

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
January 13, 2016
Annual Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Annual Meeting

The City Manager called the Annual Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission to order at 4:30 PM. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to select a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary for 2016.

Chairperson: It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to select Commissioner Young as Chairperson for 2016. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice-Chairperson. It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to select Commissioner Hoppough as Vice-Chairperson for 2016. MOTION CARRIED.

Secretary. It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Lee to select Commissioner Cook as Secretary for 2016. MOTION CARRIED.

The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for January 13, 2016 was called to order by Chairperson Chris Young at 4:34 PM.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Boomer Hoppough, Mark Jennings (arrived at 5:00 PM) Gordon Kelley (arrived at 4:40 PM), Tim Lee, Evonne Ulmer, and Chris Young present.

City Manager Jason Eppler and Planning Consultant Tim Johnson were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Young reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Cook to approve the agenda for the January 13, 2016 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The Commission reviewed the minutes of the December 9, 2015 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2015 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS None.

OLD BUSINESS Master Plan Amendment – Former Sparrow Ionia Hospital Property: The City Manager reported that at its January 5, 2016 meeting, the City Council accepted the Commission's recommendation and approved the Lafayette/East Washington Sub-Area Plan amendment to the City's 2012 Master Plan. The Sub-Area plan addresses the re-use of the former Sparrow Ionia Hospital property. The City Manager also reported that asbestos abatement work is underway at the old hospital with bids currently being accepted by Sparrow Health System for demolition of the old hospital. All demolition/site improvement work should be completed by late Spring 2016.

Sign Ordinance – Recent United States Supreme Court Decision: Planning Consultant Tim Johnson introduced discussion on this topic at the Commission's December meeting. He reported that the recent Supreme Court decision in Reed v Gilbert has prompted many communities throughout the country to revisit their sign regulations and determine if updates are needed. Mr. Johnson reviewed with the Commission a memorandum dated January 13, 2016 which he prepared and outlines sections of the sign ordinance that the Commission needs to review and consider changing.

After discussion, the Commission requested that Mr. Johnson be prepared to review with the Commission the first six or seven sections of the sign ordinance at the next meeting with the goal of identifying the revisions/amendments needed to these sections.

Zoning Ordinance – “Little Houses”/Minimum Square Footage for Dwellings: Commissioner Kelley introduced discussion on this topic at the Commission's December meeting. At that time, he suggested that Commissioner's conduct research on their own regarding the pros and cons of amending the City's zoning ordinance to reduce or remove the minimum square footage requirements for residences in the City. He stated that the movement to live in “little houses” has been popularized by a show on cable television. He further stated that he continues to research this topic and

will likely have more to share with the Commission at the February meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of 2012 Master Plan Implementation Plan: The City Manager reviewed the status of the Commission's efforts to implement the goals/priorities contained in the 2012 Master Plan. He stated that the Commission accomplished many recommendations during 2015. He reviewed with the Commission those goals/priorities that still need to be completed. The Commission expressed particular interest in working on the following items during 2016 (in no particular order):

- Assess traffic calming options on Washington Street (Dexter Street to Rich Street);
- Amend the setback requirements of the B-2 Zone (CBD) to require new buildings to have a zero setback or perhaps a minimum in order to preserve the historical building setback environment in the downtown area, especially along Main Street;
- Review Zoning Ordinance regulations pertaining to the downtown area and revise as necessary so that a broader range of complementary uses are permitted.
- Prepare, in conjunction with the Downtown Development Authority, a wayfinding signage plan which will include the uses for which directional location signs are desired as well as probable placement and design of those signs. The major gateways into the City should be taken into account.

The City Manager reminded the Commission that it will need to begin reviewing and updating the Master Plan sometime during 2017 based on the statutorily established five year review cycle.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

The City Manager updated the Commission on the medical marihuana grow facility and associated zoning violation at 410 Swartz Court.

The Commission discussed the timeframe for implementing the recreational component of the Steele Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 PM. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Eppler
City Manager
Recording Secretary for Dave Cook, Secretary