

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-Chair Ostrowski; Members: Abboud, Borowski, Freedman, Stempien and Westerlund

Absent: Peddie and Ruprich

Also Present: Village Manager, Wilson
Planning Consultant, Borden

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Abboud, to amend the agenda to remove the following items: #7 Discuss updating the Zoning Ordinance in areas where State/Federal law applies; #9 Review the Southfield Corridor design guidelines booklet provided by LSL.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD JANUARY 23, 2013

Motion by Borowski, second by Stempien, that the minutes of a Planning Commission meeting held January 23, 2013 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JOINT COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Motion by Borowski, second by Ostrowski, that the minutes of a joint Council/Planning Commission meeting held February 13, 2013 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

A dozen scouts along with their leader and parents joined the meeting. Scouts from the Junior Webelos Den of Pack 1049 from Bingham Farms Elementary were present to complete their Citizenship Badge. Chairman Jensen addressed inquiries from a few scouts and parents regarding the function and duties of the Planning Commission.

DISCUSS RESPONSE TO OAKLAND COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION REGARDING THE SOUTHFIELD ROAD REHABILITATION/ROUNDABOUTS, AND PROVIDE WRITTEN POSITION FOR COUNCIL AND REFERRAL TO THE RCOC

It was stated at the February 13 joint meeting with Council that the Road Commission for Oakland County is studying a redesign of Southfield Road from the Lodge freeway to north of 13 Mile Road. The County has presented a number of design solutions including a plan that calls for a median in the middle of the roadway with a slip road on the west side that would allow

parking along store fronts. The Planning Commission and Council propose to take a joint stance on a statement to the County indicating the Village's preferred design option for Southfield Road in Beverly Hills.

Planning consultant Brian Borden from LSL Planning understood that there was a preference for the median approach to the reconstruction of Southfield Road that incorporates a slip road with parking. A stance has not been taken on the roundabout concept for the Thirteen Mile and Southfield intersection. The goal is to pass a recommendation from the Village Council to the Road Commission by April, 2013. The Planning Commission may want to consider forwarding their recommendation to Council at tonight's meeting.

Wilson related that he was contacted by the City of Southfield Planning Department regarding a meeting about the Southfield Road corridor on Wednesday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. When he receives more information regarding this meeting, he will forward it to Commission members and LSL. This would be a constructive meeting for representatives of the Planning Commission, LSL and administration to attend. Southfield officials are also looking at formulating a position on an alternative design for Southfield Road and providing feedback to the Road Commission.

Westerlund displayed concept sketches from the Road Commission and summarized the alternative designs for Southfield Road. There was a preference indicated for Alternative #4, where there is a center median, two lanes of travel in both directions, a bike lane, and another narrow median with a slip road on either side. Since the east side of Southfield Road in Beverly Hills abuts the cemetery, the Village's recommendation would be to revise Alternate #4 to include a slip road with angled parking and a larger right-of-way space on the west side.

Topics of conversation included the possibility of a roundabout at 13 Mile and Southfield Roads and the safety and location of a bike path near the road.

Borowski said that the recommendation to Council and the Road Commission should include the preferred design for Southfield Road, whether the road reconstruction should extend to Beverly Road or all the way to 14 Mile Road, thoughts regarding a roundabout at the intersection of 13 Mile and Southfield Road, and possible comments about the location of a bike path. Westerlund questioned whether the Planning Commission wanted to consider a recommendation for reverse angle parking along the slip road. People using the slip road would back into angle parking.

Referring to the sketch of the slip road design, Wilson said that the Road Commission would need to provide direction on access management. He noted the number of curb cuts on Southfield Road and the need to limit or consolidate them.

In answer to an inquiry about the Southfield Road Corridor Environmental Assessment Study, Wilson stated that this study is a part of any federal requirement for a project of this type. The environment assessment includes items like storm water management but is broader in scope in terms of socio-economic, community, and religious factors.

For the benefit of the scouts present in the audience, Freedman provided a summary of the Southfield Road corridor redevelopment plan and town center as well as the County's plan to reconstruct Southfield Road.

Jensen suggested that planning consultant Borden draft a letter incorporating the Commission's recommendations and preferences to be reviewed and finalized at the March meeting. Members talked about selecting Alternate #4, but shifting the entire road to the east and eliminating a slip road on the east side. There was interest in considering a roundabout if the benefits outweigh the detriments. Members had a preference for the Southfield Road reconstruction to go at least to Beverly Road and potentially to 14 Mile Road.

