



# PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

## MINUTES OF OCTOBER 09, 2018

### Call to Order:

Sabbadin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 201 W. Ash Street, Mason, Michigan.

### Roll Call:

Present: Commissioners: (5) Hagle, Howe, Reeser, Sabbadin, Waxman

Absent: Commissioners: (3) Barna, Droscha, Feintuch

Also present: Elizabeth A. Hude, AICP, Community Development Director

### Public Comments:

None.

### Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve both August 14, 2018 and September 25, 2018 minutes was made by Reeser, second by Waxman.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

### Public Hearing:

**Resolution 2018-14** - Brian Brady, Red Oak Holdings, LLC, has requested an amendment to the Mason Code to amend Chapter 100 – Table 100-2 Building Dimensional Regulations to add footnote (14) under the maximum height allowed in a C-1 Central Business District stating: An additional 5'-0" maximum height may be added for residential occupancy, with a minimum 10'-0" setback from the front building face and a maximum square footage equal to 25% of the grade floor gross area.

**OPEN:** 6:33 p.m.

**CLOSED:** 6:36 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED:** YES

#### Public Comments/Discussion:

Chris Weir, with Studio Intrigue Architects, Lansing, MI and Representative for Brian Brady, spoke in favor of the ordinance. He stated that the staff report summed up the request. The request is directly related to their plan for new construction at 154 W Maple - the ordinance would accommodate their plan for the new building which seeks to honor the historical significance of the downtown. The ordinance provides design flexibility for their project and future projects. He said this will encourage economic growth, pedestrian activity and increase density per the goals of the Master Plan.

Jamie Robinson, 4748 W. Columbia Rd. Mason, MI is a building owner downtown. She noted she is very excited to see a building develop in downtown. She began purchasing property in downtown Mason around 2001. She has seen it grow to 55 apartments above retail and restaurants. She also mentioned that this project will add incentives for people to go downtown while reducing blight.

Jamie was also present as a DDA (Downtown Development Authority) Chair. She pointed out that this project would increase our tax base. She noted it is important to keep the look of downtown while adding contributors. She supports the ordinance.

Staff provided an overview of the request and that it is related to a specific project at 154 W Maple. She noted

that the C1 District is the appropriate place for growth because the properties within the district are served by existing infrastructure.

Commissioner Howe asked if there was an ideal height increase with a step back. Staff discussed massing, perspective, and proportion between the height building and the sidewalk. With a step back, additional height is possible without losing the character of a four-story building. It was brought up that this maybe an issue to look at more closely in future development. This can be brought up in site plan review.

Commissioner Waxman asked for clarification on the reason for the existing ordinance. Is it all about the ability to see the courthouse and aesthetics? Staff responded stating that was the assumption in the analysis. There is a unique sensitivity because of the courthouse.

Commissioner Waxman continued by asking if there are any public safety reasons for how tall a building needs to be. Staff responded that they did not find any documentation for how the height was arrived at but suspected it was likely determined by the prevalent existing height of buildings built long before zoning, as well as the sensitivity to keeping heights at a level that protected the view of the courthouse, and the reach of fire truck ladders.

Commissioner Hagle asked to verify the height of the Hilliard Building. Staff confirmed the height was just over 42' as confirmed by the County Staff Facilities Manager.

Commissioner Reeser asked about the height restrictions of the downtown District. Staff responded that there is not a specific ordinance protecting historic views in Mason but that precedent exists for doing so. Moreover, there is time to flesh out that question because it needs to go to City Council for two readings.

Commissioner Sabbadin stated he was okay with the five-foot increase.

Commissioner Waxman stated this is a reasonable recommendation. He then asked further if the Commission should look at expanding building options in the district, observing the recommendations made by staff in the report – remove restriction for residential, increase to a full story and greater percentage of area.

Commissioner Reeser responded and recommended to accept the resolution as it is written, and that if the ordinance needed to be changed further, the Planning Commission can discuss in the future.

Commissioner Sabbadin agreed that the commission should not hold up the movement of this building associated with the ordinance. He further posed the idea that the Planning Commission needs to look at height restrictions more creatively. It is a great idea to move forward with this (the ordinance) with the intention that at the December meeting they look at the height restrictions in the C1 District. Moreover, he relayed that it is important to plan for the future.

**Vote:**

MOTION made by Waxman, second by Howe to approve Resolution 2018-14.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

**Unfinished Business:**

**A. Resolution 2018- 10:** Brian Brady, Red Oak Holdings, LLC has submitted a request for a special use permit and preliminary site plan approval for new construction of a 24,287 sq. ft., three-story, mixed-use building to include mercantile, business and single-family residential, on property located at 154 W. Maple Street, parcel 33-19-10-08-233-021, City of Mason, Ingham Co.

**OPEN:** July 10      **CLOSED:** July 10

**Public Comments/Discussion:**

Staff provided an overview. This application was the subject of a public hearing on July 10. No public comments were received. The application was tabled at the request of the applicant to resolve the height limitations.

Commissioner Waxman asked if the Historic District Commission has approved of the project. Staff responded yes.

**Vote:**

MOTION made by Waxman, second by Howe to approve Resolution 2018-10. The resolution was amended on the floor to include a condition that City Council approve Ordinance 221.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**New Business:**

None.

**Admin Report/Workplan**

Staff reviewed highlights from the Administrator's Report and Workplan contained in the packet.

**Liaison Report:**

There was not a liaison report. Council Liaison Droscha was absent from meeting.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

  
Lori Hagle, Secretary

