
MINUTES

I. *The City of Buchanan Planning Commission, in compliance with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a Planning Commission meeting to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.*

II. ** Comments may also be submitted in writing at least 4 hours in advance to the Community Development Director Richard Murphy at rmurphy@cityofbuchanan.com*

** Buchanan City will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aide and services to those individuals with disabilities who wish to attend the public meeting upon receiving at least one (1) week’s prior notice. Any such individual requiring such aids or services should contact the city in writing or by telephoning: Buchanan City Clerk; 302 North Redbud Trail, Buchanan, MI 49107, 269-695-3844.*

III. Regular Meeting - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Lietz at 7:00 P.M.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

Lietz led in the pledge of allegiance.

V. Roll Call

Present: Jason Lietz, Kevin Barker, Richard Martin, Ralph McDonald, Sean Denison, Tony Houser

City Staff: Director of Community Development, Rich Murphy; City Clerk, Kalla Langston

VI. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Denison, supported by Houser to approve agenda as presented. Voice vote carries unanimously.

VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items

Don Ryman – does not want to see changes to existing zoning regarding single family residential districts and home occupations.

VIII. Approve Minutes**A. Consider approving minutes from March 14, 2023.**

Martin’s name is misspelled in section 14 of the regular meeting minutes. Langston will amend the minutes to reflect the correct spelling.

Motion made by Houser, supported by Barker, to approve public hearing and regular meeting minutes from March 14, 2023, as amended. Voice vote carries unanimously.

IX. Old Business**A. Zoning Update Project- Discussion**

Murphy stated the goal for this discussion was to outline the Planning Commission’s goals and objections from draft 2 of the updated zoning ordinance. Notable updates since draft 1 include keeping the current PUD standards, including sign illustrations, and changing alternative dwelling units and home occupations to be special use.

Barker would like to see a time frame, such as 12 months, for non-conforming structures to repair back to their original, conforming state.

There was discussion over the proper time frame for discontinued use. Lietz is in favor of keeping the language broadly applicable to most residents with exceptions using established channels to receive variances. they'd like to add a definition of abandonment.

There was discussion on accessory dwelling units and their locations. Murphy will be proactive on their concerns about the specifications for ADUs. There were questions about their appropriateness for different neighborhoods, lot coverage, and parking.

There may need to be a definition of 'story' added. Discussion about potential maximum heights per story. Lietz and Barker would like more discussion regarding subdivisions and existing ordinances for them.

There were questions about the text regarding outdoor dining on private property, with Lietz suggesting omitting it.

Barker suggested roof being done for special use, with Lietz supporting the idea. They'd also like to potentially see similar setbacks as are currently required. Lietz and Barker are interested in revisiting the focus on dense housing in a small town like Buchanan.

They agreed more discussion was needed regarding the façade process. They proposed changing or eliminating a minimum awning size.

There was discussion regarding short-term vacation rentals and the proper channel to regulate them. Murphy recommends a standalone ordinance. They'd like to see the percentage of a home used for a home occupation reduced to potentially 20% from 50%. The Planning Commission also discussed parking for commercial vehicles in residential areas.

McDonald shared some technical errors he found as well as the zoning map not identifying all parks as natural areas as well as some inconsistencies. Houser felt the colors for zoning districts should be better differentiated. McDonald also felt the minimum solar panel specifications should be changed. Barker suggested potentially adding specifications for freestanding solar panels. They decided they should address energy producing equipment.

Denison wanted clarity on downtown sidewalk sizes after the downtown reconstruction project. Barker provided information on ADA requirements.

Barker suggested having longer discussions about ADUs and parking in the next meeting.

X. New Business

None.

XI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only

None.

XII. Community Development Director Comments

Murphy appreciates the productive meeting and will continue to organize the Planning Commission's input for Placemakers.

XIII. Commissioner Comments

McDonald – will provide Trail minutes at the next meeting.

Houser – none.

Baker – would like Denison to bring the idea of a bonus and penalty clause in reference to the sale of city property before the City Commission and the City Attorney. He would like to incentivize good, efficient work and penalize any developer that would cease work.

Lietz – thanked Barker for covering in his absence. Lietz would also like to inquire into the status of the boutique grow operation at the corner of Smith and Oak which seems to have stalled. Murphy and Houser reported that they'd experienced mechanical difficulties. He also the Planning Commission vote on officer positions as it hadn't been done in a while. This will be added to the next meeting.

Martin – reported on the Tree Friends. They will have a planting on Earth Day.

Denison – the Chili Walk is this Thursday. The City has an interim City Manager and is in the process of hiring a new City Manager. The DPW Building was approved and will begin construction soon.

XIV. Adjournment

Motion made by Martin, supported by Houser to adjourn. Voice vote was carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 P.M.

Chairperson, Jason Lietz

City Clerk, Kalla Langston