

Village of Onekama Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
5283 Main Street, Onekama, MI 231-889-3171
January 9, 2024

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Members Present:

Chair Christopher Forth, Vice Chair Deborah Storms, Tom Foster, Susan Halloran and Wendy Kamaloski

Motion to accept/amend the agenda:

Chair Forth requested that election of officers be added to the agenda. The Bylaws require election in January of each year. A motion was offered by Storm to accept an amended January 9, 2024 Planning Commission agenda and seconded by Halloran. The motion was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Chair Forth asked if there are any recommended changes to the December 12, 2023 Planning Commission meeting minutes. There being no changes, a motion was offered by Halloran and seconded by Kamaloski to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Business:

1. Travelers Motel, 5606 8 Mile Road. Chair Forth introduced Jodi Lynch from the Manistee County Planning Department. Lynch introduced the applicant/owner of the Travelers Motel, Mariada Gezon. Lynch indicated Gezon recently acquired the property and the proposed improvements/renovations, which triggered a land use permit. Motels are a permitted land use in the Commercial Residential zoning district subject to issuance of the special use permit. However, given the age of this motel, a special use permit had never been issued. Lynch noted that when her office started the permitting process, she indicated the Zoning code requires that the Planning Commission first certify the site plan in accordance with section 8005. The action of the Planning commission is to approve the site and improvements as they currently exist, including and nonconformities that are grandfathered given the age of the facility. Lynch indicated the applicant and applicant's contractor, Mr. John Scott, are here to answer any questions.

Commissioner Halloran stated renovations have already started and asked if the dimensions of the exterior are changing. Ms. Gezon responded that the building footprint is being reduced by removal of the sunroom. An outside deck will replace the sunroom. Ms. Gezon added that removal of the sunroom required review and approval by the Village. Commissioner Halloran also noted the north part of the building appears to encroach on the adjacent property. Chair Forth stated there are two nonconformities associated with the site. The first is an encroachment into the residential zoning district at the north end. Although for residential, the applicant does own this property as well. The second nonconformity involves the building setback along the west property line. The minimum setback is 10 feet and the building is setback less than 10 feet. Commissioner Halloran also asked if there will be changes to the parking lot. Mr. Scott stated the parking lot will be removed and replaced within the same area. Chair Forth asked about storm water containment. Protection of the nearby streams and Portage Lake is an important goal. Mr. Scott indicated the storm water currently flows towards the southwest into an underground basin.

Chair Forth asked if this matter needs to be reviewed by the Village Council. Ms. Lynch responded the certification of the site plan is the responsibility of the Planning Commission and Village Council will review the special use permit as a result of the sunroom removal.

There being no further discussion, a motion was offered by Commissioner Kamaloski and supported by Commissioner Foster to approve the certification of the site plan for the Travelers Motel, 5606 8 Mile Road. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Short-term Rental Ordinance. Chair Forth stated that at the last Village Council meeting, the Council specifically asked the Planning Commission to develop a short-term rental ordinance. Chair Forth briefly summarized the information in the agenda (short-term rental slide presentation made at the October 2023 MAP conference and Michigan Court of Appeals decisions). The Commission discussed existing short-term rental homes in the Village and the language of a proposed ordinance, including parking, number of occupants permitted, administration, among others. The Commission also discussed inventorying the number of dwelling units as a starting point and is there a desire to limit the number of licenses issued.

Commissioner Halloran indicated the Township has adopted a short-term rental ordinance and the Village should use it as a model for consistency purposes. Chair Forth noted an ordinance should only apply to those areas zoned residential. Dwellings located in the commercial residential district would be excluded since it is an area zoned for commercial purposes.

The Commission also discussed the administrative process and whether or not this is a task the Village administration wants to accept. Commissioner Halloran noted that when adopting a short-term rental ordinance was discussed by the Council, comments were made

that the Village administration did not want to manage the program. Before proceeding any further with drafting a short-term rental ordinance, the Commission wants the Village Council to confirm the Village administration administer the program. Commissioner Halloran said she would request this item be added to the next Village Council agenda for discussion.

3. Election of Officers. Chair Forth noted that the adopted Planning Commission Bylaws requires election of officers every January. Commissioner Halloran nominated Forth to continue in the position of Chair, which was supported by Storms. The nomination was unanimously approved by the Commission. Chair Forth nominated Storms to continue in the position of Vice-Chair, which was supported by Halloran. The nomination was unanimously approved by the Commission. Commissioner Halloran nominated Foster to for the position of Secretary, which was supported by Kamaloski. The nomination was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Old Business

1. Mixed-Use Zoning: Chair Forth projects an aerial photo of the Village that highlights vacant property, existing multi-use buildings previously identified by the Commission, parks, marinas, ally's that provide rear access and one possible location for a municipal parking lot. After reviewing the map and existing conditions, two locations for mixed use development emerged. One would be located at the west end near the Village Park, which also appears to be the primary commercial location and the other at the east end in the area of the Blue Slipper and EZ Mart. This could be accomplished with an overlay district. The other Commission members concurred.

Chair Forth also mentioned that access to residential units on the upper floor could be obtained from either the streetside or rear. Many communities allow access from either. Chair Forth also mentioned the language of the ordinance cannot be onerous. It needs to be flexible so developers are encouraged to build mixed use buildings. The Commission also discussed incentivizing at least the initial projects to build momentum. This would need to be considered by the Village Council.

The Commission also discussed design considerations in light of the email received from Mr. Greg Carlson. The basic building design considerations included in the memo to the Village Council are still supported by the Commission. Commissioner Foster mentioned a proposed development project in Leland that is being opposed because the building design is to modern and does not fit within the character of the Village. The future mixed-use building design considerations identified by the Planning Commission are intended to be compatible with and complement the existing mixed-use buildings in Onekama. The Commission also discussed placement of a garage(s) involving lakefront property. Options include in the rear yard or side yard. Chair Forth indicated the expressed concerns will be considered during development of draft ordinance language.

2. Master Plan Update RFP. Chair Forth indicated the responses to the consultants questions prepared by the Planning Commission were provided to the consultant. Also, Chair Forth indicated the responses were forwarded to MAP and posted to the Villages Master Plan RFP webpage. Chair Forth also mentioned he reached out to networks Northwest via Mike Szocola as a reminder to submit a proposal. Consultant proposals must be submitted by January 14th. The contract will need to be awarded by the Village Council.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment

Adjournment:

Commissioner Halloran asked about establishment of a DDA. She suggested business owners be invited to a Planning Commission and/or Village Council to discuss this issue. In the past, Doug Callaway prepared information to establish a DDA and Halloran offered to reach out to him in an effort to obtain the previous information. Chair Forth suggested Village Council weigh in on this matter first. The Council is the authority responsible for approving the establishment of a DDA. Council should green light the project before any work is undertaken to establish a DDA.

Chair Forth indicated the annual report on Planning Commission activities during 2023 needs to be prepared and submitted to the Village Council.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, a motion to adjourn was offered by Foster and seconded by Storms. The motion was unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,



Christopher Forth, AICP
Planning Commission Chair