

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

For the Regular Meeting of the Planning-Citizen Advisory Commission July 23, 2007 at 7 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair LaPonsie and the Clerk called the Roll.

Present: Commissioners, Berry, Dimmick, Doyle, Hodges, Jahnke, and Chair LaPonsie.

Absent: Commissioner Noall.

Also Present: City Manager David Pasquale, City Clerk Betty Morlock, DPW Director Dan DesJarden, and Building Inspector Doug Hopkins.

City Manager Pasquale explained Councilmember Hodges has been appointed to the newly organized seven member Planning Commission. He will be a voting ex officio member. City Clerk Morlock swore Hodges into office.

IT WAS MOVED BY BERRY and seconded by JAHNKE to excuse the absence of Commissioner Noall.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY DOYLE and seconded by JAHNKE to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of June 25, 2007 as written.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Item 6A (Off Street Parking Lighting) was deferred until further notice.

IT WAS MOVED BY BERRY and seconded by HODGES to approve the agenda as modified.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #2. **PUBLIC HEARING.**

- A. Special use permit – 214 West Main Street – Innovative Design – consideration of four new residential dwellings. Mark Tomasik of Innovative Design wished to provide housing on the second floor of 214 West Main Street.

Questions were raised regarding the garbage pickup and parking. The enclosure on the back half of the building will be removed and a dumpster will be installed. There will also be additional parking near the back of the building, which will be consistent to the structure next door. There is also a parking lot which will have reserved spaces.

City Manager Pasquale noted King Milling has expressed concerns regarding the parking in the back with regard to the exact property lines. Tomasik stated the King Milling's property line is right where the building is while their property line jogs with the building.

Pasquale explained the 10 parking spaces being allocated provides sufficient parking and meets the zoning requirements.

Commissioner Berry confirmed the units would all be on the second floor. Tomasik responded yes.

Commissioner Doyle inquired if an elevator still existed. Tomasik was unsure.

IT WAS MOVED BY DOYLE and seconded by DIMMICK to approve the site plan as well as the special use permit for four new residential dwellings at 214 West Main Street as presented.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. Advertising signs in parks – ballfields – review ordinance, consider public hearing (8/27). The Commission reviewed the ordinance amendment regulating signs in city parks.

Commissioner Doyle questioned if the back of the signs would all be one color. City Manager Pasquale responded this has not been discussed. Commissioner Dimmick believed this should be a requirement which could be regulated by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Commissioner Berry asked if signs could be displayed at any park system athletic field. Pasquale responded yes.

Commissioner Jahnke believed it would be a good idea to have the signs uniform in color on the back sides. He suggested the Parks and Recreation Commission determine the color. He suggested the statement be placed in Section 14.83 Item C stating "the back sides of the signs shall be white".

It was noted the Parks and Recreation Commission will approve the front sides of the signs.

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by BERRY to set a public hearing for August 27, 2007 to consider an ordinance amendment regulating advertising signs in parks ballfields.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

### Item #3. **NEW BUSINESS**

#### A. SITE PLAN REVIEW

- 1) 2300 West main Street – Auto Zone, Inc. – construction of a 7,381 square foot retail store. Commissioner Jahnke abstained from discussion.

Representing Auto Zone, Phil Pecord was present for discussion. Auto Zone has proposed construction of a retail store on the south side of West Main east of the Bowes – Alden Nash intersection.

The engineer from Williams & Works Dave Austin providing a City review, recommended connection to the City sanitary sewer through a small pumping station rather than a drain field as proposed by Auto Zone.

Pecord stated he has had discussion with Williams and Works. It appears the nearest sanitary manhole is 500 feet away from Auto Zone's property. State law requires hookup if one is within 200 feet. In discussion with Williams and Works Engineer Dave Austin, it was felt it would be beneficial to connect to the sewer system based upon several reasons as follows:

- They would not have to maintain the system and would be better for public health
- Because of the amount of land they have had to put together for storm water retention and the distance that is required to be separated from the septic field, they had to put the septic field off site behind the back of the property whom they are purchasing the property from. They would have to engage in an easement in perpetuity for the use of the land for their sanitary system.
- Cheaper to do it this way rather than installing a septic system.

