

PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2, 2017

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of February 2, 2017 was called to order by Chairman Welch at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Three 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 Randy Brown, City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the January 19, 2017 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Final Plan: Portage Pediatric Dentistry, 3020 Old Centre Road. Mr. West summarized the staff report dated January 27, 2017 regarding a final plan submitted by Portage Pediatric Dentistry to construct an approximate 7,000 square foot professional dental office and associated site improvements at 3020 Old Centre Road. Mr. West stated the subject property is zoned PD, planned development and part of the larger Woodbridge Hills Planned Development project and is located within an area designated for office land use. Mr. West discussed the shared access arrangement between Portage Pediatric Dentistry and the adjacent Southwest Michigan Dermatology site to the east. Mr. West also stated the plan has been reviewed and approved by The Moors of Portage Architectural Control Committee.

Mr. Walt Hansen of Hansen Building and Design Corporation (applicant's representative) was present to discuss the proposed development. Mr. Hansen also introduced the owner of Portage Pediatric Dentistry, Dr. Jody Wrathall. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Stoffer, to recommend to City Council that the Final Plan for Portage Pediatric Dentistry, 3020 Old Centre Road, be approved. The motion was unanimously approved 8-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

7:05 p.m. - The Commission took a short recess.
7:12 p.m. - The Commission reconvened the meeting in City Hall Conference Room No. 2

NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY 2017-2027 Capital Improvement Program (preliminary). Mr. Forth reviewed the staff report dated January 27, 2017 that summarized the modified process for soliciting citizen and Commission input regarding the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which began in September 2016. Mr. Forth stated the results of the on-line citizen survey were included as attachments to the staff report, along with summaries of new and revised projects proposed in the preliminary FY 2017-2027 CIP. Mr. Forth stated a complete bounded DRAFT version of the FY 2017-2027 CIP would be provided in March, however, staff was requesting any initial comments from the Commission regarding the new and revised projects detailed in the staff report and attachments.

Commissioner Dargitz stated there has been significant amount of investment at Ramona Park and much less at Lakeview Park. Dargitz asked that pickleball courts be considered for Lakeview Park. Commissioner Dargitz also inquired about the proposed purchase of two MDNR State Game Area parcels located along West Centre Avenue and Angling Road. Mr. Forth stated the two parcels comprised approximately 378 acres and the MDNR was considering disposing of the land since its usefulness for hunting has diminished due to development on adjacent private properties. Commissioner Dargitz stated \$4 million was a significant amount of money and believes more emphasis should be placed on acquiring other properties in other sections of the city including the eastern portion of the city where there are fewer natural areas. Chairman Welch stated that he believes the acquisition of the MDNR parcels represents an opportunity for the city to continue preservation of this existing natural area. Chairman Welch stated that if the city doesn't purchase the property, the MDNR could sell the land to a private party who might develop the property. Commissioners Stoffer, Patterson and Bosch concurred. Mr. Forth and Mr. West discussed existing parks that were present within the eastern portion of the city, along with recreational projects that were proposed in the proposed FY 2017-2027 CIP including the Austin Lake Trail, South Sprinkle Road Multi-Use Trail, Romence Road East Multi-Use Trail and Lexington Green Park Improvements.

Commissioner Dargitz stated the South Westnedge Avenue/Shaver Road Traffic Signal Improvement project seems expensive and might be taking away from other project areas. Mr. Forth stated the project is needed to improve traffic flow, operation and safety in this area. Commissioner Dargitz asked how much of the Vincent Drive/Oakland Drive Intersection Improvements project was the result of the traffic generated from the large church on Vincent Drive. Mr. Forth stated this intersection has been problematic before the Valley Family Church relocated to Vincent Drive and also indicated that the church was paying for traffic control at the intersection, before and after services. Mr. Forth provided a brief description of how Vincent Drive was proposed to be relocated to the north and signalized. Commissioner Dargitz asked why the realignment Lakeview Drive at Portage Road does not include a roundabout, as discussed during the Portage Road Diet Open House. Mr. Forth stated the roundabout idea was considered, however, engineering details including the lack of right-of-way were deterrents to the roundabout option. Commissioner Dargitz asked if any projects that were identified in the FY 2016-2026 CIP were deleted to allow for inclusion of the new projects proposed in the preliminary FY 2017-2027 CIP. Mr. Forth stated he did not immediately know the answer and would provide a response.

Mr. Forth summarized the new projects proposed in the preliminary FY 2017-2027 CIP by category: Streets, Sidewalks & Bikeways, Water and Sewer, Police and Fire and Public Facilities. Mr. Forth reviewed the three sidewalk/bikeway projects proposed within the eastern portion of the city that were intended to better connect the east and west sides of the city. Mr. Forth also discussed the Neighborhood/Community Enhancement project and the need to review and finalize the application form. The Commission did not have any additional questions or comments regarding the preliminary FY 2017-2027 CIP at this time. Chairman Welch asked the Commission to email staff with any additional questions and/or comments regarding the preliminary FY 2017-2027 CIP.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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