

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
November 10, 2021
Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hoppough called the Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for November 10, 2021 to order at 4:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners David Cook, Mike Donaldson, Tim Lee, Ryan Videtich, Boomer Hoppough, and Judy Swartz (4:32 PM).

Absent: None

Also Present: Planning Consultant Brad Kotrba, City Manager Precia Garland, and Assistant to the City Manager Jonathan Bowman.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Hoppough introduced the agenda and asked if there were any requested changes. No changes were requested. It was moved by Commissioner Cook and seconded by Commissioner Donaldson to approve the agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the regular meeting of September 8 were reviewed. It was moved by Cook, seconded by Lee to approve the minutes from September 8. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing to receive comments on repealing the current sign ordinance from within the subdivision regulations and adopting a revised sign ordinance to the zoning regulations. The aforementioned repeal and adoption would be enacted through proposed Ordinance No. 558.

Chairperson Hoppough opened the floor to receive comments on the Public Hearing at 4:32 PM at the request of a member of the public who could not attend the full meeting.

John Kruger, member of the public, spoke to the Planning Commission requesting an exemption for the national flag to be included in the ordinance. He also expressed that government signs should be subject to the same rules as all other signs. Finally, he discussed content on signs and how this can protect property values.

Chairperson Hoppough closed the Public Hearing at 4:38 PM to continue with the regular agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stacy Moore the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity presented to the Commission on current projects and initiatives.

Commissioners held a dialogue with Moore on the ability to partner with Habitat for Humanity on the “Rock the Block” and “Brush with Kindness” programs. These programs support beatification efforts that the Commission aims to tackle as a future goal.

PUBLIC HEARINGS CONT.

Public Hearing to receive comments on repealing the current sign ordinance from within the subdivision regulations and adopting a revised sign ordinance to the zoning regulations. The aforementioned repeal and adoption would be enacted through proposed Ordinance No. 558.

Chairperson Hoppough reopened the floor to receive comments on the Public Hearing at 4:49 PM.

Chairperson Hoppough closed the Public Hearing at 4:49 PM following no additional public comments.

City Manager Garland provided the following noteworthy changes on the proposed Sign Ordinance.

Noteworthy Changes:

- Abandoned Signs – We have added to this definition to clarify characteristics of abandoned signs and differentiate from other types of signs. In section 1284.08 it was added that if abandoned signs are nonconforming they must be removed in 1 year.
- Dangerous Signs – This is a new definition used to describe a sign that is in disrepair. We wanted to distinguish between a sign that is abandoned due to the use no longer existing and signs that need to be removed immediately because they are a public safety risk. For this reason, dangerous signs were added to the list of prohibited signs in section 1284.04.
- Banners – In this definition, we separated banners into two new categories, temporary and permanent. This was done to allow the current practice of banners being used as wall signs as long as they are maintained. Temporary banners are the traditional use for event advertising as originally allowed in the previous ordinance except we removed flags from the definition.
- Flags – We determined that everyone knows what a flag is traditionally and we do not need to over complicate the ordinance by calling some flags signs. The revisions provide a broad flag definition and then permit up to four flags per lot as long as size restrictions are met. Section 1284.06 explains these restrictions and explicitly states that permits are not required.
- Incidental Sign – This is a new addition to the ordinance to provide guidance for directional, operational, and other types of signs that the City does not need to require a permit for as stated in section 1284.06. This section provides size restrictions and limits the number allowed per lot based on parcel size.
- Monument Sign – Ground signs were renamed “monument signs” to more accurately follow industry definitions for this type of sign.

- Sidewalk Sign – The definition was clarified and a graphic was made to express what they are to resemble. These signs were added to section 1284.06 to allow them to exist without requiring a permit.
- Section 1284.04 Prohibited Signs – All inflatable signs will now be prohibited rather than only inflatable signs with movement.
- Section 1284.07 General Standards for Permitted Signs – A major difference in this section is that it has been expanded to include standards for each specific type of sign. These standards previously were within each zoning district but have been simplified to incorporate easy to read charts for each district. Illumination standards have been added to this section as well to provide guidelines for all illuminated signage.
- Section 1284.11 Temporary and Portable Sign – Originally there were too many types of signs placed in this category. It has been simplified to list temporary and portable and then broken down into residential and non-residential lots. Residential temporary signs no longer require a permit and are limited to a maximum of 4. The time frame that temporary signs are allowed was simplified to a 30-day period up to 4 times a year.
- Pole Sign – For all pole signs we have reduced the setback requirements from 20 feet for the front yard setback and 15 feet for the side yard setback to a uniform 10 feet setback for both.
- Wall Signs – In addition to allowing banners to be used as wall signs when they are securely fastened and properly maintained, the maximum area for wall signs has been changed. Each zoning district now has a percentage of wall area or maximum allowable square footage for wall signs. These percentages and maximums will increase the amount of allowable signage in multiple districts.
- Section 1284.19 Substitution of Non-Commercial Speech and Commercial Speech – This section is an addition needed because of the ruling in Supreme Court case *Reed v Town of Gilbert, AZ (2015)*.

Planning Consultant Kotrba gave an additional overview of proposed Ordinance No. 558 and communicated important changes.

It was moved by Donaldson and seconded by Cook to recommend that City Council approves Ordinance No. 558 repealing Part Twelve, Title Four, Chapter 1234 entitled “Subdivision Regulations; Signs” and adding to Part Twelve, Title Six, a new Chapter 1284 entitled “Zoning; Signs” to the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia, Michigan.
MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Cook and seconded by Commissioner Swartz to adjourn the meeting at 5:33 PM. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully Submitted,

Precia Garland, Recording Secretary,
for David Cook, Secretary