

**City of Howell
Planning Commission
January 17, 2018
611 E. Grand River Avenue
Howell, MI 48843**

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Streng at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Paul Streng, Maryanne Vukonich, Mayor Nick Proctor, Jan Lobur, Erin Britten, Robert Spaulding and Jeannette Ambrose.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director Tim Schmitt and Deputy City Clerk Deanna Robson.

GUESTS: Holly Osterhout, John Eckstein, Lowell Sprague and Patrick Cleary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, December 20, 2017 REGULAR MEETING

MOTION by Lobur, SUPPORT by Vukonich, “To approve the December 20, 2017 regular Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented.” MOTION CARRIED (7-0).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

STAFF REPORT

Community Development Director Timothy Schmitt stated that staff has been working on enforcing snow clearing from sidewalks; under the ordinance, sidewalks must be cleared within 24 hours of the end of a snow event; and staff has tried to be flexible with property owners due to the amount of snow this season.

Building activity has increased downtown including: beginning construction at Mark’s Coney Island; owners of the Pearl Building working on financial numbers in preparation for implementation of previously approved changes; and a proposed move of the bail bonds business on Grand River Avenue to the second floor in order to allow a new business to occupy the space.

NEW BUSINESS

#17-30 – 202 WEST HIGHLAND – PRELIMINARY PLAN REVIEW – IHA MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING

Community Development Director Schmitt reviewed the plan and displayed aerial photos, adding that the first step in the approval of the project is a preliminary plan review as required by the MXD ordinance. He also noted that the Planning Commission will need to review waivers for minor issues in regards to landscaping and lighting, as well as a shortage of three required parking spaces. The next step is a Public Hearing, which will occur at a future meeting.

Lowell Sprague, Finance Officer for IHA, 24 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive, Ann Arbor, provided information regarding the IHA physician group including their long history in the community (prior to IHA branding), recent growth, quick statistics, the desire of the primary care group to expand in order to serve patients locally, and the group's enthusiasm to expand in Howell. He confirmed that the existing facility will be used by a local medical specialist, and also talked about IHA facilities in nearby areas.

John Eckstein, Architect at Lindhout Associates, 10465 Citation Drive, Brighton, displayed a video of the proposed building including street views, and showed samples of planned building materials. He confirmed that the structure will be built on a slab on grade and that simple lab tests will be performed on site. There will be no helipad. He informed the Commission that they would like to begin construction as soon as the frost is gone, with the project completed in 9-10 months.

Patrick Cleary, Boss Engineering, 3121 E. Grand River Avenue, Howell, stated that they would like to seek waivers for landscaping requirements due to the utility easements on the property, adding that additional foundation landscaping was added to the plans.

Vice-Chairperson Vukonich stated that she would like to see more trees on the south side of the building and asked for the types of foundation plants proposed. Patrick Cleary responded, also stating that the southwest corner is the high point of the site and the challenge is that plantings must be smaller due to the drainage requirements. Commissioner Ambrose inquired about adding striping for a crosswalk to adjacent businesses. Community Development Director Schmitt responded that the striping should be required. The Commission asked about lighting on the site and Mr. Cleary responded that ambient lighting is proposed and that typical street lighting exists in areas beyond the proposed IHA site.

Planning Commission consensus was to schedule the public hearing for the February 21, 2018 regular meeting.

ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Community Development Director Schmitt that the proposed ordinance updates were intended to clarify the ordinance language and add some specific use changes, including: first floor office uses in the Downtown Central Business District would require Special Land Use approval; allowing doggie daycare and kennels as light industrial uses; incorporating comments from the Redevelopment Ready Communities review; specific guidance regarding garage sales; proposing start and end dates as well as permit reviews for sidewalk cafes; changes for construction, temporary, vertical and multi-tenant signs; driveway maintenance and expansion requirements; and storage of recreational equipment. He noted that updates regarding collection bins and hotels/motels will be addressed separately.

Discussion followed regarding first floor office uses in the Downtown Central Business District - whether they should be permitted through Special Land Use approval or not allowed altogether. Further debate continued considering whether the proposed change would be too restrictive on owners of buildings downtown versus offsetting potential issues caused by a shortage of retail and restaurants. Director Schmitt will discuss the concerns with Downtown Development

Authority/Main Street Inc. Director Edgerly to provide possible alternatives. Further conversation persisted concerning kennels, signs, recreation equipment, tents, sidewalk cafes, parking and Redevelopment Ready Communities. Several changes will be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance update for presentation to the Commission at the February 21, 2018 regular meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

The Commission discussed the vacant property at the corner of Grand River Avenue and Court Street that is currently for sale; Schroeder's Body Shop; the Howell Soft Cloth Car Wash expansion; and the vacant Citgo gas station at Barnard Street and Grand River Avenue. Concern was expressed regarding ongoing non-compliance and code enforcement issues at the Regal Recycling property on Lucy Road. The Commission directed staff to work with the City Attorney to attempt to resolve the issues.

**MOTION by Proctor, SUPPORT by Spaulding, "To adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m."
MOTION CARRIED (7-0).**

Deanna Robson, Deputy City Clerk