

**CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 11, 2017
7:00 PM

(In the absence of Chair John Wilson, Commissioner Tim Palmer was selected as Acting Chair).

The regular meeting of the Ithaca Planning Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Tim Palmer at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Present: Acting Chair Tim Palmer, Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Jerry Timmons and Doug Wright.

Staff Present: City Manager Chris A. Yonker and City Clerk-Treasurer Barbara Fandell.

Absent: Chair John Wilson, Commissioner James Gruesbeck and Deputy Clerk Cathy Cameron.

Audience in Attendance: Michelle Fairchild

Chair Palmer presented the minutes for approval.

Moved by Wright, second by Barrows to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held March 14, 2017. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Palmer asked to receive public comments. None were offered.

Public Hearing

Chair Palmer called to open the public hearing for a Special Use Permit (SUP) and Variance request for a Group Child Care Home at 304 N. Main Street.

Moved by Barrows, second by Wright to open the Public Hearing for a Special Use Permit (SUP) and Variance request for a Group Child Care Home at 304 N. Main Street. Motion carried.

Chair Palmer opened the public hearing at 7:05pm.

City Manager Yonker explained that the request from Ms. Fairchild was submitted and received prior to the last regular meeting, however due to his absence, it was not brought to the Commission to set the public hearing. As to not delay the process another month, he had the information sent out, published and properly notified the affecting parties. Ms. Fairchild's request is for a Group Child Care Home of 7-12 children, in her neighborhood at 304 N. Main Street. The location is in an R-2 District. He explained that Chapter 22 of the Zoning Code states if the request is for home daycare (versus a child care center) then it must be 1500 feet from another facility or home.

City Manager Yonker stated the Commission had latitude for the SUP in regards to use and restrictions. The 1500 foot radius is set by state statute and for Ithaca that is a large part of the City. Maps were reviewed of the 1500 foot radius from the 304 N. Main Street home and showed ten daycares or facilities licensed with the State of Michigan. Ms. Fairchild added that the daycare next door (#4 on the map) was closing June 9, 2017 and the daycare provider was moving out of town. This provider was Courtney Wheeler and Ms. Fairchild would be taking on her children.

Manager Yonker said the main issues with the business in the neighborhood would be traffic, drop off, etc. He asked Ms. Fairchild if there were plans for a side fence on the yard. Ms. Fairchild stated they were looking into it and wanted to place one in a way to make it look nice.

Commissioner Barrows said of the ten on the map, three were out of the radius, #4 was closing and moving, one was the jail, one was Mindful Therapy, so that left #3, #5 and #6 as close for daycares. Commissioner Timmons stated #5 was an adult foster care home. Commissioner Barrows asked how the neighbors felt. Commissioner Timmons said he was one of the neighbors and they haven't had any issues with parking or otherwise with the current daycare. Chair Palmer added that he spoke with the three daycares in the area and 7-8 of the neighbors and no one has expressed any issues with the request.

Chair Palmer inquired if the SUP and Variance could be tied to the current owner, Ms. Fairchild, and not to the property. Commissioner Sherman said the license is tied to the person. Manager Yonker confirmed the SUP could be tied to the licensee as a provision.

Chair Palmer asked for additional comments. None were offered.

**Moved by Barrows, second by Sherman to close the public hearing. Motion carried.
Chair Palmer closed the public hearing at 7:25pm.**

New and Old Business

Moved by Sherman, second by Barrows to approve the Special Use Permit to Michelle Fairchild to operate a Group Child Care Home for 7-12 children at 304 N. Main Street in the R-2 District with the restriction that it is tied to Michelle Fairchild as the licensee. Motion unanimously carried.

Moved by Barrows, second by Wright to approve a Zoning Variance request submitted by Michelle Fairchild for a Group Child Care Home for 7-12 children at 304 N. Main Street in the R-2 District and exempt it from the 1500 foot isolation State statute. Motion unanimously carried.

City Manager Yonker updated the Commission with the following:

- ❖ Countywide Master Plan: The Steering Committee is planning to meet one more time before forwarding the Plan to the Commission and City Council for approval.
- ❖ Westwind Lot Sales: two lots have sold in the past month and construction will begin on two single family homes soon.

- ❖ Connection Sidewalk to Mid-Michigan Community Pathway: City Council approved a contract with Rowe Professional Services for the design on the connection sidewalk from the City sidewalk system at Burger King to the Pathway. City staff will be working on finding funding sources. Commissioner Barrows asked if the City only uses Rowe. Manager Yonker said not necessarily, however they are engineer of record for civil items. Commissioner Sherman asked why it wasn't included when the pathway was installed. Manager Yonker explained that MDOT programs cover from City to City but not from the path to the City. Alma and St. Louis will have similar, but larger challenges. There was a discussion on the funding sources and use of Caldwell funds. The Pathway group is very close to Phase III bidding and they are gathering volunteers for cleaning and care of the pathway; the Gratiot County Parks and Recreation will handle the pathway maintenance.
- ❖ ZFS Project: A teleconference was held between the parties and their attorneys and it looks like the package will be on the City Council's May 2nd agenda. The project has started and the Renaissance Zone was in place as of 12/31/16. Most of the parts and equipment have arrived and are on site.
- ❖ Isabella Bank Sign: The sign is installed and the brightness is fine.
- ❖ US-127/ZFS/MDOT: Manager Yonker, Sheriff Wright and Fire Chief Nelson met with Representative Tom Leonard about US-127 and MDOT. It was noted that the project is small in the scheme of everything. MDOT is buying up properties to help make access to US-127 safer and more limited by converting some of the roads to cul-de-sacs. There is no funding for any changes right now and Rep. Leonard suggested contacting Bay City for ideas and reconvene. The long range plan includes the elimination of drives and eventually Bagley Road. ZFS is okay with northbound US-127 but would like the southbound to use the ramp.
- ❖ Consumers Energy Efficiency Grant: Update on the HVAC and other upgrades to the Fire Hall and Community Center buildings through the Consumers Energy Efficiency grant. This also led to another grant program for all new LED lighting inside and outside the building.
- ❖ Water Well #7: The well is in, tested and certified. The City needs to build a well house and install the pump. The purchase of the land has been the delay, however we finally got the landowner to allow the survey and are trying to finalize the sale. The well will be the highest producing well with the best water. The City Council also approved a maintenance contract on each well; similar to the water tower maintenance program.
- ❖ SAW Grant: The City received a Storm Water Asset Management grant from the MDEQ. This is a three-year grant for over \$500K. City staff met with the Drain Commissioner to coordinate grant to avoid duplication. Ithaca has more drains than any other city in the County. The grant will result in the City having an inventory of the storm water system, its condition and an asset management plan.

Commissioner Barrows asked if there was any word from Beacon & Bridge and when they would return to remove the testing units from resident homes. He has been unsuccessful in getting the company to respond.

City Manager Yonker reviewed the Capital Asset Plan with the Commission. He reviewed the adjustments and new fiscal year projects. He further updated commissioners on the ZFS improvements, infrastructure and road construction.

Transmittals

- ❖ City Manager Activity Report to City Council: March 17, 2017
- ❖ City Manager Activity Report to City Council: March 31, 2017

Public Comments

Chair Palmer asked for any additional public comments. None were offered.

Moved by Timmons, second by Sherman to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Barbara Fandell, Recording Secretary