

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2016.

Chairman Tim Schaiberger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Members: Bob David, Kara Fachting, Heather Grace, Mike Jackson, June Longstreet, Shirley McClenahan, Tim Schaiberger, and Dan Weiler.

Absent: Jan Hasty

Others officers in attendance: City Clerk/Treasurer John Dantzer

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Anna Devine, on behalf of First Fitness, presented a sign variance request. She presented plans of what the sign would look like as well as a letter of recommendation from the sign maker, Paul Lebzelter.

Chairman Schaiberger noted that they needed a variance because the height of the sign would be higher than the 5' from the ground requirements of the Central Business District.

Member Jackson noted that that property would need to have a higher than normal sign because it has a brick retaining wall in front of where the sign is going due to the slope of the land and that at the standard height, it would not be highly visible.

Member David noted that because of the lay of the land and because it is on a hill it would also need to be higher than normal in order to see it effectively.

Member Jackson asked if it was in the Downtown District and it was noted that it was not. Chairman Schaiberger noted that even though it is just out of the Downtown District, he would like to see some sort of Victorian theme added to the sign.

Member David noted his concern that it would not interfere with the visible sight line for anyone using that corner.

Chairman Schaiberger noted that it was back away from the road and is in their parking lot area.

Chairman Schaiberger noted that this property is unique and that by granting the variance would not set a precedent to allow higher signs for other properties.

Manager Grace noted that she would like to have DPW Superintendent Jameson and Chief Walters look at it to verify that they don't have any issues with its proposed location before it is put up.

MOTION BY WEILER, SECOND BY FACHTING, TO APPROVE THE SIGN VARIANCE CONTINGENT UPON THE ADDITION OF SOME VICTORIAN DESIGN TO THE SIGN AS WELL AS DPW SUPERINTENDENT JAMESON AND CHIEF WALTERS VERIFYING THE FINAL LOCATION FOR SAFETY CONCERNS.

Motion carried

Manager Grace shared plans that MDOT submitted for changes in signage and road markings as part of their plans for the redoing of the asphalt on the business loop and on the M-55/M-30 junction. She further noted that while the Planning Commission does not have any authoritative power on the issue, MDOT was offering the chance for them to comment on any issues that they see.

Member Jackson noted that the City would lose the street light on the corner of M-55 and M-30. Member David noted his concern that he would not like to lose the street light and would like to see it moved to a different location. It was the consensus of the Commission to request that the street light that needs to be taken down is moved to a different location so that it will still provide light at that corner due to safety concerns. Member Jackson also noted that he believes MDOT should pay for the relocation of the street light since they are requiring it to be taken down.

Chairman Schaiberger asked about the possibility of a stop light at the Family Fare plaza entrance and Manger Grace noted that it was part of their conversations with MDOT and that based on those discussions, it was not likely.

Member McClenahen noted her concern for the merge area on the west side of town in front of Tractor Supply. Manager Grace noted that they will be removing the current merge sign and making it a two lane road until it gets to the K-mart area. Member McClenahen noted that this would be worse than were it is currently located. Member Fachting recommended that they extend the two lanes all the way past the Family Fare plaza entrance and then do a lane merge after that. It was the consensus of the Commission to request that MDOT extends the two lane road until the Family Fare plaza entrance and then merges the traffic after the Little Caesars entrance.

Member David noted that he would like to see a service drive for all of those businesses and only have the entrance/exit at two locations that are both serviced by stop lights. Manager Grace noted that this was also discussed with MDOT and that they said it could be done but that they would not help in this matter with planning or funding.

MOTION BY JACKSON, SECOND BY DAVID, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016

Motion carried

Member McClenahen noted her discouragement for the home on the corner of Wright St. and S. First that has not replaced the vinyl siding that was taken down.

Manager Grace noted her appreciation that MDOT was willing to involve the Commission and the City with recommendations on the road changes.

Member Jackson congratulated Member Weiler on his election to City Council and it was noted that both Member Weiler and Chairman Schaiberger would no longer both be allowed to be on the Planning Commission because only one City Council member is allowed on the board as per the City Charter.

Chairman Schaiberger noted that after December 31, 2017 he would no longer be able to be the Chairman of the board due to City Council passing a resolution that all City Council members cannot be Chairman or presidents of City boards and that they would have to elect a new Chairman at that time.

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Chairman Schaiberger adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.