

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the January 20, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:32 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Jane Johansen, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel

EXCUSED Richard Griffin

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There was 1 person in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2015, Planning Commission with the attached corrections.
Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.**

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Recommendation of Surplus Property: 114 N Warren Avenue (City owned parking lot north of the Post Office).

Chairperson Schmidt reviewed the Public Hearing process for the audience.

Sweppenheiser reviewed the proposed recommendation of surplus property stating that the City Commission has recently referred many parcels to the Planning Commission for review and determination. He added that the 50' by 150' parcel (114 N Warren Avenue #54-17-362-004) is City owned and is zoned RP (Residential Professional). It is primarily used as overflow parking for the Post Office. The parcel does not contain any utilities.

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 6:36 p.m.

Sweppenheiser, as the City's representative for the request, said that a lot of the properties that have been referred for determination are intended for future economic development. He said that the City would like to have a list of available properties for developers who come into town looking for property to develop.

A Position Paper from Assistant City Manager Mark Gifford included the following comments:

- 114 N Warren is not needed or used for any utility purposes.
- The public parking lot serves the businesses immediately adjacent to the property and can be used for overflow parking during a downtown event.
- The most likely use is in support of the Post Office or whatever future use may be undertaken in the building.
- Public Works does not currently have future plans for the property.

Staff recommends the parcel be considered as surplus property.

Those Who Spoke in Favor of the Request:

None heard.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition of the Request:

None heard.

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff:

Sweppenheiser reported that the request was published three times in the PIONEER, but no public comments were received.

Chairperson Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Bean stated that she understands the concept of having property available for development but this parking lot is used a lot for Post Office business. It is sometimes full. She feels the proposed parcel is small and wondered in what manner it could be used. She asked who owns the other portion of the parking lot.

Sweppenheiser stated that the other portion is owned by the Federal Government and that a 24-foot wide building would be allowed on the proposed site.

Johansen stated that the property is zoned RP and the zone does not allow retail. She is leaning towards not recommending this property for consideration as surplus.

Bean asked who maintains the property and Sweppenheiser said he wasn't certain.

Bean questioned who would maintain the property if it was declared surplus and didn't sell, and Cochran wondered about the value of the property and what could be developed there.

Sweppenheiser said the Chamber could build there but they are not interested in the site. He said it could be office space or residential.

Vogel stated that there is an agreement between the City and the Post Office for use of this property and he wondered why we are pursuing recommendation for surplus property if the Post Office is still using it. He said that the City doesn't maintain the snow. The agreement spelled out who would maintain the property and we need to find and review it to determine what was agreed upon. Vogel believes that there is not enough information to move ahead with a recommendation.

Cerdena wondered about the disposition of the property. If it were declared surplus, would it remain vacant? Sweppenheiser said that a future use for the property has not been identified. If the property is declared surplus it would remain vacant until someone purchased it for development.

Vogel stated that the lots to the north are commercial and this property could be valuable as parking. He would like to review the City/Post Office agreement.

Schmidt stated that currently postal offices are changing and they seem to be smaller. He would like to see the building turned over to the Chamber, but the Post Office needs to be considered. He wondered who proposed this property to be determined surplus, to which Sweppenheiser answered "the City Manager".

Vogel said that if the area is to be redeveloped, the parking lot is critical to the Post Office.

Schmidt noted that during the last request for determination of surplus property, there was a question as to the property being used and maintained by another individual other than the owner over a long period of time and if that would establish adverse possession by State law. He added that the agreement also needs to be considered.

Motion

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to postpone the Public Hearing for recommendation of Surplus Property at 114 N Warren Avenue (City owned parking lot north of the Post Office) for more information pertaining to the agreement between the City of Big Rapids and the Big Rapids Post Office.

Motioned passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Jane Johansen, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Dumpster Update – Cochran gave a review on the dumpster situation saying that she has been pursuing the involvement of FSU students via an adopt-an-alley program. She has spoken with the FSU Coordinator of Student Activities and explored the Bull Dog Sustainability Alliance. This group is committed to promoting recycling and sustainable practices, and Cochran feels they would be good partners.

She also reported on her “ride-along” with Republic, the City’s garbage disposal company. She thought it was very helpful and gained some insight into the dumpster vs. poly carts controversy and how each is handled by the company.

Cochran also met with some property owners to learn about their concerns and to obtain their input on the issues.

Some of the ways in which this problem could be addressed are through educating the students as to when and where the garbage is picked up, how to dispose of their garbage, encouraging recycling opportunities, getting the students involved in the issue, and paving the alleys.

Audience member Paul DesNoyers, president of the Big Rapids Property Owners Association, commented that property owners don’t automatically get a recycle bin when they choose to use a dumpster instead of poly carts.

Cochran explained that recycle bins are available upon request and there is a charge per unit for the bin.

Sign Regulations- Sweppenheiser presented possible text changes to the sign ordinance (attached). Changes are needed due to current changeable display signage and sign brightness.

The State Street Scoops sign is an issue as it is very bright and is located at an intersection. It has measured 130 nits. The owner has dimmed it considerably.

Sweppenheiser stated that the City Sign Ordinance needs to be reviewed and revamped. Doing this is a complex issue.

Vogel was concerned about what the City can enforce while at the same time not infringe on freedom of speech. The text is the issue, the size and brightness can be changed. He feels we need help from an expert.

Sweppenheiser said that the Ordinance has to be consistent for all signs – time and temperature signs have to comply also. It seems we can always be two steps behind on sign language.

Schmidt agreed that it is not “cut and dried”. He spoke to a sign company and they may be able to help with the issue. They will be here on February 11, 2016. He also agreed that we can’t ignore text. If a display changes too quickly, it becomes “blinking”. Schmidt pointed out that the words *dusk* and *dawn* on number 5 of Sweppenheiser’s handout should be switched. Sweppenheiser commented that it is hard to go against the City Attorney’s opinion.

Sweppenheiser suggested getting all the sign owners together for their comments and start afresh with the sign language. Schmidt disagreed saying the City needs to determine the regulations for new signs and if old signs are changed they would need to conform. Sweppenheiser suggested that someone from this board needs to talk to the City Attorney and Schmidt said he would.

Cochran understands that freedom of expression plays a part in this issue, but there is a responsibility to see that signs do not interfere with driver safety by being distracting. She inquired whether the Michigan Department of Transportation has any regulations regarding this point. She added that at the same time, the sign language needs to represent the needs of the community.

Sweppenheiser stated that the business owners need to be invited to express their opinions.

Schmidt said that he will contact the Michigan Department of Transportation for information and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission to see if someone can come here to offer some insight. He would also like to ask the professionals, such as outdoor sign experts, for their comments.

Sweppenheiser commented that different sites have different variables such as line of sight, so it is difficult to come up with sign regulations. It’s not a “one size fits all” situation. He expressed that we need to do something. He suggested talking to the City Attorney and contacting Dave Bee of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission for his suggestions.

Vogel said that Grand Rapids has figured it out for their downtown – a sign can only change every 5 minutes.

CIP Committee

Schmidt explained the purpose of the CIP Committee and Sweppenheiser added that it is a balancing act involving the budget and projects that need to get done in the next fiscal year. It is helpful to have the City Treasurer sit in on the process.

The Committee will meet the first week of February for a walk through of the proposed projects. Then the Committee will meet with staff to hear the requests and make recommendations. Tim Vogel, Jennifer Cochran and Renato Cerdena volunteered to serve on the Committee.

Training Opportunity

Sweppenheiser handed out Michigan Association of Planning flyers outlining planning and zoning training opportunities. Planning Commission members are free to attend one class and the City will pay for the training.

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, Chairperson Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 2, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the March 2, 2016, special meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel

EXCUSED Richard Griffin

ABSENT Jane Johansen

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 3 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Sue Bean, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2016, Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairperson Schmidt outlined the public hearing process for the audience.

Site Plan Review for the Construction of a 7,225 sq. ft. Auto Parts Store at 630 S. State Street (O'Reilly Auto Parts)

Sweppenheiser introduced the request for site plan review saying that the property is located in the C-3 District and is 1.211 acres. The proposed auto parts store is a principal use. He noted that a revised landscape plan was submitted for approval as it originally did not meet

requirements. The storm water plan has been approved. Staff recommends approval of the site plan dated 1-27-16 using the 2-10-16 revised landscape plan.

Chairperson Schmidt opened the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

Patrick O’Leary, 30450 Forest Drive, Franklin, MI 48005, represented the applicant. He stated that the property has been for sale for a long time and he, as a developer, tried to market it as a prime restaurant location and couldn’t get any interest. O’Reilly had been looking for a location and liked this one. The developer believes that the plan is advantageous to the area as they will be replacing a lot of pavement with green space.

Those Who Spoke in Favor

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

None

Written or Telephonic Communications Received by Staff

None

Chairperson Schmidt closed the public hearing at 6:38 p.m. and the Planning Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Developer O’Leary will own the property and lease to the O’Reilly Auto Parts store owner.

Vogel pointed out that the design of this building is not as attractive as some others. He presented a picture of a new O’Reilly’s located in Tecumseh. O’Leary commented that this site plan is the O’Reilly prototype and it is what the owner wanted.

Cochran asked if there were any other ideas for the location. O’Leary marketed to national retailers that would complement Ferris State University and didn’t get any viable interest.

Vogel wondered how they determined another auto parts store in town would be viable as there are a number of them already established in town. O’Leary answered that the retailer determined they wanted a share of the market and they normally do a lot of business with car dealers and garages.

The Planning Commission members agreed that the design of the building doesn’t fit the State Street location. Their job is to improve the community and believe the plain sided building could be made to look a lot nicer to fit into the community.

O'Leary stated that he sees a lot of the same type of building material used in the City and this plan is a high grade, paintable surface. The front of the building will be EIFS with red trim and a large sign. O'Leary compared the building to others nearby such as the Easy Mart to the south which has three batten board sides and Cranker's to the north which is metal siding. The O'Reilly plan includes trees and green space to the rear for a transition to the residential area and will have landscaping along the building to soften it. The steel pilings in the front are for safety.

The business is strictly retail and doesn't involve a machine shop.

The retention pond to the rear of the lot was discussed. O'Leary and Exxel engineer Bob Berends, 5252 Clyde Park S. W., Grand Rapids, MI 49509, explained that the retention pond is sloped and includes a control structure made up of filter fabric and rocks that drains water to the outlet structure where it is released over a 12 hour period until the retention pond is dry. The depth of water may get to 2 feet in the middle before it fully drains. This plan will be a relief to the City storm sewer system as water will no longer drain to the catch basin at Clark and Fuller.

The landscaping plan was discussed.

Sweppenheiser explained that a canopy tree is required at 30 foot intervals along the street frontage. This property has 167 feet along State Street and requires 5 trees. Three trees are planned. Schmidt asked if they are willing to do something different with the landscaping plan to meet the ordinance. The Tree Credit Program is being used for this project.

O'Leary said that the retaining wall on the Wendy's side will stay as nothing else could be done there. The property will be green from the rear of the building to the edge of the property. There is an earthen berm and 8 trees will be planted. They plan to take out the ties on the east side and lessen the 3 foot berm to 1 foot.

O'Leary met with MDOT and they will keep the same ingress/egress locations but will widen the radiuses and bring them up to current standards.

Vogel asked about the delivery area on the south side and the need for it to be screened per the ordinance. In defense, O'Leary said that there is a gas station to the south and it is 100 feet to the Clark Street residences. The gas station has metal out-buildings and heating and cooling apparatus on the roof that are equally offensive.

Vogel said there are 3 Norway Maples on the plan that are on the list of undesirable trees. They need to be 20 feet from the sidewalk and these are only 10 feet. Sweppenheiser said they can be included in the Tree Credit Program. There are 3 existing trees and 7 Tree Credits.

Vogel wondered if the area will be irrigated. It is not shown on the plan but O'Leary said it will be irrigated.

The front of the building includes landscaping and O'Leary was asked to see what he can do about the east side of the building.

Sweppenheiser said the City has not received a sign permit application as yet. O'Leary will submit applications for the maximum amount of signage.

Again the Committee expressed a desire for the building to fit into the area a little better. They would like to see it with a softer, more appealing look to fit State Street. Sweppenheiser agreed that per Chapter 9.6:2 of the Zoning Ordinance, the character must meet that of the adjoining property.

O'Leary commented that these would be big design changes if they were asked to look like the Tecumseh store. The store owner wants to control the look to comply with the prototype. They thought they were meeting the Ordinance. He stated that the gas station is not attractive. He will not be able to mimic the Tecumseh look on the given budget. Landscaping can do a lot for the attractiveness of the building. He noted other buildings do not have the required landscaping and he feels the requirement of one tree every 30 feet on a retail street is aggressive.

Sweppenheiser stated that we are not that far off.

The Committee thought it would be a good idea if a sub-committee was formed to approve the improved site plan once it is submitted. Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena and Tim Vogel will serve on this sub-committee.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to approve the site plan for construction of a 7,225 sq. ft. auto parts store at 630 S. State Street (O'Reilly Auto Parts) with the following conditions:

A new full set of site plans with the engineer's seal must be submitted for review and is to include adjustments to the landscaping plan, addition of irrigation, and enhancements to the building's south façade. This new set of plans will be reviewed and approved by a sub-committee of the Planning Commission.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

Recommendation on the FY 2016/2017 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Sweppenheiser explained that the CIP Committee, a sub-committee of the Planning Commission made up of Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran and Tim Vogel, met with City staff for the purpose of identifying which projects should be funded for FY 2016/2017. They also ranked the

projects in order of importance. This year, the City Treasurer attended and let the committee know how much money was available in each fund. It was very helpful.

Per Sweppenheiser's report, he has added two projects that were not funded by the Committee: \$25,000 for surveillance cameras on the new Baldwin Street Bridge, and \$10,000 to replace hazardous trail areas along the Riverwalk. It is very likely that these projects could be funded out of the Mecosta County Community Foundation Riverwalk and Swede Hill funds.

Staff would encourage the Planning Commission to recommend final approval of the CIP Committee's recommendations to the City Commission.

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 7:40 P.M.

Vogel reviewed the CIP Committee's recommendations (please refer to the CIP list).

General Fund – only \$180,500 is available for \$1,564,550 of proposed projects.

DART - \$200,000 is requested for construction of the DART garage at the Depot site. There are also \$150,000 available that was going to be used for new garage doors at the current site. This and grant funds would enable development of the new site at the Depot.

Motor Pool – there is enough money in this fund to cover the requests.

Local Streets - \$106,300 was recommended and prioritized by staff.

Major Streets - \$140,000 was recommended for project funding for the FY 2016/17.

Waste Water - \$100,000 was recommended by the Superintendent as this project is needed for their permit.

Sewer Replacement – based on the Superintendent's recommendation, all requests were recommended for funding in the amount of \$310,000.

Water Fund – based on Department Head recommendations, all \$220,000 worth of projects were funded.

Water Replacement - \$300,000 was reserved to go towards the projected \$1,976,000 total projects.

Airport – no funding recommended.

Those Who Spoke in Favor of the CIP

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition of the CIP

None

Telephonic or Written Communication Received by Staff

None

Chairperson Schmidt Closed the Public Hearing at 8:05p.m.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to recommend approval of the FY2016/17 Capital Improvement Program to the City Commission. Approval is to include the addition of Surveillance Cameras (\$25,500) at the Baldwin Street Bridge, and \$10,000 for replacement of hazardous Riverwalk trail segments.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Recommendation of Surplus Property: 114 N. Warren Avenue (City Owned Parking Lot North of the Post Office).

Sweppenheiser explained that the agreement between the City and the Post Office concerning 114 N. Warren does not exist anymore. Therefore, the reason to postpone the approval of surplus property for additional information has been satisfied.

Vogel stated that there is enough opportunity for businesses to locate downtown and it doesn't make sense to declare this property as surplus at this time. Bean agreed with him that the parking lot is valuable to the Post Office and if they leave, there may be value to the new owner as well.

Renato wondered what would be different if it were declared surplus. Sweppenheiser answered that it could be sold.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Renato Cerdena, to recommend to the City Commission the designation of 114 N. Warren Avenue (City owned parking lot north of the Post office) as surplus property.

Motion failed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in opposition.

Renato Cerdena was in favor.

Bean reported that 3 houses have been sold in Woodward Estates off of Woodward.

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Jennifer Cochran to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, Chairman Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
APRIL 20, 2016**

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena called the April 20, 2016, meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Jane Johansen, Tim Vogel

EXCUSED Richard Griffin, John Schmidt

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 4 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2016, Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

Review of the proposed construction of a 15,625 sq. ft. warehouse to be located at 1005 Baldwin Street (Wolverine World Wide).

Sweppenheiser reviewed his Staff Report saying that the proposed building would be located north of the existing Wolverine World Wide (WWW) building. The new construction will be a 15,625 sq. ft. accessory building. Staff has requested that the parking lot to the west of the White

Pine Trail be paved and include storm water control. This is important as it would help control storm water run-off before it affects the new Baldwin Street Bridge located down the hill from WWW on Baldwin Street. WWW has stated that they would like to add 25 Hawthorn trees along N. Fourth Avenue to create a screen between the parking lot and adjacent residential properties. The trees currently growing within the parking lot need to be removed to create a more orderly parking area.

WWW personnel hope to gain insight as to what the City and the Planning Commission will require concerning the construction of their proposed building.

Gail Taylor, Scott French and Ron Waznyk from WWW were present as well as Architect John O'Brien. They explained a bit of WWW history and said that the WWW contract process has changed for them from contracts being awarded on a best value basis to contracts being awarded on a cost basis. It is a competitive business where 3 to 5 year contracts can be repriced and could be as much as 10% lower than the original contract.

They plan on using the building as a warehouse. Currently, raw materials are shipped to Rockford and then up to Big Rapids as needed. Having a warehouse in Big Rapids would be an economic benefit to them. They could win more contracts based on a lower operating cost and, in turn, could possibly create more jobs.

The plan is not approved by WWW yet and they would like to include requirements of the City before presenting the plan to their corporate offices.

They believe the Big Rapids warehouse would create 10 jobs and help retain others. The structure would be attached to the current building but will be a basic warehouse with no restrooms. Storing materials in the new structure would allow more space in the current building to bring in additional production machinery and enable them to meet their contract demands.

Recently they have added 150 people at the Big Rapids site. They would like to be good neighbors with the Big Rapids Community and make the neighborhood nicer for nearby residents.

Cerdena asked about the tree selection for the parking lot and Sweppenheiser explained that due to nearby overhead wires, Hawthorns were selected. They are also considered to be hearty in this environment. He asked if traffic in the area would be increased and WWW representatives stated that currently 4 big trucks come in and out. They would expect between 4 and 7 smaller trucks per day once the warehouse is in operation.

The architect explained that the proposed steel building will be 125' X 125' in size with 24ft high ceilings located to the north of the factory. It will not have any additional loading docks but will have two overhead rolling doors for delivery. The elevation matches the existing building. A racking system for storage will be installed inside.

The height of the building is allowed in the Industrial Zone. The building will be heated and sprinkled but will not be air conditioned.

Vogel was concerned about lighting and wanted to make sure outside lighting will not shine into nearby homes. The WWW architect said they will comply.

When asked about paving the parking area, Taylor said that the building construction and parking lot paving are two separate projects. The building expenses come out of a construction budget and the parking lot expenses come out of their operating budget. They would like to take 3 to 5 years to pave and line the parking lot. She explained that the military shoe business does not have a high profit margin.

Vogel asked if the proposed building will displace parking and he was told that it will, but employees will have enough parking spots. When asked about making provisions for storm water, the applicant said that they have hired Mid-Michigan Engineering for the parking plan off of Fourth but it is not yet completed.

The Commission discussed paving the parking area. Bean asked if the City is comfortable with WWW's plan to pave the parking lot within 3 to 5 years. Sweppenheiser said the City is comfortable with it. Vogel commented that they will need to guard the trees they plan to plant and the trees within the parking area should be removed as they are not of high value and have created a slight problem. The applicant said they would remove them at the time of paving.

Vogel asked if paving is required by the City and said they could use a softer material. Sweppenheiser said that the ordinance is ambivalent concerning the need to pave. He added that the Carpet Gallery located down the hill on Baldwin floods due to storm water run-off.

Bean questioned that if this were a new business in the Industrial Park would they be required to pave the parking lot. Sweppenheiser answered: "potentially".

