

WHITE CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

White Cloud City Office, 12 N. Charles, White Cloud MI 49349

February 28, 2023 (meeting cancelled) moved to

March 13, 2023

6:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Shears called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call (Confirmation of a quorum)

Wallace conducted a roll call for attendance.

Present: Lori Shears, Christine Tiernan, and Jamie Steffes

Absent: Anthony Johnson and Chad Fetterley

Staff Present: April Storms (City Manager) and John Wallace (Zoning Administrator)

Public in attendance: LeRoy Stratton, Brian Miller, Dan Abid, Susan Schneider, John Schneider, Ann Schneider and Kasey Hershberger.

C. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Shears gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Set/Amend Agenda

Shears added an item 4 under New Business which is to discuss the future use of the Methodist Church.

A motion was made by Steffes to set the agenda as amended, supported by Tiernan.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.

E. Public Comment (Comments limited to 2 minutes)

Shears opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

F. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2023

A motion was made by Steffes, supported by Tiernan to approve the minutes of January 24, 2023.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.

G. New Business

1. Site plan review Parcel #62-15-05-133-004 (Schneider Auto Service)

Shears introduced the site plan and indicated the site plan and zoning administrator staff report was in the packet. Shears asked Wallace if he wanted to explain the staff report.

Wallace explained that the zoning ordinance does not define the difference between major and minor auto repair and that the zoning district for this site allows for minor auto repair. He indicated that the planning commission should make a determination as to the type of auto repair that is being conducted at this auto repair business. Wallace indicated what he thought in his experience was the difference. Steffes thought that a total engine rebuild would be a major repair but just to replace an engine would be minor repair.

Shears inquired if going forward defining major and minor auto repair in the zoning ordinance is something that should be done. Wallace responded that it should be. Shears asked the Schneiders what type of repair they do at their shop. The Schneiders responded that they considered it minor but did state they would be doing some engine replacement and transmission work. They thought major repair would be those repairs which involved body work or work that needed machine work.

Wallace indicated that for the C-3 zoning district the planning commission could take action on the site plan tonight if they considered the auto repair business to be minor repair. He further indicated that if they deemed it major they could still address it tonight but would have to hold another meeting at which they would have a public hearing.

Shears acknowledged that going forward the zoning ordinance would be amended to include definitions for major and minor auto repair.

Wallace indicated that he reviewed the site plan as though it were coming in as new use.

Shears asked Wallace to go over his recommendations.

Wallace addressed the issue of parking. The ordinance requires 1 space per bay and 1 space per employee. With 2 repair bays and 5 employees the business is required to have 7 parking spaces. Wallace explained that 30 percent of that parking could be in-street if approved by the Planning Commission which means 3 of the 7 required spaces could be in the street. Wallace indicated that there is also a maximum number of parking spaces which is 10% over the minimum number of spaces which is only one additional space. This brings the total number of spaces allowed to 8 spaces of which 3 spaces could be allowed in the street. Wallace indicated that the only way

the Planning Commission could approve more than 8 spaces is if the applicant were to submit a parking needs study.

Wallace indicated that the zoning ordinance also requires that parking areas have durable and dust-free surfaces, which he has interpreted as being paved with asphalt or concrete. Wallace also went over access requirements which requires a defined driveway. Pedestrian access must also be provided through the site. Wallace also covered accessory building requirements due to the storage container proposed behind the building. Accessory structures 120 square feet or more in size must have a concrete foundation, must be located 10 feet from the principal building and be 3 feet from a property line. Any outdoor storage must be screened.

Wallace also went over the following:

- Clear vision requirements in the ordinance which would preclude cars being parked in front of the building.
- General standards contained in Section 15.06 of the ordinance.
- Storm water design.

In regard to the storm drainage design it may not be required if historically the site was drained off site. If possible the site should be designed to hold the year storm event which the city uses as its standard.

Wallace indicated that the site plan submitted did not have enough dimensional information to review the site plan for conformance with the ordinance. He said that he prepared a site plan taken off the aerial photo on the County GIS which is fairly accurate. He offered to make the dimensions for the site plan available.

