LUDINGTON CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL WATERFRONT WORKSHOP
NOTES
December 12, 2000

The Ludington Planning Commission Waterfront Sub-Committee held a special waterfront workshop on December 12, 2000. The meeting was held at the Ludington Senior Citizen Center, 308 S. Rowe St., Ludington, MI and was opened at 7:05 p.m. by Commissioner Tom Coleman.

Present from the Planning Commission was Commissioners Tom Coleman, Jack Ereon, Kaye Holman, Marge Carlson, Ron Sarto and Paul Peterson.

Also present were Mayor Carol Pomorski, City Manager Jim Miller, City Councilmen Jack Harper, Dave Weston, Pete Engblade, and Greg Dykstra, City Attorney Roger Anderson, Building Inspector John Healy, and Recording Secretary, Carol Ann Foote.

Tom Coleman opened the workshop at 7:05 p.m. He explained that the adhoc committee had been working on the waterfront zoning and language for about a year. He said that he was glad to see such a good turn out. This was the eighth draft. He went on to explain all the adjustments to the draft including a sliding chart, view corridors, reduction in width for view corridors, and the removal of Lake St. from the view corridors. He then went through the proposed zoning map changes and how each section of the proposed ordinance pertained to the map. Height, incentives and accessible easements were explained.

Tom Thornhill, Muskegon, commented that multifamily density had not increased in the WCB. He also asked why the definition of height had been changed. He stated that non-waterfront districts would allow higher buildings. Tom Coleman said that there had been a lot of confusion about the definition of height. He asked John Healy to give them the definition of height according to ordinance.

Mr. Thornhill asked Tom to go through all the districts as written in the current ordinance and explain what is permitted to do now. Mr. Coleman explained that in the current ordinance there were only two waterfront zones. He explained all the permitted uses in those zones.

Loren Andrulis, Warner, Norcross & Judd LLP, stated that he was an attorney representing Cal Prins and Bob Manglitz. He presented pictures of several parcels in question. He showed what the parcels looked like before and after the present development and said that it was a dramatic change for the better. He went on to explain how five specific parcels would be effected by the draft ordinance. He said that the draft was very complicated. He went on to say that under the draft, the proposed development for the City Hall property would end up with two buildings. There are real concerns. Construction would be more expensive and less appealing. There are concerns about fairness and it is overly restrictive.

Tom VanBuren, West Shore Bank, said that he had sent a draft to his contractors. It was very complex. It would make a great impact on their project and would impact future development. They paid 960,000 for their property with the incentive of what was going up around it. There is a serious concern about the impact of this ordinance. It does not encourage investment.

Don Clingan, Lake Michigan Carferry, said that they were concerned about the long-term impact. The car ramp is well over 30 feet. We have a tower on premises and the Badger and Spartan. These are all well over 30 feet, which will make them non-conforming. There is a 100-ft. restriction on length. We already have two buildings that are over 100 ft. in length. This business has been here for 100 years. This will put us at the grace of the people making the decision.

Tom Thornhill, Muskegon, stated that he was representing private property owners; Jim Claire, Boat Club, Thompson, and Abrahamson. He presented a city map with extended lines of the proposed view corridors. He stated that the Claire Property would be chopped into seven parcels and the Abrahamson property into six. There is no way the parcels would come up with the densities allowed. I submit to you that every single existing building in the entire waterfront district will be nonconforming. View corridors are a major problem. Limitations on the size of a building are a problem.

Bob Mangalitz, 6671 Audubon, Holland MI, stated that he sees the City of Ludington wanting to make a deal with them on the City property. We know if we buy the property and develop it, it would be nonconforming. A lender would not look very favorable at that. He explained that the carferry borrowed millions of dollars. They have a moral obligation to run the carferry. They employee 250 people. We had a tough year. If I were a motel operator or restaurant operator in this town, I would be flat scared. We have lost control of our own destiny. This is a subtle form of theft. It puts my project at risk. I think this is unfair.

Pete Engblade, 317 N. Delia, thanked the Planning Commission for their effort and time. It is hard to appease businesses and the public. It is no ones intent to put anyone out of business. There is a lot of merit on both sides.

Larry Nix, Community Planner, said that private owners had hired him. He sees that the City has been through several plans and one fatal flaw was listening to all input. They are trying to gain public access without paying for it. They need to let the developer plan it. Do not legislate. What is being impose, needs to be looked at very carefully.

Chris Blalock, Ludington, MI, explained that she has lived here since 1978 and is very proud of what has been done. She doesn’t see the need for view corridors.

Bonnie Vaught, 502 N Robert St., stated that she felt the Planning Commission was trying with good intentions. Look forward with the future in mind.

Maureen Myers, 712 N. Lakeshore, said that she has not lived here long and thinks Ludington is very lovely. She feels that the walkway by the Coast Guard Station could be extended. It would be better than a view corridor.

Tom Coleman explained to Randy Bowden how the concept of view corridors came about. Mr. Bowden stated that the waterfront was doing well already. Why change? Mr. Coleman explained that Ludington is at a point right now to strive to make the community excellent.

Tom Thornhill wanted to plan something for property owner's input. Mr. Coleman asked that property owners send John Healy's office a bullet list of their concerns. Mr. Thornhill suggested more communication.

Jim Karr, 235 Harbor Dr., wanted to know how the Planning Commission could give them this ultimatum. Do not stifle this growth.

Tom VanBuren stated that if everyone was pleased with the present waterfront, leave it alone. Ludington has received statewide recognition. If it's not broke, don't fix it.

Steve Abrhamson, P O Box 119, said that the current ordinance is restrictive. Why do we have to change it?

Tim Anderson, Lake Michigan Carferry, commented that no one likes view corridors but the committee.

Steve Thompson, Ludington Boat Club, expressed concerns about putting sidewalks on private properties.

Becky Anderson, Ludington, stated that the walkway was there. It is not being utilized. Cleanup Dowland and Washington. Fix it.

The Workshop ended at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A Foote, Recording Secretary.