Vogel stated that he has no issue with the building but would like to make sure WWW addresses the lighting so it doesn't shine into nearby homes. Bean agreed saying that growth is good and she supports the project.

The applicant asked if they could go ahead and plant the trees along Fourth. Vogel thought it would be a good idea if they waited for the public hearing in May.

Vogel asked if there would be any hazardous materials stored on site to which WWW answered there won't be anything different than what is already stored on site – glues, isotopes and acetones. They will be stored in the existing building.

At this point the WWW attendees were advised to wait until after the public hearing to plant the trees and they left for the evening.

O'Reilly Sub-Committee

It was reported that O'Reilly will add 4 feet of brick to the exterior walls of the entire building. They also added 2 large trees to the landscape plan and widened the planting area on the south side to incorporate taller shrubs. They have satisfied the City's landscaping concerns.

Bean stated that she had heard the building would act as a ware house. It will be retail only.

WWW Project

The Commission discussed the WWW project again saying that 3 to 5 years is a long time to get the parking lot paved. If this were a new business, they would be made to pave the parking area. Sweppenheiser said that their willingness to plant the trees shows good faith.

Bean was not so sure about WWW's claim that they didn't have the money to pave the lot. She stated that WWW's claim of a \$1,000,000 investment is over exaggerated compared to other buildings of the same size and material. Paving would help the flooding issue of their neighbors.

Sweppenheiser said that WWW needs to take the White Pine Trail's proximity to the parking lot and the housing across the street from the parking lot into consideration.

Cerdena stated that the parking lot is large and perhaps their business can't support the cost of paving. He would like to be friendly to business expansion and suggested maybe the City could find a middle ground to lessen the requirement of paving while still accomplishing area improvements. Paving may be unreasonable.

Bean agreed that perhaps there could be a timeline to pave the parking lot but she thought that 3 to 5 years was too long. If they have money for a \$1,000,000 improvement they should be able to look at paving the parking lot. They have been in business a long time and should be able to pave it.

Cerdena thought that maybe the City could require them to regularly set aside a certain amount of money over a period of time to be used for paving, but Sweppenheiser said it was not the City's job to help them afford the City required improvement.

Vogel stated that they need to prevent the storm water runoff.

Surplus Property

Sweppenheiser stated that the City Commission is referring the property on N. Fourth Avenue to the Planning Commission again for determination of surplus property.

Vogel stated that the Planning Commission already declined recommendation of surplus property for this piece of land. He asked why they are asking the Planning Commission for determination again. Sweppenheiser said it was for the piece of land adjacent to Peg Brennen's property. The Mayor stated that the whole property should be considered without any conditions on it.

New State Farm Building

The Commission wondered if the owner was going to be completing the landscaping for the State Farm building located at the corner of State Street and Woodward Avenue. Sweppenheiser said that they should be.

Apartment Building on Chestnut

Sweppenheiser reported that the ZBA approved the variance for a 3 parking space variance allowing for a better designed parking area.

Park and Recreation Master Plan

Sweppenheiser reported that there will be a Public Hearing on May 12, 2016.

Old K-Mart Building

Sweppenheiser reported that Farm and Home will be occupying part of the old K-Mart building. The owners are still working with Joanne Fabrics for their possible occupancy of the building.

Thanks

This being their last Planning Commission meeting, the City and Planning Commission members wished to extend their gratitude to Jane Johansen and Richard Griffin for their dedication and service to the City.

There being no further business, Vice-Chairperson Cerdena closed the Planning Commission meeting at 7:48 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MAY 18, 2016**

Acting Chairperson Vogel called the May 18, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, Tim Vogel

EXCUSED Renato Cerdena, John Schmidt

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 2 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Jennifer Cochran, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2016, Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Acting Chairperson Vogel outlined the Public Hearing process for the audience.

Recommendation of Surplus Property: 1002 N. Fourth Avenue

Acting Chairperson Vogel opened the Public Hearing at 6:32 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request by saying that this property has been previously referred to the Planning Commission for Surplus Property determination in 2012. At that time there was a title issue which has since been resolved and the City Commission would like the Planning Commission recommendation again since the title is now clean. The property is zoned R-2 and

is 1.153 acres in size. The property's neighbors may have an interest in the parcel but if it is determined to be surplus property, it would go through a bid process in which the property would go to the highest bidder. There is a possibility that the property could be split into buildable parcels. To be considered buildable it must be 7,500 sq. ft.

Jackson asked if the City is proposing to split the property. Sweppenheiser said it could be a recommendation of the Planning Commission. Bean asked why this issue is back before the Planning Commission as it was determined at the last request for recommendation that the parcel served as a nice buffer between the factory and the residential properties, and Sweppenheiser said it was referred by the City Commission. Jane asked if it is thought that Wolverine would want it for parking and Sweppenheiser said no proposal has been made by Wolverine as yet. The City has also considered splitting the parcel for the purpose of making it available to the property owner to the north (Brennan) so a buffer could be retained.

Those Who Spoke in Favor

At this point, Peg Brennen, 1038 N. Fourth Avenue, had some questions but made it clear that she was not speaking in support. She stated that she was confused as to what the City wanted to accomplish. Sweppenheiser said the issue before the Planning Commission tonight is to determine if the property is surplus – it is not a request to rezone.

Brennen stated that the City Manager was talking about a lot split so that her property line could be squared off giving her a more reasonable lot shape and buffer to the parcel in question. Sweppenheiser again said that that is not what is before the Commission tonight. Brennen asked that if Wolverine wanted the parcel for parking, would it need to be rezoned. Sweppenheiser said yes, unless the City Attorney said otherwise. It does not meet the definition for allowable parking as it must be immediately adjacent or across an alley to the parent property.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

None

Written or Telephonic Communications Received by Staff

None

Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m. and the Planning Commission entered into Fact Finding.

The Planning Commission was still interested in knowing why this particular property was back before them for recommendation. Sweppenheiser said that at the time it was referred, he didn't remember it was previously referred in 2012. When asked if it was for Wolverine, he said he didn't know but they would probably be interested.

Jane asked about the criteria for making a decision and Sweppenheiser said that there is no set criteria. Vogel added that they are responsible to listen to the comments made by the public and staff to help them make a decision.

Bean noted that staff did not include a recommendation.

Cochran asked what the pros and cons would be if the property was declared surplus. Sweppenheiser answered that currently no taxes are gained by the City, the City has no current use for the property and has no future plans for the property. The Housing Commission could possibly be interested in it. Bean added that it could be made available for purchase by bid. She added that it could be rezoned for parking and again added that previously the Commission decided that it serves as a buffer between industry and residential areas.

Vogel asked if there was public comment at the previous request and Sweppenheiser said that there was a lot. It lacked a reason to be declared surplus but it also had a title issue which has since been resolved. He added that the process for declaring public grounds as surplus must be followed.

The Commission discussed splitting the property and the idea of “squaring off the north end of the property.” To declare a 10-foot section as surplus would not be following the process as that would be benefitting one individual. If the property were to be split, both sections would have to go through the bidding process.

Vogel stated that there is a need to listen to the public and then decide. With no new reason or information to declare the property as surplus, the position to deny still holds. He suggested waiting for a plan and then decide if the property is surplus or not.

Bean agreed and said nothing has changed (no new information) since the last request. She said it seems as if the city is working under the radar to make the property what they want it to be.

Jackson added that currently, the City has no use for the property and in 2012 it was not declared surplus but rather had value as a buffer zone. He wondered why the City hasn't landscaped the area. Sweppenheiser said the area contains mature trees.

There was no input from the residents who live across the street from the property.

MOTION

Motion was made by Sue Bean, seconded by Paul Jackson, to recommend to the City Commission, that based upon there being no new information, 1002 N. Fourth Avenue, Parcel #54-17-11-124-007, shall not be declared surplus property.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane and Tim Vogel in favor.

Bean reiterated that if the City goes forward with declaring this property as surplus, and wants to keep Brennan's interest in mind, it would still go to the bid process and the highest bidder would get the property.

Recommendation of Surplus Property: 119 Second Avenue

Acting Chairperson Vogel opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 P.M.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request by saying that this property was part of the Buy Back the Neighborhood Program. The structure was torn down as it was not in good condition. It is a very small lot – 25' X 122'.

The City is looking at all the City owned property and trying to determine what is not necessary to keep in its ownership. It has determined that it makes no sense to own this parcel. The neighbor mows the property. Perhaps either the Housing Commission, who owns the property to the north or the neighbor to the south will be interested in bidding on it. The City would only receive minimal property taxes on it but there is no reason to keep ownership. The property is zoned R-2 and there are no utilities on it.

Those Who Spoke in Favor of the Recommendation

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition of the Recommendation

None

Telephonic or Written Communication Received by Staff

None

Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the Public Hearing at 7:15p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Jackson asked if the parcel was buildable. Sweppenheiser said that the Zoning Ordinance does allow a reduction in side yard setbacks to 7.5 feet. The house would have to be very narrow.

If the Housing Commission is interested in buying the parcel they could combine it with their property to the north. The property owner to the south could also add it to his property.

MOTION

Motion was made by Chris Jane, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to recommend to the City Commission that 119 Second Avenue, Parcel #54-17-11-381-005 be considered as surplus property.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The question arose that if 1002 N Fourth were determined to be surplus property and it were split, would each parcel need to be a legal sized parcel. Sweppenheiser said it can't be split into a non-conforming parcel. One parcel could be re-zoned and the other could stay R-2 and could be used for a buffer.

There being no further business, Acting Chairperson Vogel adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
June 15, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the June 15, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel,

EXCUSED Renato Cerdena

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 10 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2016, Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chairperson Schmidt outlined the Public Hearing process for the audience.

Site Plan Review: Construction of a 15,625 sq. ft. Warehouse Addition at 1005 Baldwin Street

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 6:35 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the Site Plan Review by saying the property is zoned Industrial where a fully enclosed warehouse is permitted. The plan includes the warehouse addition and parking with landscaping along the east edge of the property and a proposed fence on a portion of the

north property line. The parking plan for the west parking area does not show a landscaping plan but they would like to plant 25 Hawthorn trees along the west edge to screen the parking from the residential district. The plan dated May 12, 2016 shows the catch basin for the parking area. Sweppenheiser recommends approval per the Staff Report.