The Planning Commission will review the letter at its next meeting, which will follow the March 20 meeting with the City of Southfield regarding road reconstruction. A recommendation will be made to Council at that time for their consideration.

REVIEW SIGN ORDINANCE

At the joint meeting with Council, subcommittee chair Stempien narrated a slide show presentation to give Council a comprehensive look at the revised sign ordinance sections. The purpose of tonight's agenda item is to forward the final draft of the sign ordinance to Council for public hearing and approval.

Stempien stated that the sign ordinance subcommittee met with Manager Wilson following the joint meeting and made additional changes. LSL Planning incorporated those modifications into the document and distributed a draft ordinance dated February 25. Stempien indicated that he had a few minor markups that he will pass along to Brian Borden to include in the final revisions.

The subcommittee also talked about the current sign permit application and the fact that the form will have to be modified to reflect requirements of the new sign ordinance. Stempien referred to other sign applications to draft a revised form for Beverly Hills, which he distributed to those present. It includes a checklist of items that the Village wants to see in terms of signs in the community. Wilson will review the draft sign permit application with the building department clerk.

Motion by Borowski, second by Freedman, that the Planning Commission forward the final draft Sign Ordinance Amendments to the Village Council with a recommendation for adoption.

Motion passed.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Jensen stated that he was pleased with the way the annual meeting with Council went earlier this month. The Planning Commission was well prepared and the subject matter was presented in a way that was understandable and well received. Jensen expressed the view that the Planning Commission could have not produced the comprehensive sign ordinance amendments any sooner or better.

Abboud had inquiries on the sign ordinance adoption process, which were addressed by Jensen. Freedman commented on the fine work done by the sign ordinance subcommittee. She recognized Robert Stempien for his leadership in this effort.

Stempien thanked sign subcommittee members Westerlund, Borowski, and Abboud for their work and for the assistance of Brian Borden and Chris Wilson. Initiatives like this generally require work outside of regular monthly meetings in order to research and consider all aspects of a topic. He added that the process was begun 10 months ago following Council approval of the funding.

Ostrowski added that the type of work that was accomplished on the sign ordinance amendments is typically done internally in most communities by a planning consultant or by a planning staff. To have this breadth of work done for the most part by volunteers was impressive.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

In response to an inquiry, Wilson said that the Walmart proposal in the City of Southfield was turned down by the city council due to lack of space.

Wilson reported that the Village received a request for seasonable displays and outdoor sales of products from Market Fresh. Previously, this type of request required a hearing and variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Due to the work of the Planning Commission, the Village adopted an outdoor sales ordinance that will allow this type of permit to be approved administratively. Market Fresh is being charged an application fee of \$55 for this permit.

Wilson commented that, as part of making a decision to contract for services or bring in a building official, he is in the process of analyzing building department fees. He was expecting the Village's fees to be 50% low compared to other communities. The fees for coming before the Zoning Board of Appeals need updating. Plumbing fees are low, but other fees were not as low as he thought.

Freedman commented that she spoke with Brad Strader from LSL Planning after the joint meeting about whether or not a request for variance associated with a site plan should be heard by the Zoning Board before that site plan goes before the Planning Commission for review. She referenced the recent Taco Bell reconstruction. Freedman related that Strader concurred that this is an item to be addressed by the Village.

Borden remarked that this is a policy decision of the Village; there is nothing in the statute or ordinance that dictates that one or the other must come first. Wilson added that a site plan cannot be approved if it does not meet the code. On the other hand, the Village cannot deny someone an application to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Board members commented on the process. When an applicant goes before the Planning Commission and points out the need for a variance as part of their presentation, the applicant may receive a recommendation for site plan approval contingent upon the ZBA variance and subject to other factors designated by the Commission.

Wilson reported that administration is getting close to completing its analysis of the building department issue. He will bring this matter to the Planning Commission for input after a presentation is made to Council. The issue is whether to keep the building department service in house or look to consolidate that service with a neighboring community. Wilson talked about the pros and cons on both sides.

There is an administrative benefit to the Village Manager and the Planning Commission to having a zoning and planning professional on the administrative staff. Hiring that person would cost more. There's also a concern about the service level of doing the job with two people. It will not be the same level of service to the residents or the contractors that would occur if the Village contracted with a full service building department.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Motion by Borowski, second by Freedman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Motion passed.

David Jensen
Planning Commission Chair

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary