

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 24, 2012
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: R. Murphy, C. Zuellig, G. Clark, D. Lautenbach, M. Bullard,
P. Hollifield, B. Lenart

Absent: R. Johnson (excused) K. Weger (excused)

Staff: Teresa Gillotti, City Planner
Bonnie Wessler, Planner I
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 19, 2012 and October 15, 2012

Commissioner Lenart moved to approve the minutes of September 19, 2012 with correction as recommended (Support: C. Zuellig) and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Lenart moved to approve the minutes of October 15, 2012 as read (Support: C. Zuellig) and the motion carried.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Grove Road Capital Improvement Review

Ms. Gillotti introduced Marcus McNamara of Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment, who is the city engineering firm on this project. Mr. McNamara made a presentation on the proposed improvement on Grove Road. He stated that they hope to start the project in May 2013 with

completion in the 2014 construction season. He added that this is 80% federally funded and includes all of the improvements, bike lanes, crosswalks, etc. The City is working with Ypsilanti Township on the project and should have all the paperwork completed by the end of the year. He reviewed the plan indicating two proposed bus stops and flash signs for crosswalks as well as location of same. Street trees can be included in the project but are not eligible for funding but this could be discussed to include at the time work was being performed. He reviewed the proposed lane configuration, which meets the intent of the complete streets ordinance, with 25 mph. There are four driveways on the project, which will be completed. The sidewalk gap across the gas station will also be done.

Commission Members Zuellig and Lenart encouraged that sidewalks be continued where the bank is located. Commissioner Murphy confirmed that both curbs are being replaced at this side of the project.

Commissioner Lautenbach moved to open the public portion of the hearing (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously. Since there were no public comments, Commissioner Lenart moved to close the public portion of the hearing (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously.

More comments by the board and staff continued, after which, Commissioner Lenart moved to recommend the proposed design concept with the addition of completing pedestrian sidewalk along the eastern segment, evaluating street trees and appropriate signage for the pedestrian crosswalk for efficient operation and safety. The motion was supported by Commissioner Clark. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

2. 311 S. Grove – Zoning Request B2 to B4

Ms. Wessler stated that this is a request to rezone to B4, General Business or CI Commercial Industrial for a minor auto repair in the B2 District. The property is currently used for major auto repair and the property owner wishes to add auto sales to the business, which is not a permitted use in the B2 District. The site is unique; it is adjacent to the former Ford plant, and on a major street. It is surrounded by residential on three sides. However, the Master Plan states that it is zoned community commercial and his request is not consistent with the Master Plan.

Ms. Wessler reviewed the rezoning considerations that are generally accepted criteria for evaluating a rezoning request with staff responses to each of the ten considerations, copy of which is included in the staff report dated September 27, 2012. By considering rezoning of only 311 S. Grove and not the entire “triangle” between Grove/Prospect/Maus, Tyler, this would be considered “spot zoning”, and should be avoided. Ms. Wessler also included the five findings of recommendation of denial.

She added that the Planning Commission could expand the scope of what is under consideration but we would have to re-notice it; but if we wanted to examine the entire triangle, that could be worked on. She also stated that this area should be given special consideration in the upcoming Master Plan and future land use map. She stated that there was a number of letters of support for this landowner and his request.

Commissioner Clark moved to open the public portion of the hearing (Support: d. Lautenbach) and the motion carried unanimously.

Ayad Jacksi, Complete Auto Sales – feels that this opportunity would benefit many people since there are a number people in this area who have financial constraints and are interested in the purchase of used cars and are supportive of this endeavor. Because of tough economic conditions, and the rising cost of doing business, this would be beneficial to many people. He stated that has previously been used car sales many years ago.

Eric Brown, 11667 Meadows Circle, Belleville - is a customer of Complete Auto Sales and is willing to be a business partner if the property is rezoned.

Johnny Epps, 4265 Woodtream Drive, Ypsilanti – also a customer and neighbor – would appreciate if the board would consider this rezoning.

Alan Foulkes, 319 S. Grove, Ypsilanti – stated that this is a low income neighborhood and he supports the rezoning. It is a place where one could get a car at an affordable price and would tie in nicely with the current business.

Commissioner Lautenbach moved to close the public portion of the hearing (Support: B. Lenart) and the motion carried unanimously.

Some board members were sympathetic to the applicant's dilemma but agreed with staff's decision. Other members thought the city should be more flexible. Ms. Wessler explained that it had previously been a non-conforming use and used car sales were allowed in the 1990's but when the auto sales license lapsed, the non-conforming use was extinguished and cannot be picked up again. After much discussion, Commissioner Lautenbach moved to table the rezoning for 311 S. Grove with instructions to planning staff to exhaust all possibilities to see what can be done to make the use work for the applicant in conformance with the zoning laws; this includes the entire block (Support: G. Clark). A roll call vote was taken with a vote of 6:1 with Commissioner Bullard opposed. The motion carried.