Applicant Statement

Gail Taylor, Wolverine World Wide, 7852 9 Mile Road, Big Rapids, stated that she has been a resident for 20 years. She introduced Scott French who acts as Wolverine's Facility Manager. Taylor stated that Wolverine is excited to be in Big Rapids providing jobs. The proposed warehouse will be a cost saving for their operation as currently they drive back and forth from Rockford for their materials.

Those Who Spoke in Favor

None heard.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

Peggy Brennan, 1038 N. Fourth, Big Rapids, stated that she is pleased that Wolverine is growing but she opposes the addition. She has lived at 1038 N. Fourth for 49 years and has coexisted with Wolverine amicably. But now, things have changed.

She showed 3 pictures to the Commission:

1. Wolverine employees parking on City property.
2. Wolverine employees parking on grass, over curb and encroaching into neighborhood.
3. Unorganized employee parking in lot.

She also complained of employees eating their lunches in their cars and dumping their garbage and litter in the parking lot. She asked how many parking spots will be eliminated by adding the warehouse, to which Taylor answered, "50". They have no current plans to increase the parking area. She added that the corner of the parking lot will be paved and landscaped.

Peg stated that the community has worked hard to improve the east side of the City making the neighborhood more attractive. She sees Wolverine parking as detrimental and will oppose the warehouse addition until their parking situation is addressed. She added that Wolverine World Wide is located in a residential area, not the other way around.

Dan Moriarty, 1017 N. Fourth, Big Rapids, stated that he agrees with Peggy and is opposed due to the parking situation. Employee parking has encroached on City property and he complained about the trash accumulation. He also mentioned that bad language is heard from the employees and there are families with young children nearby. Wolverine needs to work to improve relations. He also noted that things have changed lately and is upset about the parking situation,

trash, and bad language. He feels Wolverine needs to provide 50 more parking spots to make up for those lost to the new addition.

Written Correspondence Received by Staff

None

Telephonic Correspondence Received by Staff

None

Applicant Rebuttal

Taylor commented that the parking has been difficult during the City's construction. Almost every day they have received a phone call concerning the construction making it difficult to instruct employees where to park as they came into work.

When asked about the parking, Taylor said that although smaller, they will restripe the area to make 75 parking spots. She added that the addition will be complete by November or December and the parking on the west will include a new storm water system, trees along the perimeter and then the paving will be done at a later date.

The current paved parking (near the addition) will be repaved and striped but the gravel area will remain gravel. They expect the warehouse addition to add 10 to 30 new jobs. Currently, the first shift has 350 to 400 employees and the second shift has 100 to 200 employees.

French added that due to snow removal, there is not a lot of curbing in the parking lot. They could add a pipe and rail system to help control parking.

Schmidt asked that with 60% currently paved, why couldn't they skim coat the remaining 40%.

French said the cost is prohibitive. He said that between the two parking lots there are 450 parking spots. Sweppenheiser added that 1 spot for every worker on the largest shift is required.

Vogel asked if they intend to have the west parking lot paved by 2020. Taylor said they would add the trees this year and pave as money became available. Vogel asked if posts or barriers could be used to delineate parking spots. French said they could add steel posts with cabling.

Taylor stated that they will address the parking by perhaps having the janitors direct parking at the start of each shift. They can also get notices to their employees concerning the trash. They need to train employees and make an effort to communicate their concerns to them.

Brennen stated that last week she noticed 53 empty parking spots and employees were parking on the street. She believes Wolverine employees are not respecting the neighborhood and management needs to communicate with them concerning their expectations.

Chairperson Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m. and the Planning Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Jackson asked about the number of parking spots. French stated that there are 450 spaces now. There may be less during construction.

Bean asked if this were a new plant, would the City require them to pave the parking lot. Sweppenheiser said that it would ultimately be a Planning Commission requirement. Bean believes that the parking is currently a mess and it needs to be addressed to help the neighborhood. She added that they need a better plan. Jane added that management communication with the employees might help the situation and relieve concerns. Vogel asked what assurances Wolverine could give them that the western parking lot would be paved by 2020. He asked about the longevity of their work contracts.

Cochran stated that she is in favor of Wolverine's growth but they must also respect the environment. She feels they need to address the trash situation and give some type of assurance that the western parking lot will be paved by 2020.

Jane said he is also on the side of growth.

Jackson feels that the parking is the hang up and he would like to see all the parking near the building (east parking lot) paved immediately. He would like to see the west parking lot paved sooner than 2020.

Bean thought that perhaps the building of the warehouse would give them the opportunity to have the entire parking area paved.

Vogel thought that barriers would help organize the parking and suggested that parking on City property could be an enforcement issue.

Sweppenheiser said that employees have parked off of Fourth Street for a long time. They have only been parking on City property since the construction project. The City has been lenient due to the construction.

Schmidt summarized the Planning Commission concerns as the following:

- There is parking mayhem – the lots need paving but it is costly.
- There is a problem with trash and litter.
- There is a problem with employee foul language.
- Wolverine is reluctant to immediately solve the parking problem.

- Bollards could be installed to align parking.
- Trash receptacles could be added and janitors could monitor.
- Wolverine needs to educate their employees.

Schmidt thought that Wolverine could lay a base coat for dust control and stripe the parking lots regardless of the addition.

MOTION

Motion was made by John Schmidt, seconded by Chris Jane, to table the site plan review for a 15,625 sq. ft. warehouse addition at 1005 Baldwin (Wolverine World Wide) for a special meeting giving Wolverine World Wide the opportunity to address issues of parking overflow/organization and come up with a parking plan and a policy to control trash and behavior.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

Public Hearing

Recommendation of Surplus Property at 318 S Third Avenue

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 7:45 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request by saying that the City Commission has referred several City owned parcels to the Planning Commission to determine if these parcels should be considered surplus property. The recommendation is made back to the City Commission who ultimately has the authority to accept the recommendation.

Public Works has reviewed this property and due to an existing storm sewer drain, has determined that an easement would need to be created on this property if it is sold.

318 S. Third Avenue contains two parcels. One is .625 acres and is zoned C-3. The other is 3.427 acres and is zoned R-3. There is an existing 15” concrete storm drain on the property which would require an easement if sold. The City purchased the smaller property from Curries for \$30,000 for the placement of this storm drain. The VanDykes own the 8 acres to the north. The City does not currently have plans for this property but designation as surplus property now would expedite a sale if a developer were to be interested in the future.

Staff recommends designation as surplus property with an easement for the storm drain.

Those who Spoke in Favor

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff

Sweppenheiser received a question from Adam Curtis who owns ABC Auto as to what is the next step. He may have a business plan.

Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 7:50 p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Bean asked if there was enough frontage on S. Third for the property to be developed to which Sweppenheiser answered he didn't know at this point.

Vogel added the easement should be established all the way to the Muskegon River.

Motion

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, that the property at 318 N. Third be recommended to the City Commission as surplus property with the condition that the easement be taken all the way to the Muskegon River along the north property line.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

Public Hearing

Recommendation of Surplus Property at 1002 Catherine

Chairman Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 7:55 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request by saying that the City Commission has referred several City owned parcels to the Planning Commission to determine if these parcels should be considered surplus property. The recommendation is made back to the City Commission who ultimately has the authority to accept the recommendation.

Public Works has reviewed the property at 1002 Catherine and has determined that there is no current or potential Public Works use for this property.

Sweppenheiser stated that the utility that was on Wolverine World Wide property was moved to this property to make room for their proposed addition. The lot size is 50' by 158' and requires an easement for the pole. There is a possibility that it could be sold to the neighboring property.

City Staff recommends designating this property as surplus.

Those Who Spoke in Favor

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff

None

Chairperson Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Motion

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Chris Jane, to recommend to the City Commission that 1002 Catherine be designated as surplus property.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

Public Hearing

Recommendation of Surplus Property for 701 N State Street

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 8:01p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request by saying that the City Commission has referred several City owned parcels to the Planning Commission to determine if these parcels should be considered surplus property. The recommendation is made back to the City Commission who ultimately has the authority to accept the recommendation.

Sweppenheiser explained that this property is in the C-3 zone and is an irregular shape of 150' by 150' and is 0.577 acres. It was once used as the Dial-A-Ride bus location. It is considered buildable.

Public Works has reviewed this property and has determined there is no current or potential Public Works use for this property.

City Staff recommends a determination of surplus property.

Those Who Spoke in Favor

None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition

None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff

None

Chairperson Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 8:02 p.m.

Schmidt asked if this property was used as a pathway. Sweppenheiser said that people think it's an alley. The property owners were given notice of this proposed action.

Motion

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to recommend to the City Commission the designation of 701 N. State Street as surplus property.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The City received a letter from Mary Ryan, President of the Good Neighbors Association, whose members expressed a concern about flashing signs that seem to be getting brighter and moving faster. They believe they pose a hazard on State Street. They suggest getting the opinion of professionals to address the issue of fast moving or blinking signs.

The City is currently working on the problem and is seeking an expert's opinion.

The owner of the River Bend Veterinary Clinic is looking at 745 Water Tower Road as a possible location for their business. Currently the property is zoned Residential and has a Special Use Permit. Rezoning to C-3 would be needed to operate a veterinary clinic, but the City is considering rezoning to C-1 and passing a Text Change in the C-1 to allow a veterinary clinic.

Currently Perry Street is zoned C-1 which is the most restrictive in the commercial area to retain the most control.

The O'Reilly Auto Parts project is still moving forward.

The owner of the State Farm building on State Street said landscaping will be complete in the next 60 days.

The Bonner Group has presented its sketch plans to the City. There is a request for proposals.

There being no further business, motion was made by Jennifer Cochran, seconded by Tim Vogel to adjourn.

Chairman Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 6, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the July 6, 2016, Special Meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel,

EXCUSED Renato Cerdena, Chris Jane

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 6 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Paul Jackson, seconded by Tim Vogel, to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2016, Planning Commission meeting as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

Site Plan Review: Construction of a 15,625 sq. ft. Warehouse Addition at 1005 Baldwin Street

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to remove the Site Plan Review for a 15,625 sq. ft. addition at 1005 Baldwin (Wolverine World Wide) from the table of the June 15, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request for site plan review saying that the City Commission looked at the plan for Wolverine World Wide (WWW) overflow parking at the July 5, 2016, City Commission meeting. They have agreed to allow temporary over flow parking at the Industrial Field parking area during construction of the proposed WWW addition. There will be a loss of 50 parking spaces at this time and office personnel will be instructed to park in the Industrial Field parking lot. They anticipate 120 days for the construction of the proposed addition. Sweppenheiser further stated that WWW has removed some of the trees from the western parking area allowing for more organized parking. They have also erected a barricade to eliminate parking on the City owned parcel.

