

CITY OF COOPERSVILLE
REGULAR MEETING of the PLANNING COMMISSION
February 20, 2012

Chairman Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Ross Conran Pat Vadas
Mike Schmidt Tim Haselhuhn
Aaron Konn Brian Bacon
Duane Young Justin Longstreth

Absent Commissioners: None

Motion by Haselhuhn and second by Vadas to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2012 regular Planning Commission meeting. Carried unanimously.

CITIZENS INPUT & SUGGESTIONS

Chairman Schmidt opened the floor for any citizen comments regarding items that were not on the agenda. There were none.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Commission members discussed the newly proposed “draft copy” and the “current” Planning Commission By-Laws. Commission Chairman Schmidt suggested that Commission members take more time to review the By-Laws and have them placed on the March 2012 agenda for discussion and/or action. No further action was taken

Discussion was held on the “Complete Streets” concept. Action has already been taken by the State of Michigan. Planning Director, Steven Patrick explained to Commission members that the Complete Streets concept will not necessarily cost more to implement, but the designing of the projects will be performed differently and that the concept should be a part of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Patrick also explained that the concept could be ear marked for certain areas on the Master Plan or it could be implemented in the overall Master Plan for all areas within the City. Commissioner Wash suggested that it would be beneficial to map links on the Master Plan so that City Council can then see where the priority areas would be, and that the City could possibly work with Ottawa County GIS to obtain a general survey. No further action was taken.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Planning Director, Steven Patrick informed the Commission members that he has not obtained additional quotes from other consultants for additional pricing to assist us in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Wash stated that it would be beneficial to contact Grand Valley’s geography department for the possibility of getting an intern to assist us in the process. Commissioner Wash will send Mr. Patrick the contact information for Grand Valley. No further action was taken.

DISCUSSION-SIGN ORDINANCE

Much discussion was held on the current sign ordinance and what the current issues are. City Clerk, Kimberly Borgman stated that the majority of the current issues are with "Temporary Signage." Commissioner Wash stated that the current ordinance is hard to read, and all ordinances should be specific to each community as each communities needs are different. Commissioner Conran stated that changes to the current ordinance or new ordinance will need to be enforceable, and that the Commission should collect more data on what the current issues are before making any changes.

Several members of the "Main Street Merchants" were in attendance and addressed the Planning Commission with their concerns on the need for more signage to direct people to the downtown area.

- 1) Larry Harde, 265 Main Street, stated that the flow of traffic to the downtown has been circumvented according to the traffic studies they have obtained. Mr. Harde stated that there needs to be more signage directing people to the downtown area. Mr. Harde suggested that a sign board be installed for the "train traffic" to be used as a directory for the downtown area. Mr. Harde stated that "signs by themselves do work."
- 2) Greg Slater, 300 Main Street, informed the Planning Commission that the "Main Street Merchants" has had three (3) meetings of the entire committee. Mr. Slater explained that signage is an issue, and trying to get people to the downtown area is challenging. Mr. Slater stated that the large DDA sign in front of Family Fare is not effective due to the location of the sign being near the Round About and that people are watching where they are going when driving through there, and not being able to read the sign. When asked by Commissioner Conran "what type of signage he felt would be productive," Mr. Slater stated that he felt temporary and/or group signs would be most productive.
- 3) Jim Waswick, 284 Main Street, stated that he sends several patients here from his Jenison office that state they cannot find the downtown. Mr. Waswick suggested signs be allowed to be placed on the backsides of the buildings, or on the top of buildings on Main Street that face the train, for appearance and directory purposes for train traffic. Planning Director, Steven Patrick informed the merchants of the "Free Market Zoning" for the downtown area.

James Ward, City Resident and City Council member stated that he is not interested in our City having the appearance of a "large yard sale" with temporary signs placed in many various places. He stated that the Planning Commission has a challenge ahead of them as they prepare a new ordinance to help put signage in place to improve the downtown traffic. He asked the Planning Commission to take a close look at Walker's ordinance so people will take our downtown seriously.

Jodie Allen, City Resident and City Council member stated that she recently sent some of her colleagues to the downtown area and they would not have found it without the map she provided them with. Jodie also stated that she was glad that the Main Street Merchants were being pro active by attending the meeting tonight.

DISCUSSION-SIGN ORDINANCE continued

Discussion was held on the possibility of the City's Council, DDA, Planning Commission and the Main Street Merchants Boards having a joint workshop to address the sign issues.

Commissioner Wash stated that the Main Street Merchants needed comparables with different cities such as Rockford to find out how they are drawing people to their downtown. Wash also commented on the traffic circulation issue stating that placing signs on every corner probably not be well received by the residents in the city.

Planning Director, Steven Patrick suggested that the Main Street Merchants should address the DDA Board on getting the sign by the Round About moved, and also stated that too many signs tend to flood each other out, causing them to lose their intended effect.

Commissioner Young asked where the merchants felt they were losing their business from. The Main Street Merchants stated they are losing business from Coopersville residents.

Commissioner Wash suggested that the merchants revisit the Hyatt Palma Study that was performed in 2000. Planning Director, Steven Patrick stated that he would provide a copy of the study to the merchants group.

Commissioner Wash suggested that signage needs to balance with the DDA and the Chamber.

A sub-committee to address the sign ordinance was formed. Members are: Frank Wash, Mike Schmidt, Duane Young, and Tim Haselhuhn.

ADJOURN

Motion by Chairman Schmidt with second by Conran to adjourn. Carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:28 P.M.

Chairman, Mike Schmidt