

PLANNING COMMISSION

December 7, 2017

The City of Portage Planning Commission meeting of December 7, 2017 was called to order by Chairman Stoffer 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 Stoffer led the Commission, staff and citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael West, Senior City Planner and Randy Brown, City Attorney.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. West called the roll: Patterson (yes), Shoup (yes), Stoffer (yes), Schimmel (yes), Place (yes), Joshi (yes) and Corradini (yes). A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Shoup, to approve the roll excusing Commissioners Bosch and Harrell-Page. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Stoffer referred the Commission to the November 2, 2017 regular meeting minutes and November 16, 2017 workshop meeting minutes contained in the agenda packet. A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson, seconded by Commissioner Place, to approve both sets of minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Site Plan: Cooley Townhouses, 3223 Cooley Drive. Mr. West summarized the December 1, 2017 staff report regarding a request by Greg Watts of Prime Homes, LLC to construct an attached residential development at 3223 Cooley Drive. Mr. West stated the site plan proposes construction of one 4-unit attached building, one 3-unit attached building, one 2-unit attached building and associated site improvements. Mr. West discussed various aspects of the project including access, storm water and sidewalk installation. Mr. West stated that applicant has agreed to construct a five-foot wide concrete sidewalk along Cooley Drive, however, was requesting Planning Commission approval not to install an internal sidewalk connector along at least one side of the private drive. Consistent with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, 2015 Complete Streets Policy and Zoning Code, Mr. West indicated that staff was recommending that the site plan be approved subject to installation of a four-foot wide concrete sidewalk along at least one side (south/east side recommended) of the internal private drive so as to provide a separate and safe pedestrian connection from the individual townhouses to the sidewalk along Cooley Drive.

Greg Watts (applicant, Prime Homes, LLC) and Frank Renaldi (engineer, Wightman & Associates) were present to support the application and discuss the development project. Mr. Watts stated that he believes the internal sidewalk connection was not needed and that residents of the development would walk down the private drive to access the sidewalk that he will be installing along Cooley Drive. Mr. Watts indicated there was only approximately 20-feet of driveway area, between the front of the garage and the internal private drive, and installation of a sidewalk would reduce area available for resident parking within the driveway and also reduce greenspace area.

The Commission, staff and the applicant next discussed various aspects of the internal sidewalk connection. Commissioner Patterson indicated no sidewalks are located within The Woodlands at Austin Lake and the residents utilized the wider road shoulder to walk/bicycle. Chairman Stoffer indicated that he lives on a short cul-de-sac street (eight houses) with no sidewalks and residents walk down the cul-de-sac to existing sidewalk

located on the adjacent intersecting street. Commissioner Place stated that she concurs with the staff recommendation and believes an internal sidewalk connection should be installed by the developer for improved safety purposes. Mr. West provided a short historical summary of sidewalk installation and how the requirements have changed and evolved over the years. More recently, Mr. West stated the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, 2015 Complete Streets Policy and 2016 Zoning Code amendments have all emphasized the importance of providing safe and efficient pedestrian modes of travel with new development projects. Mr. West discussed recent development projects that have included sidewalk installations, separate from the internal private streets, including Streamsong Condominiums, Whisper Rock Condominiums and Greenspire Apartments. Attorney Brown indicated that the Site Plan Review Standards contained in the Zoning Code allows the Commission to consider that “safe, convenient, uncongested and well-defined vehicular and pedestrian circulation shall be provided for ingress/egress points and within the site”.

After additional discussion regarding possible locations for the internal sidewalk, setback distances between the townhouse garages and the internal private drives, and possible future mailbox locations, a motion by Commissioner Joshi, seconded by Commissioner Schimmel, to approve the Site Plan for Cooley Townhouses, 3223 Cooley Drive, subject to installation of a 4-foot wide concrete sidewalk along one side of the internal private drives with the specific location to be determined by staff following discussions with the developer. The motion included a finding that installation of this internal sidewalk will provide a separate and safe pedestrian connection, from the individual townhouses to the sidewalk along Cooley Drive, which will be insulated from the internal private drive and is consistent with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, 2015 Complete Streets Policy, Section 42-521.L of the Zoning Code and other recently approved residential development projects including Whisper Rock Condominiums, Streamsong Condominiums and Greenspire Apartments. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2018 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule. Mr. West reviewed the 2018 Planning Commission meeting schedule, which is typically the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, and asked whether any adjustments were needed due to Commissioner availability particularly for the April 5, 2018 meeting (week of Spring Break for Portage Public Schools) and July 5, 2018 meeting (day after the 4th of July holiday). After a brief Commission discussion, it was determined that no adjustments to the 2018 Planning Commission meeting schedule were needed at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Stoffer stated that the Neighborhood and Community Enhancement Program subcommittee was meeting in Conference Room No. 2 following the regularly scheduled meeting.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS/COMMISSIONERS:

Chairman Stoffer discussed the importance of having a full Planning Commission in attendance for the next few meetings where the issue of a proposed medical marijuana ordinance would be presented to the Commission. Attorney Brown stated the schedule established by City Council included a Planning Commission workshop meeting on December 21st where he and staff would provide a comprehensive overview of the state medical marijuana legislation along with an introduction of the proposed ordinance, followed by a public hearing to consider the proposed medical marijuana ordinance at the January 4, 2018 meeting.

No Commissioners indicated that they would not be available for the December 21st and January 4th meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the regularly scheduled meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael West, AICP
Senior City Planner