



**THE CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 09, 2023 AT 7:00 PM
86 W CENTER ST., DOUGLAS MI**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Commissioner John O'Malley

Commissioner Neal Seabert

Chair Paul Buszka

Vice-Chair Louise Pattison

Commissioner Gregory Freeman

Interim Planning & Zoning Administrator, Tricia Anderson

Deputy Clerk, Laura Kasper

ABSENT

Secretary Kelli Heneghan

Commissioner Matt Balmer

A. Approval of March 9, 2023 Agenda (additions/changes/deletions)

B. Approval of February 9, 2023 Minutes (additions/changes/deletions)

Motion by Commissioner Freeman, Seconded by Commissioner Seabert, to approve; March 9, 2023 Agenda & February 9, 2023 Minutes.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

3. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - VERBAL (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES): No verbal communication.

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – WRITTEN: Two letters were submitted to the Commission.

A. Sue Neville and Sue Jansky Letter regarding the proposed Forest Gate Condo development – Letter received in agenda packet for public record.

B. Ralph Pizza Letter regarding the proposed Forest Gate Condo development - Letter received in agenda packet and for public record.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. **April Meeting Date Change** – Chair Buszka indicated that there will be some scheduling conflicts among some Planning Commission members on the regular meeting date of April 13th, 2023. He

proposed moving the meeting date out by one week and instead, holding it on April 20th, 2023.

Motion by Commissioner Seabert, Seconded by Commissioner O'Malley, to reschedule the date of the regular April 13th Planning Commission meeting to April 20th.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- B. **485 Ferry – Forest Gate Condominium Development Special Studies-** Traffic and Environmental Study Review – Tricia Anderson, City Planner gave a summary of what the Commission would be considering with a motion for this item. Ms. Anderson spoke about the Public Hearing at last month's February 8, 2023 Commission meeting for the Forest Gate Development plan submission. The Commission voted unanimously at the February meeting to table the item until the applicant was able to address concerns brought forth by the Commission and Ms. Anderson. The motion did not include specific direction for staff follow up with independent consultants review for the special studies submitted by the applicant. These items were related to traffic impacts and environmental issues. She mentioned that the City has the right to have the applicant's submitted studies and reports review by a consultant of their choosing, and this motion is part of a formality of the Commission for the record. Ms. Anderson spoke about how the independent consultant's review of the special studies that were provided by the applicant will then assist in the Commissions analysis of the standards of site plan approval. This will give the Commission full reassurance that health safety and welfare standards are met, along with the determination of whether all standards are met.

Motion by Commissioner O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Seabert, to direct staff to have the traffic and environmental study's further reviewed by independent consultants. Motion carried by roll call vote. (Yes) O'Malley, Seabert, Freeman, Buszka (abstain) Pattison

- C. **Planning Commission Bylaws – Discussion Only** – Chair Buszka opened the discussion and asked Tricia Anderson to provide background on the topic of the bylaws. She discussed how amending the Bylaws would be the appropriate way to enact new rules instead of adopting a resolution. Ms. Anderson gave a breakdown of the areas that needed attention or are not typical in Bylaws. This included procedural information, and a great deal of unnecessary language. She questioned the Commissioners if they would like an overhaul of the Bylaws to modernize and simplify the language within and she provided a sample of some new bylaws that she drafted for a different community. Commissioner Seabert stated his main concern with the Bylaws is that it should prohibit Commission Members from meeting without a quorum with applicants outside the setting of a public meeting. Commissioner Pattison stated that the main issue for her was the ex parte contact. Commissioner O'Malley and Commissioner Freeman agreed. Ms. Anderson explained that the Commission can restrict activities of members by what they allow in the Bylaws. Chair Buszka stated that the short-term solution to the problem is the ex parte amendment to the Bylaws, and he would support Ms. Anderson to update a draft for the next meeting. Commissioner Pattison also suggested that the Commission hold a workshop at their first session of the year to look at Bylaws and give commissioners a refresher on topics such as roles and responsibilities and some of the procedures outlined in the zoning ordinance. Commissioner Freeman supported the idea. Chair Buszka stated the next steps is to have Ms. Anderson to take the existing Planning Commission Bylaws and work in a section that would prohibit the ex parte contact and a provision for an annual training workshop as a refresher for roles and responsibilities.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **Draft Sign Ordinance – Discussion Only** – Chair Buszka had directed Tricia Anderson at the prior meeting to give the current sign ordinance a complete overhaul. Ms. Anderson discussed the draft sign ordinance she provided to the Commissioners. She stated that the main focus the of the draft provided was to achieve content neutrality and to simplify the ordinance to make it more user friendly. The

draft also included graphics associated with definitions and a section that includes simplified regulatory language. The Commissioners gave feedback and were all in agreement that the draft should allow for the character and charm of Douglas to be preserved, while regulating electronic message signage. Chair Buszka addressed concern that without enforcement the ordinance is obsolete. He asked Commissioners to list their comments and provide Ms. Anderson with their ideas so she can make additional adjustments to the next draft.

7. REPORTS

- A. **Planning and Zoning Administrator Report** – Ms. Anderson talked about some of the future meeting agenda items which include the draft sign ordinance, Forest Gate, rezone request for the bus lot for Saugatuck Public Schools, and a PUD application from BDR for West Shore. She also mentioned that the Centre Collective developer has reconfigured the residential site condo layout and that it is a substantial enough change to warrant a public hearing and review by the Planning Commission. She stated that the upcoming meeting agendas will be limited to 3 items maximum to prevent late night meetings which often result in less productivity. In addition, she also is looking into a possible mapping error with 200 Center Street and will be going over with the City Attorney.
- B. **Planning Commissioner Remarks** -
Commissioner Freeman and Commissioner O'Malley thanked Ms. Anderson for her work.

8. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – VERBAL (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES): No verbal communication.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Seabert, seconded by Commissioner O'Malley.

Submitted by Laura Kasper, Deputy Clerk

Please Note – The City of the Village of Douglas (the “City”) is subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of this meeting or the facilities, are requested to contact Pamela Aalderink, City Clerk, at (269) 857-1438, or clerk@douglasmi.gov to allow the City to make reasonable accommodations for those persons. CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN