



CITY OF PLYMOUTH
201 S. Main
Plymouth, MI 48170
www.ci.plymouth.mi.us
PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 8, 2016

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M. by Chairperson Mulhern.

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Kehoe, Charles Myslinski, Joseph Philips, Scott Silvers, Karen Sisolak and Jim Mulhern

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jennifer Frey, Jim Frisbie & Conrad Schewe

OTHERS PRESENT: John Buzuvis, Community Development Director
Sally Elmiger, City of Plymouth Planner

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Ed Krol, 1108 Beech, spoke about the height of building calculations; he would like the calculations of height to be made simpler so that the citizens are able to calculate them, themselves. Mr. Krol felt that three story residential homes were not allowed, yet some new homes lately seem to be taller than three stories.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Comm. Silvers supported by Comm. Myslinski, to approve the meeting minutes from the May 11, 2016, as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Comm. Silvers supported by Comm. Myslinski, to amend the agenda adding Building Height & Height Calculations onto Number 7, Old Business.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Fence Ordinance Amendment / Fencing Diagrams
2. Potential Ordinance Amendment - Finished grade must match the original grade
3. Schedule forthcoming meeting for required review of lighting.
4. Roof pitch review & discussion
5. Lot Coverage discussion
6. Building Height & Calculations

1. Fence Ordinance Amendment / Fencing Diagrams

Sally Elmiger, Planner, explained the changes made to the Fence Ordinance Language and graphics portion of the ordinance, per her Memo dated, June 1st . A definition of "double" fence was added, along with language that requires new and replacement fences to be located on the property line, along with the adjoining Owner's consent.

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following subjects:

Comm. Kehoe asked about the new definition of double fences. Ms. Elmiger explained that double fencing was not decided upon, therefore does not have a broader definition.

The following revisions to be made:

1. The fence definition, adding the language: " along a common property line".
2. Number 1: revised to: "on a side or rear property line", removing "required & setback".
3. Moving Number 2 to the Number 1 spot.
4. Adding "Existing" fences to Number 2.
5. Number 4, referencing and adding language on the allowed fence location, such as: "On the property or required setback".
6. Adding to the Graphics- the one foot in from the sidewalk (to show where the property lines start). It was decided not to show the graphic as it seemed to be too confusing.
7. There was discussion on not allowing solid fences. Ms. Elmiger read the definition of Fence (Solid) - meaning any fence that presents a solid surface without any gaps of materials to allow the flow of air and light, such as a stockade fence. Solid fencing that allows air flow and light was decided upon.

2. Potential Ordinance Amendment - Finished grade must match the original grade

Sally Elmiger, Planner, explained the language of the Example Grading/Drainage Ordinance, per her Memo dated, May 5th.

The new language:

1. Grades around new structures shall meet existing grades in the shortest distance possible as determined by the Building Official, but cannot create slopes greater than 25 %. (This change encourages new homes to be set closer to existing grades instead of building them up out of the ground).
2. First floor elevations of new structures shall be consistent with the first floor elevation height of contiguous residences, and that fill above the height of existing grades will need to be approved by the Building Official. (This also encourages more consistency in the height of first floors, and requires less change(s) to existing grades).

3. Grade Certificates will be required of the grading plan submitted by a civil engineer or land surveyor. (This helps to minimize mistakes in the field).
4. Adding the definition of existing and finished grades, to the definitions section.
5. Changing the grade plane definition to clearly use existing grades rather than finished grades. (This helps to minimize required grading as well as building height).

There were no changes requested by the commissioners for this new language.

Accessory Buildings & Structure Revisions:

Sally Elmiger, Planner, explained the only changes made were to the setbacks and graphics portions of this Ordinance. (All the houses and garages were at the exact same location as the fence illustrations with curbs and sidewalks added).

The Planning Commissioners had discussion regarding the following subjects:

Comm. Myslinski spoke about a recently built tall shed building that was built most of the length of the rear yard and asked what could possibly be done to prevent this in the future. Comm. Myslinski suggested possibly revising the Ordinance for a corner lot that is abutting a side yard, restricting the buildable area of the adjoining neighbors rear yard area, and suggested possibly that greater than 40% of the rear lot line length area may not be occupied.

Comm. Silvers suggested that the accessory structure Ordinance language be changed to read: the accessory buildings wall that parallels a rear property line (abutting a side yard) can be no greater than 30% of the length of the rear property line

Comm. Kehoe felt that the percentage suggested would be too great and the property owner may not possible be allowed a 2-1/2 car garage in their rear yard.

Comm. Philips felt everyone should be allowed a 2 ½ car garage and instead put limits on them for certain sized lots.