Pecord stated he consulted with his civil engineer and asked for a comparative cost between a septic system and a grinder pump. It amounts to 700 feet of line which includes 500 feet on public land and 200 feet on the property. The engineer estimated the septic system to be approximately \$17,500 for the field, tanks and the line. The sanitary system for the grinder pump and 700 feet of two inch polyethylene line is estimated at \$35,000. This did not include tap fee, engineering to align the system, any permits with regard to being on MDOT right of way, boring under four driveways and the possibility of having to install a lift station as well as a grinder pump. Therefore, it is becoming more apparent that a septic system is more affordable. It is becoming less and less affordable for Auto Zone to build on this property. Because of this, the company is asking for Planning Commission approval at this time and providing a consideration for a septic system in lieu of a sanitary line.

Chairperson LaPonsie questioned if the City would prefer Auto Zone to hook into the current system for maintenance purposes in case something goes wrong. Pasquale explained the ultimate goal is for all properties to hook into water and sanitary sewer. However, there are situations where it may not be in the best interest to do this. He noted the State regulations, which refer to 200 foot limit in terms of being required under State law to hook in.

LaPonise questioned if there have been any other developments which have hooked in from that distance. Pasquale responded none of this distance.

Pecord stated this property is being subdivided and there would be commercial value in

the remaining property.

Commissioner Dimmick questioned what the doctor's office (Lowell Family Medical Center) on the corner of Bowes and M-21 handled their hook up. Pasquale explained a grinder pump was installed. The biggest difference is a line was immediately available. A grinder pump is used and pumps across M21 and connects to a sewer line on North Main Street by Michigan Wire and east toward Sibley Street. However, the distance is very close.

LaPonsie stated the property has been vacant for so long and it would be nice to have development there.

Pasquale noted Auto Zone will be hooking in to the water system.

Pasquale stated Williams and Works provided a letter and recommended approval of the site plan subject to the following conditions:

- Confirmation of 60% lot coverage maximum (has shown 40%) note 47 parking spaces provided are sufficient
- Light fixtures turned off at closing - confirmed on plans
- Sign details to be shown - pylon sign detail provided
- Lot split to be approved (through Assessor's office)
- Plantings between parking area and right of way – 3 foot high minimum

Pecord stated the building plan review process has been approved as well as discussion with City Assessor Jim Marfia. He is waiting on notification the closing has taken place before a property split notice is sent to the County Board of Equalization. Pasquale noted there is sufficient room for a split.

LaPonsie inquired regarding the curb cut. Pecord stated they have received approval from the County representing MDOT.

Dimmick did not want this to be a make or break deal with regard to the sewer or septic system. However, he cringes at the idea of having another septic system in the City.

Commissioner Berry questioned the water table and asked if the drilling was at 9 feet. He questioned the location of the drillings. Pecord responded the drillings were done where the building will be built.

Pasquale explained a permit from the County Health Department for a septic tank must be issued. There are rules and regulations which have to be followed.

DPW Director DesJarden agreed. There always will be some contamination any time there is a septic tank. However, he wanted the Commission to keep in mind east of the property are three other properties with septic tanks. Commissioner Hodges agreed with Dimmick but would allow a septic tank.

IT WAS MOVED BY DOYLE and seconded by BERRY to approve the site plan for Auto Zone, Inc. at 2300 West Main Street with the septic system, conditional on the four recommendations made by Williams and Works.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. ABSTAIN: 1. (Jahnke) MOTION CARRIED.

- 2) 2275 West Main Street – First Baptist Church – 22,400 square foot addition. First Baptist Church has proposed an addition to the rear of the facility accommodating an office, classroom, kitchen, restrooms and recreation/fellowship space. There will also be parking lot improvements, lighting, landscaping and utilities. These are all included in the site plan.

