

Present: Chairperson Ostrowski; Vice-Chairperson Westerlund; Members: Borowski, Grinnan, Stempien, Ruprich, and Wilensky

Absent: Members: Drummond and Jensen

Also Present: Planning and Zoning Administrator, Wilks
Planning Consultant, Duffy
Council Liaison, Abboud

Chairperson Ostrowski called the regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Southfield Township municipal building at 18550 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA/APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Westerlund, second by Ruprich, to amend the agenda to include item 4a. Review and Consider Sign Request for Nexus Academy.

Motion passed.

Motion by Westerlund, second by Ruprich, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion passed.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING HELD OCTOBER 26, 2016.

Motion by Westerlund, second by Ruprich, that the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting held October 26, 2016, be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER SIGN REQUEST FOR NEXUS ACADEMY AT 31333 SOUTHFIELD ROAD

Wilks presented the sign request, explaining that the newly proposed sign complies with the requirements of the Village Zoning Ordinances. A review by LSL suggests that the applicant should provide additional details on proposed landscaping. Wilks has also explained to the property owner that if other tenants move in, they are limited in light to the total 30% illumination.

A representative from Phillips Sign and Lighting Company provided images of the current landscaping and stated that the client is happy to landscape the area after installation of the new sign. He explained that the old sign and pole would be removed, and the new sign installed with only the words Nexus Academy illuminated.

Motion by Borowski, second by Westerlund, to recommend approval of the sign application as presented with the requirement that the landscaping around the sign be consistent with the current landscaping which contains small shrubs and plant coverage.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion passed (7-0)

DISCUSSION ON TREE ORDINANCE LANGUAGE

Ostrowski feels that all outstanding questions were discussed at the prior Planning Commission meeting and should be incorporated into the revision to be provided to the Commission.

Ostrowski answered questions from various board members. He explained that tree survey results would be used to determine who is responsible for trees located on or near property lines, and the responsibility for survey is clarified in the ordinance based on whether it is a minor or major tree removal project. He suggested that the cost of permitting could be based upon the expense incurred by the Village to engage a professional forestry service. He also suggested that this ordinance should be referenced in site plan regulations of the Village Zoning Ordinance.

Wilks explained that any fees to be assessed would be set by Council. She added that consistency of language would be ensured throughout the document.

DISCUSSION ON CONSTRUCTION FENCE ORDINANCE LANGUAGE

Wilks explained that a draft was provided to Commission members per the discussion at the July 27, 2016 meeting. The Village building official confirmed that there are no standards within the Michigan Building Code which could be applied to compel a contractor to erect barriers as described. Therefore, this language would be added to the existing ordinance Section 22.08.280 Regulation of Nuisance Activities.

Westerlund feels that it is important this ordinance is included with the permit application, to help ensure compliance.

Borowski felt that it should have the purpose listed as “safety and security of site”. Westerlund stated the Commission needed to decide if the purpose of the ordinance was to create awareness of a project with the fence or if it was to promote safety and security. Stempien stated that the goal was safety and they needed to consider what was safe and impacted the neighbors. Westerlund pointed out the importance of a fence on an excavation site, less so on a construction site, so the determination needed to be made if the fence was a warning or a blocking fence.

Wilensky had no concerns with the language. He felt that it gave discretion to the people enforcing the code based on the site. He felt that the term “prevent unauthorized persons” created a clear definition of the purpose of the fence. Ruprich suggested adding a general statement saying “barrier could apply to other things determined as an unsafe environment” with the example given of dumpsters or trusses, etc.

The Commission agreed to hold a public hearing on the proposed language at the January 25, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.

DISCUSSION ON SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL FENCE ORDINANCE LANGUAGE

Wilks explained that 28 (30%) of the cases before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in the last six years were fence related, with the majority (16) regarding six-foot privacy fences. The remainder of requests are for five or six foot open fences, or for fences to be located in the side yard. The ZBA has only approved the request for privacy style fence near a condo development, and where a home was purchased with a newly constructed fence on the property.

Wilks reported that as far back as 1958, four foot fences were a part of the Village Ordinance. The most recent change to the section of ordinance regulating residential fencing was adopted in 1997. Borowski agreed that four foot fences and openness were requirements as far as he can remember.

Wilks pointed out that the current privacy screen allowances are ineffective for small lots, due to the 10 foot off lot line requirement. She also suggested the Commission consider the language used regarding non-compliant fencing.

The Commission agreed that a thorough review was needed, and requested copies of both the current ordinance and any changes and their notes from 1997. Westerlund stressed the importance of considering the Master Plan and goals of the Village.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

LIAISON COMMENTS

None.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Wilks reminded the Commission the December meeting was canceled and the Commission would meet again in the Village Council Chamber January 25, 2017.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

None.

Motion by Borowski, second by Westerlund, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Motion passed.

George Ostrowski
Planning Commission Chairperson

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Elizabeth Lyons
Recording Secretary