Staff recommends approval of the site plan for the addition and the western parking area.

Schmidt asked if trash receptacles have been placed in the parking lots. Sweppenheiser advised him that they have been placed around the property. He added that he envisions some sort of permanent barricade being installed in the spring to prevent encroachment onto City owned property.

Gail Taylor, Director of Operations at WWW, said that she appreciates the opportunity of a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission in order to address their concerns. They have addressed the following:

1. Parking on City property: she presented a set of before and after pictures of the parking area to the Planning Commission showing that they have addressed the situation and employees now park on WWW property.
2. Haphazard parking: parking in the western parking area was difficult in the past due to the presence of trees. They have taken down some trees allowing for more orderly parking. They have gained 30 spaces and now have had empty parking spaces.
3. Trash: a meeting was held with WWW supervisors and lead people to make sure everyone knows what is expected of them to make sure WWW is a good neighbor. They are to make sure all employees are informed. Trash receptacles have been put out and they have increased monitoring of the parking lot after each break and after each lunch.
4. Trailer: the trailer that has been sitting on the north end of the parking has been removed. There is now ample space for 50 cars.

Taylor said that she has noticed an immediate difference and employees are more respectful. WWW has tried to show good faith and is getting more involved in the community. The proposed investment will bring 10 to 40 jobs to Big Rapids.

Written or Telephonic Correspondence Received by Staff

None

Vogel asked them to go over the plan for the addition. John O'Brian, Director of Facilities at WWW presented the plans to the Commission.

Cochran thanked Taylor for addressing the Planning Commission's concerns. Taylor added that they are asking the employees to go over the handbook and if it is not followed, they will be written up.

Vogel asked about outside lighting and made sure they plan on directing the light downward in an effort to keep the light from disturbing the neighbors.

The Commission asked about the length of time it will take to pave the parking areas and how much it would cost. Taylor said it will cost \$250,000 including the storm sewer installation.

Vogel read a sample motion and the Commission discussed it. They discussed the number of years it will take WWW to pave. Bean struggles with giving them even 3 years for completion saying that any other new business would be made to pave the parking. Jackson agreed and asked if the cost is out of bounds for WWW.

Ron Wazniak, WWW Director of Finances and Operations, described the nature of the project saying that for the last 40 years, raw materials were stored in Rockford and shipped to Big Rapids. It will save them money to have the warehouse located in Big Rapids. The market is competitive and the profit margin is not great. He stated that there is a point at which the addition won't make sense anymore and if they are made to pave the parking immediately, they would have to revert back to the warehousing in Rockford and abort the Big Rapids plan.

Cochran posed a question regarding the need to set aside money for projects such as paving in light of the fluid nature WWW's contracts afford them.

Taylor stated that WWW is a \$3 billion company. Moving the warehouse up here will save them money and they will be able to pave out of the money saved. She stated that they need time to insure the money will be there. She suggested they construct the parking lot in phases. They would do the storm sewer first and pave in 3 different sections/phases. She would ask the City to rely on their good faith to get the job done in the allotted time. Wozniak added that they have recently painted the building and added landscaping.

Schmidt added that the parking has been an ongoing situation over the years. It is out of compliance but will be paved over 4 years. He is happy to see their investment in Big Rapids and their commitment to pave the parking area but would like to see a consistent effort being made.

Bean stated that she is concerned about how they will be monitored. As time goes by the ability to get anything done may be lost.

Jackson added that WWW has been here a long time and they have earned the right for the City to take their word that they will get the parking area paved.

Cochran wondered about the likelihood of the paving cost still being the same in four years.

Taylor said the cost shouldn't go up more than 20% and they plan to do the work in phases starting with the storm water sewer and paving in thirds or even halves depending on their cash flow.

Motion

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to approve the site plan for Wolverine World Wide (WWW) for a 15,625 sq. ft. warehouse expansion located at 1005 Baldwin Street, design plans dated May 19, 2016, with the following conditions:

- 1. Applicant shall provide a paved parking lot (130 spaces) located west of the main WWW building and west of the Fred Meijer White Pine State Park Trail as outlined in the June 15, 2016 letter to Steve Sobers City Manager. Construction shall be completed by *October 15, 2019* as per plans prepared by Mid-Michigan Engineering dated 5-25-2016.**
- 2. Applicant shall install and maintain only upon WWW property, parking row delineations on the entire WWW site by using all-weather materials and methods. Wolverine World Wide shall provide the number of parking spaces required in the Zoning Ordinance. Installation shall be completed by December 15, 2016.**
- 3. Applicant shall plant and maintain 30 street trees, 2 1/2" caliper in size along Fourth Avenue in the City right-of-way adjacent to WWW property. Trees shall be planted by December 15, 2016.**
- 4. Applicant shall install facility lighting so that the beam of light shines in a downward fashion and does not disturb the neighbors.**

After discussion, **Motion** was made by Paul Jackson, seconded by Tim Vogel, to amend the completion date in #1 of the Motion made by Tim Vogel from *October 15, 2019* to *October 15, 2020*.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Updated Motion previously made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson:

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to approve the site plan for Wolverine World Wide (WWW) for a 15,625 sq. ft. warehouse expansion located at 1005 Baldwin Street, design plans dated May 19, 2016, with the following conditions:

- 1. Applicant shall provide a paved parking lot (130 spaces) located west of the main WWW building and west of the Fred Meijer White Pine State Park Trail as outlined in the June 15, 2016 letter to Steve Sobers City Manager. Construction shall be completed by *October 15, 2020* as per plans prepared by Mid-Michigan Engineering dated 5-25-2016.**
- 2. Applicant shall install and maintain only upon WWW property, parking row delineations on the entire WWW site by using all-weather materials and methods. Wolverine World Wide shall provide the number of parking spaces required in the Zoning Ordinance. Installation shall be completed by December 15, 2016.**
- 3. Applicant shall plant and maintain 30 street trees, 2 1/2" caliper in size along Fourth Avenue in the City right-of-way adjacent to WWW property. Trees shall be planted by December 15, 2016.**
- 4. Applicant shall install facility lighting so that the beam of light shines in a downward fashion and does not disturb the neighbors.**

Motion passed with Paul Jackson, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor. Sue Bean and Jennifer Cochran were opposed.

There being no further business, Chairman Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 20, 2016**

Acting Chairperson Vogel called the July 20, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:33 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane, Tim Vogel,

EXCUSED Renato Cerdena, John Schmidt

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There was 1 person in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Jennifer Cochran, seconded by Paul Jackson, to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2016, Special Meeting of the Planning Commission as presented. Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Bean wondered how the July 6, 2016, Special Meeting was scheduled and if there were any regulations to follow in calling the Special Meeting. She wondered if those that were present at the previous meeting should have been notified. Sweppenheiser said that there are no special regulations. The public hearing was already conducted and concluded. The Planning Commission started the meeting with further Fact Finding.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Planning Commission agreed to review both requests simultaneously.

Recommendation to Rezone 745 Water Tower Road from R-2 to C-1

Recommendation on a Text Change to the Big Rapids Zoning Ordinance to Include Small Animal (Non-Agricultural, Large, Livestock) Veterinary Hospital with Indoor Boarding as a Principal Use in the C-1 Zoning District.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request per his Staff Report. Dr. James Scott is requesting the ability to open a Veterinary Hospital at 745 Water Tower Road. To be able to do this, the City would need to rezone the parcel from R-2 to C-1 and make a text change to the C-1 language to include a small animal Veterinary Hospital as a principal use. If the Veterinary Hospital was closed and the property sold, any business allowed in the C-1 could locate there. The property to the south is zoned C-1. Sweppenheiser said that the only communication he received was from Big Rapids Housing Director Mark Sochocki who manages the residential component of the Hope Network property immediately to the north. He considers the proposed property use (Veterinary Hospital) compatible with the property he manages.

The alternative action to allowing this use would be to change the zoning to C-3 where veterinary hospitals are allowed as a principal use, but this would be considered spot-zoning and it would be best to go to C-1 to be consistent with the neighborhood to the south.

Applicant Statement

Dr. James Scott, Riversbend Veterinary Hospital, 10565 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, said that he has been here since 1980 and opened a small veterinary business in Rogers Heights. His business grew and they added onto the building. Business has been growing ever since and there is a need to relocate to a larger building as they are unable to add another addition to the building. He plans to keep the Rogers Heights location for grooming and boarding and the Big Rapids location would be for veterinary purposes. He intends to see only small animals at the Big Rapids location. The property would be fenced so no animals could run away during a walk and they do not intend to have permanent dog runs. Dogs are individually walked. Currently, he does not intend to board animals at the Big Rapids site except for those recovering from medical procedures. They have never had any noise complaints at their Rogers Heights business.

Acting Chairperson Vogel opened the comment portion of the Public Hearing at 6:52 p.m.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff: A comment from Housing Director Mark Sochocki who manages the residential component of the Hope Network property immediately to the north. He considers the proposed property use (Veterinary Hospital) compatible with the property he manages.

Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the comment portion of the Public Hearing at 6:53 p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Commission on both requests.

When asked about noise or smell that could be expected, Dr. Scott said that presently there is no smell or noise coming from the current business. Staff picks up the messes left by dogs and discards in garbage bags. They currently have 60 “patients” at their business and they regularly employ 20 people. His son is the office manager.

Dr. Scott again said that he plans on separating the veterinary clinic and the grooming/boarding business as it is better to keep them separate. Grooming and boarding would stay in Rogers Heights.

Hours for the Clinic would be 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. He may stay open to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays in the future. They have two doctors and one surgeon and have appointments every 15 minutes. They would expect 8 visits per hour. The property currently has 35 to 40 parking spaces.

Jane said that he grew up near Dr. David’s Veterinary Clinic and noise or smell was never an issue.

When asked about after-hour emergency service, Dr. Scott said that he would eventually like to provide this service. He would only expect about 2 or three visits per night.