3. Food Production and Processing Text Amendments

Ms. Gillotti stated that this is our second opportunity to look at changes to the ordinance on food production in residential lots; hoop houses/green houses as accessory use in residential zones and food processing in other districts. At the meeting in July, Planning Commission was open to changes but had concerns related to setbacks of gardens on vacation residential lots, scale of hoop houses/greenhouses in residential lots and their impact on residential character, as well as any required permitting. Staff has made an effort to further research and provide recommendations related on Planning Commission's feedback. She reviewed the recommended text changes.

The proposed zoning would allow gardens/community gardens as a permitted principal use in R1 and R2, as permitted accessory uses in all residential districts and would allow edible landscaping as part of any landscaping treatment. Additionally, community gardens will be permitted in public land districts.

In R1 and R2, gardens/community gardens will be permitted principal use subject to the following requirements: 1) Setback of 3 feet along any street frontage and 2) Traffic visibility requirements are met per Sec. 122-649. Additionally, gardens/community gardens will be permitted accessory uses in all residential districts subject to the same setback requirements.

Regarding hoophouses/greenhouses, the City's building official contacted other jurisdictions and has confirmed that hoophouses and greenhouses can be treated as agricultural buildings if the use and/or underlying district is agricultural in nature. To meet the criteria of the State of Michigan, staff has defined greenhouse and gardens to indicate cultivation of plants.

Commissioner Lautenbach moved to open the public portion of the hearing (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously.

Amanda Edmonds, 320 Garland – and is the Director of Growing Hope. She congratulated the Planning Commission on taking up this issue. If it passes, we will be the first in the state to do so. She stated that she does not believe that hoophouses should be subject to size restrictions – 720 sq. ft. recommended by staff is problematic and it is her opinion that 30' x 96' is the most common size and could possibly be a special use. She also asked that the board consider R3 as a special use. She also asked for consideration of farm sales for the future. It has been successful in other urban areas.

Gary Urich, 539 Maple Court – agreed with Ms. Edmonds and supports her efforts. It is his opinion that this is an opportunity for the City of Ypsilanti to address food justice issues down the road. The community is trying to be sustainable and making food available to people is the hallmark of the future. Energy costs and transportation costs makes food costly and this would help themselves and their neighborhood.

Jeanette Golembiewski, 501 Osband – stated that she is excited about this project. She has a degree in horticulture from MSU and has a small landscaping business.

Commissioner Clark moved to close the public portion of the hearing (Support: M. Bullard) and the motion carried unanimously.

Board members had many comments on various items, i.e. food processing, size of hoophouses/greenhouses, agricultural exemptions on hoophouses, sales on garden lots and opposition to structures on vacant lots, after which, Commissioner Lenart moved to recommend to city council the proposed ordinance as presented with changes as referenced in staff presentation, and to permit greenhouses up to 720 sq. ft. as an accessory use, with greenhouses 720 sq. ft – 1200 sq. ft. as a special use.

The motion was supported by Commissioner Bullard. A roll call vote was taken with a vote of 5:2. Commissioners Hollifield and Murphy opposed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Water Street Recreation Center Update

Ms. Gillotti stated that presentations were held at Spark East and another will be held with Council the second meeting in November since some members was unable to attend. Some surveys were received on the design concepts with comments on likes/dislikes.

2. Master Plan RFP Proposal Recommendation to City Council

Ms. Gillotti referred to the presentation made the previous week noting that questions by the board and some in the audience were forwarded to the consultants as agreed and staff had received responses, which had been distributed to each member. She also noted that there had been a change in the LIAA proposal where one of the consultants from the MAP withdrew because of a conflict of interest. They have since replaced that position with McKenna Associates who they have worked with before.

The commission was asked for comments on the two proposals that had been presented. While both presentations were strong, the consensus was the ENP team. It was their opinion that ENP had a stronger vision for the City and liked the idea of the compressed schedule. ENP's team brought in an economic development consultant as well as a transportation consultant, which would bring value to the process. Also a consideration was the fact that they are based in Washtenaw County and that they brought in national expertise.

Commissioner Lautenbach moved to recommend the proposal for the Master Plan be approved to contract with the ENP Team are a cost of not to exceed \$150,000 (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Because of the holidays, the November meeting was changed from November 21st to November 14th and the December meeting was changed from December 19th to December 12th.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Non-motorized transportation committee (Johnson, Murphy) – no report

IX FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Ainsworth rezoning request, Ecorse McDonald's site plan amendment for a second drive-through.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Lenart moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.