

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, April 27, 2020**

APPROVED
MAY 27, 2020

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Day at 7:36 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

PRESENT:

Chairman: W. Day
Vice Chairman: P. Carter
R. Cousineau
S. Grossi
M. Lada
A. Lawrence
C. Tacy

AGENDA CHANGES:

Chairman Day added New Business #2- Review and Discussion of the Truck Zoning Ordinance Amendments

MINUTES

Moved and seconded by Commissioners Lawrence and Carter to approve the March 2, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE:

(None)

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments made by the public.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

(None)

NEW BUSINESS:

1.) Emergency Ordinance Amendments

Mr. Avantini recalled the Commission met a while back to discuss emergency ordinance amendments. They had been classified emergency because they believed these items needed to be addressed before the entire Zoning Ordinance went through an update. He said they kept coming back to these few items; truck docks and different zoning districts

(IRO, M-1, M-2). He knew of a few issues driving these amendments. The first issue being the City had land zoned IRO, M-1 and M-2 which allowed uses that would generate a lot of truck traffic. He explained a traffic study conducted indicated a lot of traffic on Wixom Road. In addition, he felt the traffic was heavier because Beck Road was only two lanes. He believed the City had almost reached capacity during the peak hours of travel. They hoped to re-write the ordinance in such a way that would no longer allow the type of truck use that came into the City to drop off and load up again. They believed that conduct generated a lot of truck traffic without creating a lot of jobs. He explained how they hoped to remove the M-2 District within the Ordinance where the ICP property was located. He said the M-2 District had several uses that were not appropriate for the City any longer. He expressed how they hoped to update the M-1 and IRO Districts with uses that would allow them to incorporate some modern uses. He believed that ICP was not a proponent for the City updating the Ordinance, but he felt they could accommodate the types of uses they needed within the changes.

Ms. McIntyre indicated in their review they noticed within the M-1 and M-2 Districts various uses that were out of date. In addition, they found some uses that were not included anywhere within the Ordinance that needed to be there. She said with technology being the way that it was they needed to utilize their industrial land a lot differently. She said that manufacturing was conducted in a much cleaner way with less impact on the property. She explained that traditionally the M-2 District was heavy industrial and reserved for intrusive industrial activities like the Ford Motor Plant. She added the former Ford Property was the only property within the City that was zoned M-2. She was proposing to combine two districts together (M-1 and M-2) in the hope that they could incorporate uses that would accommodate the more intense M-2 industrial uses as Special Land Uses. She presented the Commission with a table of information that indicated the uses with the combined districts and some that were eliminated. She indicated the automotive had been cited within the IRO District. The auto operations that she was speaking of did not have outdoor storage and could easily exist among corporate offices and/or research offices. She noted the change within the IRO District was the addition of warehousing and distribution centers. She hoped they would add the following to the IRO District Definition: distribution center, manufacturing, manufacturing warehouse, warehouse, warehousing, warehouse center, warehouse retail and truck terminal. She brought attention to the truck terminal definition and indicated that it did not permit the use of trucks just coming to the City to drop off loads and pick up another. She said the use for each definition was reflected in the report submitted to the Commission. She included comments on the report indicating what was moved from M-1 to M-2. For example, they added accessory above ground fuel and storage tanks for on-site vehicles and equipment, automotive repair business, breweries and distilleries, central dry-cleaning plant, contractor establishments within an enclosed building and laboratories. She said they removed stand-alone offices, executive, administrative, professional, financial, brokerage, insurance, clerical, drafting and sales. They felt that a stand-alone office does not interface well within an industrial setting. She mentioned they added places of worship, racetracks/go-karting, railroad transfer storage tracks and railroad terminals. They recognized the former Ford property as it had a railroad track so there may be a use that require that.

Mr. Avantini stated that one of the things they may want to be aware of was a situation where a railroad proposed a transfer station but with chemicals. He said that was brought to the City before and the idea was dropped after they required environmental studies. He wondered if something like that could be added. Ms. McIntyre said she would consider adding more detail and standards.