The Commission reviewed and commented on the Standards for Zoning Amendments (Section 14.2:4 of the Big Rapids Zoning Ordinance):

1. The use requested shall be consistent with and promote the intent and purpose of this Ordinance.

The Commission agreed that the use meets the intent and purpose of the Ordinance.

2. The proposed use will ensure that the land use or activity authorized shall be compatible with adjacent land uses, the natural environment, and the capabilities of public services affected by the proposed land use.

The Commission agreed that the use is consistent with the adjacent land uses and environment and public services already present.

3. The land use sought is consistent with the public health, safety, and welfare of the City of Big Rapids.

The Commission agreed that there are no apparent conflicts.

4. The proposed use is consistent with the City Master Plan or a determination that the plan is not applicable due to a mistake in the plan, changes in relevant conditions or changes in relevant plan policies.

The Commission agreed that there are no issues and the use appears consistent with the Master Plan.

The Commission discussed how the language should read for the C-1 and agreed that only small animals should be permitted at the Veterinary Hospital and should specifically exclude agricultural animals and large livestock.

Motion was made by Paul Jackson, seconded by Chris Jane, to recommend to the City Commission the rezoning of 745 Water Tower Road from R-2 to C-1, and to recommend a text change to the Big Rapids Zoning Ordinance to include a small animal (non-agricultural and non-large livestock) Veterinary Hospital with indoor boarding as principal use in the C-1 Zoning district.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Chris Jane and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Next month, Sweppenheiser would like to review the Focus Areas of the Master Plan. He asked the Commission to review them and select an area strategic to City Goals to discuss.

Cochran commented on the FSU Bulldog Sustainability Group. They are focusing on the alleys of the student corridor and trying to address the wishes of the Mayor to clean them up and come up with a better plan for garbage pick-up. There will be an open meeting on July 27, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. to discuss renter/landlord education, recycling, and garbage disposal.

The Adopt-an-Alley program will be organized for fall implementation. Currently, an alley will be getting paved which will help in overall appearance and drivability. The City is working on a special assessment for the paving.

Bean inquired about the landscaping at the new State Farm building on State Street.
Sweppenheiser will look at the site plan and see what was approved for landscaping.

There being no further business, Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the July 20, 2016 Planning Commission meeting at 7:30 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
August 17, 2016**

Acting Chairperson Vogel called the August 17, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel,

EXCUSED Renato Cerdena

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 3 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Sue Bean, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2016, Meeting of the Planning Commission as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Recommendation on the Conditional Use Permit Application to allow a Home Occupation (Private Counseling Service) at 219 Marion Avenue.

Acting Chairperson Vogel reviewed the Public Hearing procedure for the audience.

Acting Chairperson Vogel opened the Public Hearing for Conditional Use Permit at 6:32 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request saying that Terry Ruelle, 219 Marion Avenue, is requesting a Conditional Use Permit for a Home Occupation to allow a Private Counseling

Service. A Home Occupation is permitted as a Conditional Use in the R-1 zone subject to the Conditions of Section 11.1:10 of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. No stock in trade may be kept or articles sold or offered for sale in the dwelling except such as are produced by such home occupation.
2. No display of goods or signs pertaining to such use are visible from the street and that no persons are employed other than the dwelling occupants.
3. The principal structure for which the Conditional Use is requested must be the residence of the applicant. No such home occupation may be conducted in any accessory building.
4. No such home occupation shall require interior or exterior alterations, or use of mechanical equipment, not customary for housekeeping.
5. No clients or customers may visit on a regular basis to conduct business with the home occupation, and the home occupation shall not generate more than ten (10) business related vehicle trips in any one (1) day period.

Sweppenheiser noted that in the past we have approved the following requests for Conditional Use Permits to allow Home Occupations: a single-chair hair salon, tax preparer, therapy business, bookkeeping, pet grooming, nail salon, and psychotherapeutic service. Several of these business models require repeat customers on a fairly consistent basis. He discussed this condition with City Attorney Eric Williams who recommends moving forward as the Planning Commission has approved other Home Occupations in the past. Williams suggested a text change that would eliminate that portion of Condition #5 that does not allow regular visits to the home. The 10 business related vehicle trips in any day would remain.

6. Parking for the home occupation shall be accommodated in the driveway or along the curb adjacent to the property.
7. No more than twenty-five percent of the floor area of the ground floor of the principal structure may be devoted to the home occupation.
8. The home occupation shall not require exterior alterations that change the residential character of the dwelling (this statement shall not be construed so as to prohibit alterations necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act).
9. In no case shall the home occupation be open to the public at times earlier than 7:00 a.m. or later than 9:00 p.m.

Sweppenheiser also reviewed the Standards to be used by the Planning Commission in making the decision to recommend the request per Section 10.3:8 Standards:

No conditional use shall be recommended by the Planning Commission unless such board shall find:

1. That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety or general welfare.
2. That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor shall it substantially diminish and impair property values within its neighborhoods.
3. That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.
4. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and necessary facilities have been or are being provided.
5. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress or egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.
6. That the conditional use shall, in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, any specific requirements established for that use in Article 11 and to any additional conditions or procedures as specified in Section 10.4.

Recommendation:

Staff feels the request meets all criteria and would support a recommendation for approval of the Conditional Use Permit to operate a Private Counseling Service as a Home Occupation at 219 Marion Avenue.

Applicant Statement

Applicant Terry Ruelle, 219 Marion Avenue, stated that as a transition to retirement, she would like to operate a part-time private counseling service out of her home. She stated that she has been counseling since 1988 and has had a private practice since 1996. She would like to be able to hold sessions for 5 to 7 hours, 3 days per week. She would leave ½ hour between sessions so that sessions wouldn't overlap and no more than one session would be in progress at any given time.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff: None

Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the Public Comment portion of the Hearing at 6:47 p.m. and the Planning Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Schmidt wondered if the City Attorney had any back ground to the reasoning behind the aforementioned Condition #5 not allowing clients or customers on a regular basis. Sweppenheiser said that perhaps it was a fragment of a previous condition. Perhaps it was targeting non-professional occupations. Sweppenheiser again said the City Attorney recommends a text change. Schmidt agreed that the language was ambiguous and supports a text change.

Cochran asked how long the sessions normally run and Ruelle said the standard is 50 minutes but no more than an hour. She would expect to see between 5 to 7 clients per day, 3 days per week.

Ms. Ruelle stated that she lives at 219 Marion.

The Commission would like to make sure the counseling appointments are staggered so that no more than one client would be on the property at any one given time.

MOTION

Motion was made by John Schmidt, seconded by Paul Jackson, that the application for Conditional Use Permit for Home Occupation (Private Counseling Sessions) at 219 Marion Avenue be recommended to the City Commission for approval subject to Conditional Use Permit Ordinance Requirements and Restrictions and to allow no more than one counseling session at a time.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, John Schmidt and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Master Plan Focus Area

Sweppenheiser spoke about the need to address one of the Focus Areas of the Master Plan. The Master Plan is due to be updated starting in the fall and he would like to address one of the focus

areas before the Plan is changed. He asked the Commission to take a look at them and decide which Focus Area they would like to work on.

When asked for a suggestion, Sweppenheiser said that Focus Area #2 would be appropriate as both parcels are currently owned by the Housing Commission. Their plan for the property would be to develop single family affordable housing. They would like to increase their housing over a larger area and include the undeveloped parcel to the west. The area would need to be rezoned from R-3 to R-1. This idea would require 2 separate Public Hearings, one to review the Focus Area and another if it is decided the undeveloped parcel to the west should be included.

Schmidt suggested the Planning Commission should develop a schedule to look at all the Focus Areas one at a time. Sweppenheiser stated that most Focus Areas are identified for the purpose of re-zoning.

Sweppenheiser added that the Master Plan update is an 8-month process and the City will retain the services of Dave Bee from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission. He will be able to start in October. Updating the Master Plan is a requirement to be eligible as a Redevelopment Ready Community with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Schmidt asked if there are any other areas outside of the Focus Area that need to be looked at. Sweppenheiser said there could be but these were identified for a reason. None of the areas are of an urgent nature. He added that Focus Area #1 could be developed. Currently it is zoned R-2 and it could be R-1 Single Family.

Schmidt suggested that the Airport should be in the Master Plan. Vogel added that the City's well-head is also out there and should be in the Master Plan.

Chamber of Commerce

The new Mecosta County Chamber of Commerce building is to be located on State Street. The site plan will come before the Planning Commission eventually.

Bus Stop

Jackson noted that there is a sign on US-131 for a Bus Stop in Big Rapids. It is currently located in the Save-A-Lot parking lot. Ferris will probably provide the bus ride from FSU to Grand Rapids again this year. It is for students and faculty use.

Social Security Administration

It has been reported that the Social Security Administration will relocate to the old Pioneer building on State Street. Half the building will be torn down and they will provide a parking area.

Auto Parts Store

The new auto parts store on State Street is still moving ahead.

JoAnn Fabrics

JoAnn Fabrics proposed location at the old K-Mart store is still in review. There is room for 3 store fronts there.

There being no further business, Acting Chairperson Vogel closed the Planning Commission meeting at 7:24 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
September 21, 2016**

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena called the September 21, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Tim Vogel,

EXCUSED John Schmidt

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 4 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2016, meeting of the Planning Commission as presented.

Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Site Plan Review for 502 N State Street to redevelop 6,000 sq. ft. of office space with 31 parking spaces (Gary Gerber/Gerber Construction)

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena reviewed the Public Hearing procedure for the audience.

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena opened the Public Hearing for Site Plan Review for 502 N State Street at 6:34 p.m.

Sweppenheiser introduced the request saying that applicant, Gary Gerber of Gerber Construction, is requesting approval to redevelop 502 N State Street. Two-thirds of the building

will be demolished and one-third will be redeveloped. The plan needs to come before the ZBA to allow for accessible access to the building. Application has been made to request a zero front setback.

The southern portion of the existing structure will be demolished and 6,000 sq. ft. will be rehabbed to provide office space. Parking will be constructed where the demolition will occur.

The property is zoned C-3 and an office is a principal use in the district. The storm water plan has been approved. Application has been made to the ZBA to allow a zero front setback.

Staff recommends approval of the site plan dated September 1, 2016 on the condition that the ZBA grants a setback variance and MDOT has approved the curb reconfiguration on State Street.

