

PLANNING COMMISSION

June 16, 2016

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of June 16, 2016 was called to order by Vice-Chairman Stoffer at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Two citizens were in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Vice-Chairman Stoffer led the Commission, staff and citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services; Michael West, Senior City Planner; and Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Forth called the roll: Patterson (yes), Bosch (yes), Stoffer (yes), Dargitz (yes), Schimmel (yes), Richmond (yes), Shoup (yes) and Joshi (yes). A motion was offered by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the roll excusing Chairman Welch. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chairman Stoffer referred the Commission to the June 2, 2016 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was then made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan: Pfizer (north warehouse addition), 7171 Portage Road. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated June 10, 2016 regarding a request by Pfizer to construct an approximate 98,000 square foot warehouse addition along the north side of Building 41 of the Pfizer manufacturing complex located at 7171 Portage Road. Mr. Forth discussed the Zoning Board of Appeals variances approved on December 14, 2015 and June 13, 2016 involving building setback, building height and the loading/unloading area. Mr. Forth indicated that staff is recommending approval of the site plan.

Mr. Tom Kasten of Pfizer was present to support the application and explain the development project. Mr. Kasten explained planned changes to manufacturing and warehousing operations and also discussed proposed parking lot expansions. Commissioner Dargitz asked if the building addition required FAA review and approval. Mr. Kasten stated the proposed building addition will not exceed the height of the northwest portion of the existing building and also discussed other building/structures within the complex that are in excess of 100-feet in height. Mr. Kasten indicated that he would check with FAA, but does not believe any review/approval would be necessary.

After additional discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the Site Plan for Pfizer (north warehouse addition), 7171 Portage Road. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Comstock Charter Township Master Plan Update. Mr. Forth summarized the staff report dated June 10, 2016 regarding notification received from the Charter Township of Comstock concerning the Comstock Township Vision 2025 Master Plan. Mr. Forth stated that Comstock Township was requesting review and comment of the proposed Master Plan update prior to the planned July 14, 2016 public hearing. Mr. Forth indicated that staff has reviewed the Master Plan and does not have any comments.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to accept the Comstock Township Vision 2025 Master Plan with no comments. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

7:20 p.m. - The Commission took a short recess.
7:25 p.m. - The Commission reconvened the meeting in City Hall Conference Room No. 1

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Community Impact Projects Grant Fund – additional discussion. Commissioner Dargitz asked if the Commission had any additional comments regarding the community impact projects grant fund program and comments received from Chairman Welch and Commissioner Patterson. Commissioner Patterson summarized his comments and indicated any grant fund program should involve long-term community group involvement and maintenance with City Council reviewing and evaluating applications. Commissioner Patterson stated he believes the idea should be first tested as a “pilot” program to determine community interest and does not believe the Planning Commission should be involved in the administration on any grant fund program. Commissioner Dargitz agreed that any grant program should start small and then expanded based on the amount of interest and applications received. Commissioner Dargitz indicated that projects could be located on either public or private property so long as a public benefit is provided.

The Commission next discussed various elements of a possible grant fund program including who could apply (individuals, community groups/organizations, etc.), eligible projects, general criteria for evaluation and grant amounts. Commissioner Bosch suggested that a general outline for a grant fund program be prepared that could be proposed to City Council, from the full Planning Commission, prior to developing program specifics. Commissioner Patterson agreed. Commissioner Richmond stated the program should emphasize neighborhood enhancement projects, especially in older declining neighborhoods, such as community gardens, hanging flower baskets, benches, signage/banners and free library boxes. After additional discussion, Commissioner Dargitz stated she would develop a written program outline including examples that could be further reviewed and discussed by the Commission, prior to submission to City Council. Commissioner Dargitz stated she would have a working draft prepared for initial Planning Commission review at the July 7th meeting and believes a final draft could be developed for either the July 21st or August 3rd meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Forth provided responses to Planning Commission questions received during the June 2, 2016 meeting regarding the Portage Road Diet Study.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Forth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "F".

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