

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

7:00 PM

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

Present: Chair John Wilson and Commissioners Mark Barrows, Jerry Timmons, Dale Sherman, Neville Pitcher, Dr. Kelvin Grant, Doug Wright, Jim Gruesbeck and Tim Palmer

Staff Present: City Manager Chris Yonker and Deputy City Clerk Cathy Cameron

Audience: None

Moved by Dr. Grant, seconded by Wright to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held October 13, 2015; motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Countywide GREAT Master Plan

Manager Yonker stated that a review of the countywide GREAT Master Plan is required every five years by the State Planning Enabling Act. He reported that Greater Gratiot Development had requested and received proposals from Rowe Engineering and OHM. A countywide steering committee comprised of the three City Managers, four Township Supervisors and a representative from Greater Gratiot Development had met to review the proposals and recommends going with OHM. Manager Yonker presented an overview of the proposal, along with a copy for each PC member. Within this plan will be an appendix for the City of Ithaca detailing specific goals and objectives along with a land use map. He informed members that they will be able to participate and have input into this area of the master plan. Dr. Grant inquired on the process and timeline. Manager Yonker stated that an update usually takes six months to complete and would be reviewed by the PC to make a recommendation to Council for adoption.

Roundtable Discussion: Zoning Code

Manager Yonker opened discussion on zoning issues that need to be reviewed, edited and updated. For example, the current trend of requests for accessory buildings larger than the code limits of 864 square feet might be increased or the ability for administrative action and approval could be given to become more flexible. The intent is to lessen the number of required variances and the need for Zoning Board of Appeals requests. Dr. Grant suggested that we look at comparable communities for suggestions as a baseline to work from. Mayor Palmer stated that Rowe Engineering provides a service to assist with a revision of the code, suggesting that a meeting be set with a representative from Rowe and members of the PC to discuss options. Commissioner Barrows stated that a couple members could meet to review the current zoning code and create a list of areas to discuss with a representative from Rowe, then bring a draft back to the PC to review and discuss for a final revision to be presented to the City Council for adoption. Dr. Grant shared his concern for the PC to have a clear vision of planning for the next 5-10 years in addition to the countywide Master Plan. Commissioner Pitcher shared his view that many variances are being given under the current code.

Move by Palmer, seconded by Dr. Grant to create a subcommittee, consisting of volunteered Commissioners Barrows, Dr. Grant, Palmer and Manager Yonker, to review the zoning code and meet with a representative from Rowe, with a date yet to be determined; motion carried.

Establish Zoning Board of Appeals

The City Manager stated that in 2006 the State passed the Zoning Enabling Act and the Planning Enabling Act. The Planning Commission needs to create a separate Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) under State statute and in accordance with city ordinance. This will allow for any applicants seeking a variance to appeal a PC decision to another board consisting of one PC member and additional community volunteers. Dr. Grant inquired if the PC member on the ZBA can only serve to provide input from the PC meeting and must be excluded from the vote at a ZBA appeal. Manager Yonker agreed. Discussion was held on the number of members to be included on a ZBA for voting purposes.

Manager Yonker suggested having staff speak with the City Attorney to assist with a draft on policy and procedures for a ZBA. It is the consensus of the PC to table this for additional information to be provided.

Transmittals

City Manager Activity Reports to City Council for January 15 and 29, 2016.

Public Comments

The Chair asked to receive any additional public comments; none were given.

Old/New Business

Commissioner Timmons inquired on the status of the request made by Rosewood to connect to city sewer. Manager Yonker informed members that the owners of Rosewood have been given an estimate on the cost of installing a dual pump system to the man hole at the end of Raycraft being almost 800 feet. Current ordinance requires them to annex into the City or be part of a 425 Conditional Boundary Transfer Agreement.

Moved by Palmer, seconded by Timmons to adjourn at 7:55p.m.; motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

7:00 PM

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

Present: Chair John Wilson and Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Neville Pitcher, Doug Wright, Jim Gruesbeck and Tim Palmer.

Staff Present: City Manager Chris Yonker.

Audience: None

Moved by Pitcher, seconded by Barrows to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held February 9, 2016. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Countywide GREAT Master Plan

Manager Yonker reported that the County has an agreement with OHM for professional services to update the five year Plan. The cost share for the City will be \$1 per real property, being \$1,200 to \$1,300 in total. All the City Managers are on the steering committee and he suggested that one person from the Commission serve as a liaison as well to provide a historical contribution to the planning process of the countywide plan. The entire body will be included in the planning process of the City appendix. The appointment of a commission member will be tabled until the next meeting.

Capital Improvement Plan

Manager Yonker presented the proposed 5-Year CIP that is compiled for budget planning. A review of the Executive Summary was held and discussed. He also updated the commission on the projects that were completed during the fiscal year of 2015/2016.

Transmittals

City Manager Activity Reports to City Council for February 12 & 26, 2016.

