

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
June 8, 2016
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for June 8, 2016 was called to order by Chairperson Chris Young at 4:30 PM.

ROLL CALL Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Boomer Hoppough, Mark Jennings, Gordon Kelley, Tim Lee, and Chris Young pre sent. Commissioner Evonne Ulmer was excused.

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

Public present included Scott Ferman on behalf of View Point Counseling and Lowell Swartz.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Chairperson Young reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to approve the agenda for the June 8, 2016 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The Commission reviewed the minutes of the April 13, 2016 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2016 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING Chairperson Young opened the Public Hearing to receive comments regarding the request submitted by View Point Counseling for site plan approval for the construction of a professional office building at 441 Swartz Court.

The City Manager stated that notice of the Public Hearing was published in the May 20, 2016 edition of the *Sentinel-Standard* as well as mailed to those residing and/or owning property within 300 feet of the subject property. He further stated that to date no comments regarding the request have been received.

Commissioner Hoppough stated that due to a banking relationship with the applicant, he has a conflict of interest and would not participate in discussing or taking action on the request. Commissioner Cook also stated that he has a

conflict of interest due to currently renting a building that he owns on West Main Street to the applicant and therefore, like Commissioner Hoppough, would not participate in the discussions/actions on the request.

Mr. Scott Ferman, on behalf of the applicant, reviewed the request for site plan approval. He provided details regarding the project proposed by View Point Counseling.

The City Manager stated that the City's Planning Consultant, Tim Johnson, had reviewed the View Point Counseling site plan and offered comments regarding compliance with the City's Zoning Ordinance in a memorandum dated May 27, 2016. He further stated that since that time the applicant had revised their site plan to address many of the comments contained in the memorandum and Mr. Johnson had prepared an updated memorandum (dated June 7, 2016) for the Commission's review. Mr. Johnson reviewed this memorandum with the Commission.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Young closed the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Sign Ordinance – Recent United States Supreme Court Decision: Planning Consultant Johnson distributed a memorandum dated June 8, 2016 containing the revisions proposed by the Commission to the sign ordinance. The Commission will review the memorandum in detail at its July meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Request for Site Plan Approval – View Point Counseling – 441 Swartz Court: Planning Consultant Johnson provided an overview of the request. He stated that the applicant has requested permission to construct a 3,060 square foot professional office building on property zoned B-3 General Business District at 441 Swartz Court. This use is a “by right” use in this zoning district. Mr. Johnson stated that the latest version of the site plan provided by the applicant addresses many of the deficiencies of the original site plan. The updated plan, however, requires the Commission's input on many aspects of the site landscaping. He reviewed these items with the Commission and stated that the landscape sections of the Zoning Ordinance (both general landscaping provisions and landscaping provisions contained in the parking section) provide some discretion on the part of the Commission as to the actual plan and plant material/tree

requirements. He also stated that the site plan proposes twenty-two parking spaces, well exceeding the maximum permitted by the Zoning Ordinance for this type of use. He further stated that the Commission would be required to make a finding that the number of parking spaces requested is appropriate.

The Commission discussed the matter of permitting twenty-two parking spaces for the use. The applicant stated that the number of spaces are needed based on the number of counseling rooms (ten) proposed in the new building. After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Kelley, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to permit twenty-two parking spaces at 441 Swartz Court based on compliance with the factors contained in Section 1282.05 of the City Code. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

The Commission then discussed the matter of requiring additional landscaping for the parking lot (including landscape islands) based on the parking lot containing twenty or more parking spaces (Section 1286.03 (o)). After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to not require parking lot landscaping due to the size and shape of the parking lot and the general landscaping plan for the site. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

The Commission then reviewed the matter of screening the parking lot from the residentially zoned property located south of 441 Swartz Court. Section 1282.02(n) requires that, where off-street parking areas for non-residential uses abut residentially zoned property, a greenbelt of not less than 15 feet wide shall be provided and landscaped per the requirements of Section 1286.03(f). The applicant has proposed landscaping, however, the Commission questioned the need for and effectiveness of the landscaping due to the natural berm/varying topography between 441 Swartz Court and the residentially zoned property to the south. After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to not require a landscaped greenbelt between 441 Swartz Court and the property to the south due to the natural berm that currently exists and the varying topography of the area. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

The Commission then discussed the landscaping requirements for the two front yards (one being towards Swartz Court, the second being towards M-66) contained in

Section 1286.03 (n). The Commission questioned the effectiveness of the shrubs required by the ordinance in providing aesthetic value due to the topography of the site as well as the number of trees (canopy/ornamental/evergreen) suggested by the Zoning Ordinance. After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Lee to revise the landscape plan proposed by the applicant as follows:

Landscaping for Swartz Court Front Yard: A total of six trees (2 – canopy; 2 – ornamental; 2 – evergreen). No shrubs, however, ornamental grasses shall be planted around the electric transformer located at the north east corner of the property.

Landscaping for M-66 Front Yard: A total of six trees (2 – canopy; 2 – ornamental; 2 – evergreen) and no shrubs.

and that the size of the trees proposed by the applicant (evergreens 4'6"; large deciduous (2 1/2" caliper); ornamental (1 1/2" caliper) are acceptable for the site. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

The Commission then discussed the section in the Standards of Approval for Site Plans (Section 1276.07) that addresses sidewalks. After discussion it was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Lee to not require a sidewalk on Swartz Court since there is currently no other public sidewalk along Swartz Court and to not require a sidewalk along M-66 since the placement of a sidewalk or non-motorized pathway along M-66 needs to be part of a multi-jurisdiction master pathway plan prepared with neighboring municipalities. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

It was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Lee to approve the request submitted by View Point Counseling for site plan approval for the construction of a 3,060 square foot professional office building at 441 Swartz Court per the site plan dated June 2, 2016 subject to the site plan being revised to include the landscape plan changes approved by the Commission and subject to final approval from the Ionia County Drain Commissioner regarding the storm water plan for the site. MOTION CARRIED (Cook and Hoppough abstained).

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS None.

ADJOURNMENT It was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by
Commissioner Lee to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM.
MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Eppler
City Manager
Recording Secretary for Dave Cook, Secretary