

**City of Howell**  
**Planning Commission**  
**January 20, 2021**  
**ZOOM Digital Meeting**  
**611 E. Grand River Avenue**  
**Howell, MI 48843**

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The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Vukonich at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Maryanne Vukonich, Nathan Voght, Mayor Nick Proctor, Jan Lobur, Erin Britten and Robert Spaulding

Absent: Chelsea Dantuma

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director Timothy Schmitt, Deputy City Clerk Tonya Hubbard and Planning Consultant Richard Carlisle

GUESTS: Jennifer Douglas

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES, DECEMBER 16, 2020 ZOOM DIGITAL MEETING**

**MOTION by Lobur, SUPPORT by Spaulding, “To approve the December 16, 2020 zoom digital Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented.” A roll call vote was taken. Proctor – yes, Voght – yes, Britten – yes, Lobur – yes, Spaulding – yes, Vukonich – yes. MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

**STAFF REPORT**

Community Development Director Schmitt informed the commission that we should have a purchase agreement for the Barnard property in place very soon and construction on the new homes should start in late summer or early fall. Coratti’s restaurant is getting close to opening, Soft Cloth Car Wash does have temporary occupancy and is open for business and Gallery Park has been sold and a new builder will be finishing the remaining units.

Commissioner Spaulding inquired about the possibility of the Clinton Place duplexes becoming rental units, Mr. Schmitt responded that they currently do not have permission to be rentals.

Commissioner Voght questioned if The Pearl building would need a Site Plan extension, Mr. Schmitt responded that the MEDC has officially reissued a new letter of interest and if they are not on the MSF board in April for final approval it would likely be brought back to the Planning Commission for approval of an extension.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **#21-02 – SPECIAL LAND USE – 402 WEST GRAND RIVER AVENUE**

Community Development Director Schmitt introduced the request as a change of occupancy and informed the Commission that the applicant is requesting approval to utilize the main building on the property which is zoned as HL-1, Historic Limited as a Tax and Accounting Office.

Commissioners Lobur, Britten and Mayor Proctor expressed their excitement and support for the proposed tax office.

Commissioner Spaulding questioned if the counseling office would remain at the back of the building, Mrs. Douglas responded, yes.

Commissioner Voght inquired about the parking situation and the authority the Planning Commission has to require a Special Land Use since it is going from office to office, Mr. Schmitt responded that the City's approach could be an annual renewal of the parking agreement by the church unless they would like to put something more permanent in writing; an approval on the previous use could not be located and the City wants to grant the proper approval for the proposed use at this time.

**MOTION by Lobur, SUPPORT by Britten “To approve the Special Land Use application (#21-02) for 402 West Grand River, parcel id number 4717-36-102-032, to allow a tax and accounting office to occupy the existing main structure, subject to the following conditions:**

- **No other uses than a tax and accounting office shall be permitted on the property, without further Planning Commission review and approval.**
- **No changes to the building or property shall be made without approval of the City and/or building permits being issued.**
- **Planning Commission authorization for a reduction in parking from seven spaces to four spaces, subject to evidence of approval to utilize the parking at the Presbyterian church being provided.**

**A roll call vote was taken. Voght – yes, Spaulding – yes, Proctor – yes, Lobur – yes, Britten – yes, Vukonich – yes.**

**MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ORDINANCE 940 – SIGN ORDINANCE UPDATE**

Community Development Director Schmitt stated the questions and concerns from the December meeting were taken back to Mr. Carlisle along with a request for his input.

Planning Consultant Richard Carlisle stated that he appreciated the commissions thoughtful comments regarding the sign ordinance and feels that they can easily be addressed. Mr. Carlisle and the Commission discussed the Commissions previous comments one by one. The discussion included the inconsistent use of freestanding vs. ground signs and digital electronic signs vs. electronic message signs with an agreement to use freestanding signs and electronic message signs

going forward in terms of terminology, eliminating audible sound on electronic message signs and restrictions on electronic message sign placement. Mr. Carlisle suggested evaluating which districts should have additional restrictions and bringing back specific recommendations that the Commission could take into consideration.

Discussion continued regarding lowering the height or eliminating ground signs in the Central Business District while accommodating the signs that are pre-existing and increasing the size of temporary ground signs located only on sites of construction.

Mr. Schmitt stated that he and Mr. Carlisle will work on the outstanding issues to finalize the language to bring back to the next public meeting and then make a recommendation to present to City Council.

**MOTION by Spaulding, SUPPORT by Lobur, “To excuse Commission member Dantuma.” A roll call vote was taken. Britten – yes, Voght – yes, Spaulding – yes, Proctor – yes, Lobur - yes, Vukonich – yes.  
MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

**MOTION by Proctor, SUPPORT by Britten, “To adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m.” A roll call vote was taken. Spaulding – yes, Proctor - yes, Lobur – yes, Britten – yes, Voght- yes, Vukonich – yes.  
MOTION CARRIED (6-0).**

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Tonya Hubbard, Deputy City Clerk