

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021.

Chairperson Cori Lucynski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Bob David, Yvonne DeRoso, Josh Erickson, Kara Fachting, Mike Jackson, Cori Lucynski, and Rusty Showalter

Absent: None

Others officers in attendance: City Manager John Dantzer.

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All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**MOTION BY DAVID, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETINGS HELD MARCH 9, 2021 AND JUNE 8, 2021.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

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A site plan was submitted by Brian Rang to increase the size of the storage unit business he recently purchased at 1797 S. First St. It was noted that during the last zoning rewrite, this location was changed from commercial to multi-family residential which changed the setbacks and allowed uses and made this business a nonconforming use. According to the zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission is allowed to approve plans to increase a nonconforming use. It was further noted that the setbacks would have to be 48’ from the center of the road to the front of the first building. Mr. Rang noted that would not be an issue. The other issue that was discussed was that during the rewrite the fencing requirements for this area was also redone and was rewritten to not allow chain link fence in the front yard and nothing over 4’ in height. It was determined that it was an oversight and those requirements were only meant for residential and not commercial type of businesses. The Commission noted that they would like to look at a zoning amendment to change the fencing requirements for fencing in commercial type of properties in the multi-family residential district.

**MOTION BY JACKSON, SECOND BY FACHTING, TO APPROVE THE SITE PERMIT FOR BRIAN RANG AS SUBMITTED CONTINGENT UPON APPROVAL FROM CHIEF WALTERS THAT THERE WILL BE NO LINE OF SITE ISSUES WITH THE NEW FENCING.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

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As an addition to the agenda, Chris and Adam Galea addressed the Commission on the property they recently purchased at 619 W. Houghton Ave which used to be a pizzeria. They noted that the property consisted of two residential areas in the back in addition to the pizzeria on the road side. They further noted that they have completely gutted most of the buildings and are looking to redo them. They noted that they were having trouble finding a commercial type of business to rent the old pizzeria area because there is very little parking in that area and asked if the Commission would consider allowing residential in that location. It was noted that the property is currently zoned Central Business District and residential that did not exist at the time of the ordinance rewrite is not allowed on the first floor.

Mr. Galea was asked if they were looking at doing long term or short-term rental like an Airbnb. Mr. Galea noted he thought about the Airbnb option but was looking more at a residential type rental.

It was noted that the Commission has had requests in the past to allow first floor residential in the downtown area and that they have always denied that request to maintain the commercial buildings. It was noted that this building was not really in the walking area of the downtown. It was further discussed that there are other residential properties in this area and that they should have probably looked at making that area mixed use and not central business district similar to the area to the east of the downtown area because it is a mixture of residential and business and is not really in the downtowns walkable area.

The Commission also discussed that the parking issue would still be an issue for residential especially in the winter months when cars are not allowed to park on the road side. Mr. Galea and the Commission discussed other parking options.

The Commission discussed options including the ability to approve the request since it was connected to other buildings that were residential at the time of the zoning rewrite. It was the consensus of the Commission that the best way to proceed would be to start a rezoning amendment to change the areas from Sixth St. to M-30 from Central Business District to Mixed Use District.

**MOTION BY DEROSO, SECOND BY DAVID, TO START A REZONING AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE ZONING BETWEEN SIXTH ST AND M-30 ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TO MIXED USE DISTRICT.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

It was noted to try and get this done as quickly as possible.

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Member Fachting noted that she had turned in her letter of resignation due to health issues and the amount of work that it took as the secretary. It was noted that the Commission had already made plans to have the City Manager serve as the secretary moving forward. Ms. Fachting asked the Commission to allow her to withdraw her resignation request since she was not going to have to be the secretary any longer. Member Fachting asked to be excused from the rest of the meeting.

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The Commission discussed the need to look at the zoning of marijuana facilities. The Commission discussed that they would like to be proactive and have something in place in case Council ever decided to opt in and allow marijuana facilities.

It was noted that there were several different types of license including sales, production, processing, transportation, safety compliance, microbusiness, consumption establishment, and event organizer that would need to be considered for zoning. The Commission discussed different options and it was the consensus to only zone for sales, production, processing, transportation, and safety compliance. Manager Dantzer noted his recommendations and the Commission discussed their ideas as well. It was the consensus of the Commission to look further into this matter and discuss it at the next meeting.

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**MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO ALLOW MEMBER FACHTING TO WITHDRAW HER LETTER OF RESIGNATION AND REAFFIRM HER POSTION ON THE PLANNING COMMISSION.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Erickson, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent –Fachting**

**Motion carried**

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The MAP site plan review training that was approved as part of the fiscal year 21 budget was discussed and it was the consensus of the Commission to hold the training when the weather was cold and not able to do as much outside. They further decided the try and hold it the first meeting in December.

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Member David noted his concern with the garbage pickup and tall grass in some areas.

Member Jackson noted the walls are under construction at Meijer’s and they are still shooting for an April 2022 opening.

Member Showalter noted there was a new flag style banner at Ann’s Hair Affair and asked if a permit was pulled. Manager Dantzer noted he had not received anything on it but would address the issue. Member Showalter also welcomed Member Erickson to the Commission.

Member Erickson thanked everyone for supporting his appointment to the Commission and noted he was excited to get started. Member Erickson also noted the handrail on the new concrete steps in the parking lot behind the Highway Brewing is broke.

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Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm