

City of Howell
Planning Commission
January 18, 2017
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, Robert Spaulding and Jeanette Ambrose.

COMMISSIONER ABSENT: Erin Britten.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Shea Charles, Community Development Director Tim Schmitt and Recording Secretary Deanna Robson.

GUESTS: Michael Kruzman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION Ambrose, SUPPORT by Proctor, “To approve the November 16, 2016 regular Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented.” Chairman Streng inquired about the Howell Estates conversation and whether or it should have been included in the minutes or if it occurred after the meeting. City Manager Shea Charles stated that the conversation occurred after meeting. Chairman Streng asked for verification and that approval of the minutes be tabled until the next regular Planning Commission meeting. **MOTION Ambrose, SUPPORT by Lobur, “To table approval of the November 16, 2016 regular Planning Commission meeting minutes until the February 15, 2017 meeting.” MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

STAFF REPORT

Timothy Schmitt, Community Development Director, provided updates in addition to his staff report, stating that the Gould environmental cleanup project on National Street is expected to move forward in February after some issues are worked out with the future property owner.

Staff expects to receive the Redevelopment Ready draft report next week, and the topic will be included in the February meeting agenda.

The Highland Howell purchase agreement has been approved by City Council. Conceptual plans will be presented to the Planning Commission once received. Discussion followed regarding ownership of the surrounding properties.

The Howell Township Master Plan has been adopted and official notification of the plan adoption has been included in the Planning Commission packet. Commission feedback received by staff was submitted to Howell Township prior to their Master Plan adoption.

NEW BUSINESS

#16-002 – 915 NORTH MICHIGAN- MCPHERSON MANSION CARRIAGE HOUSE – SITE PLAN EXTENSION

Community Development Director Schmitt introduced the topic by stating that the project completion is expected within the next couple of months.

MOTION by Ambrose, SUPPORT by Spaulding, “To approve the extension of the site plan for 915 North Michigan Avenue, Parcel ID number 4717-36-200-001, subject to all of the previously approved conditions of approval.” MOTION CARRIED (6-0).

Chairman Streng stated that he spoke at length with a representative at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) earlier in the day as part of the process for the City to obtain approval as a Redevelopment Ready community. Mayor Proctor expressed that a Commercial Rehabilitation District has been created to entice developers and to facilitate the perception of the City as a business-friendly community. Chairman Streng added that overall the MEDC was very complimentary, but there may be some items that need to be included in the Planning Commission Annual Report. Therefore, he suggested that the Commission may want to postpone approval of the report until staff receives the MEDC report. He added that a policies and procedures manual, which may also require written descriptions of Commissioners’ duties, will need to be drafted by the Planning Commission. A pamphlet for new members containing information on what to expect will also need to be developed, and Commissioners were instructed to send their feedback to Community Development Director Schmitt. Mayor Proctor inquired about the necessity to postpone approval of the 2016 Annual Report for future requirements and inquired if doing so would be in violation of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Community Development Director Schmitt responded by stating that the report was presented to the Commission as a draft and there would be no violation if approval was delayed until the following month to ensure that all pertinent information is included.

2016 PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

MOTION by Proctor, SUPPORT by Lobur, “To table approval of the 2016 Planning Commission Annual Report until the February 15, 2017 regular meeting and to use the intervening 4 weeks to amend the draft provided by staff.” MOTION CARRIED (6-0).

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Streng asked for an update regarding the Howell Estates property. Community Development Director Tim Schmitt replied that staff has been in communication with the property management company, and demolition orders for some vacant and dilapidated units will be presented to City Council in February. Mr. Schmitt confirmed that the property owner is responsible for demolition costs in the end, even if the City does the demolition. The management

company has been responsive to City communications; and has made improvements to the park in reference to water service, signage and the playground. Chairman Streng voiced health and safety concerns regarding the vacant units. Mayor Proctor asked if there is any mechanism to engage County and State officials for quicker resolution. City Manager Shea Charles stated that the maintenance in the park is generally in compliance with State guidelines, but mobile home parks are governed by the State of Michigan Mobile Home Commission and there is a lack of regulatory assistance for local municipalities to enforce local property maintenance standards. Mr. Schmitt noted the high vacancy rate in local mobile home parks. Commissioner Spaulding inquired if the City is required to have a mobile home park in the City and Mr. Schmitt responded that there is no requirement for a park but the State of Michigan does not allow any municipality to prevent the use.

Mayor Proctor expressed concern that the City has no control over possible contamination of the clean City water that enters the park's pipes. City Manager Charles responded that the pipes carrying water in the park are plastic, and therefore would not cause any lead contamination. He added that the park's plastic pipes are reaching the end of their life cycle. A meter monitors the volume of water used by the park. Due to unfixed breaks in previous years, there were multiple drains of the City's water tower – and that has since stopped. Mayor Proctor inquired about the City taking over the park's water and sewer lines via a special assessment, and City Manager Charles responded that, in addition to the magnitude of the project, the park is governed by the Mobile Home Commission. Mayor Proctor asked for and received confirmation that there is no public Right-of-Way in the park. Commissioner Lobur asked for and received confirmation that the park is private property and snow removal is taken care of by park management. Commissioner Ambrose inquired about potentially occupied units, as well as whether or not residents are required to obtain permits for renovations.

Commissioner Lobur asked about abandoned houses in the City. Community Development Director Schmitt responded that staff has been generally addressing code enforcement issues as they arise; and the building inspector has recently inspected some homes that need improved maintenance but meet current building code.

Mayor Proctor inquired about the type of recent enforcement actions in the City and Mr. Schmitt responded that enforcements have not been out of the ordinary. Mayor Proctor asked about the site plan and Special Land Use application for the Schroeder's Body Shop expansion that the Commission denied in November 2016 and Mr. Schmitt responded that the applicant submitted a request to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and the matter will be discussed at the BZA meeting scheduled for January 26, 2017. Mr. Schmitt confirmed that BZA members will receive the November 16, 2016 Planning Commission minutes as well as all of the information that was provided for the November meeting; and the applicant can choose to file with circuit court if the BZA confirms the Planning Commission's decision and the applicant would like to appeal.

MOTION by Proctor, SUPPORT by Spaulding, "To excuse Commissioner Britten from the January 18, 2017 Planning Commission meeting." MOTION CARRIED (6-0).

Mayor Proctor asked about scheduling a joint meeting with Marion Township in March 2017 similar to the meeting that occurred in March 2016. Chairman Streng voiced his agreement, adding that meeting with other communities would support the City's MEDC efforts and future meetings should also be scheduled with the Townships of Howell, Oceola and Genoa.

**MOTION by Proctor, SUPPORT by Ambrose, "To adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m."
MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

Deanna Robson, Recording Secretary