Public Comments

The Chair asked to receive any additional public comments; none were given.

Moved by Palmer, seconded by Barrows to adjourn at 8:20p.m. Motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday June 14, 2016
7:00 PM

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

Present: Chair John Wilson and Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Jerry Timmons, Jim Gruesbeck and Tim Palmer

Absent: Dr. Kelvin Grant, Doug Wright and City Manager Chris Yonker

Staff Present: Deputy Clerk Cathy Cameron

Audience: Josh Melnek, JBS Contracting; Don Schurr & Jim Wheeler, Greater Gratiot Development, Inc.

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Gruesbeck to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held March 8, 2016; motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Site Plan Review

Chair Wilson presented the site plan for Kommel Investments, LLC on an addition to the Craig Frames business located at 140 Industrial Parkway. The contractor for the project, JBS Contracting, being represented by Josh Melnek, informed the Commission of a proposed 100' x 100' (10,000 ft.²) addition to the southeast corner of the existing building. Discussion was held on the possible issue of stormwater detention. Don Schurr stated that he will meet with Drain Commissioner Brian Denman to discuss options for this development so this project can move forward.

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Sherman to approve the site plan for Kommel Investments, LLC contingent upon meeting the requirements of the County Drain Commissioner for storm water detention; motion carried.

Countywide Master Plan Update

A meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 29th at 6 p.m. at the Ithaca Community Center for all elected officials and planning commissioners to review goals and objectives for the update of the Countywide Master Plan.

Transmittals

City Manager Activity Reports to City Council for May 13 & June 3, 2016

Public Comments

The Chair asked for any additional public comments; none were given.

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Sherman to adjourn at 7:22 p.m. Motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday September 13, 2016
7:00 PM

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

Present: Chair John Wilson and Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Jerry Timmons, Jim Gruesbeck and Tim Palmer

Absent: Dr. Kelvin Grant and Doug Wright

Staff Present: City Manager Chris Yonker and Deputy Clerk Cathy Cameron

Audience: None

Moved by Palmer, second by Timmons to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held June 14, 2016; motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Countywide Master Plan Update

Manager Yonker updated the commission on the progress of the Master Plan Steering Committee and provided informational handouts on county demographics and future land use maps. He presented proposed goals 1 through 6 as recommended by the Steering Committee. Discussion ensued. DPW Director Studt has been working with the Michigan Rural Water Association on a wellhead protection program. They have suggested that the City include a policy statement in the Countywide Master Plan regarding wellhead protection. Mr. Yonker provided the commission with a draft copy of that statement.

Manager Yonker announced that the City has been awarded a Stormwater Asset Management & Wastewater (SAW) grant in the amount of \$560,000 from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. This grant will allow the City to conduct a stormwater and storm sewer analysis with development of an asset management plan and a GIS database and map.

Transmittals

City Manager Activity Reports to the City Council for August 12, 2016 & September 2, 2016

Public Comments

The Chair asked for any additional public comments; none were given.

Moved by Timmons, second by Palmer to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday October 11, 2016
7:00 PM

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

Present: Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Doug Wright, Jerry Timmons, Jim Gruesbeck and Mayor Tim Palmer

Absent: Chair John Wilson

Staff Present: City Manager Chris Yonker and Deputy Clerk Cathy Cameron

Audience: Bob Garland, Eric Meeuwsen, Brian Terborg, Don Schurr, Jim Wheeler and Kasey Zehner

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Timmons to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held September 13, 2016; motion carried.

Public Comments

Mayor Palmer asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Request for Temporary Kennel License

Manager Yonker reported on a written request from Julie Hess of 324 E. Newark Street to operate a temporary kennel at her residence for eleven dogs. City code states that the number of dogs is limited to three without approval of the Planning Commission. Ms. Hess stated that she has three small-breed dogs that are unlicensed and currently has an additional eight small-breed dogs that are also unlicensed. Her daughters own the eight dogs and would retrieve the dogs from her in December.

Moved by Timmons, seconded by Wright to deny the request of a temporary kennel license; motion carried.

Site Plan Review: Zeeland Farm Services (ZFS) Ithaca, LLC

Manager Yonker presented the proposed site plan for Zeeland Farm Services (ZFS) Ithaca, LLC property located at 1266 E. Washington Road. He announced that the property was been declared as a Brownfield Redevelopment Site under the Brownfield Redevelopment Act authorized by the Gratiot County Brownfield Authority. Manager Yonker stated that improvements will be made on Washington Road to accommodate the influx of traffic and size of the vehicle entering and exiting the facility.

The gentlemen representing ZFS Ithaca, LLC introduced themselves as Eric Meeuwsen, General Manager; Brian Terborg, CFO; and Bob Garland, Project Manager. Mr. Meeuwsen referred to the proposed site plan map detailing elevators for grain receiving/storage, facilities for soybean processing including preparation and extraction, and location of finished product loaded by rail and truck. This plant will be able to process, at full capacity, 40 million bushels of soybeans per year making soybean oil and soy bean meal.

