

PLANNING COMMISSION

May 18, 2017

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of May 18, 2017 was called to order by Chairman Welch at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Approximately 20 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: Joshi (yes), Shoup (yes), Richmond (yes), Dargitz (yes), Schimmel (yes), Welch (yes), Stoffer (yes), Patterson (yes) and Bosch (yes). All members were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Welch referred the Commission to the May 4, 2017 meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet and referenced a typographic error under Approval of Minutes (should read "Vice-Chairman Stoffer"...). A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was unanimously approved 9-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

None

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Preliminary Report: Rezoning Application: Rezoning Application #16/17-5, 7338 Lovers Lane. Mr. Forth summarized the May 12, 2017 staff report regarding a request from Jensco Properties to rezone 7338 Lovers Lane from R-1B, one family residential and MHC, mobile home community to RM-1, multiple family residential. Mr. Forth explained the existing single family residence and three, three-unit, nonconforming apartment buildings located along the eastern portion of the property and the applicant's plan to construct an additional 13 four-unit apartment buildings within the remaining approximate 6.0 acres of undeveloped property. Mr. Forth reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan designations for the subject property and adjacent properties. Mr. Forth stated the subject property and surrounding properties along the west side of Lovers Lane have been planned for Medium Density Residential land use since the original 1981 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Forth referred the Commission to the table contained in the staff report that discussed the total number of dwelling units that would be allowed under the RM-1, RM-2, R-1T and PD zoning districts. Mr. Forth briefly discussed the 1993/1994 rezoning consideration of 7330 and 7338 Lovers Lane where both staff and the Planning Commission recommended a zoning change to RM-2, but was later denied City Council. Finally, Mr. Forth referred the Commission to several letters of opposition received from area residents that were contained in the original agenda packet and final agenda packet.

Mr. Scott Gignac, representing Jensco Properties (applicant), was present to support the application and discuss his plans to construct four-unit apartment buildings on the approximate 6.0 acres of vacant land located behind the existing single family residence and three-unit apartment buildings. Mr. Gignac stated the proposed buildings

would not be large apartment buildings and the desired density was just slightly higher than what would be allowed under an RM-2 zoning district. Mr. Gignac stated there is a need for multiple family units in the City of Portage.

The public hearing was then opened by Chairman Welch. Seven citizens spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning: 1) Colleen Poot (7402 Lovers Lane); 2) Bobbie Dianne Spitzner (7183 Oak Brook Circle); 3) Len Diamond (7310 Lovers Lane); 4) Greg Fuller (7302 Lovers Lane); 5) George Gerth (7426 Lovers Lane); 6) Diane Helton (1080 Blue Brook Lane); and 7) Cory Helton (1080 Blue Brook Lane). Ms. Poot expressed concerns about the loss of wooded area, displacement of wildlife and loss of enjoyment for area residents. Ms. Poot also submitted an additional petition opposing the zoning change that signed by area residents, along with a letter and photographs of the subject property. Ms. Spitzner expressed similar concerns and stated that if the property was rezoned, she would request that the apartment units be concentrated and a wooded buffer area be preserved around the perimeter of the property. Mr. Diamond expressed concerns including the development density, storm water/flooding issues and disruption to area wildlife. Mr. Fuller also expressed concerns regarding impacts of the development on area wildlife and area residents and stated the property was a special ecosystem in the middle of the city. Mr. Gerth expressed similar concerns and also discussed issues related to increased traffic and speeding along Lovers Lane. Mr. and Mrs. Helton concurred with previous citizen comments and also discussed the unique nature of the Oak Brook Estates mobile home community and indicated there were other more appropriate areas along Lovers Lane for multiple family residential. No additional citizens spoke regarding the proposed rezoning.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Bosch, seconded by Richmond, to adjourn the public hearing for Rezoning Application #16/17-5, 7338 Lovers Lane, to the June 1, 2017 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved 9-0. Commissioner Dargitz stated she was not sure whether the Medium Density Residential land use designation was appropriate for this property and surrounding properties, if the property along the east side of Lovers Lane does not develop as Research, Development and Technology. Mr. Forth stated the two designations are not necessarily tied together and there are several factors that determine future land use designation and appropriateness. Mr. Forth also stated there is no specific timeframe referenced in the Comprehensive Plan as to when properties should transition into the planned land uses.

NEW BUSINESS:

Secretary Schimmel read a Resolution honoring Commissioner Richmond for her three years of service to the Planning Commission. A motion was then made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Dargitz, to approved the Resolution. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Welch read a Resolution honoring Commissioner Dargitz for her nine years of service to the Planning Commission. A motion was then made by Commissioner Stoffer, seconded by Commissioner Bosch, to approved the Resolution. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vice-Chairman Stoffer read a Resolution honoring Chairman Welch for his ten years of service to the Planning Commission. A motion was then made by Commissioner Schimmel, seconded by Commissioner Patterson, to approved the Resolution. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Forth provided a brief summary of the tenure and service that Commissioner Richmond, Commissioner Dargitz and Chairman Welch have provided to the Planning Commission, thanked them for their service and offered best wishes to all three in their future endeavors. Chairman Welch, Commissioner Dargitz and Commissioner Richmond thanked city staff for their assistance over the years, as well as their fellow Commissioners.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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