

**MINUTES
JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2008**

In regular session, Thursday, February 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of Town Hall, 323 West Michigan Avenue, Marshall, MI, the Joint Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Mark O'Connell.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Commissioners Collins, Wills, Stevenson, Chairman O'Connell, and alternates Banfield and Mikesell

Members Absent: Commissioners Potter and Franklin

Staff Present: Susan George, Township Zoning Administrator
Natalie Dean, City Planning & Zoning Administrator
Russ Wicklund, Township Planner

MINUTES

MOTION by Wills, supported by Collins, to accept the minutes of the November 13, 2007 regular meeting as submitted. On a voice vote: **MOTION CARRIED.**

AGENDA

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Noticed Public Hearing for JPCSLU08.01 – Special Land Use recommendation to City Council for Kempf Funeral Home property at 14721 – 17 Mile Road

Craig Kempf, owner of Kempf Funeral Home and Dave Star, KEBS Design & Engineering presented the drawings for the proposed funeral home.

Public Hearing Open

No public comment.

Public Hearing Closed

Administrator Dean told the commissioners that she supplied them with a worksheet which outlined the specific ordinance requirements for special land use approval.

Commissioner Wills indicated that the City Planning Commission has designated the Kempf parcel as office service in the new city master plan.

Commissioner Stevenson said that he felt there couldn't be a better site for the funeral home than this location. He was very pleased with the plan.

Wills stated her concern with the current posted speed limit of 55 mph in this location.

MOTION by Wills, supported by Mikesell, recommend special land use approval to the City Council for Kempf Funeral Home. On a voice vote; **MOTION CARRIED.**

Site Plan JPC08.01 for Kempf Funeral Home at 14721 – 17 Mile Road

Commissioner Wills spoke of the semi circular area with the small retaining wall to the front of the building which surrounds the proposed ground sign. Commissioner Collins asked if the bottom of the sign would be above the street grade. Dave Star answered that the sign would be the same elevation as the ground of the parking lot. The sign will be perpendicular to Old U.S. 27 and that it has been corrected on the final site plan.

Chairman O'Connell then read from the Site Plan worksheet.

Commissioner Stevenson told the committee that it may be necessary to someday accommodate walking pedestrians from the downtown area. With the development of the State Farm property, the concept of a sidewalk would be a definite advantage.

Kempf said he would be agreeable to this idea as a condition of site plan approval.

Commissioner Wills asked about the proposed driveway from the funeral home to the Family Bible Church. Kempf told the commissioners that he had an agreement with the church to share parking lots when the church expands according to their master plan.

Commissioner Wills asked about storage areas for caskets and vehicles. Kempf said the caskets are delivered by small trucks on an "as needed" basis and that all vehicles will be

housed in the garage. Wills commented that the landscape design will be beautiful. The City Planning Commission looks at the aesthetics of greenery and Wills was pleased to see the design will provide screening on all sides of the funeral homes neighbors.

Dave Star told the committee that they had met with the Calhoun County Road Commission and no deceleration lanes had been mandated at this time.

MOTION by Collins, supported by Stevenson, to adopt site plan JPC08.01 for Kempf Funeral Home, 14721 17 Mile Road, with the condition that if the decision is ever made to place sidewalks along the west side of North Old US 27, then the owner of this property will agree to install them on the property. On a roll-call vote-ayes: Mikesell, Collins, Wills, O'Connell, and Stevenson; nays-none. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Conceptual Site Plan for State Farm property located at I-94/F Drive North

Trae Allman, developer for the proposed "The Crossings" retail center, told the commission that the subject of front yard loading against 16-1/2 Mile Road is an issue. Discussion with the Calhoun County Road Commission has taken place regarding a third lane crossing for traffic. Allman said that a meeting took place with staff and the Road Commission in December of 2007 regarding a traffic light at Sam Hill Drive. A proposed cut for a drive had been proposed on F Drive North across from the Family Bible Church.

Commissioner Wills voiced her concerns about a right-turn-only in two areas with all traffic entering at Sam Hill Drive. She also expressed concerns with the round-about having five entry points. Commissioner Collins disagreed and stated that from her experience, she felt that traffic has a tendency to flow smoother through round-abouts.

Chairman O'Connell asked if the fire and police departments could move through the site safely. Dean stated that until a solid traffic design is in place, police and fire could not answer these questions definitively.

Allman stated that round-abouts move traffic quicker than alternative methods. He stated that the largest round-about would be approximately 200 feet across. He also told commissioners that landscaping around the buildings had not been shown on the conceptual.

Commissioner Collins asked where delivery trucks would be coming in from. Allman told her that at this time, they would be coming in from Old U.S. 27.

Commissioner Wills said that fire protection along 16-1/2 Mile Road is an issue of great concern. Along with that issue, a landscaped berm along the back of the buildings allowing neighbors their privacy on 16-1/2 Mile Road is reason for concern. Commissioner Collins said that the height for these buildings could be a maximum of 35 feet so it is imperative that adequate screening be imposed.

Kim Koetje, 725 Allison Drive, told the committee that this neighborhood is in a quiet area and that is why many of the neighbors moved there. They are concerned with the possibility that "The Crossings" could accommodate parking for over 3,000 vehicles, the front of houses will be looking at the back of buildings, and that area may be full of fast food restaurants. She does not want to see local businesses in the downtown sector going out of business due to this retail development.

Commissioner Banfield said that his concern was that the berm along the west side of the property be large enough to accommodate the planting of evergreen trees along 16-1/2 Mile Road as well as a retention pond, if the developer chooses to place one there. He also stated that he would rather see entry from F Drive North than on North Old US 27.

Wills added that the entrances to stores off the round-about exits were much too close, leaving no stacking room. She was afraid this would cause major congestion in and around the primary round-about.

JPC Officer Re-election

Administrator Dean conveyed that the City Planning Commission elects commissioners once a year and that they can serve for two years. She then stated that there are no rules governing officer election within the JPC and asked the commissioners to discuss this issue.

Chairman O'Connell said that he believed the Chair and Vice-Chair role should be on a rotating basis. He expressed that the purpose behind the JPC was to foster good relations between the City and Township and in so doing, all commissioners should have the opportunity to hold office. Commissioners then discussed the idea of electing officers every two years (odd numbers years) at the first meeting of 2009.

MOTION by Wills, supported by Stevenson, that commissioner's will serve a two-year term, alternating between the City and the Township, at the first meeting of 2009 and then subsequently every two years after. On a voice vote; **MOTION CARRIED.**

Approve 2008 JPC meeting dates

MOTION by Wills, supported by Collins, to accept the 2008 JPC meeting dates as submitted. On a voice vote; **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Joint Planning Commission adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Katz