Mr. Meeuwsen stated that the facility is a legacy project that focuses on a long-term investment for Ithaca for the next 50 years. The project is projected to create 75 full-time jobs, 60 of which would be on site at the Ithaca plant and the remaining 15 supporting the function of the facility from the main office in Zeeland Township, MI. He reported that at the peak of harvest season during each October & November it is anticipated that around 150 semi-trucks will be entering and exiting this location on a 24-hour basis. Local farmers will be using this facility for their soybean crop.

Stormwater will be retained in two private retention ponds located on site while sanitary wastewater will go to the City lagoon system. Manager Yonker reported that he has been working with Rowe Engineering for the best solution in providing sanitary sewer services to ZFS. The plan is to build a lift station on site then bore under US-127 and the railroad leased from the State to the short-line company Great Lakes Central Railroad to the City's main lift station, thus providing service connection to the City's lagoon system. City watermain is already available for connection on the south side of Washington Road at the project's main driveway. Abutting the ZFS property on Bagley Road are North Star Township residents owning property that was excluded by the original 425 Conditional Boundary Change Agreement on file between the Township and the City. Mr. Garland stated that he has spoken with some of these residents with a standing offer on behalf of ZFS to buy out any homeowner if and when they choose to sell their home and property.

Following general discussion, Wright moved, Timmons seconded to approve the site plan for the Zeeland Farm Services (ZFS) Ithaca, LLC project as proposed to develop a soybean processing facility at the property located at 1266 E. Washington Road; motion carried.

Countywide Master Plan Update

Manager Yonker updated the Commission on the progress of the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Transmittals

The Commission received the City Manager's Activity Report to the City Council for September 16, 2016.

Public Comments

Mayor Palmer asked for any additional public comments; none were given.

Moved by Timmons, second by Sherman to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. Motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary

CITY OF ITHACA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
 Tuesday December 13, 2016
 7:00 PM

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

Present: Chair John Wilson, Commissioners Mark Barrows, Dale Sherman, Doug Wright, Jerry Timmons, Jim Gruesbeck and Mayor Tim Palmer

Staff Present: City Manager Chris Yonker and Deputy Clerk Cathy Cameron

Audience: Rod Merchant

Moved by Palmer, seconded by Barrows to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held October 11, 2016; motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked to receive public comments; none were given.

Request for Setback Variance for New Sign Placement: Isabella Bank, 1402 East Center Street
 Manager Yonker presented a variance request made by Isabella Bank to install a new digital pylon sign at the current sign location. Zoning code requires a 7' setback from the right-of-way on Center Street, which would not be compliant.

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Wright to set a Public Hearing for Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the agenda allows, for a setback variance on the new sign placement; motion carried.

Request for Zoning Interpretation of side yard setbacks in C-2 District

Manager Yonker informed the Commission that Rod Merchant has expressed interest in purchasing the property located at 1126 East Center Street with the intent for redevelopment. Mr. Merchant stated that he would tear down the existing building and construct a new commercial development. He inquired with the property frontage being on two streets what the side yard setbacks can be, as he is requesting a zero foot side yard on the west line. The Commission expressed willingness to work with Mr. Merchant on providing a variance to accommodate a new development, instructing that a formal site plan with an accompanying zoning variance request be presented to the Planning Commission once he owns the property.

Consideration of Offer to Sell Parcel in Downtown

Manager Yonker stated that Joe Barden has asked the City if it has any desire to submit a purchase offer on his 66' x 40' property with the cinder block building located on the north alleyway of downtown. In addition, the owner of the vacant lot north of the Barden property (Mr. Foster) has expressed interest in selling. At this point, the Commission by consensus unanimously decided to table the opportunity.

Adoption of Proposed Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2017

January 10	July 18
February 14	August 15
March 14	September 12
April 11	October 10
May 9	November 14
June 13	December 12

Moved by Barrows, seconded by Palmer to adopt the meeting schedule for 2017; motion carried.

Countywide Master Plan Progress

Manager Yonker updated the Commission on the progress and reviewed the proposed future land use maps for the city as well as Emerson and North Star Townships. Discussion was held on the possible land use designations for parcels, particularly those east of U.S.-127.

Zeeland Farm Services Progress

The City Manager updated the Commission on the progress of the 435-acre redevelopment.

Transmittals

The Commission received the City Manager's Activity Reports to the City Council for November 11 and December 3, 2016.

Public Comments

Chair Wilson asked for any additional public comments. Mayor Palmer stated that there are a lot of temporary storage sheds/structures being erected around town and that their use/placement needs to be addressed in the zoning code. Code does not currently address the use or permitting of these "tent-like" structures. Manager Yonker offered to review the situation and report back to the Commission.

Moved by Wright, seconded by Palmer to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.; motion carried.

Dale Sherman, Commission Secretary

Cathy Cameron, Recording Secretary