

PLANNING COMMISSION

August 18, 2016

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of August 18, 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. Seven 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 Randy Brown, City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Forth called the roll: Patterson (yes) Schimmel (yes), Stoffer (yes), Dargitz (yes), Richmond (yes), Shoup (yes) and Joshi (yes). A motion was offered by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approve the roll excusing Chairman Welch and Commissioner Bosch. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chairman Stoffer referred the Commission to the August 4, 2016 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Preliminary Plat of The Oaks (Phase I), 4800 Bishop Avenue. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated August 12, 2016 regarding the request by Landmark Development Partners, LLC to construct Phase I of The Oaks single family residential subdivision. Mr. West stated The Oaks (Phase I) represents the continuation of the previously approved Holiday Village subdivision and proposes 20 single family residential lots on approximately 8.8 acres. Mr. West summarized the analysis section of the staff report and indicated staff is recommending approval of the preliminary plat subject to the condition regarding public streets and utilities as outlined in the August 12, 2016 Department of Community Development report.

Mr. Pat Flanagan of Ingersoll, Watson & McMachen (applicant's engineer) was present to explain the development and support the proposed plat. Commissioner Dargitz asked about the wetland delineation and the groundwater table in this area of the city. Mr. Flanagan discussed the wetland consultant that performed the wetland delineation and the subsequent review/approval by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Mr. Flanagan stated the regulated wetland area was concentrated along the northern portions for Lots 1 through 5 and on the adjacent approximate five acre parcel to the north, which was proposed to be owned/maintained by the homeowners association for passive recreational use. Mr. Flanagan also discussed historic groundwater elevations in this area of the city and plans by the developer/builder to install foundations above historic high groundwater levels and install pump systems in the event of any future basement flooding. Mr. Flanagan stated he has already had initial conversations with city staff regarding construction of the subdivision and historic groundwater levels in this area of the city. The Commission, staff and Mr. Flanagan discussed various

aspects of the preliminary plat including regulated wetland areas, groundwater elevations, home construction and building envelopes/setbacks and the planned homeowners association.

Vice-Chairman Stoffer opened the public hearing. Four citizens spoke regarding the preliminary plat: 1) Diane Oaks, 7234 Jamaica Lane; 2) Stan Vandenberg, 7127 Jamaica Lane; 3) Therese Reva, 7203 Jamaica Lane and 4) Richard Bassett, 7143 Jamaica Lane. Ms. Oaks asked if the new subdivision and related home construction would cause groundwater levels to rise and possibly flood existing homes/basements along Jamaica Lane. Mr. Flanagan stated he does not anticipate construction of the plat infrastructure and individual home construction to affect the groundwater elevation. Mr. Flanagan indicated it's the same amount of rainfall on the same amount of land (pre-construction compared to post-construction). Mr. Flanagan stated the roads, driveways and homes will displace the rainfall differently from the undeveloped land; however, the same amount of rain will fall on the same land area and infiltrate into the ground. Mr. West discussed the groundwater levels in this area of the city, as recorded by a city installed monitoring well, and stated that groundwater levels have fluctuated approximately 6-feet over the past six years without any development on this property. Mr. West stated the groundwater elevation was at the approximate 856-foot level in 2009, 850 foot level in 2013 and at the approximate 852-foot level in June 2016. Mr. West indicated that precipitation patterns have the greatest impact on groundwater elevations, while construction and grading activities affect surface runoff and drainage patterns. Mr. West stated the preliminary plat stage of review/approval involves the general layout of the development and the next stage of review (final preliminary plat) will involve submittal and review/approval of the detailed engineering plans.

Mr. Vandenberg indicated the original developer (25 years ago) stated that no home construction would occur on this vacant property. Mr. Vandenberg also inquired about the location of proposed public streets and residential lots/homes and potential impact on the wetlands and groundwater table. Mr. Vandenberg stated that he spent approximately \$15,000 to install pumps to address flooding in his basement that occurred back in 2008/2009. Mr. West and Mr. Flanagan discussed the proposed layout of the plat including the location of public streets, residential lots and the regulated wetland area along the northern portion of the property. Ms. Reva stated that she was also told that no development would occur on this vacant property and asked whether all the trees would be removed from the property. Ms. Reva expressed concerns about disruption to wildlife that would occur with construction of the new subdivision. Mr. West stated that this property has been shown for future plat development with earlier phases of the Holiday Village subdivision. Mr. Flanagan discussed trees that will need to be removed to accommodate roadway and home construction and indicated the developer would preserve trees where possible, particularly along the rear portions of the lots. Mr. Bassett inquired about the anticipated size and value of home construction proposed within the subdivision. Mr. Flanagan stated that home size would be a minimum 1,500 square feet with an estimated value between \$250,000-\$400,000. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed subdivision. A motion was made by Commissioner Schimmel, supported by Commissioner Dargitz, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

After additional discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to recommend to City Council that the Preliminary Plat for The Oaks (Phase I), 4800 Bishop Avenue, be approved subject to the condition described in the August 12, 2016 Department of Community Development staff report including the provision that storm water will also be reviewed with the detailed engineering plans. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

2. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application #16/17-1, 10332 Shaver Road. Mr. West summarized the preliminary staff report dated August 12, 2016 regarding a request from Mr. Donald Cochran to rezone 10332 Shaver Road from R-1B, one family residential to B-3, general business. Mr. West discussed the single family residential zoning of the property and the historic use of the property as a nonconforming office/commercial use. Mr. West indicated it is the desire of the new property owner to rezone the property to commercial, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map and existing zoning pattern along the west side of Shaver Road. Mr. West stated that building remodeling and construction of a new paved parking lot for a future office/commercial tenant is planned by the applicant.

