

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
October 10, 2012 - Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for October 10, 2012 was called to order by Chairperson Mark Jennings at 4:00 PM.

ROLL CALL Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Boomer Hoppough, Mark Jennings, Gordon Kelley (arrived at 4:14 PM) Tim Lee, and Chris Young. Commissioner Evonne Ulmer was excused.

Staff present included City Manager Jason Eppler, Planning Consultant Tim Johnson and Public Safety Officer Doug DeVries were also present.

Public present included Beverly Anderson, John Dinehart, Lowell Swartz and others.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Chairperson Jennings reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to approve the agenda for the October 10, 2012 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The Commission reviewed the minutes of the September 12, 2012 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2012 Commission meeting as corrected. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING Chairperson Jennings called to order the Public Hearing to receive comments on the application submitted by Beverly Anderson requesting that the property located at 524 West Main Street be rezoned from R-1 One-Family Residential District to B-3 General Business District and to receive comments on her request for site plan approval to use the residence at 524 West Main Street as a professional counseling office.

Ms. Anderson addressed the Commission regarding her request. She advised that she currently leases office space in a medical building on East Lincoln Avenue for her mental health therapy counseling business and would like to relocate to 524 West Main Street. She advised that the residence, without significant alteration, could house her counseling office and create a very calming environment for her patients.

She advised that she and her other counselors have flexible office hours to meet the patient's needs. Depending on time of day, there are often times when only two counselors are working at the same time. They provide assistance to individuals as well as group (family) counseling.

Chairperson Jennings thanked Ms. Anderson for her comments and asked for Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Kelley inquired about on-site parking. Property owner Lowell Swartz advised that the driveway/paved parking area on the north side of the residence can easily accommodate 4-6 cars plus on-street parking is permitted on West Main Street on this particular side (north side) of the street.

Commissioner Kelley also asked about handicap access. Ms. Anderson advised that the north doorway to the residence is 36" and at-grade with no obstacles within the residence for maneuverability. She also advised that they would be using as offices the parlor and dining room on the first floor and 3 bedrooms on the second floor for offices.

Commissioner Hoppough asked about signage for the business. Ms. Anderson stated that the sign would likely be affixed to the side of the building and sized to comply with the City sign standards.

Commissioner Kelley requested accurate data on the exact square footage of the residence to be used for the business so that an accurate off-street parking total could be calculated. The parking standards require 1 space for each 200 square feet of usable space for a professional office.

John Dinehart, real estate agent for Mr. Swartz, stated that the approximate usable floor area is 1,000 square feet. He provided information regarding the real estate listing by stating that he has attempted to sell the residence twice. Although many who have toured the home appreciate its historic nature and condition, they dislike the location. He stated that a use other than single family residential at this location would provide a nice transition from the more intense uses on Dexter Street to the duplex uses to the west.

Commissioner Lee stated that he was concerned about "non-residential creep" further west along West Main Street towards Yeomans Street. He suggested that the Commission

may want to consider an O-Office zoning for this particular address rather than B-3.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Request from Beverly Anderson Regarding 524 West Main Street: Chairperson Jennings requested that Planning Consultant Tim Johnson review with the Commission his Memorandum on the request dated September 28, 2012. Mr. Johnson stated that there are two issues before the Commission. The first being the request for the rezoning and the second being site plan approval. In terms of the rezoning, he stated the request was not consistent with the 2012 Master Plan. He suggested that a minimum the applicant may want to consider the Office zoning district so that the future use of the property is limited to "softer" uses should Ms. Anderson cease using the building for her business. He further stated that B-3 permits a variety of retail and business uses that may not be appropriate for this location.

Mr. Johnson also reviewed his comments regarding the site plan with the Commission. He stated that the drawing was not to scale so that it is difficult to determine if the buffering, driveway setback and parking requirements (both number and size of spaces, etc.) are consistent with the zoning ordinance. He further stated that if some of the standards in the zoning ordinance cannot be met, Ms. Anderson may need to apply to the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances. He suggested that Ms. Anderson revise her site plan to address some of the concerns expressed in his report.

When asked by Commissioners questions pertaining to straying from the recently adopted Master Plan, Mr. Johnson reminded Commissioners that the future land use map is not necessarily site specific so the Commission can get involved in interpreting the map and the specific lines between land uses.

Several Commissioners expressed interest in having Ms. Anderson add more detail to the proposed site plan for the project and return to the Commission for further review.

