

PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

October 20, 2005

I. ROLL CALL

Fred Walstrom	Present
Andrew Bowman	Absent
Jack Deegan	Present
Jeff Ford	Present
Mary Ellen Hughes	Present
Sheryl McCleery	Present
Pringle Pfeifer	Present
Peter Sears	Present
Sara Smith	Absent

Also present were City Planner Larry Nix, City Attorney James T. Ramer, and City Manager Fred Geuder.

Chairman Fred Walstrom called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. MINUTES

Motion by Pfeifer, seconded by Hughes, to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2005, meeting, as corrected including several non-substantive changes given to the City Manager by Pfeifer. Motion carried.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT AND CORRESPONDENCE

A. Letter from the Friendship Center

The City Manager noted the request received from the Friendship Center to relocate to the Hillside Apartments location on West Main Street. The matter was referred to the City Planner to determine what action needs to be taken to accommodate the request.

[The City Manager noted that he had received several items of correspondence concerning the proposed Cluster Development on Sargent and Summit; those letters will be included at such time as the project comes back to the Planning Commission.]

IV. NEW AND OLD BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing on Proposed SLU-2005-02—a Proposed Two-Story Accessory Building with Guest Quarters at 284 Fourth Street (David Layman)

The City Manager noted that Mr. Layman's request included both a request for the guest quarters and was also located on the "Bluff", both of which required consideration by the Planning Commission.

Correspondence was received from David Winegarden, who did not object provided that the project would not be visible from above the "Bluff".

David Layman, owner of the property, reviewed the plan for the structure.

Layman noted that the building was being situated based on what he assumed to be an retaining wall that went across the property. He asked the Commission to approve the proposed location based on that retaining wall. He also noted (in response to a question), that the other accessory building would be removed.

Sheryl McCleery noted her concern with a large tree just above the proposed location that might be affected by the construction.

Holly Hudson, who owns the property immediately west of the Layman property, asked whether or not the retaining wall shown was in fact a retaining wall. She felt it was not, and was concerned that the building would be built "into the bluff".

Motion by Sears, seconded by McCleery, to close the public hearing. Motion carried.

B. Consideration of SLU-2005-02

City Planner Larry Nix reviewed the proposed plan. Nix noted that he was taking special care with this plan because it was the first one where we had to consider both the guest quarters ordinance and the "Bluff" ordinance.

Nix noted that a general site plan was required. Nix noted the following points:

1. Existing and proposed topography is not shown.
2. The existing shed is not shown, nor whether it will be retained.
3. The shed on the neighbor's property to the west is not shown. If you remove the north-south retaining wall on the west side, what will happen to that shed?
4. Existing larger trees are not shown on the plan, and what will be cut and what will be retained.

Nix also questioned whether or not the retaining wall running east-west was in fact a retaining wall as it applied to the "Bluff" ordinance. He suggested having the City Engineer make that determination.

In addition to the points noted above, Nix said the following items needed to be provided:

1. Existing features and buildings on the adjacent properties. (east and west)
2. Site Topography—existing and proposed. Nix questioned what would happen to the east of the new building.
3. A cross-section of the proposed building relative to the bluff needs to be supplied by the City Engineer
4. A letter from an Engineer certifying that the proposed structure will have no adverse effects on the "Bluff" needs to be provided.

5. A clearer building elevation needs to be provided. The architecture of the proposed building must be in harmony with the principal building.
6. A storm water plan drawn by an Engineer.

Nix also suggested that the City should perhaps have an affidavit signed by any applicant for guest quarters under this ordinance, so that it is clear and on the record that the property cannot be rented and how it can be used per the ordinance.

Nix suggested that the proposed plan be tabled pending further information being supplied by the applicant.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Deegan, to table the matter until additional information is provided.

Layman asked whether the proposed use was acceptable.

Nix noted that he did not hear from the table that the use was being questioned.

C. Public Hearing on the Proposed Reorganization of the Zoning Code

The City Manager noted that City Attorney James T. Ramer had been working on this proposal for some time.

City Attorney Ramer noted that this proposal did not include any substantive changes to the Zoning Code.

No public comment was received.

Motion by Sears, seconded by Hughes, to close the public hearing. Motion carried.

D. Consideration of Planning Commission Recommendation on Zoning Code

Motion by Sears, seconded by McCleery, to recommend City Council approval of the proposed Zoning Code reorganization. Motion carried.

E. Consideration of SPR-2005-06—Proposed Office Building for the Michigan Dyslexic Institute at 693 East Lake St.

The City Manager explained that Karin Flint was proposing to build an office on behalf of the Dyslexic Institute at this location. The use appears to fit in the ROS Zoning District.

Karin Flint noted her long association with the Dyslexic Institute, and briefly reviewed the proposed plan. The Dyslexic Institute has been located at Holy Childhood for about 20 years.

The proposed office will be residential in appearance (as required). What would normally be an attached garage will be utilized as a conference room. The parking lot will be screened and will have 8 parking spaces. Drainage is shown on the plan.

Planner Larry Nix asked whether the Commission was satisfied with the landscaping, and whether any parking lot lighting was contemplated.

The Commission felt that Ms. Flint would do a first-class landscaping job, and had no problem with that plan.

Ms. Flint commented that there would be two Weque-style lights on the back of the parking lot.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Sears, to approve SPR-2005-06, as presented. Motion carried.

F. Zoning Code Review

1. Downtown Parking Requirements for Living Spaces

The City Manager reviewed a chart showing various living units located in the CBD, and how many parking spaces each had. The parking space count might be off, but the square footage of each unit was accurate. The question was whether or not the Commission should consider a standard for those living units of a certain size or less to provide one parking space instead of two.

Planner Larry Nix, in reviewing the list, suggested that a limit of around 850 square feet be permitted with a requirement of only one space.

The City Manager will review the existing uses further, and then propose an ordinance change.

2. R-1-D Proposed Zoning/R-1-C Changes

The City Manager reviewed a map that showed the Southard & Crandall area that could be considered for the R-1-D district, with a minimum width of only 50 feet. He noted that it is usually a practical difficulty to meet the front and corner side yard setbacks, especially given so many existing non-conforming structures.

The Commission suggested that the City Manager and City Planner work on a specific proposal and report back to the Commission.

V. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2005, at 6:00 p.m.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager