

VILLAGE OF SCHOOLCRAFT
PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 13, 2009

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Tim Brown at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairperson Tim Brown, Commissioners Gunnett, DeVries, Harden, Rozeboom, Pfost, and Vestal.
Absent: None.
Also Present: Village Manager Cheri Lutz, Todd Carlin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Harden, seconded by Vestal, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 8, 2009, with minor corrections as requested by Commissioner Brown. All aye.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

UPDATE ON VILLAGE ACTIVITIES:

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Village Council held on June 1 and 15, 2009, were discussed with general questions regarding MDOT's decision regarding a request for a left hand turn signal on US 131 and Lyons.

Commissioner Harden requested permission to address the issue as a representative from MDOT, and went on to explain the rationale for denying the request.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Chairperson Brown introduced the letter from McKenna & Associates and AGS regarding a request for Open Air Sales in the B-1 District. Commissioner's comments as follows:

Commissioner Harden had the following comments:

- He stated that he has reviewed the comments from McKenna, and is concerned about impact to residential homes and traffic on local streets.
- He stated that some weight must be given to Council directives regarding additional traffic volume on local streets.
- He stated that he would be open to some type of Open Air Sales, and that he favors them in the CBD District.
- He stated that is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to balance intensity of businesses and residential homes, and the quality of life for residential homes abutting the B-1 District.

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- He stated that businesses fronting Grand Street have little greenspace, and expressed concern that parking regulations could be affected if businesses were allowed to set up Open Air businesses in their parking lots.
- He stated that the lack of sanitary sewer is detrimental to business development in the Village of Schoolcraft.

Commissioner DeVries had the following comments:

- He stated that he likes the Open Air concept, and would like to limit uses to high versus low traffic or high versus low density.
- He stated that he would like to clear up inconsistencies in the B-1 and B-2 Zoning Districts.
- He stated that while Open Air businesses may not be an option in the B-1 District, they may be an option in other districts, and that he would like to allow the maximum number of uses.
- He stated that by putting the B-2 District at the north and south Village limits, we could be creating urban sprawl, and force other businesses to locate outside the Village limits.
- He asked if many businesses located within the Village limits are “grandfathered”?
- He stated that he feels that the Planning Commission may be making assumptions that may not be applicable to Open Air businesses.
- He stated that he has yet to see a traffic jam on U.S. 131 related to businesses.

Chairperson Brown had the following comments:

- He stated that many uses were allowed before adoption of the Zoning Ordinance in 1992.
- He stated that there are very few businesses located on Hayward Street, and that a possibility would be to limit businesses to Grand Street.
- He stated that it would be easy to identify specific areas in the Business District that would be conducive to Open Air Sales, but urged the Planning Commission to remember that Open Air Sales would apply to the entire district.
- He stated that Open Air Sales could open up potential for a Flea Market in the Business District.
- He stated that he is concerned about large volumes of traffic related to a Farmer’s Market.

Commissioner Gunnett had the following comment:

- He stated that Planning is a balance act between business and residential development:

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Commissioner Rozeboom had the following comment:

- He stated that the concept of Access Management would be addressed by diverting traffic to local streets.

Chairperson Brown called for concluding comments as follows:

Commissioner Harden had the following comments:

- He stated that at previous meetings he has been called negative but that he believes that the Planning Commission has the responsibility to look into all foreseeable issues, and to address the potential impacts prior to amending Zoning Ordinances.
- He stated that it is important for the Planning Commission not to plan itself into additional problems, and then have to plan itself out of them.
- He stated there is a big difference between Open Air Sales ranging from fruit stands to car lots.

Commissioner DeVries had the following comments:

- He stated that if the Planning Commission is sensitive to where businesses locate, then should they also be sensitive to where residential properties are located.
- He stated that the CBD makes sense for Open Air Sales.
- He stated that Open Air Sales brings people together, provides a sense of community, and that Schoolcraft could be a destination point by opening up Open Air Sales in certain districts.
- He stated that he would like the Planning Commission to say yes to Open Air Sales in certain locations with certain restrictions.
- He requested that the Planning Commission include Open Air Sales in the CBD along with other planned Zoning Ordinance changes.
- He stated that Open Air Sales could be defined as capital versus consumable sales.

Commissioner Pfost had the following comments:

- She stated that the implications of a high intensity use in the B-1 District has many negative impacts including traffic and safety issues.
- She questioned that Open Air Markets may not add value to existing businesses, and that there would be an impact in traffic.
- She stated that she wants to see stable businesses in town.
- She stated that lack of sanitary sewer is prohibitive for any type of business development, and that we have an undeveloped Industrial Park that is not marketable because of lack of sanitary sewer.
- She stated that she is not open to the promotion of Open Air Businesses.

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Commissioner Gunnett had the following comments:

- He stated that he would like to encourage businesses that have a vested interest in the community, and that would create additional revenue for the Village.
- He stated that an Open Air Market would likely attract people who are driving through Schoolcraft, and doubts that existing businesses would receive a benefit.

Commissioner Rozeboom had the following comments:

- He stated that the Planning Commission must ask themselves if an Open Air Market would bring people to the community.
- He stated that a revised definition of an Open Air Market may wish to include issues such as a permanent building, length, and hours of operation.
- He stated that he agrees with Commissioner Gunnett that there must be a benefit to the community.

Chairperson Brown had the following comments:

- He stated that the Planning Commission has suggested some creative ideas and possibilities for Open Air Sales.
- He stated that the concept of Open Air Sales in the CBD should be presented to the DDA.
- He stated that an Open Air Market works best when it is run by the municipality.
- He requested that Open Air Markets be added to the list of Zoning Ordinance changes to be done at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Cheri M. Lutz, Recording Secretary

Tim Brown, Chairperson