Applicant Statement

Gary Gerber of Gerber Construction is requesting approval to redevelop 502 N State Street. Marlies Manning is designing the landscaping. The plan is included. Financing is lined up and the Social Security Administration will have a 5-year lease with a 5-year option. The redevelopment is scheduled to be complete by early next winter.

Gerber stated that he is from Reed City and teaches at FSU. He has been working on finding a spot for the Social Security Administration for a couple of years and believes that this is a good spot. He stated that his company recently worked on Osceola State Bank.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: Bill Routley, Mecosta County Commissioner, agrees that this will be a good use of the building and he looks forward to seeing it finished.

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff: None

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena closed the Public Comment portion of the Hearing at 6:40 p.m. and the Planning Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Vogel asked why the variance was needed and Sweppenheiser explained that an 8 ft. 4 in. canopy is needed for a Handicap Accessible ramp and it would be non-complying with the Zoning Ordinance by 8 feet. MDOT has been contacted for eliminating the curb cut on the northwest end of the property. They are happy to get rid of it.

Bean stated that it looks like a great project and added that the landscaping looks good.

There is a dispute over 7 to 8 feet on the north lot line which would jeopardize the proposed landscaping.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the site plan dated September 1, 2016, for redevelopment of 502 N State Street on the condition that the ZBA grants a setback variance and MDOT approves the curb cut reconfiguration on State Street.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, and Tim Vogel in favor.

Public Hearing: Recommendation of Surplus Property: 1509 Catherine Street

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena opened the Public Hearing for Surplus Property recommendation at 6:45p.m.

Sweppenheiser reviewed his Position Paper saying there have been several surplus property recommendations recently. The property, 1509 Catherine Street, was acquired from the school district and is adjacent to Northend Riverside Park property. It is an alternate access to the park.

Bill Routley is interested in buying 10 feet of property adjacent to his property at 1491 Catherine as his driveway encroaches on 1509 Catherine.

There is potential for development related to the park on this property. This request is similar to the request of Peg Brennan to purchase only part of a parcel being considered for surplus property designation. The portion Routley is interested in buying would not meet minimum size restrictions for a parcel. When a property is determined to be surplus and is available for sale, there is a bidding process making the property available to anyone. To declare this property surplus to benefit one person is not following the bidding process.

Routley stated that he used to live at 1601 Catherine which is north of 1509 Catherine. He sold it and bought 1491 Catherine which was an eye sore. When it was built in 2006, the required set backs were barely there. There is not enough room for a garage and 2 car driveway. He would like to purchase 10 feet of the property as currently his driveway encroaches on the City owned property by 1 foot. He is not in favor of purchasing the entire parcel.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communications Received by Staff: None

Vice-Chairperson Cerdena closed the Public Hearing at 6:57p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Sweppenheiser said that the lot frontage of 1509 Catherine is 120 feet and it is considered buildable.

Jackson stated he agrees with Mark Gifford's Position Paper (Attached). There is a State Law that governs surplus municipal property that says the sale of which has to include an open bid process. The proposed sale would constitute a closed bid.

A legal size property is a minimum of 75 feet wide and 100 feet deep. The portion proposed to be sold to Routley does not meet this standard.

Sweppenheiser added that a detached garage needs to be located in the back yard.

Vogel asked if property on the other side would be available to purchase. It is owned by Roy Gruenberg and he would not be interested.

The Commission discussed the possible sale of the whole parcel but Routley would not be interested in purchasing the entire property.

This property is not currently included in the Master Plan and it is not included within Northend Riverside Park.

To create a non-conforming parcel that does not meet size requirements is illegal. To sell to a specific buyer does not follow the bid process.

Bean asked about a deeded access. Cochran added that she is concerned about setting a precedent. Bean would like to hear more input from Attorney Williams.

Vogel asked how long the driveway has been there and Routley said since 1959. Bean asked about reverse possession. The Public Schools owned the property before the City.

Vogel agrees with Gifford's Position Paper and it should not be determined as Surplus Property.

Sweppenheiser said that a boundary adjustment is an option, but he is not sure about it. Bean would like to table the request for more input from Williams.

It was suggested that Routley go for a variance to locate the garage 1 foot from the property line. He decided to pursue this option.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson to recommend to the City Commission that the parcel identified as 1509 Catherine should not be determined Surplus Property.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson and Tim Vogel in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Master Plan Focus Areas

The Commission discussed the Master Plan Focus Areas. At the last meeting they spoke about Focus Area #2. Vogel asked if this selection is still valid and if it will be included in the new Master Plan. Sweppenheiser stated that we are just doing a Master Plan up-date and not a full blown re-do. The goal is to look at a focus area every 1 1/2 to 2 years. There is no urgency to move forward. He stated that Focus Area #4 has already been completed. It was changed from R-3 to R-P.

Cochran suggested that she couldn't offer an opinion given her current knowledge and suggested a sub-committee be formed to consider Focus Area #2. Sweppenheiser added that the Housing Commission owns both parcels and would like to add the small rectangular parcel. The parcels are currently zoned R/3 and they would like to re-zone them to R/1. The proposed time frame for the Housing Commission to get started on this project would be 1 to 2 years. Sweppenheiser added that their plan is to develop single family housing at market rate as well as affordable rate.

Sweppenheiser suggested that the Commission members should visit the sites to form their opinions. Focus Area #2 matches the goal of the Housing Commission. Focus Area #1 could have a benefit on the surrounding area.

Cerdena asked about the probability of Focus Area 3 as an office or restaurant site.

Sweppenheiser said the City doesn't think much of developing that area due to the smell emitting from the Waste Water Treatment Plant across the river. It is low on the list.

Cochran suggested a drive-around to try to make a determination as to which area they would recommend the City address.

Cerdena wondered how these areas were suggested in the first place.

The Commission discussed possible ways of selecting a Focus Area:

- 1) Get help form experts,
- 2) Get public input (but Public Hearing attendance is generally meager),

- 3) Post on City Website,
- 4) Identify stake holders in each area.
- 5) Ride-around to brain storm – invite Commission and Staff.

Adopt-an-Alley

Cochran reported recent FSU Bulldog Sustainability Alliance (BSA) and FSU Student Government Association (SGA) activities saying that she met with the various representatives who are planning a clean-up on October 15, 2016. They will advertise the event. They intend to involve the community and would like to get the RSO's involved too.

They are also working on setting up a calendar of clean up dates and want to get the word out about their project and report on their progress. She met with the Dean of Student Life and they will be looking into signs that will designate the name of the group responsible for cleaning a particular "adopted" area. They would like this effort to continue (on and off campus) and would like to see Ferris offer information on recycling starting with incoming freshmen. After clean-up efforts, they would like to be able to leave trash bags at the ends of the alleys and have Republic pick them up.

There being no further business, Vice-Chairperson Cerdena closed the Planning Commission meeting at 7:50 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
October 19, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the October 19, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel, and Bill Yontz

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 8 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Paul Jackson, seconded by Sue Bean, to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2016, meeting of the Planning Commission as presented. Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Site Plan Review for new construction of a 3,480 sq. ft. office building at 127 S. State Street. (Big Rapids Welcome Center: Mecosta County Chamber and Convention and Visitors Bureau).

Chairperson Schmidt reviewed the Public Hearing procedure for the audience and opened the hearing at 6:34 p.m.

Keegan Brown from Steve Jones Construction represented the applicants, the Mecosta County Chamber of Commerce and the Mecosta County Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, saying they hired Steve Jones Construction to develop a design build for a new Welcome Center. An approved landscape plan has not yet been fully developed due to the Landscape Architect's absence, but a rough plan is available. It is the applicant's and Steve Jones' intent to meet the Landscape Ordinance regulations. He asked the Planning Commission for conditional approval

of the site plan so they will have time to get the foundation out of the ground and start new footers before it gets too cold. The approval would be conditional based on City staff's review and approval of the landscaping plan. If they could start the project now, they would hope to be complete by March 30, 2017.

Sweppenheiser added that the property is zoned C-2 and an office establishment is a principal use in the district. The storm water plan has been approved by Public Works Deputy Director Schneidt.

Staff recommends approval of the site plan review for 127 S. State Street with the condition that the landscape plan be reviewed and approved by staff before work begins.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communication Received by Staff: A favorable comment was received by Dick Hansen who believes it will be a nice improvement to the property.

Chairman Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

When asked about the lack of a dumpster area Brown said they won't be using a dumpster. The owners will use poly-carts.

When asked about a plan for lighting, Brown explained that down-lighting will be implemented with the majority of the lighting located on the west side of the parking lot focusing east. They would like to create a pathway to the east and will work with the City for placement.

The sign will be located at the corner of State and Elm and will have a LED scrolling message area about 16 inches high. Orientation of the sign was discussed. Originally, two signs were planned but City Ordinance does not allow two signs. The Commission pointed out that it will be hard to read from both directions due to its 45 degree angle. They will look at changing the orientation to improve readability.

When asked about soil borings, Brown said that there was a hot spot on the property along the sidewalk that protrudes 30 feet inward. They changed the orientation of the building to eliminate a need to remediate the area.

The only curb cut to remain will be on Elm Street leading to the parking lot. Brown is in the process of applying for curb cut permits.

Vogel stated that he does not like incomplete plans and doesn't feel it is fair to rely on City staff for approval. Sweppenheiser said that in the past, staff has approved the landscaping plan and is comfortable with the task.

Brown said that design/build plans are a little different than normal site plans. They are done mainly to decrease upfront costs. Students from Ferris State University helped with the layout of the building. There is a budget for landscaping design.

Jackson stated that there is no real bus stop in town and asked if maybe one could be incorporated here. It could merely be a sign and a bench. Currently, bus riders are dropped off in the Save-a-Lot parking lot. It would be up to the applicant and the bus company. Brown added that the Indian Trails bus line has a stop in Howard City but they do not pull into the parking lot.

The stair case indicated on the building layout leads to a 700 sq. ft. basement where storage and utilities will be located. Vapor barriers can be used to eliminate any toxic fumes that may be present from the soil.

Jerry Scoby, FSU Administrator, stated that he is very happy that FSU students can be involved in community projects and he hopes that the collaboration will continue to move forward.

MOTION

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Paul Jackson, to recommend approval of the site plan dated September 27, 2016, for construction of a 3,480 sq. ft. office building at 127 S. State Street (Big Rapids Welcome Center: Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitor's Bureau) with the following condition:

The landscaping plan will need to be submitted to staff and approved prior to final approval.

