

Plan Commission meeting on October 3 at 6:00 PM at Buchanan City Hall is confirmed - Agenda and background

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Hello Plan Commission,

A special Plan Commission meeting has been scheduled for October 3 at 6:00 PM at City Hall. I have heard back from all of you that you are able to attend as we will need all of you there to conduct business.

There will be two agenda items:

- Zoning amendment for 208 Days Ave from R1A to C-3 Central Business District
- Design Review Committee Minutes and Recommendation for Mural at Cannavista, 120 E. Front St.

Full packet is forthcoming.

Some background on the Historic Livery Project and reason for the proposed zoning amendment:

My team has been working closely with a developer over the last year to redevelop a boutique hotel at the historic livery building at 206 Days Ave. On a parallel track, my team and the developer's team have been working with senior leadership at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to apply for Community Revitalization Project grant that would leverage significant state funds (over \$1 million) to be used to implement the project.

We want to be clear that the project is not a done deal and will have to compete with other projects around the state. The developer also has to secure bids that will make the project work. There is more work to be done. At the same time, we are receiving very positive feedback from the state that our project is competitive, and the developer recently received a letter of intent that states the MEDC is considering recommending the project to be funded. This is an important milestone and a milestone that kicks off several other action items that need to be completed by mid-November in order for the project to be considered for funding.

For the project to happen and to secure the support of MEDC, it will be necessary for the developer to acquire the property at 208 Days Ave and to incorporate the property into the project site plan. The house at 208 Days Ave would likely need to be demoed or moved in order to accommodate parking and other infrastructure that is required for the project. After discussing the path forward, it was determined that the easiest way to incorporate 208 Days Ave into the project is to propose a zoning amendment of the property from R1A Residential to C-3 Central Business District. The Historic Livery Building/property is already zoned C-3 Central Business District. I was notified this week that the 208 Day Ave property is now under contract and that the seller supports the project and the rezoning of the property. The seller has submitted a letter of support for the zoning amendment and the project.

In our Master Plan discussions, the Plan Commission believed that there is potential to extend the Central Business District in certain instances to encourage for catalytic redevelopment project to be implemented. This project would be a strong anchor a newly invigorated Days Ave district and will likely cause the rehabilitation and investment to several other properties in the neighborhood. The result will be a long-term increased tax base, job creation, a historic asset will have new life breathed in it to tell the story of Buchanan history, and a significant positive economic impact.

Further, Buchanan is a small town of 4,500 residents. We have no hotels and we have to approach hospitality in a creative and innovative way. The Historic Livery Project will fill a strong hospitality demand and take our new wave of day trippers and make them overnights, resulting in a significantly stronger economic impact to a community that needs it. The data could not be more clear. County and state tourism bureaus across the country state that overnights spend 3-4 times more per capita than daytrippers. This demonstrates a great opportunity for Buchanan.

The Zoning Amendment Process:

The Plan Commission, upon its own action, may initiate an application for amending the zoning ordinance text or map. Based on the above projected benefits, there are ample findings of this rezoning that support that it is in the best interest of the City to support the zoning amendment.

Next steps:

At the October 3rd Plan Commission meeting, the Plan Commission will initiate the application for the zoning amendment of 208 Days Ave. As with any zoning amendment, there will be an advertised public hearing, a presentation of the project and the need for the zoning amendment, and the Plan Commission will vote to recommend approval. From there the zoning amendment moves on to the City Commission for approval. If we proceed with the timeline we have outlined, the City Commission will be able to approve the zoning amendment in time for the MEDC to recommend our project for funding.

Please see attached Plan Commission Resolution to initiate the zoning amendment, zoning amendment application, and public hearing notices.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions. Exciting times in Buchanan!

Thank you!
Rich

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