Wallace recommended that cars coming in for repair not be parked on-site more than two weeks. He asked the applicant if that was a sufficient time. The applicants suggested a month time frame.

Wallace indicated that the parking spaces shown on the site plan would not fit given the dimensions of the site he took off of the GIS aerial. He explained a site plan he prepared which shows a driveway on the north end of the property, seven parking spaces to the west of the screened storage and three in-street angled spaces on the south side of the building. He inquired of the applicant the status of the gas pumps with MDOT. He responded that the state has approved the pumps and they are going to be right where they are today. Wallace indicated that his proposed site plan would not interfere with the gas pump operation. After some discussion on the location of the sidewalk it was decided it could stay at its current location as that is where it has been historically.

Discussion was held on the need to pave. The applicant was opposed to paving and suggested gravel. They indicated that they would be paving the area that would serve the gas pumps. Steffes thought that given that its an existing building gravel would be acceptable.

Additional discussion was held on maximum amount of parking, consensus was reached that there would be a maximum of 11 spaces with 7 spaced on the north side of the building and 4 spaces in-street south of the building but not in front of the building.

Shears asked for a motion to approve the site plan for Schneider Service Center (Parcel #62-15-05-133-004) as a minor auto repair business subject to the following conditions

1. There is to be a maximum of 11 parking spaces with 7 spaces located north of the building behind the screened storage and 4 in-street angled spaces south of the building.
2. The storage unit meeting the ordinance requirements.
3. That the vehicles stored on site be operable or operable after repair and be limited to being stored on-site for not more than 30 days.

This motion was made Tiernan, supported by Steffes.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.

2. Review and recommendation on submittals on the Request for Proposals for the White Cloud Master Plan.

Shears introduced the master plan proposals which were received from McKenna & Associates, Williams & Works, and Beckett Raeder Inc.

She indicated that her favorite was the McKenna Associates proposal because of its personalization to White Cloud and using White Cloud pictures. She thought all three proposals were good and had the same approximate time line. She also read through the comments from some of their past clients.

Storms didn't like the McKenna proposal because they did not follow the price per task layout in the request for proposal. This could have been an issue because the city was originally only offered \$30,000 in assistance from the MEDC and the city would have to cover the balance.

Storms indicated that she would like to see a contract awarded in April. If the master plan can be completed in 13 months then it would be possible to complete the Redevelopment Ready Communities program within three months after the master plan.

Shears said she would recommend McKenna Associates, but to have them clarify their fees.

Storms inquired if anyone had checked out other community's master plans.

Shears said she had checked out Cassopolis, Spring Lake, and Sturgis.

Wallace indicated that he gave a slight edge to Williams & Works based on the layout of their plans, the use of white space, and the ease of reading the plans.

Wallace liked the development graphics from Beckett & Raeder Inc., but wasn't sure the city would be receiving these high quality graphics for the price which was quoted. Storms said they did not do a lot of homework, and that the proposal was very textbook.

Wallace didn't think that there would be a huge difference whichever firm was selected, that it would come down to minor differences.

Storms indicated that Williams & Works was her first choice, but also liked the McKenna proposal. She liked that McKenna picked up on the use of the Imagine White Cloud idea. She said the references for the three firms were good. She said that whichever firm we go with we have to have the CEDAM Fellow assist with the Imagine White Cloud branding.

Steffes liked the McKenna proposal except for how they presented their prices.

Storms was concerned whether the McKenna prices reflected all of the items needed to meet the Redevelopment Ready requirements.

Tiernan said there has to be a way to communicate with community. Few of the goals in the existing plan were followed up on.

Stratton said that we have a good city manager now and that it will be different.

Tiernan asked can the consultant connect with the community and produce a plan which can be implemented per the planning commission's wishes.

Shears said that we have to find ways to engage people. Shears said she is perfectly content with either the McKenna & Associates or the Williams & Works proposal, but if the Williams & Works proposal is the one which best responded to the request for proposal, that would be her recommendation.

