

CITY OF PORTAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

**Thursday, June 28, 2023
7:00 PM Portage
Portage City Hall Council Chamber**

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of June 28, 2023, was called to order by Chair Corradini at 7:00 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE

- Biqi Zhao, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning
- Peter J Dame, Chief Development Officer
- Catherine Kaufman, City Attorney

ROLL CALL

Mr. Feldt called the roll: Chairman Corradini (yes); Vice Chair Joshi (no); Fries (yes); Pezzoli (yes); Baldwin (yes); Adams (yes); Youngs (yes); Kasper (no); and Freiman (yes).

Chair Corradini asked a motion to amend the agenda to move the Commission's workshop item Presentation of Draft Master Plan to after approval of minutes. Supported by Pezzoli, seconded by Baldwin. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes dated June 1, 2023.

Motion by Pezzoli, seconded by Baldwin to approve the June 1, 2023 meeting minutes, as submitted.
Motion carried 7-0.

WORKSHOP ITEM

Presentation of Draft Master Plan Key Recommendations by Houseal Lavigne and Planning Commission review and discussion.

Chair Corradini updated the Commission about the draft Master Plan process, informed the various community input for the draft Plan, and stated the six draft chapters for the workshop presentation.

Brandon Nolin, Houseal Lavigne, presented the draft Master Plan vision, goals, and land use categories. Mr. Nolin discussed in detail six chapters of the Plan, including Land use & Development; Housing & Neighborhoods; Economic Development; Transportation; Parks, Open Space, and the Environment; and Livability, Infrastructure, & Sustainability. He asked the Commission for any questions, comments after each chapter.

Commissioner Baldwin asked about whether or not waterbodies including wetlands and aquifers can be mapped. Mr. Nolin replied 'yes'.

No further questions, comments were asked by the Commission.

Mr. Nolin indicated that the information presented would be posted online for public view, and future draft Master Plan discussions will be held as the overall Master Plan update process continues.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Ordinance Amendment #22/23-11 to amend various sections of Chapter 42 Article 4 (Zoning Code) to ensure consistency with State regulations, address technical items and other changes.

Mr. Feldt updated the Commission about an earlier workshop held a few months ago that discussed many code changes, and that the subject ordinance amendment consists of fewer items. He presented and discussed six changes under the ordinance amendment. Mr. Feldt referenced the attached excel sheet and draft ordinance containing the six items.

He concluded his presentation with staff's recommendation indicating that if no additional public comment is requested by and the Commission is supportive of the proposed ordinance amendment, staff advises the Planning Commission to recommend to City Council the approval of Ordinance Amendment 22/23-11.

Commissioner Lee recommended clarification that the draft ordinance relating to the proposed Child Day Care Homes should state no more than seven. Mr. Feldt and Attorney Kaufman agreed.

Chair Corradini opened the public hearing for the proposed ordinance amendment.

Public Hearing

1. Tina Kuchenbuch, 2728 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about items 3 & 4, requested safety to be added to item 3. She also expressed concerns about increased density resulting from item 5 of removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings. She was also concerned about the public not having much time to comment on the ordinance amendment due to limited public notice and issues with the online agenda packet.
2. Mari Wieloposki, 8836 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about item 5 of removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings.
3. Derek Keith Woodbine Ave. expressed concerns about item 5 of removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings, safety issues, asked if any data supports the change, and disagreed with lower the separation distance.
4. Ruth Beranek 2719 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about item 5 and removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings.
5. Faith Akert 9702 E. Shore Dr. asked about changing R-1 zoning to Planned Development, expressed concerns about item 5 of removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings, didn't believe that item 5 was aligned with the draft Master Plan workshop discussion points. Expressed desire about Portage being a natural place to grow with maintained green space, maintained wetlands, and does not think wetlands should be labeled as accessible, parkway or count as increasing density. She also does not think that future development should follow different

rules than other development. She does not think any Planned Development should have its own development rules, and wants to know why it should be changed to Planned Development.

6. John Taylor 2522 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about item 5 of removing the 30' separation between multifamily buildings, changing the Master Plan to higher density development, asked what was the change to increase the density in the Master Plan, and did not oppose other items of the ordinance amendment, requested more answers about item 5.
7. James Beaudoin 8645 Balmoral St. asked if item 5 would allow future development within five feet of his house. Commissioners indicated 'no'.
8. Denise Sokoloski 2409 Bayside Ave. indicated issues with citizen involvement and the timing of involvement for future development.
9. Rick Hess 2802 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about item 5 provides too much flexibility and little scrutiny, and supports keeping the existing 30' separation distance.
10. Joe Kuchenbuch, 2728 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about the draft Master Plan contacts, surveys, and requested a bigger sample size for community input.

