Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

September 27, 2023

1. **Call to Order at 6:01pm**
2. **Roll Call –** Chairperson DeBoer, Commissioners Dean, Tecca, Lyon-Jenness, and Bliesener, City Manager Stoddard, and Zoning Administrator (ZA) Harvey.
3. **Approval of Minutes – July 26, 2023**
* Bliesener noted that on Page 3, Section 15.4 needed to have the word states changed to stated.
* Tecca stated that he did not feel right about not working on the Short Term Rentals (STRs).
* Chairperson DeBoer reminded the PC about the costs and ability to monitor that were part of the previous discussion.
* ZA Harvey stated that the City of Parchment could be at some risk for the lack of a Short Term Rental Ordinance. Some may feel that it is not a concern and others may want some small portion like accessory building uses allowed.
* Chairperson DeBoer said that STR’s could be revisited in 6 months, after the legislation has had time to sort out its concerns.
* Motion to accept the minutes with the revisions by Bliesener and supported by Dean. All ayes.
1. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda –** No changes
2. **Citizen Comments**
* No comments
1. **Old Business –** None
2. **New Business**
3. Purchase Agreement, Parchment Vegetable Products
* Dan Bussema, 133 Glendale, explained the photograph that he provided to the PC members. He spoke regarding Building 2-97.
* Chairperson DeBoer asked what the plan was for the building preparation.
* Bussema reported that the building would not take a lot of preparation as the structure is strong. He would add utilities, bathrooms, and offices to the building as well as paint. The front 3rd of the building would be suitable for a Farmer’s Market with an artisan setting for retail use.
* Bussema went on to explain that Vertical Farming MI State is a closed system that uses very little water.
* Lyon-Jenness said that this appears to be a sophisticated/complicated process.
* Bussema stated that some systems are designed to clean the water.
* Dean mentioned Plant Chicago, a closed loop, aquaponics business. There is a grow garden for the brewery and winery that is in their building. Fish are grain fed and mushrooms are grown. People do Farm Camps.
* Bussema said that he intends to work with Parchment High School students; students will be able to get certification for working there.
* Dean stated that she is very supportive of this idea and that it could be used as a model. Space for business meetings, camps, and employee retreats.
* Bussema said that this building is a good asset and would be perfect for this these kinds of business.
* DeBoer asked about lighting to which Bussema explained that LED lighting would be used.
* Tecca asked for a comparison to traditional sized farms. Bussema replied that it runs 24/7 and equals approximately 25-40 acres of potential productivity, which is substantial.
* Chairperson DeBoer made a motion to move the purchase agreement on to the City Commission, Commissioner Dean supported. Voice vote: Each PC member voted: Aye.
1. Review of Article 15
* ZA Harvey stated that this was a portion of the Article 15, Section 15.1 Intent – this is the portion that is most complicated to update, labor intensive.
* DeBoer asked about the brackets. ZA Harvey said that words were bracketed to reflect their removal or relocation in the ordinance.
* ZA Harvey said that the set of standards that gives the most trouble is the sign ordinances. As a planning consultant, there is an art to zoning ordinances. You could make a really nice sign ordinance and that makes it easier for the planning consultant. Purpose statements are easily read by the PC. Section 15.1 - Key things in the statement of purpose: Uniformity, balance for a good look, and the right to advertise.
* Article 15, Section 15.2 Definitions – ZA Harvey asked the PC to look at the changes. Sign regulations, case law in signs. The PC will want to set the City of Parchment up to have fewer problems. She tried to put in what is needed in the ordinance.
* DeBoer asked if pictures would be allowed in the ordinances.
* ZA Harvey stated that new ordinances now allow for graphics/ pictures. In directional sign language, some have logos – this would be considered as advertising.
* Electronic Signs, ZA Harvey narrowed the definition to be changed manually, 1 or 2 times. Three or more changes may be too much activity on a sign. Changing this wording addresses a sign company’s arguments.
* Free standing and Ground signs are the same currently. Ground signs should be free standing. The definition of a free standing sign should be separate from a monument and ground signs. Monument signs should have individual standards.
* Murals – ZA Harvey said that the City of Parchment speaks to them, but more language should be added.
* Lyon-Jenness asked about a historical mural – she noticed one in which a historical saw mill was portrayed.
* ZA Harvey stated that this would not be considered an advertisement, just a picture.
* Ways to measure signs will be clarified in writing (re-worded). Surface area and square footage in particular.
* Section 15.3 – Exempt Signs – Some of the wording will be relocated and defined. This area was reworked to allow some signage. Name plates are new, historical signs, building markers, etc. are allowed.
* Section 15.4 – Prohibited Signs – ZA Harvey explained that this section speaks to the signs we do not want and a list of allowable temporary signs.
* Section 15.5 Sign Surface Area – This whole section needs to be deleted, as it is not needed.
* Section 15.6 – General Sign Regulations – ZA Harvey stated that this section speaks to the commercial and industrial sign’s language that is general to all signs, permits, materials, and lighting.
* DeBoer asked that if the PC needs to take a deeper dive on this, can this be on the next agenda.
* ZA Harvey said that the PC may share any modifications/opinions, any stand outs in the wording. The 2nd half of the next meeting will be used to discuss some specifics about the rewrite.
* Bliesener stated that the cleaned up language looks fine. She agrees an electronic display sign would be good with one or two changes and that three or more changes does not need to be addressed.
* Tecca said that the language for the sign area section was confusing.
* ZA Harvey explained that a certain amount of signage is allowed for walls, ground, etc. Example: A sign company is trying to meet the ordinance for 32 square feet. We define the sign area to include the poles and the flat surface. We need to explain the compliance with square footage of the sign and what has to be included in that measurement.
* Tecca asked about 2 faced signs. ZA Harvey said that if it is back to back, it is considered a single sign and only one side needs to be measured. If two sections are used, like a sign shaped into a V, then both sides need to be measured.
* DeBoer asked if adding a diagram to the ordinance would be helpful.
* ZA Harvey said that she is sure that there is a common one that could be used.
* Lyon-Jenness asked if the ordinance would say square footage. ZA Harvey said that she would not change the metrics; she would use the same numbers. She will fix things within the ordinance that give her trouble with sign approvals.
* ZA Harvey had no changes for free standing signs, directional signs and height of signs. She is defining the types of signage and what is allowed. Any changes that the PC wants can be made.
* Bliesener stated that ZA Harvey will be looking at the signs in town to see if they look okay and if there are any objectionable signs.
* DeBoer asked ZA Harvey if she had enough information from the PC to move forward. ZA Harvey agreed.
1. **Comments from Planning Commissioners**
* Chairperson DeBoer asked for a Graphics Packaging update from Dean. She said that there was talk about an expansion. Conversation about the air quality ensued.
* Chairperson DeBoer stated that he appreciated the Joint Meetings with the City Commission. He thanked City Manager Stoddard for her meeting minutes and ZA Harvey for her sign ordinance work.
1. **Next Meeting** – October 25, 2023 at 6pm

1. **Adjournment** – Motion by Lyon-Jenness, supported by Tecca. All ayes. Meeting ended at 7:13 pm.