

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes  
September 25, 2024

**1. Call to Order at 6:05pm**

- 2. Roll Call**—Chairperson DeBoer, Commissioners Bliesener, Lyon-Jenness, and Brooks, Zoning Administrator (ZA) Harvey, and City Manager (CM) Stoddard.  
Motion to excuse Dean by Lyon-Jenness, supported by Bliesener. All ayes, motion carried.

**3. Approval of Minutes—August 28, 2024**

- Motion by Bliesener with support by Lyon-Jenness to accept the minutes as read. All ayes.

**4. Additions/Changes to the Agenda**

- Items were renumbered and the Renewable Webinar discussion was added.

**5. Citizen Comments**

- None

**6. Old Business**

- Chairperson DeBoer asked if the new sign ordinance had been utilized.
- ZA Harvey stated she had received an application from Biggby and also the Mobil gas station. She said that the ordinance clearly addressed what was missing. Both businesses sent completed applications. Requests were for a canopy and a panel replacement. The ordinance is easy to use now.
- 

**7. New Business**

**1. Revised 2024 Work Plan**

- ZA Harvey stated that as the Work Plan relates to the Master Plan, all was completed that was slated for this year except Commercial-Industrial Standards and Training. The Work Plan indicated fall for this work item.
- Chairperson DeBoer said that they would have the Child Care Ordinance Public Hearing and the Commercial/Industrial Overlay in October.
- ZA Harvey said that she would provide a draft outline for October to see how that works. PC can look the overlay approach over. This pulls in three of the implementation ideas.
- Bliesener, Brooks and Lyon-Jenness agreed with the October plan.

**2. Renewable Webinar discussion**

- Bliesener mentioned the Renewable Webinar that she attended regarding PA233 with Oshtemo, Texas Township, and Portage. Parchment was considered to be too small to be concerned about it.
- ZA Harvey said that the City of Parchment does not have to do anything about it. The webinar did give a better understanding of PA 233 which begins in November. It is based on a State mandate which removes local control. (Solar, wind, battery farms above a certain size). If a developer comes with a project, they can use the State's process. Some communities do it by zoning districts. Noise, fire, and setback standards are at the State level. The local unit may 1) Do nothing 2) Create an ordinance of its own with a review process 3) Local community may have an ordinance that parrots the State. This gives us a seat at the table to hear the State's review, but no voting rights.
- ZA Harvey continued – Communities of interest have people within the industry to help them craft the ordinance (Local review = 3 months, State review 1 year). The City of Parchment does not have the area to accommodate a facility of such a size so we are not worried about it.
- ZA Harvey stated that the City could accommodate a smaller one (solar farm), but the PC position is that we do not want a solar farm on the mill site. If PC changes its mind, they may amend the ordinance. If someone is proposing a solar farm the PC may amend the ordinance. Battery storage systems only use 20 acres but have to be next to a battery storage building. Townships know they are being scouted and they want to have standards in place.
- Chairperson DeBoer said that if the City had 200 acres of vacant land, they would want to get in front of it. What about solar panels on the LC Howard warehouse?
- ZA Harvey said that it would be possible to have solar panels on it as an accessory use. It would not be able to be added to the grid.

### 3. 2025-2026 Work Plan Discussion

- Chairperson DeBoer asked when the Work Plan for 2025-2026 should be constructed.
- ZA Harvey said that she would like to have this conversation in the fall. She asked that the PC think through the Master Plan to the Implementation Matrix
  - 1) Adopted Master Plan (like the Work Plan idea) – identified strategies to work from list
  - 2) Work Plan came from Master Plan, Redevelopment Ready Community process needed an Action Plan.
  - 3) Think about the Implementation Matrix as a Master List instead, as a better source to draw from for Work Plan items.

- 4) Strategic zoning – Should have a technical review of zoning ordinance. Make a list of what the ordinance lacks (clean-up). Master Plan = Guide, Zoning Ordinance = Implementation Guide. Implementation guide should be in the ordinance, too.
  - 5) ZA Harvey, Technical Review – How to do it? Ask staff to review it page by page with zoning ordinances to see if it matches. Pair to the Master Plan list, then we have a working list.
- DeBoer asked if they were to look for inconsistencies.
  - ZA Harvey said that they may not have any inconsistencies between the Master Plan and the State laws. However, nonconformities need to be handled uniformly.
  - Chairperson DeBoer said that the further we are out in front of the mill project, the better prepared we will be.
  - ZA Harvey asked how does the PC see the mill development progressing? Do we have a sense of how it will sell?
  - Chairperson DeBoer stated that the City did not want to have one entity in mind to purchase all of the site, as before.
  - Lyon-Jenness asked how we promote the site.
  - Bliesener asked if anyone has seen Comstock since they were certified as a RRC community. The grant monies that have been given has made their downtown area look good.
  - Chairperson DeBoer asked how Mike Schwartz, Prein & Newhof, coordinated the two splits. CM Stoddard said that it was based on the number of splits allowed per the Assessor and the access to utilities on Wilson Avenue. He said that he would like to see real developers come in. He then asked if the PC would want ZA Harvey to do the technical review between the Master Plan and the Implementation Plan for November.
  - ZA Harvey said that this would be a great discussion for November and asked if there were any other thoughts for the Work Plan.

#### 4. Structural Engineering Report

- Chairperson DeBoer stated that a professional report from engineers will allow for legitimate developers to study its content.
- Bliesener stated that it will answer the question – Is it salvageable.
- DeBoer noted that each building was not tied back to the map and asked if that was possible. He inquired as to whether the wood decking came from the company's forest. He stated that it was a wonderful report.
- Lyon-Jenness mentioned that Denny Collison may know about the decking and roofs.

- DeBoer noticed that the photographs revealed the huge holes in the floor with the paper machines on each side.

#### **8. Additional Comments**

- Lyon-Jenness asked about the Administration Building
- CM Stoddard stated that they are still working on it.
- Lyon-Jenness asked about the outcome of the Branding Session with the City Commission.
- CM Stoddard stated that she would send the minutes of the meeting to the PC members.

#### **9. Next Meeting**—October 23, 2024 at 6pm

**10. Adjournment**—Motion by Lyon-Jenness, supported by Bliesener. All ayes. Meeting ended at 7:00pm.