CITY OF LUDINGTON
PLANNING COMMSION
MINUTES 05/06/08

A meeting of the Ludington Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2008. The meeting was held at the Ludington Municipal Building, 400 S. Harrison St., Ludington, MI and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Tom Coleman, Chairperson.

ROLL CALL: The roll call showed the following results:

Present: Gary Schnitker, Robert Garrett, Chris Gamble, Chris Pontz, Joe Moloney, Kaye Holman, Mike Nekola, Clay Olmstead and Tom Coleman

Absent:

Also Present: Recording Secretary, Carol Ann Foote, and Mayor's Youth Advisory member Dean Feole. Kendra Silsby was excused.

AGENDA APPROVAL:
Chairman Coleman announced that there would be a presentation on walkable communities given after the public notice. Commissioner Holman made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended, seconded by Commissioner Olmstead. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Commissioner Olmstead made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2008 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Holman. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:
To consider a request from Timothy G. Strahan for a single accessory building over 900 sq. ft. and a combination of buildings over 1,200 sq. ft., in accordance with Section 900.3:26 of the Ludington Zoning Ordinance #23-00, at the following described property: ADDITION NO. 3 LOTS 15 & 16 BLOCK 134, also known as 715 E. Melendy.

Tim Strahan, 715 E Melendy, told the commission that he would like to build a 28' x 38' garage and had an existing 12' x 16' shed, for a total of 1,256 sq. ft. He stated that he was allowed 1,267 sq. ft. by ordinance. He said that he would like to have a shop in the rear of the building.

Public hearing closed.

Commissioner Nekola reported that the committee met. He thanked Carol Foote for the calculations that she did and stated that the standards of the special land use had been met. Commissioner Nekola made a motion to approve the request for a special land use for a single accessory building over 900 square feet and a combination of buildings over 1,200 square feet, in accordance with Section 900.3:26 of the Ludington Zoning Ordinance #23-00 at the following described property ADDITION NO. 3 LOTS 15 & 16 BLOCK 134, also known as 715 E. Melendy. The architectural character of the structure shall be suitable for a residential area with siding, paint, doors, roof, etc. compatible with the principal structure and the neighborhood. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Holman. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:
None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Comprehensive Plan:
Chairman Coleman pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan references walkable communities and bike paths several times. A goal was the improvement of non-motorized networks. The plan states that it is important to develop safe and effective pedestrian connections though out Ludington, but particularly between parks and public amenities. Pedestrian linkages are important to provide residents with options other than private automobiles, to encourage healthy lifestyles and

to reduce the number of traffic-pedestrian conflicts. Chairman Coleman said that the words "traffic-pedestrian conflicts" were key to the discussion tonight.

Commissioner Moloney told the Commissioners that he had driven around Ludington with Chief Barnett and told Chief about some of the Comprehensive Plan goals with regards to walkable communities. Chief Barnett recommended a resource, Holly Alway. Holly is in charge of the Muskegon-Oceana Safe Routes to School program. Commissioner Moloney said that he felt that this may give them an idea of where they fit into the equation when it comes to walkable communities. He said that he had also been looking at a vest program for safety in the community and Holly also had some resources for that. He told the Commission that Holly had volunteered her time to come from Muskegon to give a Power Point presentation.

Holly Alway introduced herself as the director of the Lake, Mason, Muskegon and Oceana Counties Safe Routes to School programs. She said that she helps communities find ways be more walkable communities. She stated that it was rapidly reaching a point where gas prices would be over $4.00 per gallon. This is going to make vehicle travel a very difficult option to some, with their financial situations, so this could not come at a better time. Holly started her Power Point Presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

Commissioner Pontz asked Ms. Alway if she had ever worked with a community that had a main street that was a U. S. highway. He said that this was a great idea, but Ludington Ave. is U.S. 10, therefore it was very challenging. Ms. Alway said that it would be a challenge, but it should not be seen as insurmountable. Chairman Coleman stated that most small towns in Michigan are built on rivers or highways. He stated that his concern is that there are a lot of people that walk in the street, even on major thoroughfares. Ms Always said that she was working with Muskegon on that same subject. She is also working with the schools on a program that teaches children to walk on the sidewalks, not the street. Commissioner Moloney asked if Ludington was considered a "safe route to school" city. Chairman Coleman commented that with the reorganization of the Ludington schools, there would be more bussing than walking. Commissioner Moloney asked Chief Barnett if sidewalks could be designated for different types of uses. Chief Barnett said that designating sidewalks for different uses would create a problem. He said that bikes were meant to be ridden in the street with the flow of traffic. He said that Ludington did have some success stories. For example, Lakeshore Dr. to the State Park. Also, the widened shoulders on Bryant Rd. Chairman Coleman asked if there was a way to educate walkers. Chief Barnett said that there had been complaints around the school area. He said that they could probably do more. Commissioner Moloney asked Ms. Always if she had any ideas about safety vest. She said that she had a source and the cost was approximately $7.00 per vest. Chief Barnett suggested that the vest might be linked to downtown business. Chairman Coleman said that businesses would be more effective than government facilities. Dean Feole commented that there was a lot of people downtown in the summer. His concern was adequate parking. Ms. Always said that parking lots would be empty space during the winter. Commissioner Nekola said that the Waterfront Master Plan talked about parking out and walking in to businesses. Commissioner Pontz commented that parking should be convenient for those shopping downtown. Chairman Coleman concluded the discussion on walkability and thanked Ms. Alway for her presentation.

Neigborhoods:
Commissioner Nekola said that they are looking at daycare facilities and are thinking that they should be 1,200 linear feet apart. Their study found that there are 3,100 residential parcels in the City and 1,400 are non-homestead. He said that Ludington was becoming a summer community. He said that the neighborhoods are not typical neighborhoods anymore. He said that it is not a community where couples come to raise children. It is more of a retirement community. He would like input about other communities. Commissioner Moloney stated that there was not a lot of luck with neighborhood associations.

US-10 Access Management:
Chairman Coleman reported that the committee met and they were trying to condense the wording to put in ordinance form. They were also considering extending the area to include M116. Progress was being made.

East Ludington Avenue Architectural Preservation:
Commissioner Schnitker reported that the committee had their initial meeting. They reviewed work that was done previously. They will meet again in a couple of weeks.

Vendors:
Commissioner Holman said that there was a couple of new business downtown. She said that they were hoping to have Travers Bay Pie Company in the next couple of weeks. Commissioner Garrett said that 202 E. Ludington Ave. was being leased by Exit Real Estate of Ludington.

Projects:
Dean Feole said that the Youth Advisory Committee's thoughts were the bike racks, bird houses and painting over graffiti.

Commissioner Pontz said that he called a welder about possibly fabricating new benches.

Commissioner Schnitker suggested refurbishing the blue footprints on the walking path and maybe establishing another route.

Chairman Coleman said that if dune grass was going to be planted, it needed to be ordered soon. They last time they planted, they raised $500.00. The consensus agreed to order the grass and they would get the money.

SITE PLAN REVIEW REPORT:
None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:
Commissioner Nekola wanted to know the status on blocking off N. James St. Commissioner Holman said that it would go to the next City Council meeting.

Commissioner Holman said that the downtown group was looking at directional signage for the downtown. She stated that there were two façade programs going on downtown.

ADJOURNMENT:
The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Ann Foote, Recording Secretary

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Tom Coleman, Chairperson