CITY OF LUDINGTON
PLANNING COMMSION
MINUTES 05/05/09

A meeting of the Ludington Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, May 5, 2009. 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 Clay Olmstead, Vice-Chairperson.

ROLL CALL: The roll call showed the following results:

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

Absent: Tom Coleman, excused

Also Present: Recording Secretary, Carol Ann Foote

AGENDA APPROVAL:
Commissioner Holman made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Pontz. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Commissioner Holman made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2009 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Schnitker. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:
None

NEW BUSINESS:
Commissioner Holman stated that there had been discussion at the last two City Council meetings about signs being allowed in the right-of-way. She stated that she was opposed to this and would like to discuss, with the text committee, changing the Ordinance so that the City Council does not have the option to allow these signs. She said that they only allow this for certain groups, mostly non-profits, and she does not think that it is fair. Commissioner Nekola stated that he thought that it should be up to the committee of the legislative body, not the Planning Commission. Commissioner Holman explained the sign Ordinance that is now in place that allows City Council to approve signs in the right-of way. She said that she felt that these signs should be treated like garage sale signs and placed on private property, with approval. Commissioner Olmstead suggested that the text committee take a look at this ordinance and at modification for window displays and bring it to the Commission for discussion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
Comprehensive Plan:
Commissioner Olmstead reminded the Commissioners that each of the three committees is to review their twenty page increment that was assigned to them. The draft changes should be turned over to Carol Foote. He said that the Zoning Committee has completed their section. Commissioner Nekola reported that his committee has met with Chairman Coleman and they are going a different way on neighborhoods. Commissioner Moloney said that they had been working on it. He will notate their additions and deletions and try to have it in on Friday.

Suggested Community Projects:
Commissioner Olmstead asked that anyone with any suggested community projects, turn their list in. Chairman Coleman will then meet with the City to determine what projects the Planning Commission will do. He stated that he would like to see military flags at the end of the beach. Commissioner Pontz said that he was in charge of the holders of the state flags. He stated that there was not enough space for all fifty flags, so they rotate the flags. He will follow up on the holders for the military flags.

Commissioner Olmstead said that he would also like to see the fire hydrants downtown painted. Maybe grade school children could paint them like different characters. They may add a little fun whimsy in the downtown.

Commissioner Holman reported that the DDA is buying new benches and trash containers for the downtown this year.

Commissioner Schnitker said that he would like to see some help given to the beach area dog park. He commented that it did not have enough sand and there is a lot of trash and debris in the area.

Vendors:
Commissioner Holman reported that the ordinance on vendors will be going directly to City Council. Once it is organized, it will fall under the farmer's market portion of the City Code. This will open up to more of the downtown area to vendors. Commissioner Nekola asked the difference in an ordinance and code. Commissioner Olmstead explained that the City Code is adopted by the City Council. The Planning Commission recommends changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

East Ludington Avenue Architectural Preservation:
Commissioner Schnitker reported that there is a scheduled meeting for Thursday, May 21, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at Cartier Mansion to discuss the establishment of a Historic District.

Downtown Walk ability:
Commissioner Moloney reported that he continues to work on his projects. He said that West Shore Tech Center was donating their labor on the eight bike racks. He will need help painting the bikes when the racks are done.

Signs:
No report

Wind Energy:
Commissioner Garrett and Chairman Coleman have been in discussions about wind energy. A proposal for language was given out to the Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Garrett pointed out that White Pine Land Company has signed a twenty year lease in Riverton Township for one large WEX.

SITE PLAN REVIEW REPORT:
None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:
Commissioner Nekola requested that neighborhoods be put on the June agenda for discussion. He stated that he would like input on things such as safe affordable housing in the community. He pointed out that over a half of the housing stock is not owner occupied. He would like to get the consensus of the group.

Commissioner Moloney said that the key component to affordable housing is rental registration. He said that they did not necessarily need a consensus on the issue, but Commissioners Nekola, Gamble and he are going to move forward with it again. He stated that the sub-committee would draw up a proposal and then present it to the City because they firmly believe that it is needed. Commissioner Nekola said that MSHDA would require some type of rental ordinance. He said that they were aware that the program would need to pay for itself.

Commissioner Moloney said that he would like to recognize John Healy who recently passed away. He said that he was a wonderful man who was a key part in what they are doing. He would like to honor him in some way.

Commissioner Pontz said that while reading his portion of the Comprehensive Plan, it stood out to him that ¼ of the families in Ludington with children under the age 18 are living in poverty. Forty-seven percent have female heads of household with no husbands living there. Commissioner Nekola said that there are people living in poverty who are afraid to say much because they are afraid they will get moved out. There are unsafe conditions and this has been going on for a while. It is time to take a stand.

Commissioner Olmstead announced a possible work session with Williams and Works on July 8.

Chapter 7 of the City Charter will not be read due to the lack of media coverage.

ADJOURNMENT:
The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Ann Foote, Recording Secretary

_____
Clay Olmstead, Vice-Chairperson