Mr. Donald Cochran (applicant/property owner) was present to support the rezoning application. The public hearing was opened by Vice-Chairman Stoffer. No citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning. The Commission next discussed the policy of adjourning the public hearing to a subsequent meeting and whether the

Commission should waive the second meeting and formulate a recommendation to City Council at tonight's meeting. Attorney Brown stated any deviation from the Planning Commission policy should be discussed and stated in the motion. Mr. Forth suggested the Commission could consider the consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and surrounding land uses in a motion to support the application. Mr. Cochran stated a recommendation from the Commission at tonight's meeting would save a couple weeks in the rezoning process and would allow additional time to perform site improvements before the asphalt plants close in November. Mr. West stated an additional public hearing will also be conducted at City Council and the same residents within 300-feet will also receive notice of this public hearing.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Schimmel, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to waive the second meeting and close the public hearing based on the lack of public comment received during the meeting, the lack of opposition voiced in phone calls received by the Department of Community Development, the historic use of the property for commercial/office and the consistency with the Future Land Use Map. The motion was unanimously approved. A motion was then made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to recommend to City Council that Rezoning Application #16/17-1, 10332 Shaver Road, be approved and the property be rezoned from R-1B, one family residential to B-3, general business consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, surrounding zoning pattern and historic use of the property. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

3. Final Report: Ordinance Amendment #15/16-A, Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations. Mr. Forth reiterated the intent of the ordinance amendments and provided follow-up to the Planning Commission questions/comments from the August 4, 2016 meeting.

The public hearing was reconvened by Vice-Chairman Stoffer. No citizens spoke regarding the proposed changes to off-street parking and loading/unloading regulations. A motion was then made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

Commissioner Shoup discussed the growing trend of electric vehicles and again stated that he believes the Commission should consider requiring vehicle charging stations as part of larger development projects. Mr. Forth stated the proposed ordinance language encourages installation of vehicle charging stations, however, a provision to require installation would need additional research. Commissioner Schimmel indicated that as electric vehicles become more common, businesses will likely voluntarily install charging stations similar to Celebration Cinema. Commissioner Joshi asked about whether the parking requirement for auto repair facilities was excessive. Mr. Forth discussed the need for additional parking spaces for vehicles that were either awaiting repair or awaiting pick-up and indicated that staff has not historically observed a problem with excessive parking at these businesses. Commissioner Patterson stated the Commission has been discussing these changes for several weeks and he feels comfortable with the proposed ordinance amendment. Commissioner Patterson stated the proposed changes will streamline the approval process and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy. A motion was then made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Schimmel, to recommend to City Council approval of Ordinance Amendment #15/16-A, Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY 2015-2016 Final Work Program Update and Proposed FY 2016-2017 Work Program. Mr. Forth referred the Commission to the staff report dated August 12, 2016 that included a final update of the FY 2015-2016 Work Program and a copy of the proposed FY 2016-2017 Work Program. The Commission did not have any further comments on the FY 2015-2016 Work Program final update. Commissioner Dargitz asked if a Complete Streets reference should be included under Item 3) of the proposed Work Program and whether the Sensitive Land Use Inventory Map is the same as the Natural Features Map. Mr. Forth suggested wording for inclusion of a Complete Streets reference under Item 3), "Implementation, where possible, of Complete Streets Policy elements." Mr. West stated the reference to Sensitive Land Use Inventory Map should be replaced with "Natural Features Map" since this map was adopted with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and includes wetlands,

floodplains, water features and woodlands greater than 10 acres. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Schimmel, seconded by Commissioner Richmond, to adopt the 2016-2017 Work Program, with the two changes to Item 3), as discussed above. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Community Impact Projects Grant Fund – draft proposal from Dargitz (additional discussion. Mr. Forth referred the Commission to the staff report dated August 12, 2016 and indicated the City Administration was supportive of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP)-funded project involving neighborhood/community enhancement projects on public property. Mr. Forth stated that an article in the September edition of the *Portager* will include a reference to this Planning Commission initiated CIP project and the on-line survey will also include a question/comments requesting ideas for neighborhood/community-based enhancement projects. At this time, Mr. Forth stated it is recommended that the Planning Commission form a subcommittee to prepare information related to the CIP project such as a project profile and evaluation criteria and asked for volunteers. Commissioners Dargitz and Richmond volunteered to be part of the subcommittee. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Schimmel, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to establish the subcommittee consisting of Commissioner Dargitz, Commissioner Richmond and with the provision to add Commissioner Bosch and/or Chairman Welch upon their consultation. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Dargitz discussed the “Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool” article in the latest edition of Planning & Zoning News and asked if staff could print copies of the free guidebook and provide to the Planning Commission. Mr. Forth stated he would research the matter and determine if there were any copyright issues that would prohibit making copies and distributing to the Planning Commission.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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