



**CITY OF CHELSEA
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
OCTOBER 17, 2006**

7:30 P.M.

BOARD ROOM

**WASHINGTON STREET EDUCATION CENTER
500 WASHINGTON ST., CHELSEA, MI**

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Approval of the Meeting Minutes for September 19, 2006.

APPROVAL OF WORK SESSION MINUTES

- Approval of the Work Session Minutes for October 3, 2006.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

OLD BUSINESS

- **Heritage Pointe Phase II B Site Plan Approval Extension** – The petitioner is asking for a 2 year extension on the final site plan approval for Heritage Pointe Phase II B. It is due to expire December 24, 2006 and they would like it extended for a period of 2 years.

DISCUSSION

REPORTS

CORRESPONDENCE

ADJOURNMENT

City of Chelsea Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2006
7:30 P.M.
Board Room
Washington Street Education Center
Chelsea, MI

Members Present: Chairman Chris Rode, Ann Valle, Walter Bolt, Casey Blair, Rik Haugen, Chris Pick, George Kinzer (arrived 7:40 p.m.)

Members Absent: Joel Abramson, Peter Feeney

Others Present: Planning & Zoning Administrator-James Drolett, Council Trustee-Cheri Albertson

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rode called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. (The Public Hearing ran longer than expected).

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- **Meeting Minutes** - Approval of the Meeting Minutes for September 19, 2006.

A motion was made by Chris Pick, supported by Walter Bolt to approve the Planning Commission Minutes for September 19, 2006. 6 Ayes, 0 No, 3 Absent. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF WORK SESSION MINUTES

- **Work Session Minutes** – Approval of the Work Session Minutes for October 3, 2006.

A motion was made by Chris Pick, supported by Walter Bolt to approve the Work Session Minutes for October 3, 2006. 6 Ayes, 0 No, 3 Absent. Motion passed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chairman Rode opened and closed participation. There was no public in attendance.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Heritage Pointe Phase II B Site Plan Approval Extension** – The petitioner is asking for a 2 year extension on the final site plan approval for Heritage Pointe Phase II B. It is due to expire December 24, 2006 and they would like it extended for a period of 2 years.

Because of the current housing market the owner of Heritage Point Properties was granted permission by City Council to split the second phase of this development. They are now asking for an extension for the second half of the phase, which is Phase II B.

The request is for a two year extension on the Final Site Plan. Phase II B would run down the east side of Marvin Carlson's property.

George Kinzer arrives 7:40.

While the Planning Commission is in favor of the second phase being postponed to better phase this development into the community, they do not want to set precedence by granting more than a 180 day extension which is what has been normal practice in the past. It was discussed that they grant this request for 180 days, and the petitioner is welcome to come and ask for a new extension at the end of that period.

A motion by Chris Pick to approve the request by Heritage Point Properties to extend the final site plan approval for Phase II B for 180 days which is consistent with other projects in the past, supported by Walter Bolt. This extension is good through June 24th, 2007.
7 Ayes, 0 No, 2 Absent. Motion passed.

DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission discussed the success of tonight's Public Hearing on the Master Plan. We had over 100 residents come and share their comments. We should have compiled results from those surveys by the next Planning Commission Meeting from LSL. We will then post them on our website along with a timeline of our process. These are two things that residents asked for.

Council member Cheri Albertson suggests that someone from the Planning Commission come to a Council meeting and share with City Council how the Public Hearing went. Chairman Rode said he would do that.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Casey Blair, supported by Walter Bolt to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 P.M. 8 Ayes, 0 No, 1 Absent. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,



Walter J. Bolt
Planning Commission Secretary



LSL Planning, Inc.

Community Planning Consultants

Memorandum

November 8, 2006

Attn: Jim Drolett, Zoning Administrator
From: Brad Strader
Subject: Master Plan and Open House Update and Status Report

Dear City of Chelsea Planning Commission,

OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

The Public Open House was held on October 17, 2006. With over one hundred people attending, we feel it was a tremendous success. Below is a summary of observations derived from our evaluation of the meeting and public comments recorded on the survey forms. Please discuss our summary and comments at your November 21st meeting, and provide us with any revisions based on your individual experiences at the open house. We realize that we could not be at every station, and expect you all will have additional observations to add to this list. In addition, if after reviewing this information, you have specific items, concepts or revisions to the Master Plan, please let us know. We will use the results of your discussion as direction from the Planning Commission to incorporate the concepts in the revised summary into the draft Master Plan.

Open House Format: Generally, the feedback from various attendees regarding the meeting format and content were positive. They appreciated the “self-tour,” ability to speak one-on-one with Planning Commission members, and the various stations kept their interest. Observing the meeting in general, one could see that the public in Chelsea is highly involved and interested in this process. The timeframe of the meeting seemed appropriate as well; although members of the public were still arriving near the end of the session. In retrospect, since residents were still arriving toward the end of the meeting, extending it to 8:00 p.m. might be an option for future workshops.

