

CITY OF IONIA
Planning Commission
March 13, 2019
Regular Meeting Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER** The Regular Meeting of the City of Ionia Planning Commission for March 13, 2019 was called to order by Chairperson Tim Lee at 4:30 PM.
- ROLL CALL** Roll Call revealed Commissioners Dave Cook, Mike Donaldson, Boomer Hoppough, Mark Jennings, Gordon Kelley, Tim Lee, and Judy Swartz present
- City Manager Jason Eppler, City Engineer Kyle Patrick (5:00 PM) and Planning Consultant Jan Johnson were also present.
- Public present included Ventra representatives John Atkinson, John Lepien, Paul Wilber and Rob Lamarr and Ionia Township residents Aaron and Molly Rhines.
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA** Chairperson Lee reviewed the agenda with the Commission. After review, it was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to approve the agenda for the March 13, 2019 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** The Commission reviewed the minutes of the February 13, 2019 Regular Meeting. After review it was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2019 Commission meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.
- PUBLIC HEARING** Chairperson Lee opened the Public Hearing to receive comments regarding the request submitted by Ventra Ionia Main for site plan approval for the construction of a parking lot on property owned by Ventra located west of Beardsley Road and north of East Washington Street.
- Molly Rhines, Third Street – Ionia Township, offered comments regarding the proposed Ventra parking lot construction. She inquired about parking lot screening and the future extension of Third Street (north to M-21).
- PUBLIC COMMENTS** None.
- NEW BUSINESS** Ventra Ionia Main Parking Lot Site Plan Approval Request: Rob Lamar, Exxel Engineering, on behalf of

Ventra reviewed with the Commission a proposed site plan dated November 27, 2018 which calls for the expansion of an existing paved parking lot and the construction of a new gravel surfaced parking lot on property owned by Ventra located north of East Washington Street and west of Beardsley Road. He stated that the proposed project will address existing deficiencies in employee parking and semi-truck trailer parking spaces on the Ventra “campus”. He stated that he has met with both the Ionia County Drain Commissioner (drainage plan) and Ionia County Road Commission (roadway access) to review the proposed plans. Drainage plans will be finalized once soil borings are taken later this spring. Mr. Lamar also reviewed the proposed lighting plans for the site as well as snow removal plans. Mr. Lamar responded to several questions offered by Planning Commissioners.

Mrs. Johnson reviewed her staff report for the project. She reviewed issues including gravel v. asphalt parking lot surface; handicap parking space requirements contained in the Michigan Building Code; setback requirements for the parking lot; and, landscaping and lighting requirements.

The Commissioners discussed the staff report and asked several questions including the “finishing” of the detention basin bottom (will be left as natural as possible to encourage infiltration); location of light fixtures along the west side of the semi-truck trailer parking area (will be setback a minimum of 50’ from the west property line and will comply with the height requirements contained in the ordinance); pros and cons of islands with trees in the paved parking lot (Ventra prefers no islands/trees due to the trees obstructing security cameras); and the “closed” driveway to the parking lot owned by Ventra located on the south side of East Washington Street (in Ionia Township) and whether the driveway should be re-opened (Ventra prefers removing the driveway due to parking lot circulation issues).

Mrs. Johnson led the Commission through a discussion regarding the site plan deficiencies and findings that should be made by the Commission on particular issues so that the applicant can update the site plan for the April meeting.

Gravel Parking Lot Surface: Ventra stated that the gravel would likely be milled asphalt and will show a cross

section of the gravel parking lot materials on the site plan. It was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to permit the use of gravel (crushed asphalt) as the surface for the semi-truck trailer parking lot as permitted by Section 1282.02(h) and Section 1282.02(i) of the City Code. MOTION CARRIED.

Handicap Parking Spaces: It was the consensus of the Commission to recommend to Ventra that the new handicap parking spaces be placed as near as the manufacturing buildings as possible.

