

CITY OF HARBOR SPRINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – 20 August 2009

Commissioner Laura Kors called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Harbor Springs City Council Chambers, 160 Zoll Street, Harbor Springs, MI, 49470

I. Roll Call and Verification of a Quorum

Present: Andrew Bowman, Jeffery Ford, Mary Ellen Hughes, Laura Kors, Lee Kramer, Sheryl McCleery and Sara Smith

Absent: Fred Walstrom and Jack Deegan

Also Present: City Manager; Tom Richards, City Planner; Larry Nix, City Assessor and Zoning Administrator; Tim Grimm, Linda Rachwitz, Fred Hackl, Tom Graham Jr, Postmaster; Dennis Lechowicz, Dan Gorman, Clayton Brown, Pringle Pfeifer

II. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of July 23, 2009

Bowman moved for approval of the minutes as presented, supported by McCleery. The motion was approved by the unanimous vote of the commission.

III. Public Comments

There were no comments or correspondence offered.

IV. New and Old Business

A. Consideration for Approval of Special Use – Food Pantry at Holy Childhood Church

City Planner Nix briefed the commission on the request for the operation of a food pantry in the lower level of the church facilities. He outlined the zoning and practical implications of the proposed use, for which a special use permit had been requested.

Discussion followed regarding the suitability of the church for such a use, and the potential that the use might expand beyond the one-day-per-week (Monday AM) that was outlined in the permit. Speaking on behalf of the food pantry, Pringle Pfeifer said that she could not rule out the possible need for future expansion beyond the current one-day-per-week operation.

The Commission discussed the suitability of the church for this purpose and the improvement over the current parking situation at the Methodist Church, the present location for the food pantry operation.

Hughes moved for the Commission to approve the requested use without restriction on the days that the food pantry could be operated. The motion was supported by Smith and passed by a unanimous vote of the commission.

B. Harbor Springs Post Office – Site Plan Review – Proposed Addition

City Planner Nix explained the proposed addition to the Post Office building at Third and State Street. The request seeks approval to build permanent walls and a new roof to enclose a shipping dock area that is currently outdoors, but covered by an existing roof.

Postmaster Lechowicz explained the need for more interior space to accommodate the shipping and receiving demands for the post office.

The commission discussed specific elements of the plan.

A motion was made by Bowman and supported by Hughes to approve the site plan as presented. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the commission.

C. 771 State Street – Site Plan Review – Proposed Driveway, Landscape and Parking Changes

Planner Nix provided background on proposed changes to the property at 771 State Street for a potential buyer. The buyer was requesting changes to accommodate off-street parking for up to eleven vehicles.

Nix explained that he had reviewed two alternate plans for the additional parking. He pointed out the difficulties with the latest plan, largely due to the lack of available space within the property boundaries.

He added that a he had visited the site with the City Manager who had suggested the possibility of creating off-street parallel parking spaces on the south side of Clark Street by creating a third lane (in the existing greenway) between State Street and the existing driveway on the northwest corner of the property. The added parking would be public parking, but could accommodate the needs of the business. Tom Graham expressed that he felt the street-side parking alternative might be satisfactory to the prospective buyer.

After further discussion of the code requirements for parking, and the additional needs expressed by the business owner, Nix recommended that the Commission take no action, and the prospective owner pursue the parallel parking solution

proposed by the City as an alternative. Discussion followed about the value of additional public parking for special events at the middle school.

Realtor, Tom Graham asked about the time needed to determine if the City Council would approve the proposed parallel parking plan. Richards explained that the Council could agree to consider the proposal at a special August 24 meeting.

By consensus, the Council determined to take no action on the site plan request.

D. 138 West Third Street JoHan's Pasty – Site Plan Review – New Construction:

Nix briefed the Commission on a site plan request by owner Clayton Brown to construct a new building on the site of the existing building (which would be removed). He discussed the deficiencies in the existing building that prompted the owner to consider replacing it with new construction of similar size and character.

The Commission reviewed a comprehensive site plan package including renderings of the proposed new construction. Nix added that, as presented, the project appeared to meet the requirements under the zoning code.

Discussion followed about the details of the building including signage and lighting.

A motion to approve the site plan was made by McCleery and supported by Bowman. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

City Planner Nix reminded the owner and architect of the need to return to the City manager with their plans for signage.

E. Consideration of Lot Coverage Reductions – R-1-C District:

City Planner Nix reviewed his memo to the commission, and a table comparing the impact of building size restrictions if the R-1-C district were restricted to lot coverage limits of 50%, 45% or 40%.

He discussed with the commission the goal of preventing the construction of disproportionately large homes on very small lots. He used the example of an R-1-C lot measuring 52.8 feet by 132 feet.

He noted that the current (50%) coverage limit would allow a home of 3,262 square feet. The 35% limit proposed in Ordinance 372 allowed a home of only 2,440 square feet.

Discussion followed about the size of the homes allowed under each of the various limits. Richards noted that, for the lot being discussed, the maximum building width wouldn't change regardless of the percentage limit, but the maximum depth of a home under each of the options would be reduced by roughly ten feet for each five percent reduction in the coverage percentage... from 94 feet (at the 50% limit) to 65 feet (at the 35% limit)

Commission members discussed the potential of various home sizes and garage configurations under the various limits proposed.

Bowman moved and Smith supported a motion to revise ordinance 372, altering the lot coverage limit for the R-1-C district to 40%, and for a public hearing to be held before the Commission makes a recommendation to Council.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

V. Member Comments

There were no comments offered.

VI. Adjournment

With no further business, Commissioner Kors adjourned the meeting at 6:49 PM.

Thomas Richards, City Manager