Commissioner Lee stated reasons behind item 5 and that all items were discussed during a previous workshop.

Commissioner Youngs made motion to close public hearing, seconded by Pezzoli. Motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Adams made motion to approve proposed Items 1-4 and 6, making the change to Child Day Care Homes to state no more than seven, and tabling Item 5 to next Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Fries supported. Motion carried 7-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS

1. Mark Alexander, 2630 E. Shore Dr. indicated he wants a new survey done for the draft Master Plan to capture current comments of the public.

2. Rick Wielopolski, 8836 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about traffic, safety, lack of public safety, flooding issues, high water table, and requested a comprehensive study for water issues. He also wants to know when projects are in development phase for greater public input.
3. John Taylor, 2522 E. Shore Dr. wanted the draft Master Plan to have a natural features overlay like the City of Kalamazoo, and that the City should look at fixed route busing through Metro for workforce housing.
4. Kelly Presta, 2722 E. Shore Drive asked about the format for questions during the Commission meeting, wanted to know if and when the draft Master Plan maps will be posted, asked about the land use and zoning change process, asked about past reference to zoning changes around the lakefront, asked if the City is changing its vision statement, asked when the lake center process occurred and what was the public involvement, asked if the draft Master Plan consultant was chosen by the City or Planning Commission and if other consultants were reviewed.
5. Jennifer Parks, 2505 Woodbine Ave. expressed concerns about impacts to wetlands and wildlife, and traffic safety and congestion.
6. James Beaudoin 8645 Balmoral St. expressed concerns with a possible development and trail occurring close to his house, and drainage issues along Zylman Ave.
7. Derek Keith Woodbine expressed concerns with suburban development concept in the draft Master Plan, drainage impacts, requests a detailed study of impacts of the water table from future large development near Austin Lake and West Lake, concerned about traffic safety along Woodbine Ave. and adjacent streets, asked how will cars move once Portage Rd is narrowed, and that it is not fair to loosen regulations for some and keep tight regulations for others.
8. Mari Wielopolski, 8836 E. Shore Dr expressed that she did not think the draft Master Plan vision and goals align with the new large development proposed around the lakes.
9. Cathleen Haight, 3020 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about bicycle safety around the lakes and traffic flow.
10. Denise Sokoloski, 2409 Bayside Ave. expressed concerns about pedestrian and bicycle safety, safety on Portage Rd, and indicated disappointment with the draft Master Plan consultant from a big city and supporting big city development attracting crime, big buildings, and no natural vegetation.
11. Rick Hess, 2802 E. Shore Dr. stated support for getting public input in specific areas for the drafting of the new Master Plan.
12. Ruth Beranek, 2719 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns of traffic along Portage Rd, and requests a traffic study be done in the area of Austin Landings.
13. Richard Wieloposki, 8836 E. Shore Dr. expressed concerns about issues with difference between the Master Plan recommendations and the desires of local residents.
14. Joe Kuchenbuch, 2728 E. Shore Dr. stated he wanted more local comments from neighborhoods for the Master Plan visions, goals.

15. Dave Savoy, 3520 E. Shore Dr. stated that there are too many homes proposed resulting in traffic safety, and the appearance of the draft Master Plan being changed to fit future the Austin Landings project.
16. Ben Boyer, 3524 E. Shore Dr. expressed support to lower the lake levels to lessen flooding.
17. Tina Kuchenbuch, 2728 E. Shore Dr. She also wanted to know what has been approved in the Lake Centre District Plan. She expressed concerns of traffic safety and congestion, requests a traffic study, wants accommodations for kids to bike, and wants to know where in the process is Austin Landings and the Portage Road Housing developments.

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONERS/ STAFF

Commissioner Adams recommends providing an opportunity for greater public education of rezoning process, sequence of reviews and plans.

Commissioner Fries recommends a workshop for overall questions and answers.

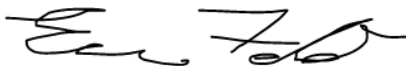
Chair Corradini initiated discussion on election of new officers.

Chair Corradini was elected to continue to act as the Chair as supported by Commissioner Fries and seconded by Commissioner Pezzoli. Commissioner Baldwin was elected as new Vice Chair as supported by Commissioner Youngs and seconded by Commissioner Adams. Commissioner Freiman was elected as new Secretary as supported by Commissioner Fries and seconded by Commissioner Youngs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Corradini adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Feldt, AICP, CFM
Senior City Planner