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Young, to table the request

submitted by Beverly Anderson for the rezoning/site plan approval for 524 West Main Street until the November 14, 2012 meeting of the Commission to provide Ms. Anderson time to re-evaluate her request/update her site plan. MOTION CARRIED.

Review of Discussion Paper on Non-Conforming Uses/Structures/Lots: Planning Consultant Johnson stated that at the September meeting, Commissioners requested that he prepared a discussion paper regarding the current Non-Conforming Uses Chapter of the Zoning Ordinance. At that time several Commissioners expressed concerns over the inconsistencies that exist in current ordinance language. The Commission began its review of Mr. Johnson's outline and discussed specific examples around the City of non-conforming uses, non-conforming structures and non-conforming lots. The Commission will continue its discussion on this topic at the November 14, 2012 meeting.

Sidewalk Installation – 2013 Lafayette, Stevenson, Johnson, Lovell Street Improvement Project: The City Manager stated that the City's capital improvement plan calls for the reconstruction of Lafayette Street (Morse Street to Lovell Street); Stevenson Street (Lafayette Street to M-21); Johnson Street (Lafayette Street to M-21); and, Lovell Street (Washington Street to M-21) during the 2013 construction season. He shared that this will be the final phase of the three-year Lafayette Street improvement project.

Consistent with Planning Commission policy regarding sidewalk installation, the City Manager reviewed a Memorandum with the Commission dated October 1, 2012 regarding his recommendations for sidewalk installation along these streets. He stated that his recommendations were developed after reviewing survey information and base maps prepared by the City's project engineers, Prein & Newhof and walking the streets with the engineers. He reminded Commissioners that their policy states that at a minimum, sidewalk be installed on both sides of a street unless there are limitations due to setbacks, topography, tree preservation issues, etc., in such instances a sidewalk would only be installed on one side.

Commissioner Hoppough left the meeting at 5:30 PM.

The City Manager reviewed the following with the Commission:

Johnson Street: Sidewalk exists along the east side of the street. It is proposed that this sidewalk be removed and replaced. No sidewalk exists along the west side of the street. Considering the topography and off-street parking which parallels the street at one of the residences (due to no driveway), sidewalk is not proposed for the west side of the street.

Lafayette Street:

North Side: Sidewalk exists along the north side of the street from Morse to Johnson Streets. It is proposed that this sidewalk be removed and replaced. It is also proposed that the sidewalk along the north side be continued from Johnson Street east to Lovell Street.

South Side: Sidewalk exists along the south side of the street from Morse Street to 711 Lafayette Street. It is proposed that this sidewalk be removed and replaced. If the parking problem (no driveway/cars park over sidewalk) can be solved at 711 Lafayette Street it is proposed that the sidewalk continue to Stevenson Street. East of Stevenson Street, no sidewalk is proposed due to the topography, loss of trees to accommodate the sidewalk and the shortness of the driveway at 221 Lovell Street.

Lovell Street: No sidewalk exists on Lovell Street. It is proposed that sidewalk be installed along the west side of the street only due to the number of commercial driveways and trees along the east side of the street.

Stevenson Street:

West Side: There is no sidewalk along the west side of Stevenson Street (M-21 to Lafayette Street). However, during 2005, sidewalk was installed along the west side of Stevenson Street between Lafayette and Washington Streets. It is proposed that a sidewalk be constructed along the west side of Stevenson Street (M-21 to Lafayette Street) to continue the network that was started in 2005.

East Side: There is no sidewalk along the east side of Stevenson Street. Due to topography, shortness of driveways and considerable tree removal, it is proposed that sidewalk not be installed on the east side of Stevenson Street.

Washington Street: East Washington Street in the Stevenson Street/Lovell Street area was reconstructed in 2005. Sidewalk was installed along the north side of East Washington Street up to 706 East Washington Street

(opposite McConnell Park). The sidewalk did not extend to the east to connect to the new sidewalk that was constructed at this same time on Stevenson Street (Lafayette Street to Washington Street). It is proposed that as part of this project, the sidewalk be extended along the north side of East Washington Street from 706 East Washington Street to Lovell Street. Such an extension will "close" the network on this end of the City providing safe access to McConnell Park and Sparrow Ionia Hospital.

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Young to accept the recommendations of the City Manager dated October 1, 2012 regarding the installation of sidewalks along portions of Johnson, Lafayette, Lovell, Stevenson and East Washington Streets during 2013. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS None.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Young, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jason Eppler, Recording Secretary

for
Boomer Hoppough, Secretary