

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
August 14, 2013
Regular Meeting Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER** The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for August 14, 2013 was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Chris Young at 4:01 PM.
- ROLL CALL** Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Gordon Kelley, Tim Lee, Evonne Ulmer (arrived at 4:05 PM) and Chris Young present.
- City Manager Jason Eppler and Planning Consultant Tim Johnson were also present.
- Others present included:
Lee Deitrick, John Deitrick, Lynne Bowbeer, Julianne Burns, Christy Valentine, Robert Zander, Patricia Zander, Amanda Reintjes, Barbara Bennett, Brian Cronkrite, Jane Sawtell, Linda Curtis, Paul Henderson, Jeff Parker, Betty Weaver and Melvin Weaver
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA** Vice-Chairperson Young reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the agenda for the August 14, 2013 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** The Commission reviewed the minutes of the July 10, 2013 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2013 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.
- PUBLIC HEARING #1** 347 North Dexter Street – Acquisitions, LLC: Vice-Chairperson Young opened the Public Hearing to receive comments on the request submitted by Acquisitions, LLC, for site plan approval to remove and replace the Pizza Hut restaurant at 347 North Dexter Street. Brian Cronkrite, on behalf of the applicant, provided an overview of the project. He shared with the Commission that the proposed new restaurant building will seat 72 which is comparable to the current building. He also stated that the project proposes 36 parking spaces although the size of some of the spaces is smaller than what zoning standards require. Assuming that the Commission approves the site plan, he will be meeting with the Zoning Board of Appeals in early September in

regards to the variances. Mr. Cronkrite also reviewed with the Commission the proposed project schedule which calls for construction shortly after Labor Day and completion in 90 days.

Vice-Chairperson Young called for public comments. There were no comments.

PUBLIC HEARING #2

120 South Dexter Street – Trierweiler Realty, LLC: Vice-Chairperson Young opened the Public Hearing to receive comments on the request submitted by Trierweiler Realty, LLC, to rezone the property located at 120 South Dexter Street from B-2 Community Business District to B-3 General Business District; for a Special Land Use Permit to re-establish an existing drive-up business at this location; and, for site plan approval to construct an additional 3,000 square foot commercial building at this location. Jim Morgan, on behalf of the applicant, provided an overview of the project. He stated that the applicant has purchased five former Burger King buildings in West Michigan (including Ionia) and is in the process of “repurposing” each building. The Ionia project involves updating the façade on the current building, retaining the drive-up window, converting the interior of the building into three 1,000 square foot (+/-) retail/commercial suites and constructing a new 3,000 square foot stand-alone retail/commercial building to the east of the current building. He further explained that the approval for the current drive-up window has expired due to the non-conformity language contained in the zoning ordinance and in order to resume use of the window, the property needs to be rezoned to B-3 General Business District and a Special Land Use Permit secured. He further explained that the site plan approval aspect of the request relates specifically to the proposed new building. Finally he shared with the Commission that the project will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 will be the conversion of the current building and parking lot/landscape upgrades and Phase 2 will be the construction of the new building (actual ground breaking date unknown at this time).

Vice-Chairperson Young called for public comments.

Brian Cronkrite stated that he applauds Trierweiler Realty’s proposal to repurpose the building and invest in the Dexter Street corridor.

400 Block of West Main Street – Resurrection Life Church: Vice-Chairperson Young opened the Public Hearing to receive comments on the request submitted by Resurrection Life Church for the rezoning of certain properties located in the 400 block of West Main Street from B-2 Community Business District to Resurrection Life Church Planned Unit Development District and for site plan approval to renovate and expand their existing facility located at 426 West Main Street. Jeff Parker, on behalf of the applicant, reviewed the project with the Commission. He stated that the Commission (and City Council) had previously approved a site plan/rezone for the Church's previous project which proposed expansion to the west. He stated that due to issues associated with purchasing the real estate necessary to complete the project, the project never materialized. Mr. Parker advised that the Church's new plan is to expand east which involves vacating or relocating Dallas Alley, and purchasing the buildings located at 418 and 420 West Main Street. The south (front) facades of both buildings are proposed to remain and be restored while the remainder of the buildings will be removed. New construction will occur behind (north of) the restored facades. He further stated that he would like feedback from the Commission regarding the building located at 418 West Main Street. If removed, it will provide both a linear park/sidewalk linkage between West Main Street and the parking lots north of these buildings along with a one-way driveway access. If the building remains, the one-way driveway linkage will not be constructed.