Landscaping: A lengthy discussion was held by the Commission regarding the landscaping for the site, berming and fencing. Mrs. Johnson will work with Ventra in providing calculations for plant material along the south and west sides of the proposed gravel surfaced semi-truck trailer parking area. The Commission also expressed a desire to review the existing landscaping along the east side of the Ventra building at 25 Beardsley Road. It was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to not require landscaped islands in the parking lot as part of the landscaping plan for this project. MOTION CARRIED.

Site Plan Deficiencies: Mrs. Johnson reviewed with the Commission the Site Plan Check List for this project and identified several deficiencies in what was submitted by Ventra versus what is required by the City Code. She asked the Commission to identify those items which they would like included in the updated Ventra site plan.

It was moved by Commissioner Hoppough, seconded by Commissioner Jennings to require the updated Ventra site plan to include the following items:

1. A vicinity map;
2. Existing and proposed topographic elevations at two foot intervals on the site and to a distance of 50 feet outside the boundaries;
3. Location of all proposed landscape materials, including size and planting types;
4. Location of all light poles or fixtures including type;
5. Vegetation which is to be retained on the site to be shown on the site plan; and,
6. Correct the zoning district reference to "L-1" and add the labeling to the east side of Beardsley Road as well.

An updated site plan will be available for Commission review at the April 10, 2019 meeting.

2020 Reconstruction of Steele Street (Adams to Dexter Streets) – Review of Conceptual Cross Sections: The City Manager introduced Kyle Patrick, City consulting engineer from Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber (FTCH) and advised that Mr. Patrick and associates will be developing the plans for reconstructing Steele Street (Adams Street to Dexter Street) during the 2020 construction season. The City Manager further stated that considering the Steele Street Corridor redevelopment plan, the Commission should provide direction on the preferred cross section for the “new” Steele Street.

Mr. Patrick shared with the Commission the results of the April 2018 traffic study that FTCH completed which analyzed the impact on the flow of traffic/turning movements if the center turn lane on Steele Street was eliminated. He stated that the elimination of the turn lane will result on the Level of Service (LOS) of the street remaining an A or B (depending on specific location) which is superior to the minimum LOS of C. He reviewed with the Commission four cross section options:

Option A: This is the existing cross section – two travel lanes, one center turn lane and a continuous 5’ sidewalk along the west side of the street;

Option B: This cross section has two travel lanes, no center turn lane, and continuous 5’ sidewalks along both sides of the street (with a 4’ berm on each side between the sidewalk and curb);

Option C: This cross section has two travel lanes, two 6’ wide bike lanes within the curbed portion of the street, and a continuous 5’ sidewalk (no berm) along the west side;

Option D: This cross section has two travel lanes, a 5’ continuous sidewalk along the west side of the street (no berm) and a 10’ continuous multi-use sidewalk (no berm) along the east side of the street.

Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of each option and the impact of large vehicles using Steele Street

accessing Matcor at several locations. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to develop a new, preferred option which involves modifying Option B by constructing a 10' multi-use sidewalk along the east side of the street in lieu of the 5' sidewalk, the goal being to improve bicycle and pedestrian access between the Rail Trail and the River Trail.

Mr. Patrick stated that FTCH will begin developing the base map for the project and once ready for review will coordinate a meeting with the City Manager and Matcor representatives (including Chairperson Lee) to discuss parking, driveway access, truck deliveries, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

Master Plan Update: Mrs. Johnson reviewed the changes made to both the text and maps for the updated plan. She stated that the plan is ready to be submitted to Council so that it can authorize the distribution of the draft to the appropriate agencies for the 63 day review and comment period.

It was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Donaldson to recommend to the City Council the distribution of the draft master plan to the appropriate agencies for the 63 day review and comment period. MOTION CARRIED.

The City Manager stated that this recommendation will be included as an action item on Council's April 9, 2019 meeting agenda.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS Commissioner Kelley updated the Commission on action taken by the City Council to approve the medical marijuana facilities licensing act amendment to the City Code. He stated that based on public comments received at the City Council meeting, the Commission may want to monitor whether a future cap may be needed on the number of licenses issued by licensing category.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Jennings, seconded by Commissioner Hoppough to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Eppler
City Manager
Recording Secretary for Dave Cook, Secretary