

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
August 11, 2010
Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for August 11, 2010 was called to order by Chairperson Mark Jennings at 4:00 PM.

ROLL CALL Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Mark Jennings, Ted Paton and Evonne Ulmer present. Commissioners Gordon Kelley and Boomer Hoppough were excused.

City Manager Jason Eppler, Public Safety Officer Doug DeVries, City Clerk Lynn Lafler and Tina Connor-Wellman were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Chairperson Jennings reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Ulmer, seconded by Commissioner Cook to approve the agenda for the August 11, 2010 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The Commission reviewed the minutes of the June 9, 2010 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2010 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

The City Manager noted the synopsis that was prepared of the meeting held on July 14, 2010 since a quorum of the Commission was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS Chamber of Commerce Director Tina Connor-Wellman addressed the Commission regarding the property located at 206 South Dexter Street (former Chinese restaurant that the City recently purchased) and possible uses for the site. She expressed interest in having the Chamber construct a Welcome Center on this property, which is planned to be used as a trailhead for the rails-to-trails project. The City Manager explained that a consultant will be hired to assist in developing a development master plan for the site and that this proposal can be considered as part of the site plan development process.

OLD BUSINESS Home Occupation Amendment: Chairperson Jennings asked that this matter remained tabled until a decision has been

made regarding medical marijuana. He stated that if the Commission decides to permit medical marijuana as a home occupation, the proposed home occupation amendment will need to be revised to reflect this change.

Limited Industrial Amendment: Chairperson Jennings asked that this item remain tabled until Commissioner Kelley is present. He reminded the Commission of the issues that the City Council raised earlier this summer regarding the proposed amendment.

Medical Marijuana: The City Manager reviewed with the Commission the materials regarding medical marijuana and the Michigan Marijuana Act that were previously distributed to the Commission for consideration. He stated that the City Council, at its August 3, 2010 meeting, approved a 6 month extension to the moratorium on business activities related to medical marijuana.

Chairperson Jennings introduced discussion on this topic. He stated that at the last meeting there seemed to be a split among Commissioners – those who wanted to permit some business activities related to medical marijuana and those who wanted to prohibit business activities to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Commissioners Paton and Cook both stated that they continue to support prohibiting business activities relating to medical marijuana. Chairperson Jennings expressed interest in this position as well.

Commissioner Ulmer stated that she felt medical marijuana has a place in modern medicine and should be accessible to those in need. She also stated that as a local attorney, she philosophically has issues with voting for an ordinance in which she may have to defend someone against.

After further discussion, Chairperson Jennings stated that the consensus was to recommend an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that prohibits the business aspect of medical marijuana to the fullest extent possible. He asked the City Manager to have a Zoning Ordinance amendment prepared consistent with this position for the Commission to review at a future date.

Ordinance No. 479 – Rezoning: The City Manager reported that the Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance No. 479 was held on July 14, 2010. The next step in the adoption process

is for the Commission to recommend adoption to the City Council. He reported that if action is taken by the Commission at this meeting the proposed ordinance will be placed before the City Council for first reading at its September 7, 2010 meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Ulmer, seconded by Commissioner Paton to recommend to the City Council that Ordinance No. 479, which rezones the Ionia Free Fairgrounds and certain properties in its vicinity to F-Fairgrounds and rezones the former Ionia Ford site (Caswell property) on South Dexter Street to B-3 General Commercial based on the rezoning being consistent with the City's Master Plan. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

Garage Sale Sign Regulations: The City Manager stated that the City recently received a petition from twenty-one City residents requesting that the current regulations pertaining to garage sale signs contained in the Sign Ordinance be revised to permit off-premise signs (directional signs) subject to conditions. The current regulations restrict garage sale signs to the site at which the sale is occurring.

City Clerk Lynn Lafler was present to express his support for the revisions. He stated that often directional signs (especially from M-21 or M-66) are necessary to get those looking for a garage sale to its location. He also stated that he felt placing limitation on off-premise signs, for example, number of signs, time frame for placement, content/information on the signs, size, etc. would be reasonable.

The City Manager stated that he had recently received a letter from Mr. Frank Lattimore, 724 West Lincoln Avenue, supporting the current garage sale sign regulations.

Commissioner Jennings introduced discussion on this matter. After discussion, it appeared to be the consensus among Commissioners that the garage sale sign regulations (Section 1234.08(i) of the City Code) be revised as follows:

- Permit up to two off-premise signs;
- Limit the timeframe for the placement of the off-premise signs to 2 hours prior to the opening of the first day of the sale and require removal of the signs within 2 hours after the closing of the sale on its last day;

- Require that the off-premise sign contain the address and date of the sale;
- Limit the size of the off-premise sign to no more than 4 square feet per each side of the sign.

The City Manager stated that since the City's sign ordinance is not part of the zoning ordinance, neither a Public Hearing by the Commission nor a recommendation to Council to approve the ordinance is necessary. However, he stated that he felt the City Council would appreciate a recommendation from the Commission on this topic and advised that he would have the proposed amendment available for the Commission to review at its September 8th meeting in order to recommend its approval to the City Council.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Paton to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jason Eppler
City Manager/Recording Secretary
for

Boomer Hoppough, Secretary