

**Minutes, Paw Paw Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting, May 7, 2009**

1. The regular Planning Commission meeting of Thursday, May 7, 2009 convened at 7:35 p.m. at 114 North Gremps, Paw Paw, Michigan. Chairperson Larson presiding. **Meeting Convened**
2. Present: Larson, Bogen, Greensly, Roger, and Thomas. Also present: Village Planning Consultant, Rebecca Harvey and Village Manager, Larry Nielsen. **Members Present**
3. Motion by Thomas, supported by Roger, to approve the agenda. All members present voting yes. The motion carried. **Approval of Agenda**
4. Motion by Thomas, supported by Bogen, to approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of April 2, 2009. All members present voting yes. The motion carried. **Approval of Minutes**
5. No public comment regarding non-agenda items was offered. **Public Comment**
6. Larson noted no public hearing items were before the Commission at this time. **Public Hearings**
7. Larson stated no new business was scheduled for consideration at this time. **New Business**
8. Larson noted that further review/discussion of the existing fencing regulations within the CBD Central Business District pursuant to Step 1 of the recommended review process was scheduled. Harvey provided the Commission with a Discussion Outline (*Step 1*) that set forth a review of existing fence standards in the Zoning Ordinance and a review of the proposed Master Plan objectives for the downtown area. Harvey and Nielsen then presented a slide show of existing fencing arrangements within the downtown area. The photos represented examples of: security fencing, fencing used for screening between residential and nonresidential districts/land uses, front yard decorative fencing, fencing used for boundary demarcation, and areas requested for fencing. **Ongoing Business:  
Fencing Regulations  
in CBD**
9. Lengthy discussion ensued wherein the following issues/objectives regarding fencing within the downtown area were identified: fencing downtown should be coordinated in design, employ the use of landscape techniques, and not impede vehicular/pedestrian access or circulation patterns; there is a need for limited security fencing within the downtown area; and, the use of fencing for screening between residential and nonresidential districts/land uses is appropriate but only within the side and rear yards and with height restrictions.

10. In response to the identified issues, the Commission requested Harvey draft sample ordinance language for review that would address the following: 1) prohibit fencing within the CBD, except for security fencing, fencing used for screening between residential/nonresidential districts/land uses (within the side and rear yards), dumpster enclosures, and landscape techniques applied in front yards or for boundary demarcation; 2) permit fencing within residential districts or for residential uses within nonresidential districts, provided that chain link and solid fencing is prohibited within the front yard, fencing within the front yard must be shorter in height than side/rear yard fencing, and side/rear yard fencing cannot exceed 6 feet in height; 3) fences will not be subject to setback requirements; and 4) standards for ‘corner’ or ‘unique’ lots and for appearance of fences (orientation of the ‘good side’) will continue to be considered. It was noted that the draft language would be reviewed/discussed at the June Planning Commission meeting.
  
11. Harvey referenced the May 7, 2009 Board Memo and noted the Planning Commission’s support for the consideration of a text amendment removing ‘churches’ as an allowed use within the CBD and adding ‘churches’ as a special land use within the B-1 and B-2 Districts. A public hearing on the proposed text amendments has been tentatively scheduled for June.
  
12. Nielsen directed the Commission’s attention to site plans submitted by the Van Buren County ISD for school improvements. He noted that the site plans were provided for information only and that no action by the Planning Commission was required. General review and discussion of the project ensued.
  
13. Larson requested a status report on the site plan application for a gas station on West Michigan and the rezoning application for property located at 723 East Michigan. It was noted that the site plan has been reviewed and that all reviews have been submitted to the applicant. As soon as a revised site plan is received and reviewed, the application will be submitted to the Planning Commission for action. It was further noted that the referenced rezoning application has been submitted for noticing and a public hearing on the matter scheduled for July.
  
14. Nielsen advised that the guest speaker retained on the topic of wind turbine systems is scheduled to meet with the Commission in June. He noted that the informational presentation will be approximately 30 minutes in length with additional time available for questions/discussion.

**Ongoing Business:  
‘Churches Within  
B-1 and/or B-2  
Districts**

**Ongoing Business:  
Van Buren County  
ISD Site Plans**

**Member Comments**

**Village Manager  
Comments**

Nielsen also noted that the final Master Plan Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. He explained that the consultants (LSL Planning) have completed the final draft of the Plan and are requesting Committee review and input. Nielsen estimated that the

Planning Commission will receive the draft document and the Village Council's request for review and recommendation in June or July.

15. There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

**Adjournment**

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