

PLANNING COMMISSION

March 17, 2016

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of March 17, 2016 was called to order by Chairman Welch at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Four citizens were in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Welch led the Commission, staff and citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services; Michael West, Senior City Planner; and Byran Beach, Assistant City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Forth called the roll: Patterson (yes), Stoffer (yes), Welch (yes), Felicijan (yes), Dargitz (yes), Somers (yes), Schimmel (yes) and Richmond (yes). A motion was offered by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Schimmel, to approve the roll excusing Commissioner Bosch. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the March 3, 2016 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. Commissioner Dargitz proposed two changes to the meeting minutes near the bottom of page 2: a) Reword the sentence that begins "Commissioner Dargitz indicated that she was unclear on how CIP ideas/concepts should be presented and developed for further consideration by staff and the Planning Commission in light of the revised CIP meeting process." and, b) After the sentence that begins "Staff and Commissioners Bosch and Patterson did not recall....." insert the following sentence "Commissioner Schimmel stated she did recall a previous conversation regarding this matter". A motion was made by Commissioner Dargitz, seconded by Commissioner Felicijan, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Special Land Use Permit: Group Child Care Home (Lansdale), 4020 Pompano Avenue. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated March 10, 2016 regarding a request by Ms. Natasha Lansdale to establish a group child care home for up to 12 children at her residence located at 4020 Pompano Avenue. Mr. West stated that Ms. Lansdale has operated a family child care home for up to six children from her residence for the past three years and now wishes to expand her child care business. Mr. West referred the Commission to three letters received from adjacent property owners/occupants including the letter received from Mr. Adam Grassl (owner, 4014 Pompano) requesting that a six-foot tall privacy fence be installed along the west property line. Mr. West also referred the Commission to an email communication dated March 17, 2016 received from Josh and Erica Hill, 8826 Windwood Street, which was included in the final agenda. Mr. West stated the application fulfills the requirements for issuance of a special land use permit and was recommended for

approval subject to Planning Commission consideration of installation of a six-foot tall screening fence along the south and west property lines by June 1, 2016. The Commission and staff discussed issues associated with fencing the backyard play area and State of Michigan licensing requirements.

Ms. Natasha Lansdale (applicant) was present to support the application. Ms. Lansdale stated she agrees with the recommendation to install a six-foot tall privacy fence along the south and west sides of the rear yard and has already ordered the materials. Ms. Lansdale also addressed some of the comments cited in the email communication from Mr. and Mrs. Hill indicating that she operates a non-traditional day care home with morning drop-offs occurring between 4:15-6:30am and pick-ups occurring between 11:45am-4:45pm. Ms. Lansdale stated the primary purpose for requesting the group child care home approval was to accommodate two current clients whom are both expecting a third child and would like to remain at her day care home. Ms. Lansdale stated the reference to occasional vehicle parking in the front lawn area was likely her teenage son and this would not occur in the future. The Commission, staff and the applicant discussed various aspects of the proposed group child care home.

The public hearing was then opened by Chairman Welch. Two citizens spoke regarding the proposed group child care home: 1) Karen Miller, 8902 South Sprinkle Road, and 2) Adam Grassl, 4014 Pompano Avenue. Ms. Miller asked several questions about the operation of the proposed group child care home and stated she appreciates the installation of a six-foot tall privacy fence along the southern portion of the site, where abutting her property. Mr. Grassl stated he too also appreciates the installation of a six-foot tall privacy fence along the western portion of the site, where abutting his property. A motion was made by Commissioner Somers, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Felicijan, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approve the Special Land Use Permit (group child care home) for Ms. Natasha Lansdale, 4020 Pompano Avenue, subject to installation of a six-foot tall screening fence along the south and west property lines by June 1, 2016 to mitigate any impacts on the adjacent residents/property owners. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None.

7:25 p.m. - The Commission took a short recess.
7:30 p.m. - The Commission reconvened the meeting in City Hall Conference Room No. 1

OLD BUSINESS:

1. FY2016-2026 Capital Improvement Program – Follow-Up. Mr. Forth summarized the Department of Community Development staff report dated March 11, 2016 that included a response to Planning Commission questions received since the March 3, 2016 meeting and associated information. Mr. Forth asked the Commission if they had any questions regarding the follow-up information provided and the proposed FY2016-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) document. Chairman Welch asked when it is the best time for Commission members to provide input for consideration. Mr. Forth explained the CIP process and deadlines established by administrative order and stated September through January was the best time for the Commission to propose new projects for consideration.

Commissioner Dargitz further discussed her idea for establishment of a Community Impact Projects Grant Fund as detailed in her March 5, 2016 email communication. Commissioner Dargitz stated the intent of her email was to share ideas and facilitate additional thought and discussion regarding the five topics outlined in the communication. In regard to Commissioner Dargitz's ideas involving Fire/Police vehicles, Chairman

Welch indicated this is a very functional area of operation with safety and liability concerns. Commissioner Patterson stated that emergency vehicles are not typically sold after a year or two, but rather passed down through the departments. Chairman Welch indicated he thought the idea of a Community Impact Project Grant Fund was a good idea; however, it may be more of a budgetary issue than something included in the CIP. Commissioner Dargitz asked for an update on the Lake Centre Area Improvements. Mr. Forth stated the traffic study would be presented to the Planning Commission in April and a Lake Centre Area Open House would be held in May to discuss the findings and solicit input from other interested property owners and citizens.

Commissioner Dargitz continued the discussion regarding her idea for a Community Impact Projects Grant Fund and her desire to provide additional public outreach. Chairman Welch stated that City Council support would be needed regarding funding and suggested that a written proposal be prepared and presented to City Council before soliciting specific projects from the community. Commissioner Dargitz indicated that City Council may be reluctant to provide funding without specific projects being identified and a program for evaluation developed. Mr. Forth suggested that a subcommittee of the Commission be formed (no more than four members) to develop a written proposal with basic details of the program for consideration of the full Commission at a future meeting. Mr. Forth stated that staff would be available to assist the subcommittee. As an alternative, Mr. Forth stated the concept of a Community Impact Projects Grant Fund could be further considered during preparation of the Planning Commission annual work program. Commissioner Patterson agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to develop a written outline of the proposal so that the full Commission better understands the specifics of the proposal and how it would work, before sending the idea to City Council. The Commission discussed availability to participate in a subcommittee with some members stating they did not have additional time to participate in a separate subcommittee. After additional discussion, Commissioner Felicijan stated he would prepare a draft memo outlining the main points of the Community Impact Projects Grant Fund for further Planning Commission review and discussion at the April 7, 2016 meeting.

Commissioner Dargitz stated she believes more plantings were needed along Portage Road, within the Lake Centre Area, along with additional traffic calming measures. Mr. Forth stated these issues would be discussed further during the presentation of the Portage Road traffic study in April and during the Open House planned in May. Commissioner Dargitz also stated that consideration should be given to undergrounding overhead utility lines along Portage Road. Mr. Forth stated that undergrounding overhead utilities was expensive and limited public right-of-way was present along Portage Road. After additional discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to recommend to City Council the FY 2016-2026 Capital Improvement Program be approved. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher T. Forth, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services