

Chairperson Schlottman called the Planning Commission Work-Study session to order at 7:34 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Dailey, Boyles, Schlottman, Demick, Plachinski, Bade, Paparelli, Hayman, Burkhardt.

Absent: Rutledge, Koneczny.

Also present: Greg Nikkel, City of New Baltimore Building Official
Brian Wilson, Community Planning and Management

Motion by Boyles, second by Bade, to excuse the absent members. No additional discussion by the commission. Voice vote. All ayes, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Demick, second by Boyles, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 5-20-08. No additional discussion by the commission. Voice vote. All ayes, motion carried.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Boyles, second by Paparelli, to approve the agenda as proposed. No additional discussion by the commission. Voice vote. All ayes, motion carried.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Zoning Ordinance Revision Discussion

Our planner explained based on the discussion at the last meeting, the last remaining item for discussion is the property along County Line Road. The property is located on the west side, south of the church property. The consensus was to have a full commission before scheduling a final decision on the zoning ordinance recommendation to city council. Discussion from the commission resulted in the property being left as industrial. The point of revising the zoning ordinance is to implement the master plan. It was master planned for residential, however realistically crossing the drain would be cost prohibitive, and impractical at this time.

Gary Gendernalik representing several property owners discussed additional rezonings. Particularly the properties along Cricklewood. The planner explained the decision was to leave properties with existing industrial uses industrial and rezone vacant property to general commercial. The exception was the mini storage which would change the whole property to industrial.

Any property that spans between 23 Mile Rd. and Cricklewood is going to be changed to completely general commercial. Properties with a split and industrial uses will remain industrial. In other words, it will be general commercial along 23 Mile, and if there is an industrial use already in place along Cricklewood, it stays industrial. The vacant property will be changed to general commercial. The idea would be to consolidate small parcels for a larger viable commercial development.

The Alter property at 23 and Jefferson was discussed, and it will be recommended as R-65 Single Family Residential. The Redwood development was changed to multi family, with the exception of the waterfront parcels which were changed to waterfront residential. If the existing duplex burned to the ground, a new Special Approval Land Use would need to be applied for.

The Schmid property was also discussed. The property owners want no change. The planning commission is recommending waterfront residential zoning with a 65 foot frontage requirement. Mr. Gendernalik suggested creating a 50 foot frontage zoning district for the older part of town, as not to create non conforming lots and create a new width to depth ratio. He suggested if the commission changes the Schmid property zoning they would lose the development flexibility they have currently.

Our planner explained the commission had already made their decision. Council had strongly recommended the 65 foot lots rather than 50 foot. The ordinance allows non conforming lots that meet 75% of the area requirement to be considered a buildable lot as long as the set backs can be met. The existing 50 foot lots would still be buildable. The Schmid marina property will be recommended as master planned which is waterfront residential.

A discussion regarding recommending not implementing the master plan on the parcel to remain industrial along County Line followed. The master plan is a 20+ year document. After reviewing the proposed zoning designations, it is not appropriate to move towards the master plan at this time. The finding was the natural boundary of the creek was a separation between residential and industrial uses. We will be reviewing the master plan again in two years.

The consensus was that the planner will present the entire draft and proposed map at the July 15th regular planning commission meeting.

Motion by Dailey, second by Plachinski, to set the final determination on the recommendation to city council on the zoning ordinance, for the regular meeting July 15th. No additional discussion by the commission. Voice vote. All ayes, motion carried.

Property owner Tom Hauswirth discussed about the industrial zoning on Cricklewood. Our planner explained 5 of 9 properties on Cricklewood will be recommended general commercial, and 4 will remain industrial. The goal is to attract viable commercial users along 23 Mile, and the lots will need to be combined to accommodate larger buildings.

Sign Ordinance Discussion

Our building official presented a proposal to accommodate property owners who cannot meet the existing sign ordinance in regards to pylon signs. Pylon signs got out of control when they were allowed. Under the ordinance all non conforming signs must be removed by January 1, 2010. He continued, you can see under and through a pylon sign. A monument sign is a 6 by 10 foot wall. New construction is better suited to placement of monument signs.