Mr. Parker further stated that the project is proposed to be constructed in two phases. The first phase is proposed to be the construction of the parking lot where the former Napa building is located. This is tentatively scheduled for Spring 2014. The second phase is the remainder of the project which would likely begin during Spring 2015.

Vice-Chairperson Young called for public comment.

Christy Valentine, 2157 Catalpa Drive, stated that she supports the preservation of the building facades as part of this project. She also stated that she prefers seeing as much of the remainder of each building re-used/restored as possible. She suggested that the County Land Bank be utilized as a tool to redevelop tax reverted/decayed properties in the future. She also expressed disappointment regarding the demolition of the former Miller Law Office at 110 West Main Street.

Amanda Reintjes, Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Lansing, stated that the buildings located at 418 and 420 West Main Street are late Victorian architectural style and part of the core of the downtown historic district. She stated that removal of the buildings will create a large hole in the historic district. She suggested that both of the buildings be rehabilitated/restored rather than demolished. She also opined that removal of the buildings may jeopardize the viability of the downtown historic district.

Barbara Bennett, 901 Chapman Street, stated that she did not want to see the Church expand. She questioned the value of having a Church in the central business district.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Acquisitions, LLC – Request for Site Plan Approval: Planning Consultant Johnson reviewed with the Commission his staff report dated August 6, 2013 regarding the request for site plan approval submitted by Acquisitions, LLC, for 347 North Dexter Street. He reviewed with the Commission matters that need to be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals and suggested that any approvals granted by the Commission should be subject to the granting of variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Johnson also reviewed the landscape standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance and suggested some modification to the plan that was submitted.

Brian Cronkrite, on behalf of the applicant, stated that they are in the process of preparing the variance request applications and also are proposing the replacement of the existing parking lot light along with the installation of two additional parking lot lights. All three will be cut-off fixtures.

Commissioner Kelley suggested that the applicant discuss with neighboring property owners the possibility of creating linkages between parking areas considering the contiguity and configuration of their parking lots.

After further discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the site plan submitted by Acquisitions, LLC, dated July 18, 2013 for the removal and replacement of the restaurant building at 347 North Dexter Street subject to the following:

- 1) The granting of the necessary variances for the project by the Zoning Board of Appeals;

- 2) The addition of the parking lot lights as discussed by the applicant;
- 3) The waiving of the landscape/wall requirements along the west property line considering the grade of the property and stability of the existing vegetation;
- 4) Final approval by the City Manager of the landscape plan for the other areas of the site;
- 5) Addition to the site plan of all buildings located on properties within 100 feet of the subject property;
- 6) Striping of the parking lot to reflect the differentiation between the entrance and exit lanes from Dexter Street.

MOTION CARRIED.

Trierweiler Realty, LLC – Request for Rezoning, Special Land Use Permit Approval and Site Plan Approval: Mr. Johnson reviewed with the Commission his staff report dated August 2, 2013 regarding the request submitted by Trierweiler Realty, LLC, for the rezoning of the property located at 120 South Dexter Street from B-2 to B-3 along with special land use permit approval (for drive-up window) and site plan approval for the construction of an additional 3,000 square foot retail/commercial building at this location.

Regarding the rezoning, Mr. Johnson stated that although the request is not consistent with the City's 2012 Master Plan, the property is located along Dexter Street which has several B-3 parcels including the three corners at the Adams Street/Dexter Street opposite the subject parcel. He also stated that uses permitted in the B-3 district are consistent with higher traffic volume streets such as Dexter Street.

Regarding the special land use permit, Mr. Johnson stated the applicants desire to resume the use of the drive-up window is consistent with the standards contained in Section 1274.04 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Johnson stated that the site plan generally meets the standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance. He suggested a few revisions to what has been proposed and reviewed the suggestions with the Commission.

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to recommend to the City Council that the request submitted by Trierweiler Realty, LLC

to rezone property located at 120 South Dexter Street from B-2 Community Business District to B-3 General Business District be approved based on the request being in compliance with the standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance. MOTION CARRIED.

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the request submitted by Trierweiler Realty, LLC for a Special Land Use Permit to resume using an existing drive-up window at 120 South Dexter Street contingent upon the approval of the property from B-2 to B-3 by the City Council and based on the requests compliance with the standards contained in Section 1274.04 of the Zoning Ordinance and compliance with the goals contained in the City's 2012 Master Plan. MOTION CARRIED.

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to approve the site plan submitted by Trierweiler Realty, LLC and dated July 22, 2013 for 120 South Dexter Street subject to the following:

- 1) The site plan be revised to show two barrier free parking spaces along with the barrier free access ramps to the existing building;
- 2) Directional signs be added to better direct drivers on the one-way access aisles (especially when entering from Adams Street);
- 3) Add a note to the site plan that states that the sidewalk leading from the subject property to the Armory Community Center parking lot will remain open to the public at all times;
- 4) Retrofitting of the existing parking lot lights with shoe box style lights so that light shines directly downward;
- 5) Revisions to and final approval by the City Manager of the landscape plan for the site;
- 6) The continued use and maintenance of the parking spaces to the east of the existing building (where the new building is to be constructed as part of Phase 2);
- 7) Approval by the City Council of the rezoning of the property from B-2 to B-3.

MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Johnson left the meeting.

Resurrection Life Church – Request for Rezoning and Site Plan Approval: The City Manager reviewed with the

Commission Mr. Johnson's staff report dated August 7, 2013 regarding the request submitted by Resurrection Life Church for the rezoning of certain properties located in the 400 block of West Main Street from B-2 Community Business District to Resurrection Life Church Planned Unit Development District and for site plan approval to renovate and expand their facility located at 426 West Main Street.

In his report Mr. Johnson advised the Commission that the request submitted by Resurrection Life Church is essentially the same as the request submitted and approved by the City during 2011. He further stated that the City's 2012 Master Plan recommends central business district uses along both sides of West Main Street from Dexter Street to Library Street. He further wrote, however, that the Plan contains a number of goals for the central business district which are relevant to the Church's request. These goals were previously cited by the City Council in approving the 2011 request.

Mr. Johnson, in his report, also offered comments regarding the proposed site plan (both the PUD and non-PUD portions). These comments included suggestions regarding changes to the parking lot configuration, informational changes/notes on the site plan and the need for the applicant to submit architecturally drawings/renderings of the proposed project. He also stated that the City Engineer will need to review the utility layout and stormwater management plan.

Prior to discussion beginning among Commissioners, Commissioner Lee shared with the Commission that he is an active member of Resurrection Life Church. He further stated that he did not believe that his affiliation with the Church would prevent him from carefully reviewing the request nor impact his decision making. Several Commissioners agreed.

Jeff Parker, architect for Church, discussed plans for the "in fill" portion of the building at Dallas Alley. He stated that the façade would not be designed to duplicate the buildings on either side. Likely, the appearance would match the appearance of the northern façade of the building.

The City Manager stated that the Commission should delay action on acting on the Church's request until the architectural renderings are submitted. He further stated that the Commission should determine if, as in 2011, it believes the proposed project meets the PUD standards and Master

Plan goals. Finally, he suggested that the Commission provide direction to the applicant regarding the configuration/layout of the relocated alley (walkway only v. walkway/driveway).

After discussion, the consensus of the Commission was that the proposed project is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance PUD goals and Master Plan goals. It was the further consensus of the Commission that the building at 418 West Main Street remain and that the vacant property at 416 West Main Street remain a pedestrian walkway linking West Main Street and the north parking lot with no vehicular (alley) access to be provided.

The matter of preserving the buildings rather than the building facades at 418 and 420 West Main Street was discussed and how this impacts the downtown historic district. The Commission suggested that Mr. Parker converse with the State Historic Preservation Office to determine if keeping the facades (but removing the remainder of the buildings) at 418 and 420 West Main Street is considered demolition.

The Commission requested that the applicant return to the September 11th Commission meeting so that discussion can continue regarding the Church's requests.

Sparrow Ionia Hospital – Informal Site Plan Review:
Discussion deferred to the September meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Steele Street Corridor PUD District – Continue Discussion:
Discussion deferred to the September meeting.

Donation Drop Box Standards: Discussion deferred to the September meeting.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS None.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Kelley, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 PM.
MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Eppler
City Manager
Recording Secretary for Boomer Hoppough, Secretary