The motion was amended to add that work on the footings may begin prior to landscape plan approval.

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, Tim Vogel, and Bill Yontz in favor.

Site Plan Review for the construction of a 4,060 sq. ft. building addition at 500 N Bronson Avenue. (NOCTI)

Sweppenheiser reviewed his Staff Report saying that the property is zoned Industrial and an office space is an accessory use in the district. The storm water plans have been approved. The landscaping currently exceeds zoning requirements. Furthermore, the proposed addition is on the back side of the building and additional landscaping is not required. He recommends approval of the site plan dated September 28, 2016.

Chairperson Schmidt opened the Public Hearing at 6:57 p.m.

Kevin Defever, Contractor, represented the applicant as he lives out of state. This addition has been in the planning stages for a couple of years and one year ago the land was purchased.

Those Who Spoke in Favor: None

Those Who Spoke in Opposition: None

Written or Telephonic Communications Received by Staff: None

Chairperson Schmidt closed the Public Hearing at 6:58 p.m. and the Commission entered into Fact Finding.

Vogel asked if parking requirements were being met given the additional space. Sweppenheiser said that they are met.

MOTION

Motion was made by Sue Bean, seconded by Renato Cerdena to recommend approval to the City Commission for the site plan dated September 28, 2016, for construction of a 4,060 sq. ft. building and conference space addition at 500 N. Bronson Avenue (NOCTI).

Motion passed with Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, Paul Jackson, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel, and Bill Yontz in favor.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Budget Review

The Commission discussed the Planning and Zoning Budget and felt there should be a larger budget to cover training for the Commission. It was suggested that the fees charged for site plan review go into this account to help with training costs. Schmidt also added that some states charge a surcharge on fees to be used by the Planning and Zoning Boards. Sweppenheiser said that MAP will come to us if we asked them for a training session. He added that Eric Williams could also do a training session as he has done them in the past.

Alley Clean-Up Report, by Jennifer Cochran

Cochran reported that an alley clean-up was organized by the FSU Student Government and the Bulldog Sustainability Alliance and was held on October 15th. Seventy volunteers showed up and 50 blocks of alleys were cleaned. The clean-up was very successful. She said that alley adoptions are in the works and they would wish to schedule clean-ups several times a year.

Their next course of action will be to focus on creating the signs that will designate which group has adopted which particular alley.

The group would like to target incoming freshman to introduce them to recycling and sustainability with the thought that the practice would continue. They would also like to get the international students involved.

The Commission and Sweppenheiser thanked Cochran for a job well done.

Election of Officers

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Sue Bean to nominate John Schmidt as the Planning Commission Chair.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Motion was made by Renato Cerdena, seconded by Tim Vogel, to nominate Jennifer Cochran as Vice-Chair.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Motion was made by Sue Bean, seconded by Paul Jackson, to nominate Tim Vogel as Secretary.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Cindy Plautz was appointed Recording Secretary.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Dunham's interest in the Gate site.
- The old Gate site is still for sale.
- JoAnn's Fabrics' coming to the old Kmart building has fallen through.
- Peebles has signed another year lease.
- Olive Garden needs 100,000 people within a 15-minute drive to establish a new location.
- Culver's plans on being open by the end of the year.
- Staff has not heard about the proposed housing development on Chestnut.
- Plans for the Hanchett site have not been developed at this time.

There being no further business, Chairperson Schmidt closed the Planning Commission meeting at 7:40 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
November 16, 2016**

Chairperson Schmidt called the November 16, 2016, regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT Sue Bean, Renato Cerdena, Jennifer Cochran, John Schmidt, Tim Vogel, Bill Yontz

EXCUSED

ABSENT Paul Jackson

ALSO PRESENT Mark Sweppenheiser, Neighborhood Services Director
Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services

There were 2 people in the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Tim Vogel, seconded by Jennifer Cochran, to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2016, meeting of the Planning Commission as presented. Motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion concerning whether to allow residents to raise chickens within City limits.

Sweppenheiser said that recently there has been talk about allowing chickens to be kept within City limits. He has received a letter from Matt Nikkari who said he would be interested in raising chickens due to his wife's dietary needs and he would like the City Commission to refer

the matter to the Planning Commission. His neighbors would also be interested in keeping chickens.

The act would involve an ordinance change. He suggested a committee to review the idea and added that chickens are not covered under the Right to Farm Act. Currently, chickens are not specifically prohibited by the Ordinance. Additionally, there are only a handful properties within the City limits that are large enough to allow animals other than household pets. Per Sub-Section 91.02 - Animals Prohibited; Exceptions, It shall be unlawful for any person to keep any animal or fowl within 500 feet of a dwelling, street, alley or public place...

Sweppenheiser received two letters of support from residents Judy Tressler - 506 Winter, and Don Steffin - 605 Willow. He also received verbal support from Mark and Jody Speas who would be in favor of keeping up to 4 or 5 chickens. He also said there were people in the area of Linden and Winter who were in favor.

John Schmidt provided a guide from the City of Salem, Oregon concerning the keeping of chickens. He thought that perhaps Big Rapids could use it as a guide to set up its own regulations for allowing chickens to be kept in the City.

Vogel believes that there should be a group of interested citizens that would be interested in developing the guidelines. He advised the Commission not to jump into this without study. He is not in favor of allowing chickens to be kept in the City as it would create one more thing that the City has to monitor. He added that the City of Tecumseh brought the idea to a vote of the people who voted it down. He again stressed the importance of an organized group to champion the idea.

Cerdena added that with the keeping of chickens comes the potential of viruses being spread from birds to chickens and from chickens to birds.

Yontz stated that he is disappointed that those who are interested in the idea are not present. Sweppenheiser agreed.

Schmidt asked how to take the idea forward. There are families interested who don't know where to start.

Yontz stated that due to limited farming, people may have to go back to growing their own food. People will need guidance to do so.

Bean added that her daughter has chickens and she thinks it is a great idea, but the City needs to see some interested parties take the lead. Perhaps ideas can be gotten from other communities.

Yontz wondered if the City could publicize information and ask for feedback.

Schmidt thought that the idea should be studied before it is put out to the public.

Sweppenheiser said that if he took a guess, he thought less than 10 people would want chickens. But, if the community wants chickens it could be regulated by permit. Complaints by concerned citizens would also help to control.

Bean would not be in favor of retail of the chickens or eggs but would favor the keeping of 2 to 3 chickens.

Schmidt added that this is a small town and farm fresh eggs are available nearby. He would like to see all the pros and cons considered while keeping the best interest of the City in mind. Does the City change the Ordinance for 10 people? What would the impact on local farmers be? He would like to see a task force to study the idea. There is also the cost of keeping chickens that people should consider.

Sweppenheiser said to let him know if they hear of anyone that would like to champion the idea.

Redevelopment Ready Community

Sweppenheiser reviewed the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) program saying that the City Commission passed a resolution in favor of applying for the status. The program requires our Master Plan to be up to date. The last time it was updated was in 2009, so it needs to be updated to be eligible for the program.

As a part of the Master Plan update, we need to look at the future Focus Areas. The City has contracted with Dave Bee of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) to help with the Master Plan update. The City will be responsible for providing any maps that may need to be updated.

Bee added that typically they only engage in a "bare bones" Master Plan as they don't want to compete with the professionals in Michigan that do this for a living. It can take a couple of years to complete a plan. He explained his plan for the update:

1. Update the introduction
2. Update Community Description
3. Revisit Goals and Objectives – make sure the plan is still pertinent
4. Modify Future Land Use Plan, Text, Tables and Maps
5. Adoption
6. Create Electronic Version

Dave will begin when the City is ready. It will take approximately 8 months to complete. A draft must go to the Township and the County for their review. The Township has 65 to 70 days

to comment and the County has 90 days. The City Commission can approve it or send it back for revisions. The process follows the Enabling Act.

To be eligible for the RRC, someone from the City must go through all the training, adopt a resolution in support and be actively working on the requirements.

Cerdena asked if the City knows how many people would be affected by a change in a Focus Area. Sweppenheiser explained that the changes are usually a re-zoning. Cerderna commented that the Census data is not narrowed down to our needs - the block groups are too large. He would be interested in seeing social economic values. He wondered if a survey could be done. As surveys are expensive, he suggested a sampling of data and suggested that FSU students could help. Response rates to surveys are usually low. Vogel added that tax records can be used for property information but not income information.

Vogel asked about the Master Plan Focus Areas and if the Hanchett property will be included. Sweppenheiser said it will be recommended as a Focus Area in the updated Master Plan. It is now zoned Industrial, as is Simonds. The Water Plant is zoned Residential. Schmidt believes the area could change tremendously while Sweppenheiser said the potential for a big change is not that great.

Sweppenheiser added that the Focus Areas were chosen as areas that may need to be rezoned. Schmidt asked if they need to be addressed soon or if we merely need to keep an eye on them. Sweppenheiser explained that long term plans don't work. Ferris State University had a 30-year Master Plan for development and they got rid of it as needs and wants change over time.

Currently the City needs to update the Master Plan to be in conformance with the 5-year update requirement. Plans made further out than 5 years are difficult because the City doesn't know ahead of time exactly what the budget will be for needed projects.

Cochran suggested that the Master Plan should be reviewed once a year to check on progress and to review the "big picture".

Dave Bee added that the Hanchett property may be a tool to get the RRC status as currently there is no guidance and the City could use the MEDC to assist and figure out long range possibilities.

There will be a public component to the Master Plan and RRC processes.

Yontz was concerned about bringing business to the City that will bring in revenue. Both residential and business properties bring tax dollars to the City. Sweppenheiser added that a Real Estate developer was hired to market the Hanchett property.

Bean added that the property is unique as it is river front property.

Bee said this property should be in a Focus Area and a plan should be developed. He asked if the MEDC is aware of the property. He suggested using the process and taking the time to figure out what is best. Being located on the river makes it an asset.

Schmidt questioned the potential use as it was an industrial site. He also asked, since the airport is City owned, should it be part of the Master Plan. Bee will work with the City to comply with its wishes

There being no further business, Chairperson Schmidt called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion was made by Jennifer Cochran, seconded by Tim Vogel to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m. with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia J. Plautz
Planning Commission Secretary