Jack Barnes of Nederveld and Kristi McConnell of Jeffrey Parker Architects were present regarding the project. The building will double the church size on its 17 acres. The existing gravel parking lot will be replaced by a new parking lot and the new building.

No new access off West Main is proposed. It was noted the two existing curb cuts will be utilized.

The new building will be connected into the existing sanitary line. The entirety of the building addition including the roof downspouts as well as all the black top areas will be collected and brought to a new storm water detention basin and brought to the back of the site.

There will only be one existing tree taken down. All other trees will be preserved.

McConnell explained the exterior of the building will be masonry with 12 inch block and extend 32 feet for the upper building which will house the gym. The lower building will have a 20 foot roof line as well as a shingled entry canopy on the front.

Commissioner Jahnke questioned the location of a dumpster. Pasquale noted it should be screened and shown on the plan.

Pasquale also explained the parking is sufficient with approximately 140 parking spaces shown all together.

Jahnke inquired regarding the landscape within the parking lot islands. Barnes provided a landscape plan showing proposed trees within the islands.

Pasquale noted the following conditions need to be included:

- dumpster enclosure
- indicate all signage be in accordance with Chapter 10 of the City of Lowell's zoning ordinance

IT WAS MOVED BY JAHNKE and seconded by DIMMICK to approve the site plan for the addition at First Baptist Church, 2275 West Main Street with the noted conditions.

YEA: 6. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

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

- A. Letter from Rodger Garner – regarding sign and banner regulations. Rodger Garner from Good Chevrolet explained the dealership sought a permit to display signs and banners for a sale. During the sale, there were complaints in which the police department visited the dealership. Much money was spent promoting the sale as well as the sale being held within the City of Lowell. It was successful and many individuals mentioned they heard about the sale because of the sign located in the front near the road. He believed signs and balloons made the sale successful.

Garner stated he firmly believes a joint sign agreement with the other townships is needed. However, as stated previously, the townships have basically the same ordinance as the City. It is just not enforced.

Chairperson LaPonsie questioned if the normal procedure of the police department is to visit the dealership when complaints are received. City Manager Pasquale was unsure of the exact circumstances. He noted there may be times when Building Inspector Doug Hopkins gets involved in terms of signage violations. If no response is received, the police department is then notified.

LaPonsie suggested Garner discuss the issue with other dealerships and present what they believe is fair during the August, 2007 meeting.

City Clerk Morlock noted many non profit organizations are also concerned regarding signs only being allowed for only 21 days.

There was no further discussion.

- B. Storage Units. The storage units issue was deferred until the August, 2007 meeting.
- C. Changes in the Site Plan Review Process. A revised site plan review application was provided. Chairperson LaPonsie stated she favored the revisions. Several other Commissioners agreed.

LaPonsie wanted the Commissioners to consider the idea of providing a handbook to individuals going through a site plan review process.

Commissioner Berry questioned the meaning of landscape standards. LaPonsie explained the City has certain requirements as far as screening or landscaping in parking lot islands.

She believed standards more in depth such as height of trees should be provided.

Jahnke questioned if photometric drawings will be required. Pasquale stated he thought Jahnke was going to develop lighting standards. LaPonsie felt this would be good to include in the plans. Jahnke suggested this being placed in the site plan review requirements.

- D. Master Plan Update. City Manager Pasquale noted a comment should be received from the Grand Valley Metro Council. The comment period will expire in August, at which time a public hearing date can be set.

Item #5. **BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT**. No comments were received.

Item #6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**. No comments were received.

Item #7. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**. Commissioner Doyle questioned why the site plans need to be so large.

Commissioner Hodges stated he was happy to be part of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson LaPonsie commented on the amount of work done on the house at S. Hudson and Grand. It has become a very attractive home.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIMMICK to adjourn at 8:28 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

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Maryalene LaPonsie, Chairman

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Betty R. Morlock, City Clerk