There was discussion on possible Ordinance changes that would minimize the length of a garage/accessory structure but still be considerate of a standard garage, on a corner lots that abut a side yard. There was further discussion to reduce the occupiable area of the required rear yard to lower the percentage or also possibly restricting the "length" of the rear lot line occupiable area by a percentage.

There was also discussion on masonry fences and Ms. Elmiger quoted the Ordinance under fence locations as stating: *Walls constructed of masonry, stone or pre-cast materials and constructed within a side or rear yard shall have a maximum height of 30 inches.*

Ms. Elmiger suggested revising the depth of the garage, not the width.

It was decided to change the accessory structure Ordinance to allow up to a maximum depth of 30 feet for a garage, on a corner lot that abuts a side yard.

3. Schedule forthcoming meeting for required review of lighting.

There was discussion on the contradictory language located within the Ordinance. Ms. Elmiger to review these sections of the Ordinance and bring back to discuss which language will be removed.

There was discussion on the type of lighting located within Old Village and it was suggested using shields over the lighting & LED lighting. Comm. Philips would like to include the type of light source within the Ordinance. Chair Mulhern suggested possibly contacting and using Tara Parks, former Planning Commissioner and lighting Design professional, to review and give feedback.

4. Roof pitch review & discussion
5. Lot Coverage discussion
6. Building Height & Calculations

The Planning Commissioners had review and discussion on the above three topics:

Comm. Myslinski, explained that he felt the extreme perception of height seems to come from the new colonial homes unlike the older traditional colonial homes of the past. The new colonials have windows on taller gable ends making the perception of height greater for what appears to be a third floor, (which in reality is really not occupiable), along with the construction of higher basements than the adjacent homes, that cause the taller first and second floor ceilings, and all of these items are creating the big box home effect.

Sally Elmiger explained an easy way to remedy this would be to average the side yard setbacks.

Comm. Philips spoke about working on a 3-D typical City neighborhood with various roof designs and felt the building height may need to come down, due to builders maximizing everything they can. Comm. Philips suggested changing the maximum roof height down to 23 feet, instead of 25 feet.

Ms. Elmiger suggested basing the height of the home on the lot size or lot width.

Comm. Myslinski felt the larger height perception comes from the large gable ends facing the street that is built next to a single story home and suggested facing the gables ends on the side ends with the ridge parallel to the sidewalk.

Comm. Sisolak felt, to her eye, the new homes are being built taller than what is allowed.

Comm. Silvers spoke about the gabled home and tying the main roof eve to the main sidewalk height, to obtain the overall height of the home, thus relating the pedestrian view to the height of the new home. The home would then be measured by stories, being no greater than 14 feet tall each.

Comm. Myslinski suggested using the ridge elevation that cannot exceed a certain measurement.

Ms. Elmiger explained if using the ridge equation suggested, the outcome would be a very boxy shallow roof design.

There was various discussions on what formula to use to reduce the overall roof height.

Public Comments

Ed Krol, 1108 Beech, stated the issue is perspective and calculation which should be cut and dry. Mr. Krol asked what keeps builder's from cheating on roof heights and Mr. Buzuvis, CDD, responded through field inspections conducted by the building inspector. Mr. Krol felt the newly built homes have become too large

Linda Flipczak, 1165 Carol, explained on her street (Carol) between McKinley and Harvey Streets, six homes have come down out of a total of roughly twenty, with two more proposed to come down within the next 2 weeks. Ms. Flipczak was concerned on flooding occurring in her home due to all the new homes coming down around her. Ms. Flipczak spoke about losing that quaint homey family feel within the Community due to all the big foot homes coming in.

Paulette Longe, 690 Forest, appreciated all the dialog of long homes, from Comm. Myslinski, to possibly prevent them from moving next door to Ms. Longe in the future.

8. Reports and Correspondence:

Master Plan Review Update

Comm. Kehoe spoke about waiting for the survey results to be received from Sally Elmiger and John Buzuvis and then the meeting date can be set.

John Buzuvis explained they are in the process of drafting the survey results and should be finished within a few days.

John Buzuvis, CDD, spoke about the many complaints on stopped trains blocking main roads for longer periods of time than normal. Mr. Buzuvis explained due to the amount of complaints the public has been urged to contact our local Federal Senator and representatives. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to discuss this issue with CSX regional representatives along with Michigan Congressman, Dave Trott, this meeting will include the Plymouth, Livonia and Wixom Communities. The City has been told by CSX that with the economy, they no longer have the extra help for shorter lengths of trains and with the longer lengths they are blocking roads much more frequently and for longer periods of time.

9. Commissioner Comments:

Thank you, Comm. Myslinski for the shout out regarding the meeting minutes, I sure do appreciate the kind words. Thank You! ☺ Marleta S. Barr

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Comm. Kehoe and supported by Comm. Silvers to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marleta S. Barr,
Community Development Department,
Office Manager