Attendance: As you know, attendees were asked to identify their residence or place of business on a map provided. While several in attendance were not Chelsea residents, a good representative mix of residents were in attendance. Most in attendance live in the central and downtown areas of the city.

Public Comments: Attendees of the open house were supplied a survey form and were asked to respond to several questions pertaining to each plan topic. 71 forms were submitted, which included several sent after the open house. From the survey results, we note the following general statements:

Character

- Attendees generally responded that it is the character of Chelsea that draws them. Specifically, they appreciate the small town and rural qualities of the city/area.

- In general, residents live in Chelsea because of the strong downtown and neighborhoods.
- Most feel that preservation of the small-town residential character, transportation and quality municipal services should be the city's focus.
- The most frequent suggestion to enhance the character of the city was improvements to the pathway and sidewalk networks.

Downtown and Future Growth

- About half in attendance feel that future growth in Chelsea should be directed toward the existing downtown area, while others felt the downtown should expand upwards instead of outwards.
- Some (21%) felt there should be no expansion in the downtown.
- An overwhelming response (81%) of attendees, felt that sandwich boards should be allowed in the downtown, and only a few (12%) object to such signs.
- The large majority of attendees responded that big box retailers are not needed in the city or adjacent townships. Other comments received indicate a general concern about their potential impact on downtown character and economic viability.
- Some suggested adding more public art in the downtown.
- Attendees had a mixed reaction to the future land use map, specifically regarding the neighborhood commercial node along Dexter-Chelsea Road.

Transportation

- In general, attendees feel that traffic congestion and flow are major concerns for the area.
- Some suggested adding gateway treatments at major entrances to the city.
- More than half of the respondents indicated the need for alternate transportation routes.
- Specific transportation suggestions included an alternate route and an arterial connection between U.S. 12 and M-52.
- Sylvan Township representatives noted they are "re-thinking" the redesign of the M-52 interchange in their Master Plan.
- Sylvan Township representatives and Washtenaw County and WATS staff expressed an interest in meeting with Chelsea representatives to discuss area roadway needs and implementation. The Road Commission could host such a meeting to also include Lima Township and possibly others.

Pathways and Sidewalks

- The responses suggest a strong focus toward more pedestrian activity.
- Specific suggestions included making critical sidewalk connections on Old U.S. 12 and Freer Road, expanding the pathway along the creek to connect to landmarks, and adding bike lanes on Dexter/Chelsea Road, Werkner and N. Territorial.
- Larger concepts suggested including suggestions to develop a "senior path loop" around the city, to provide more path-side parks, and to provide connections to existing pathway along the south side of Pierce Lake.
- Survey responses generally favored the need for pedestrian improvements, especially in the downtown area.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE STATUS

Based on our schedule and the last few meetings, the following is a brief summary of our progress and schedule for the next couple of months.

Since our last Planning Commission meeting, LSL has revised the document based on our review, previous Planning Commission meetings, and on input at the Public Workshop. All sections of the draft master plan will be complete once the additional comments from the November 21 PC meeting are incorporated and comments from the WATS/WCRC/Chelsea/Sylvan Township joint meeting (hopefully taking place in early December). The complete draft will be sent out prior to the December 19 meeting in the PC packets, and will be reviewed and discussed at that meeting.

Based on any changes suggested at the December 19 meeting, LSL will revise the complete draft. The January meeting will include the City Council, and will provide opportunity for comment and discussion between the PC and Council on the draft before it is distributed to surrounding communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions on these issues. We look forward to meeting with you.

Opinion Survey Results
October 17, 2006

Stations 1 & 2: Welcome and Existing Conditions

1. What do you like best about Chelsea right now? (Check up to three)

(39) Location
(39) Neighborhoods
(46) Downtown
(18) Schools
(18) Community Facilities & Services
Other (specify):

- Historic Character
- (2) Rural village character

2. What should be the City's top improvement priority?

(11) Downtown
(16) Residential Character
(11) Road Improvements & Maintenance
(16) Municipal Services
(8) Parks Improvements
(11) Complete Pathways
(11) Traffic Management
Other (specify):

- Bypass of M-52
- Shuttle service
- Road Plan
- Non-Motorized transportation

Station 3: Community Character

1. What should be the City's top improvement priorities related to community character? (Please check up to two items)

(31) Improving the City's sidewalk / pathway network
(12) Enhancing entryways into the City along main roads
(14) Creating roadside greenways along new and developing roads around the City
(9) Improving design of new residential developments
(7) Code enforcement
(44) Retaining the small town character of Chelsea
Other (please specify)

- Traffic diversion/Traffic management to maintain downtown character.

- Critical to small town character is open space and city has done a horrible job creating parks/green areas- totally rely on schools.

