

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, *Mayor*
Eric Hufnagel, *Commissioner*
Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Vacant



PLANNING COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:32 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Harger, Scott Dzurka, Brian Mills
Members Absent: Melvin Renfrow, Eric Hufnagel, James Eshelman
Staff Present: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Chris Khorey, McKenna

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

City Manager Gamble asked to add some comments regarding construction projects to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden to approve the agenda as amended.
YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Mills
NAY: None
Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 14, 2024 MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Holden seconded by Commissioner Dzurka to approve the minutes as presented.
YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Mills
NAY: None
Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

6. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Landscaping Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said this topic has come up recently with administrative site plans. He said one ended up in front of the city commission, the library. He discussed: propose some amendments, most are clearly stating when landscaping requirements apply and when they don't; street frontage and parking lots to provide shade; protect adjacent land uses that may not be compatible. In reviewing landscape ordinance, we felt it wasn't clearly doing #3. We are proposing a chart. He discussed the chart; the mixed use and long-term vision for mixed use; and other proposed changes to the ordinance.

There was a discussion of:

- Subjective language (155.296 B).
- Mixed use – flexibility.
- Approving body language.
- Trees over 2' caliper.
 - List of trees that are not permitted.
 - Cottonwood trees; female Ginkgo.
- Holding a November public hearing.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Continued Discussion on Height of Accessory Buildings

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed: data from BS&A about approved accessory buildings in the last 5 years; there were 62 & of those 56 were under the maximum height, 4 were exactly at maximum height, 1 at 19½', and 1 at 21'.

There was a discussion of:

- 16'.
- Property owner rights.
 - Setback is more important than height.
- 155.189 (M)(2).
- Holding a November public hearing.

B. Continued Discussion on Corner Lots

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed: front yard of corner lot; setback changes.

There was a discussion of:

- Accessory structures and chicken ordinance.
- Holding a November public hearing.

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: NO DISCUSSION:

A. Master Plan Demographics Presentation

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed: master plan work; first step is a draft update of the demographics chapter; city population; age – relatively young; racial composition; education; economics; occupations; commuting; retail gap analysis – not updated from last time because we don't have access to that data; housing; average household size; housing type; housing tenure; housing composition; next steps on the master plan: future land use map, and the remaining master plan schedule.

9. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS - NONE:

10. CONSTRUCTION PROJECT COMMENTS (added to agenda)

City Manager Gamble discussed upcoming street construction projects: Friday, Monday & Tuesday: Cass Street & Oakland; M-21; tentatively Brush Street will begin around the 23rd.

Commissioner Mills discussed when Lansing Street was being re-done, he got a knock on the door letting him know. He asked about a similar notification process.

City Manager Gamble said we need to contact the road commission. We will be pushing notices out to local residents. He said Heather has been great to work with on the DDA component of it.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Mills said he is constantly baffled with all the ordinances and how we aesthetically control what is going on in the neighborhood. If that is important to us, it would be nice if the city was held to a higher standard. He discussed beautification efforts we could take if we want to set an example for residents. With the demographic study, is that a catalyst that the city gets serious about economic development?

City Manager Gamble said almost everything that we do is economic development. He discussed the downtown - big attractor of our city; DDA and facade grants; hopeful reopening of the Federal Mogul building; Wilson Center; entrance signs to the city. He discussed being patient, but purposeful.

Mayor Dzurka discussed entrance signs and parks and that you don't see it all happen here (Planning Commission). He said the conversations occur a lot at commission meetings. We can't do it all at once. He discussed the MDOT process on M-21. He said some is going to get done in master planning. He discussed the partnership with LEAP and there is a lot of interest in this community; Federal Mogul and the changes coming there.

City Manager Gamble discussed the September 23rd special city commission meeting at 4:30 p.m. with a presentation at 5:00 for the annual report.

Chairperson Hanover said she is going to miss that meeting.

Mayor Dzurka followed up on the discussion at the last meeting regarding the cat issue and feeding of cats.

City Manager Gamble said it was discussed internally. He said Chris and I agreed that trapping is different than feeding the cats, it is baiting. That clarification was communicated to the resident and the humane society.

Chris Khorey said that was also communicated to code enforcement.

Chairperson Hanover said she heard M-21 was going to get redone in 2029.

City Manager Gamble said 2029 or 2030.

Chairperson Hanover asked if the city should be given credit for that?

City Manager Gamble discussed those who were involved: City, County, Senator Sam Singh, multiple levels of imploring MDOT to divert funds to Clinton County to effectuate this. He said the driving lanes only will be milled and resurfaced.

Chairperson Hanover said as the concerns of economic development. We need to get people to put in single-family units and that will bring people to the schools.

Chris Khorey said that conversation is relevant to conversations with the master plan.

There was a discussion of:

- Single-family lots with the development requirements: setbacks, driveways, basements, etc.
 - Keeping them at a rate new families can afford.
 - Maybe come up with a hybrid “residential light” development.
 - Interest in property along Glastonbury.
- The apartment building with ramps with pressure treated wood.
 - We do not regulate very strictly for things that are put in for barrier-free access.
 - Don’t remember ramps on site plan.
 - Going back and checking the plans and making sure it is in-compliance with the site plan.
- The Federal Mogul project.
 - Not having a say at the planning commission level.
 - Will make sure there is upgraded landscaping; replace old fence; parking lot.
 - They haven’t submitted an administrative site plan.
 - City staff meets every other week with the Prevail Solar Team.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Mills

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.