Ms. McIntyre mentioned that a retail wholesale warehouse would be permissible in an IRO District. This would be something like a Costco. She explained how they added the sales of building, lumber, home-improvement supplies, stone, farm implements, recreational vehicles, mobile homes, boats, jet-skis, mowing equipment, trucks, construction equipment and similar materials, including accessory outdoor sales and display. She also mentioned they added boarding of animals and warehouse distribution establishments.

She indicated that truck facilities and truck driving schools had been added to the M-1 District. She said specifically things of heavy industrial nature had been eliminated as they did not have the space for that type of use within the District.

Chairman Day wondered where the automobile dealerships fit. Ms. McIntyre said they were allowed in the Commercial District but could also be utilized in an IRO District. Chairman Day read that on-site sales of recreational vehicles and boats were allowed. He said that he did not understand why vehicles were not included. Ms. McIntyre explained their objective was the sale of one or two items and not an entire fleet.

Mr. Avantini noted that they had always allowed the sale of automobiles in the M-1 District, but it needed to take place indoors.

Chairman Day pictured the Troy Motor Mall where there were 8-10 dealerships within one area.

Commissioner Cousineau was aware of communities that tried to cluster several dealerships into the same locations rather than spread them throughout the community. He hoped to have some clarification on the idea of racetracks as he was thinking it was more for kiddie rides not animal racing. Ms. McIntyre confirmed.

Mr. Avantini noted that corporations were using the commercial type recreations for team building strategies as they were no longer just activities for children.

Commissioner Carter believed the way the Ordinance was written allowed for a true racetrack such as a speedway. Ms. McIntyre said she would investigate the wording further.

Commissioner Carter noted a clerical error on page 1 of the report. He said distribution center said, "see warehouse center" but when you looked at warehouse center it said, "see distribution center". In addition, on page 1 of the report the definition of manufacturing should not say "manufacturing" and suggested it be removed.

Commissioner Carter struggled to picture places of worship in an industrial or an IRO. He was not specifically for or against it but was curious as to why it was added. Ms. McIntyre did not think that they were likely to see a place of worship in that type of district, but they needed to make sure it was included to avoid any discrimination.

Chairman Day said that Orchard Grove Church was in a commercial location and had been for years. Mr. Avantini also recalled a large church at the corner of 13 Mile Road and M-5 in Novi. He explained that churches over the years had changed and were no longer just in neighborhoods. He said these mega churches nowadays draw from a much broader area than churches used to.

Commissioner Cousineau wondered what Ms. Maise thought of the changes given the history she had with the City and the Ordinance.

Ms. Maise explained that her full-time job was with the City of Romulus where they had heavy industrial and were experiencing an issue with truck traffic. She explained Romulus made these types of uses more of a site plan requirement and were looking at traffic studies every time. Ms. Maise wondered what the definition was for Truck Facilities within the Ordinance. Ms. McIntyre pictured more of a vocational school or truck driving school where these facilities would host classes and teach truck maintenance. Ms. Maise believed a true truck facility tended to have a dispatch center, truck maintenance with truck storage. She noted a property storing trucks may not be the best use of the property. She explained that Romulus had a requirement on storage and noted that it was based on the size of the building, that allowed them to gain the tax base they needed. It also prohibited them from having a little building with many truck and trailer storage. She explained that truck docks or terminals were when a truck loads and unloads. She noted the explanation of warehouse distribution meant it had a building. She mentioned there was a use that did not fit either criteria but was somewhere in between and that was called trucking facilities where they stored a lot of trucks.

Mr. Avantini indicated Wixom had a lot of truck terminals where they came into the City to unload and reload. In addition, they were noticing many distribution facilities where they drop off, break down, separate, ship out, etc. and places like that were employing people. He added the ICP folks were interested in the distribution because they indicated that they would create jobs.

Ms. Maise explained you could regulate the user based on what their business was. For example, Amazon would be a whole other animal compared to a standard distribution warehouse.

Commissioner Carter wondered if a company like Amazon was considered a warehouse. Ms. Maise said that Romulus considered it a fulfillment center. That particular use was complicated and involved a conditional rezoning.

Ms. Maise said Romulus introduced an Overlay Ordinance that included traffic studies and community benefits. She explained that community benefits were the way in which the manufacturer would show them the number of jobs they planned to create.

Chairman Day said he did not see any reason to prolong this further because there did not seem to be any significant changes. He suggested a motion be entertained to set a Public Hearing during the last meeting in May or first meeting in June.

Ms. Raddatz said the last meeting in May would be held on May 27, 2020 due to the Memorial Day holiday. She felt it could be presented then as it allowed enough time for advertising.

Commissioner Cousineau wanted to get the opinion of Commissioner Tacy about the changes. Commissioner Tacy believed the changes were good and made sense. She said the demographic of the people and business had changed and this Ordinance would tighten things up to meet the current needs.

MOVED and seconded by Commissioners Carter and Lawrence to schedule a Public Hearing for May 27, 2020 of the Wixom Planning Commission to discuss the Emergency Ordinance Amendments to the IRO, M-1 and M-2 District Uses of the City of Wixom Code of Ordinance

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

2.) Review and Discussion of the Truck Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Ms. McIntyre said the Commission made a recommendation at their last meeting to limit one loading dock per 25,000 square feet per building footprint. She explained they had the perfect applicant to test that requirement and found the number was too restrictive, so they brainstormed different ways to limit the docks. One way was they could limit the number of parking spaces but that quickly became problematic because a large manufacturing building may have few employees. In her research, the Urban Land Institute had a guide to classifying industrial property. They said the average for manufacturing facilities was one dock for 15,000 square feet of gross floor area. She indicated that they said warehousing called for one dock for 10,000 square feet of gross floor area. As previously mentioned, there was a high demand for warehouse and distribution centers because of e-commerce and online shopping. She added that warehouses were focused on getting product out quickly like Amazon Prime (2-Day Shipping). She explained these distribution centers meet these demands by hiring many employees that were taking small individual items from a shelf to ship. She said it was apparent the City wanted business and to create jobs, but they needed to be cognizant of the truck traffic when considering these types of businesses. After consideration, they felt the Urban Land Institute recommendation would work for the City of Wixom and thought it should be considered by the Commission. She pointed out the revision on the last page of the report in the Planning Commission packet and noted that it would be included in the new M-1 District and IRO District. She felt limiting the number of docks would limit the number of trucks coming up and down the roads every day. She restated that they did not want trucks coming into the City with cargo then switching it out for more and leaving again.

Chairman Day thought the Urban Land Institute said 10,000 square feet for warehousing and 15,000 for manufacturing; however, in the proposed amendments it was written the other way. Ms. McIntyre stated that it should read one dock for 15,000 square feet in manufacturing and one dock for 10,000 square feet in warehousing. She would make those corrections on any paperwork.

Chairman Carter mentioned the report may have had an error as Section 18.08.50 stated only warehousing and Section 18.09.50 mentioned both warehousing and manufacturing.

He wondered if both of those Sections of the Ordinance would be worded the same. Ms. McIntyre said they would be.

Chairman Day was willing to vow to Ms. McIntyre's research and expertise on this subject as she had done her homework. He said the goal was to help reduce the amount of truck traffic within the City.

MOVED and seconded by Commissioners Lawrence and Cousineau to schedule a Public Hearing for May 27, 2020 of the Wixom Planning Commission to discuss the Truck Dock Ordinance Amendments to the City of Wixom Code of Ordinance

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

(None)

STAFF COMMENTS:

Mr. Avantini thanked the Commissioners for meeting virtually. He added they were starting to see an interest in development.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Chairman Day indicated the May 4, 2020 meeting of the Planning Commission had been cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Crystal Opalko
Recording Secretary

APPROVED MAY 27, 2020