Station 4: Future Land Use

1. What land use(s) would you like to see if North Street is extended west to Cavanaugh Lake Road? (Please circle all that apply)

(30) Single Family

(17) Multiple Family

(19) Industrial

Other (specify):

- Family-Commercial Urban residential mix
- (2) Mixed use
- Chelsea is over built
- Parks

2. While the City prefers to keep the fairgrounds, this Comprehensive Plan should identify future uses if the fairgrounds were closed and redeveloped. What land use(s) would you prefer if the fairgrounds closed and redeveloped? (Please circle all that apply)

(18) Single Family

(14) Multiple Family

(23) Commercial

Other (specify):

- (5) Keep the fairgrounds!
- (6) Parks
- Green space
- Provide space for recreation sports complex and neighborhood parks
- Combination of commercial on main floor, apartments on top

3. Sylvan Township has planned a limited part of the area south of I-94 at M-52 for highway commercial. This could include various retail and office, but not big-box retail. Realizing that big-box retail is needed in the region, which statement do you agree with most?

(8) Big-box retail should be encouraged at the M-52 interchange with I-94 to increase the local tax base and provide a convenient shopping opportunity for area residents.

(7) Big-box retail should be located elsewhere along the I-94 corridor

(53) We don't need big-box retailers in the area

Comments:

- Reluctant choice above. Very concerned about potential impact on downtown business viability.
- Concerned about conversation on historic single family houses to R3-two family.
- What kind of BIG BOX is someone already inquiring about? It is something unique or just more of the same?
- It would damage local businesses
- People who want to live where there is a Lowe's/home depot etc. bought houses in Scio Township not Chelsea.
- I like Chelsea being small, it is known for many things but I think it doesn't need to be known for these Big Box retailers
- Tax base will grow- Big Box usually hurts small business in a small city.
- Some centrally located townhouses could provide affordable housing for young professionals as well as older adults wishing to downsize. This would liven up the downtown area.
- Don't see parks and recreation goal. Would like to see walkway/bike path M-52 along Mill Creek, around 4 Mile lake and back again
- I am willing to drive to Big Box Retail. Please keep it away from Chelsea.
- We are a unique small town with artistic tones- lets keep it that way!
- It will damage small businesses- they wont be able to compete with prices our local economy will suffer, we will lose the character of Chelsea
- Too much traffic

Station 5: Downtown

1. What do you like best about Downtown Chelsea? (Please check one)
 - (24) **Businesses**
 - (17) Activities
 - (8) Accessibility
 - (16) Location
 - (13) Design
 - Other (specify):
 - Historic character
2. What improvement do you think would most benefit Downtown? (Please check one)
 - (12) New businesses
 - (14) More convenient parking
 - (10) More Downtown housing
 - (18) **Pedestrian focus**
 - (7) A parking deck

(6) Streetscape improvements

(10) Public gathering space

(4) Business mix

Other (specify):

- Remove large truck traffic! Traffic reduction in general on M-52
- Less traffic
- (2) Post Office
- Restaurants
- Shopping

3. Which of the following ideas for downtown do you most agree with (check one):

(28) Higher density developments should be encouraged within Downtown to preserve boundaries and limit outward expansion

(16) The Downtown should expand upward instead of outward

(12) There should not be any expansion of the Downtown

4. Should sandwich boards (see right) be allowed in the Downtown?

(48) Yes

(7) No

(4) Unsure

Station 6: Transportation

1. What should be the City's top improvement priorities for streets and auto travel? (Please check up to two items)

(56) Identifying alternate routes for thru-traffic to alleviate congestion

(7) Improving access to I-94

(11) Extending North Street west to provide an alternate to Old US-12 (see map)

(2) Connecting Cleveland Street with the south end of the industrial park (see map)

(24) Using access management and other transportation tools to improve safety and traffic flow along M-52 from Old US-12 to I-94

Other (please specify)

- Make the darn bypass- Western
- Minimize heavy thru trucks on residential streets
- Get rid of the new crosswalk buttons on Main that confuses everyone.

2. Which statement would you agree with most regarding the City's sidewalks and pathways?

(49) The City should actively pursue completing the entire planned pathway and sidewalk network

(9) The City should only identify and fill in critical gaps in the sidewalk/pathway system

(3) Sidewalks and pathways should not be a priority

Comments:

- Chelsea should be a walkable community!
- Consider the "senior path loop" concept- see the mark up map
- In the meantime fill in the gaps. I don't see any mention of parks here- we need to include more parkland without athletic fields.
- Get AMTRACK to stop here!
- I like to bike downtown and I would like it to be safe
- Need a sidewalk along US-12 between subdivision and 52 road a walk down to the path around the Lake from the east or middle
- More careful determination of new housing- need to be sure facilities can support condition, new housing. Developers can be told NO.
- Yes Dammit! I want to leave my car at home and walk!
- No convenience stores, gas stations on Dexter/Chelsea Road. We need the bypass the truck traffic through town in crazy.
- Parks- we need them!
- NO is acceptable to developers!