input from Southwest Michigan First on the city’s tax abatement policy and what is appropriate to ask of developers so that only the greatest of developments receive maximum rewards. Discussion followed and Mr. Kitchens reiterated that the greatest force for change in a community is high quality jobs.

Councilmember Urban shared his experience and history related to a major development by Stryker and that the city was in a reactive mode at the time and stated his support for the City taking a more proactive approach for the next major development.

Councilmember Ford asked what can be done to entice a company to stay once the tax abatement period is over. Mr. Kitchens replied that a tax abatement is usually not the driver of a company’s decision to move. He continued by stating that another driver could be the overall business environment or an inability to fill jobs. He continued by stating that one of the best avenues to take to encourage a company to stay is frequent and quality communication so that a company’s needs, wants and desires can be known and understood. Mr. Kitchens followed up by stating that not only will such positive communication help you to work with and support businesses, it will enhance the

likelihood of new business development.

Mayor Strazdas summarized the discussion to this point and asked that:

- It be determined if Portage should become a member of Southwest Michigan First and, if so, at what level and at what level of financial commitment.
- The City pick 1, 2, or 3 parcels to work with Southwest Michigan First on finding opportunities to promote “speed to market.”
- The City work on development incentives, in particular as they relate to 198 Abatements, so that it is clear what level of investment and jobs will yield a particular benefit.

Mr. Kitchens stated his belief that, based on the feedback and support of City Administration and City Council, Portage can be the driver in Southwest Michigan in job acquisition. Discussion followed and City Manager Shaffer stated his support for making economic development a priority, that the city will be a true partner with business development and that a clear policy will be in place.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked City Administration to look at other communities, in particular Oakland County, that would be good models for incentives and actions to take as it relates to business development. Mayor Strazdas concurred and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson also inquired whether property managers are dealt with at a local level or if corporate offices are contacted as well. Mr. Kitchens shared that Southwest Michigan First will call on company representatives at the local, national and international levels.

ADJOURN: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk