

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
PLANNING-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF LOWELL, MICHIGAN

For the Regular Meeting of the Planning-Citizen Advisory Commission April 25, 2005 at 7 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Jahnke and the Clerk called the Roll.

Present: Commissioners Berry, Dimmick, Grimm, Hall, Hinton, LaPonsie, Teelander and Chairman Jahnke.

Absent: Schmaltz.

Also Present: City Manager David Pasquale, City Clerk Betty Morlock, DPW Director Dan DesJarden, Councilmember Jim Hodges, Mayor Jeanne Shores, Lowell Light and Power and Cable TV General Manager Tom Richards and Building Inspector Doug Hopkins.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIMMICK and seconded by HINTON to excuse the absence of Commissioner Schmaltz.

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE and seconded by BERRY to approve the minutes from the special meeting of March 11, 2005 as submitted and the regular meeting of March 28, 2005 as corrected.

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the agenda as modified, REMOVING Definition of Mining as an item.

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #2. **PUBLIC HEARING.**

- A. Consideration of Residential Sign Ordinance – recommendation to the City Council. After months of discussion, the Planning Commission amended two sections of the sign ordinance regarding Residential Signs. Under Exempt Sign in Section 20.05 I, sign with address, owner or occupant name of up to three square feet in area attached to the mailbox, light fixture or exterior wall are considered exempt, which was 2 square feet. There is also an amendment to Section 20.08 which would allow for ground signs for residential uses providing one per lot or

parcel, no greater than 3 square feet, located only in the front yard and no closer to front lot line than one-half the required setback distance and no higher than 3 feet.

Chairman Jahnke opened the public hearing. No comments were received. Chairman Jahnke closed the public hearing.

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE second by HINTON to recommend the residential sign ordinance as written to City Council for adoption.

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #3. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Site Plan Review** – NONE.

B. **VARIANCES – RECOMMENDATION TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

1. **504 Lincoln Lake (northwest corner of Lincoln Lake and Howard) – Patricia Horn – fence height variance.** Patricia Horn wished to construct a six foot high fence at her residence. The fence, six foot from side and rear yards, is acceptable. But, the required front yard from Howard allows only a three feet fence. This is a corner lot and the required front yard is Howard Street. The first fifteen feet would have to be three feet in height. A six foot fence was requested for security purposes. Thus a variance application has been filed.

Patricia Horn and her son, Tim Wolfe co-owns 504 Lincoln Lake and his family resides there. Wolfe stated his back yard has a deck and a large Koi pond and they want a secure area for their eight year old daughter and large dog. They are looking at a solid white vinyl fence being professionally installed by Lowe's.

The Commissioners felt this request did not meet any of the six required criterias for granting a variance. This would create a hazard for the neighbors trying to back out of their driveway. Also, it would make it difficult for someone to see pedestrians on the sidewalk.

IT WAS MOVED BY HINTON and seconded by HALL to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals denying the variance request to install a six foot high fence in the required front yard at 504 Lincoln Lake, because the request did not meet the required criterias .

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #4. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ON GOING BUSINESS.**

- A. Proposed canopies over vacuum islands at Lowell Water Works (1941 W. Main). Lowell Water Works proposed to construct canopies over the vacuum islands. These types of canopies are not addressed in the zoning ordinance and are recommended the Commission address this issue.

Craig Ellis of Appearance Products Custom Signs and Awnings stated the custom built canopies would be installed over the vacuum islands at 1941 Main Street. These canopies can be of any height. But for this location, it would be approximately eight feet high and cover just the vacuums. No signage is proposed for the canopies. It will also have fluorescent lighting within the canopy for safety purposes at night.

Building Inspector Doug Hopkins felt this is an excellent idea, but the ordinance does say only one per site. Clarification is needed from the Planning Commission.

The Commissioners agreed to review the zoning ordinance regarding canopies.

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by DIMMICK to approve as an exception based on Building Inspector Doug Hopkins' recommendation to allow the installation of canopies over the vacuum islands as proposed at Lowell Water Works, 1941 W. Main.

YEA: 8. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. West Side Businesses – request to have balloons – tabled from previous meetings. Commissioner Hinton contacted several communities regarding flags, balloons, banners and pennants. Most are not much different from the City of Lowell's except the City of Grandville. Most dealerships in this community have been grandfathered, but the City's revised ordinance is much more restrictive. Commissioner Hinton recommended the City enforces the zoning ordinance as is.

Tom Richards, General Manager for Lowell Light and Power stated balloons can create a hazard, wrapping around distribution lines and requiring line men and specialized crews to remove them. If there is a change in the zoning ordinance, he requested there be some consideration in establishing monetary responsibility in removing the balloons from the lines.

The consensus of the Commission was to enforce the zoning ordinance regarding balloons as it is.

- D. Master Plan Update – initial review of proposal submitted by Steve Langworthy. The Commissioners will review the proposal from Steve Langworthy and discuss it at the May meeting.

Item #5. **BUILDING INSPECTORS REPORT.** Doug Hopkins noted on the report it should read under Evart Bek, Permit issued August 20, 2004. No work has started. Permit closed April 7, 2005 by letter dated April 7, 2005 approval by Planning Commission, expired April 26, 2005.

Item #6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS.** None.

Item #7. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS.** Chairman Jahnke requested a recommendation from Building Inspector Doug Hopkins regarding awnings for the May meeting. He also announced the Joint Planning Commission meeting with the City, Lowell and Vergennes Townships has been rescheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2005 at 7 p.m. in the conference room at City Hall.

Commissioner Hall commented on the maintenance of Council Chamber lights and the stairway which has not been cleaned.

Commissioners Hinton and Teelander had attended the seminar held by Rich Harrison regarding "Innovative Neighborhood Design" last Thursday at Caledonia High School. It was an excellent seminar.

Commissioner LaPonsie questioned when the State Boundary Commission would give their decision regarding the annexation issue with Vergennes Township. City Manager Pasquale responded a date has not been given yet. The City will be notified of the adjudication meeting, which will be held in Lansing, and then a decision would be made.

IT WAS MOVED BY HINTON to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Clark K. Jahnke, Chairman

Betty R. Morlock, City Clerk