

**CITY OF IONIA**  
**Planning Commission**  
**January 13, 2010**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Annual Meeting: Due to the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, Secretary Hoppough called the Annual Meeting to order at 4:08 PM. The City Manager reported that the Commission's Rules of Procedure require the Commission to select a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary at the January meeting each year. Those selected remain in their respective positions for the ensuing calendar years.

It was moved by Commissioner Milewski, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to select the following officers for 2010:

Chair: Mark Jennings  
Vice-Chair: Ted Paton  
Secretary: Boomer Hoppough

MOTION CARRIED.

Secretary Hoppough adjourned the Annual Meeting at 4:11 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Regular Meeting: The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for January 13, 2010 was called to order by Secretary Hoppough at 4:12 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

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

City Manager Jason Eppler and the City's Planning Consultant, Tim Johnson, were also present.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Secretary Hoppough reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to approve the agenda for the January 13, 2010 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the December 9, 2009 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Milewski to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2009 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Free Fair Zoning District: The City Manager reviewed with the Commission revisions made to the proposed Free Fair Zoning District since the December meeting. Of particular note are the proposed standards for advertising signs. The City Manager reviewed the standards proposed and the differences from the current standards for the business zoning districts. He also reported that the amendment proposes that any signs currently at the Fairgrounds be determined as conforming and that signs erected two-weeks prior and during the regular annual fair be exempt from the City's sign regulations.

The Commission discussed the proposed amendment. Discussion was held regarding the review of the proposed ordinance with Fair officials. The City Manager reported that he intends to meet with Fair officials soon assuming that the Commission is comfortable with the latest draft.

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Milewski to schedule a Public Hearing on the proposed Free Fair Zoning District and associated sign regulations for 4:00 PM, Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at City Hall. MOTION CARRIED.

Wind and Solar Energy Systems: The City Manager reported that the changes suggested by the Commission at the December meeting regarding the proposed Wind Energy System ordinance have been made. The Commission reviewed the latest draft. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer, to schedule a Public Hearing on the proposed Wind Energy System ordinance for 4:00 PM, Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at City Hall. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Consultant Johnson reviewed with the Commission the proposed Solar Energy System ordinance which has been revised based on Commissioner comments made at the December meeting. He stated that the updated draft incorporates the Commissioners concerns regarding construction permit requirements, height of ground mounted systems and incorporates the City's setback and location standards for accessory structures.

He discussed with the Commission his concerns regarding limiting ground mounted Solar Energy Systems to 42" in the side and rear yards. The Commission suggested that the

ordinance be revised to permit ground mounted systems in the side and rear yards to be up to 6' in height (the same as fences) rather than the currently proposed 42". The 42" limitation will remain for a system installed in the front yard of a property considering that this height is consistent with the front yard fence height standards.

The Commissioners also discussed systems mounted/attached to fences. Mr. Johnson will revise the proposed ordinance to incorporate this suggestion.

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer, to schedule a Public Hearing on the proposed Solar Energy System ordinance for 4:00 PM, Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at City Hall. MOTION CARRIED.

Non-Residential Uses in Residential Zoning Districts: The City Manager reported that based on comments offered by Commissioners at the December meeting, Mr. Johnson developed a proposed Home Occupation amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Johnson stated that currently the City's Zoning Ordinance does not permit home occupations. With telecommuting and computer technology, more and more individuals have home offices or home based businesses and most communities have amended their zoning ordinances to reflect this change. He also stated that some communities require special land use permits for home occupations that are more "intense" in use, i.e., employ people who report to the home for work, receive regular deliveries or store business related materials outside of the home or which are open to the public.

The Commission reviewed a proposed Home Occupation ordinance amendment. A lengthy discussion was held regarding which uses should be permitted by right and which uses require a special land use permit. Based on the feedback offered by the Commissioners, Mr. Johnson will revise the current draft and have an updated draft available for the Commission's review at the March Commission meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

Draft 2009 Planning Commission Annual Report: The City Manager reported that the Commission is required to present to the City Council an annual report of its activities. This report is required to be submitted to Council by the March 31<sup>st</sup> each year. The City Manager distributed a proposed report for the Commission's consideration. He advised that

Chairperson Jennings plans to present the report to Council at its March 2, 2010 meeting.

After review of the report, it was moved by Commissioner Milewski, seconded by Commissioner Cook to approve the 2009 Planning Commission Annual Report. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Several Commissioners noted that they could not attend the February Commission meeting due to schedule conflicts. Considering the potential lack of agenda items and the lack of a quorum, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Milewski to cancel the February 10, 2010 Commission meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ulmer to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jason Eppler  
City Manager/Recording Secretary  
for  
Boomer Hoppough, Secretary