

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2024.

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

Present: Bob David, Yvonne DeRoso, Mike Jackson, Cori Lucynski, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: Josh Erickson and Kara Faching

Others officers in attendance: Acting secretary/zoning administrator, John Dantzer

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All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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At 6:01, Chairperson Lucynski opened the public hearing to take comment on ordinance 24-01. Chairperson Lucynski noted the ordinance would amend section 4.6 (Mixed Use District), section 4.8 (Central Business District), section 4.9 (General Business District) and section 4.11 (full table of permitted uses and special land uses) and to amend the City of West Branch zoning map to rezone parcel 052-455-004-00 from Single-Family Residential District to General Business District, parcel 052-458-001-00 from Central Business District to General Business District, and parcel 052-630-040-00 from General Business District /Multiple Family District to General Business District.

Chairperson Lucynski read a letter received from George Foust noting his objection to the rezoning on parcel 052-630-040-00 noting it was not a fit for business. He further noted he did not purchase his property for business and that wildlife would be negatively affected and that if they made this unwise decision, assurances must be done to prevent any sewer system problems, have trees or steps to hide development with the maintenance cost the responsibility of the owners or the city, and to reduce noise issues and the chance for criminal activity.

Shelby and Clara Roach spoke and noted they were not in favor of the rezoning of parcel 052-630-040-00 because they were concerned about the commercial zoning towards the back of the property. The Commission noted the rezoning for that particular parcel was to fix an error on the zoning map. It was further noted the parcel is currently the home to the Villa and that the zoning map actually shows two different zoning districts within their parcel with the north section of it being zoned Multi-Family Residential and the south section being zoned General Business. It was further noted that parcel has been used for commercial purposes and should not have been labeled as Multi-family residential.

Ms. Roach asked what the differences between the Central Business and General Business Districts were. Member Jackson explained that each district would have their own set of uses allowed by right or special use with the Central Business District being more restrictive and that the Central Business District was typically only for the main downtown area.

No one else wished to speak on the issue.

MOTION BY DEROSO, SECOND BY DAVID, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None

Absent –Erickson, Fachting

Motion carried

MOTION BY DEROSO, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH CORRECTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 7, 2023.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None

Absent –Erickson, Fachting

Motion carried

Zoning permit ZP-01 for 203 N. Fifth St was reviewed by the Commission. Zoning administrator Dantzer noted he did not see any issues with the plans submitted and noted all lot and building restrictions were met, the use was allowed by right, the setbacks and structural standards were met, and all parking requirements were met. He did note that because this parcel is commercial and abuts a residential property to its north, it would require a buffer of some sort. He further noted there was a tree line already on the property line between the two parcels and could be considered as the buffer if the Commission deemed it adequate.

Mary Bachelder noted there were no changes to the footprint of the building except for the covered porch and handicap ramp at the entrance to the front door.

The Commission discussed the current tree line at the property line and it was the consensus that it was adequate to support the buffer requirement.

MOTION BY DAVID, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE PERMIT ZP-01 AT 203 N. FIFTH ST AS PRESENTED.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None

Absent –Erickson, Fachting

Motion carried

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY DEROSO, TO APPOINT MEMBER LUCYNSKI TO SERVE AS CHAIRPERSON, MEMBER DAVID TO SERVE AS VICE-CHAIRPERSON, AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR/CITY MANAGER JOHN DANTZER TO SERVE AS SECRETARY FOR THE 2024 CALENDAR YEAR.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None

Absent –Erickson, Fachting

Motion carried

Updated bylaws were presented to make the following changes to sections 4.1.1 and 4.3.7 of the bylaws.

Change section 4.1.1 to read as follows: Officers. Officers of the Commission are appointed members of the commission and shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. The Commission may appoint other officers if deemed appropriate.

Change section 4.3.7 to read as follows: Election. The Commission shall, at the first practical meeting, select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from its membership, as well as a Secretary who does not have to be from its membership, to serve for a (12) month period, and who shall be eligible for re-election. Newly elected officers shall assume their office immediately after the election Vacancies in office shall be filled immediately by regular election procedure.

MOTION BY JACKSON, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE CHANGES TO SECTION 4.1.1 AND 4.3.7 OF THE BYLAWS AS PRESENTED.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None Absent –Erickson, Fachting Motion carried

MOTION BY LUCYNSKI, SECOND BY DAVID, TO RECOMMEND THE REAPPOINTMENTS OF RUSTY SHOWALTER AND KARA FACHTING TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THREE-YEAR TERMS.

Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter

No – None Absent –Erickson, Fachting Motion carried

MOTION BY DEROSO, SECOND BY LUCINSKI, TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 24-01 WHICH WOULD REZONE PARCEL # 052-455-004-00 FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, REZONE PARCEL # 052-458-001-00 FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TO GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, REZONE PARCEL 052-630-040-00 FROM GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT /MULTIPLE FAMILY DISTRICT TO GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, AND UPDATE THE FULL TABLE OF PERMITTED AND SPECIAL LAND USES BECAUSE THE ZONING IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTERPLAN, IS CONSISTENT WITH THE SURROUNDING USES, DOES NOT POSE AN IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING PROPERTIES, DOES NOT CREATE A DETERRENT TO THE IMPROVEMENT OR DEVELOPMENT OF ADJACENT PROPETIES, WILL NOT CREATE A SPECIAL PRIVELGE TO AN INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNER, AND WILL POSE NO IMPACT TO THE CITY’S INFRASTRUCTURE OR PROGRAMS.

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

No – None Absent –None Motion carried

A reminder of the annual joint meeting with City Council and DDA was shared.

Chairperson Lucynski asked about the downtown markings on the sidewalks. Administrator Dantzer noted those were used to mark utilities running under the sidewalk.

Member David noted he has heard from many people who were concerned with the downtown utility work causing traffic issues.

Member DeRoso noted the County was establishing a Housing Committee and that she was going to serve as a representative from Ogemaw Township. Member Jackson noted the City approved City Manager John Dantzer and City Council Member Cathy Zimmerman to that Committee to serve on the City's behalf.

Member DeRoso also asked about the Redevelopment Ready Community designation. It was noted the City was currently working towards the designation and had only a few steps remaining. Administrator Dantzer noted one of the last steps were to develop an Economic Development Strategy and that the Commission would start working on that during the February meeting.

Member Jackson asked on an update to the running of internet in the Industrial Park. Administrator Dantzer noted the project was completed.

Member Showalter noted he was happy to see the internet project was done and that it would be a great addition for the businesses in the park.

Chairperson Lucynski closed the meeting at 6:39 pm.