

- AGENDA -

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION TO BE HELD AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021, BEGINNING AT 6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Public Hearings
- V. Additions to the Agenda
- VI. Public Comment – Agenda Items Only – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- VII. Approval of Minutes from August 10, 2021
- VIII. Site Plan review
- IX. Sign Permit
- X. Unfinished Business
- XI. New Business
  - A. Zoning ordinance changes
- XII. Communications
  - A. Site plan review training
- XIII. Reports and/or comments
  - A. Chairperson Report
  - B. Member reports
- XIV. Public Comment – Any Topic – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- XV. Adjournment

**Motion carried**

\*\*\*\*\*

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, DeRosio, Erickson, Fachting, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

**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**

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm



**Michigan Association of Planning**  
A chapter of the American Planning Association

September 3, 2021

John Dantzer  
City of West Branch  
121 North Fourth Street | West Branch, MI 48661

Dear John,

This letter is to confirm the Michigan Association of Planning's **Site Plan Review** on-site workshop has been scheduled for **Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM** at West Branch City Hall, 121 North Fourth Street. This training will focus on and demonstrate the site plan review process.

Jacob Kain, AICP will be instructing. Please touch base with the instructor sometime before the workshop if you have any questions for him, or would like him to highlight specific points during the presentation. His contact information is [jacob.kain@gmail.com](mailto:jacob.kain@gmail.com) or 989-779-5347.

The cost for the on-site workshop is outlined in the enclosed estimate. Please email me a **list of attendees** no later than **Tuesday, November 30, 2021** so we can prepare completion certificates, handouts, and other materials and ship them to your community before the workshop.

Also, please note that you will need to arrange for a **data projector, screen, laptop, and any refreshments.**

Shortly after the workshop, we will send you an invoice for the presentation fee, materials, instructor's fee and mileage. We also ask that you send us the completed evaluation forms via mail or email.

The Michigan Association of Planning is excited about your commitment to making quality land use and community planning decisions. We look forward to this opportunity to assist you in this educational effort. If you have any questions, please contact me at (734) 913-2000 or [avansen@planningmi.org](mailto:avansen@planningmi.org). Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Amy M. Vansen'.

Amy M. Vansen, AICP  
Director of Information and Programs

1919 West Stadium, Suite 4  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

p: 734.913.2000  
f: 734.913.2061