Tiernan made a motion, supported by Steffes, for the city to use Williams & Works to rewrite their master plan.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.

3. Review and approval of the Planning Commission Annual Report (2022) and recommendation to forward to the City Council.

Wallace has prepared the 2022 Planning Commission Annual Report and it is in your packet. She indicated that she was grateful that he did it as she had prepared it the previous two years. She said it was very thorough and complete and requested a motion to accept the report as presented

A motion was made by Steffes, and supported by Tiernan to accept the 2022 Planning Commission Annual Report.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.

4. Discussion on the Methodist Church future use.

Leroy Stratton and another member of the church presented some conceptual plans for the future of their church using an aerial photo of the property. They currently own four lots which are zoned R-1. They also explained that they eventually wish to removed the old church and create more parking.

There was additional discussion on setbacks and possible advantages of being in a different zoning district.

Wallace explained that the lots were never combined, and probably should be to limit building setback issues. Wallace further explained that creating a planned unit development may create more opportunities for them to implement their plans.

Wallace checked the zoning ordinance and indicated that rezoning to a commercial district would not be a possibility.

Tiernan inquired why the old church would have to be demolished. The church representatives indicated that it was due to very high energy costs.

The church representatives asked what the city needed from them to pursue their plans.

Wallace suggested they prepare a drawing which would show buildings which would remain, buildings to be demolished, building additions, and parking areas and to do so without concern for setbacks. Upon receiving this drawing he would review the zoning ordinance and particularly the planned unit development section to see what zoning district and approval process would be most appropriate to allow them successfully complete their plan. He further indicated that consolidating the lots would be beneficial.

H. Unfinished Business

1. None

I. Public Comment (For items discussed on this agenda/3 minutes)

Brian Miller (Mayor)

- Thanked the people who were in attendance at the meeting.
- Felt he needed to take some of the burden off the Planning Commission
- The City Council has asked April Storms (City Manager) to make the city more compliant with the ordinances on the books.
- He indicated that the current concern is blight which former councils just swept under the rug.
- He said some areas of the community are really going downhill and that the city is addressing that and getting push back. He said people feel they are being picked on, but he said it is not the city's policy to discuss other people's enforcement cases which would show the city is enforcing issues across the board.
- A few people are against the new home rental inspection program that the City Council asked April Storms to establish. He indicated that he had been receiving emails regarding it. He explained that there was a case where a woman moved into an apartment unit before it was ready and didn't sign a contract. This unit had an exposed electrical box. The city could not help in this situation because the city could not legally go into the property and inspect it.
- With the issue of parking and clear vision I understand that it is a pain, but we have to start somewhere. We have instructed April to bring properties into compliance which have been ignored for years.
- We appreciate new business coming into the city. We are trying to get the city to a level which will attract more business. We are starting to get that and becoming Redevelopment Ready Certified will help.

Tiernan asked the mayor if he had suggestion on how the Planning Commission Board members could support this effort.

The mayor responded that it is already being done. We had a machine shop at Newell and State Streets which did not have the right zoning, but the Planning Commission worked it out. In tonight's site plan case the Planning Commission was flexible with the placement of the sidewalk. We will give a little bit to move things along.

Tiernan said she has heard some positive things about the rental program, that it is about time.

Storms provided an update on housing. The city entered a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreement with Edwin Allen Homes on city property for work force housing. Edwin Allen Homes has also purchased lots from Tim Loy to construct 10 to 20 3-4-bedroom homes which will be rented to people making within a 120% of median income.

J. Correspondence

1. Zoning Report – February

The zoning report was accepted with no questions.

K. Adjournment

Steffes made a motion, supported by Tiernan to adjourn the meeting at 7:24.

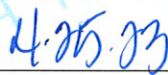
Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Motion passed.



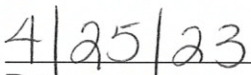
John Wallace, Zoning Admin/Recorder



Date



Lori Shears, Chairperson



Date