Chairperson Schlottman read into the record the opinion of recently hired Director of Planning and Economic Development, Judy Sproat, whose comments concur with the commission's decision to eliminate pylon signs. Chairperson Schlottman explained the commission worked on the sign ordinance extensively, council approved it. The deadline to eliminate pylon signs has been coming for 8 years. It is not new and different. She explained that she has driven around town to look at our pylon signs, and they are awful. Comments from the commission were solicited and the consensus was to keep monument signs. Pylon signs have been discussed at length. It was important to discuss the issue again, to review all sides of the argument. Some business cannot accommodate a monument sign.

Commissioner Plachinski explained that as the principle administrative reviewer and approver for a community of 32 square miles and 65,000 residents and several hundred square feet of commercial space, pylon signs in our community are not an effective way for the community to look and don't do as much for the individual businesses as they believe them to do. Pylon signs are distracting from the roadway and detract from visibility by contributing to signage pollution. There are very effective ways to brand different buildings, opportunities to slow and calm traffic down. Having a bigger sign will not help. Having an attractive business corridor will increase visibility. We have plenty of technical expertise on staff to work with business on creating effective wall sign packages. Given time, eventually compliance with the ordinance will produce a more attractive and visible community.

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Commissioner Dailey explained the ordinance was written in approximately the year 2000. It was approved by the city council. After the time put in on the initial ordinance we don't lightly make a change. Reducing the clear vision zone was discussed. Safety is the main issue. Pylon signs are distracting. Green Street is narrow and 4 lanes. When a driver looks up to a sign, it is much different that looking straight ahead to a monument sign. He continued, we want to do everything we can to help businesses in this community but safety is the primary concern.

Chairperson Schlottman explained we have required subdivisions to place their signs back out of the clear visual triangle. We have been working with this ordinance for eight years and it doesn't sound like we wish to change it.

Gary Gendernalik explained that people not from the area have a hard time seeing the monument sign at the funeral home. It was suggested the lighting be checked from the original site plan for the approved specifications. The planning commission usually protects the neighboring residential uses from higher wattage. Since there is no surrounding residential use, it could be reviewed and it was suggested the building official check.

Council Liaison Hayman stated that as a city council representative she would vote to have the sign ordinance stay as it is. She doesn't think we should change it.

Our planner discussed reducing the size of the clear vision triangle to 20 feet. It was recommended he check with the city engineer for any national safety standards. Additionally, the issue of the 4 to 1 width to depth ratio of a wall sign was discussed. There was no recommendation to increase it by the commission.

The changeable copy or reader board signs were also discussed. Currently they are only allowed for schools and churches. There was no support for expanding that for other non profit organizations. Chairperson Schlottman explained that the mayor was chair of the planning commission when the ordinance was drafted and he was adamant that nobody have it but churches and schools. The consensus was not to revisit the reader board sign and Council Liaison Hayman agreed.

Tom Hauswirth explained his tenants have complained about our sign ordinance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATION:

The commission received excerpts from the recently attended seminar on the New Michigan Planning Enabling Act from Judy Sproat.

A letter responding to communication received from Mr. Saigh was distributed FYI. Mr. Saigh objected to the brick wall and dumpster location for the gas station neighboring his property. Now the gas station applicant also does not want to put brick on both sides of the wall as was proposed and approved. He was told to make changes to an approved site plan, they must file an amended site plan and follow our procedures.

Commissioner Bade mentioned a new business downtown Ecco Bookstore FYI. Also the Sunoco Gas Station had their grand opening with gas at \$2.99 a gallon. There is also a new antique store downtown.

Our building inspector explained the wall behind Dr. Mazey's new office that is supposed to be reclaimed brick to match the building, was installed as a concrete wall with brick texture. They are now proposing to face it with veneer brick. The commission suggested they hanging a lentil and laying brick on it rather than gluing face brick on it, and our building official will communicate with the builder. The price will be the same either way.

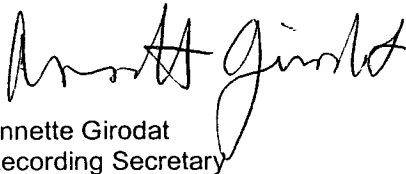
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The planner commented on the wonderful session on the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The city is in good position as far as the legal requirements. Amending bylaws to address conflicts of interest will need to be addressed. Other changes should be minor, and should be reviewed over the next few months.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Bade, second by Plachinski to adjourn. No additional discussion from the commission. Voice vote. All ayes, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annette Girodat". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "A".

Annette Girodat
Recording Secretary