

**Planning Commission
August 23, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Called to Order

Chair McGory called the August 23, 2023, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The following Commissioners were present: Commissioner Castile, Commissioner Jackson, Chair McGory, Commissioner Poggiali, and Commissioner Zuilhof. Vice Chair Miller and Commissioner Whelan were absent. Arin Blair and Alec Ochs were present on behalf of the Community Development Department, Sarah Chiappone was present on behalf of the Law Department and Quinn Rambo was the acting clerk.

Approval of Minutes from July 26, 2023

Chair McGory introduced the first item on the agenda, which was the approval of the minutes from the July 26, 2023, Planning Meeting. Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Poggiali seconded the motion. Chair McGory called for a vote to approve the minutes as presented and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

123 Division Street- Zone Map Amendment

Dr. John M. Davenport has submitted an application for an amendment to the zoning map for 123 Division Street (parcel 57-04139.000). The application is to amend the zoning map from PF- Public Facilities to LB- Local Business and R2F- Two Family Residential.

Chair McGory introduced the application and asked for the Staff report. Mr. Ochs stated the applicant proposed to split the parcel at 123 E. Division St. The owner plans to create two lots, one for the existing residential structure (parcel 1) and one for the structure currently housing a venue space (parcel 2). As part of this proposal, the applicant proposed to re-zone both the proposed parcels 1 and parcel 2. Parcel one was proposed to be re-zoned to R2F – Two Family Residential. Parcel 2 was proposed to be re-zoned to LB – Local Business. Both zoning categories would more appropriately reflect the existing uses of the structures. Staff recommended the approval of the proposed amendment to the Zoning Map at 123 Division St. (Parcel 57-04139.000) with the following conditions: (1) all applicable permits were obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, and any other applicable agency prior to transient occupancy, (2) the new Zoning Districts aligned with metes and bounds with the future new parcels. Ms. Blair added that the property was currently one parcel and would be going through the lot split process and the rezone would bring the current use into conformance with zoning code. Chair McGory asked if the rezone would have to be subject to the lot split. Ms. Blair stated that was not required because portions of parcels could have different zoning. Commissioner Zuilhof asked if the parcels would be the same zoning. Ms. Blair stated that the parcel with the house would be zoned R2F- Two Family Residential, and the other parcel would be rezoned to LB- Local Business. Chair McGory asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the application. There was no one to speak for or against the application.

Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to approve the application for zoning map amendment with Staff conditions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson. Chair McGory called for the vote and all Commissioners voted to approve the application.

New Business

3717 Venice Road- Site Plan

Logan Meisler, on behalf of Toft-Dairy Company, has submitted a site plan for 3717 Venice Road to build a cold storage building in a Limited Manufacturing District.

Chair McGory introduced the application and asked for the Staff report. Mr. Ochs stated the applicant proposed to construct a new 20,700 sq. ft. freezer and convert the existing 10,269 sq. ft. freezer to dry storage. Part of this project would also widen the Venice Road curb cut for commercial vehicle traffic and construction of a new driveway & loading docks. The loading docks would be used during daylight hours only. The addition would put the total site coverage to approximately 23%, 27% under the maximum requirement of 50%. The proposed height of the expansion would be 23 feet high. The site contained 80+ parking spaces. The code called for 105 spaces. Staff talked to the applicant and determined 80+ spaces would adequately meet the parking need for the site. Staff noted that warehousing operations typically produce a minimal number of jobs or increase in customer traffic. The site should not require the amount of parking the code required, and Staff recommended waiving any additional parking requirements, and approval of the proposed site plan at 3717 Venice Rd. (parcel 60-00568.000) with the following condition: all applicable permits must be obtained through the Building Department, Engineering Department, and any other applicable agency prior to construction. Chair McGory asked the Commission if they had any questions for Staff. There were none. Chair McGory asked if there was anyone to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Hernstein, of Feick Contractors, was present to speak on behalf of the applicant. He stated the site plan did include (7) additional parking spaces that could be developed in the future if they were needed. Commissioner Poggiali asked if there would possibly be 87 spaces. Mr. Hernstein said yes but they would not be developed unless needed. Chair McGory asked if the additional spaces were part of this proposal. Mr. Ochs stated they were not part of this application, but the Commission could make that a requirement. Commissioner Zuilhof asked about the stormwater plan. Mr. Hernstein answered it would be added to the existing system.

Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to approve the site plan for 3717 Venice Road with Staff conditions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castile. Chair McGory called for a vote. The vote was called, and all Commissioners voted to approve the site plan with Staff conditions.

Other Business

General Business District Zoning Amendment Recommendation

Recommendation to amend GB- General Business District to allow multi-family residential as a main use.

Chair McGory introduced the topic and asked for the Staff report. Ms. Blair stated Staff was proposing that the Planning Commission initiate a change in the zoning code to include multifamily residential in the list of allowed main uses in the GB- General Business Zoning District. This recommended change was based upon the findings of the Firelands Regional Housing Needs Assessment and public comment about the lack of housing options in Sandusky and surrounding areas. Ms. Blair

added that per the study Erie County was found to have a shortage of 1,637 rental housing units and 2,734 for-sale housing units. There was a demand for housing because of the needs of the current population, jobs, amenities, and walkability of the City. Ms. Blair proposed the Planning Commission recommend to City Commission an amendment to the General Business Zoning District to allow multi-family residential as a main use. This type of amendment would allow apartment buildings or mixed-use projects. Ms. Blair continued that currently the only business district that allowed multi-family residential was Downtown Business District. Commissioner Zuilhof stated that he would like to see multi-family residential, and the code referenced, so the term would be defined. Ms. Blair stated the business district section of the City's code already pointed to multi-family regulations for any building that's residential use only in a mixed-use zone and commercial building standards would apply. Commissioner Jackson asked if Ms. Blair saw this as utilization of the space that was available for residences by building onto existing commercial buildings to allow more living space. Ms. Blair answered that travel corridors were the areas that often see redevelopment and this amendment would give property owners more options for redevelopment. Commissioner Zuilhof stated that the Planning Commission should be looking to the future and long-term goals in their decisions. He continued that he was in favor of the proposed amendment to the zoning code. Chair McGory asked Staff if they were looking for a motion. Ms. Blair stated that Staff was recommending that the Planning Commission make a motion to amend the general business zoning district to include multi-family residential as a permitted main use and if the recommendation was approved by Planning Commission, it would go to City Commission for a public hearing. Commissioner Poggiali asked Ms. Blair if there was any downside to approval of this amendment. Ms. Blair stated change could be uncomfortable but that is expected with any type of development. She added transient rental was already permitted use in General Business. Sandusky has limited land area to offer more people places to live and with the current housing shortage, she didn't see a lot of downsides from this change. Commissioner Poggiali asked for clarification that transient rentals could currently go in a General Business District. Ms. Blair confirmed that was correct and this change would allow more mixed-use projects, which is how many citizens would prefer to live close to stores, gyms, and childcare centers. Commissioner Zuilhof added that zoning protected people's property rights and managed conflict between properties and this would be removing a barrier that was necessary in the past but was no longer the case. Chair McGory stated that this change would allow people to live where they were comfortable. Commissioner Poggiali stated he questioned the study results because of different factors identified in the study, such as \$300,000 homes as being affordable, the absorption rate when the population is declining/ staying the same, or if the study considered the Feick Building, Marous Development, and Redwood, and if birth/ death rates of the area were considered. Commissioner Poggiali stated many higher end units were being built and there needed to be more done on the Federal level to subsidized projects and make them more affordable. Commissioner Castile asked Ms. Blair if the Commission would still approve individual site plans if this change was adopted. Ms. Blair stated that was correct, the same site plan process would be required. Commissioner Castile stated there were properties available for the public, but the problem was the cost, many couldn't afford the properties that were available.

Commissioner Zuilhof made a motion to recommend the change of the zoning code to allow multi-family residential in the General Business zoning district. Commissioner Castile asked if the proposed language of the change was in the packet. Ms. Blair confirmed that was correct. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Poggiali. Chair McGory called for a vote. The vote

was called, and all Commissioners voted to approve the recommendation to City Commission to allow multi-family residential as a main use in the GB- General Business District.

Adjournment

Chair McGory made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Poggiali. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Next Meeting:

September 27, 2023, at 5:00pm.

Approved:



Clerk



Chair/ Vice Chair