

**CITY OF HASTINGS**  
**DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 7, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Hatfield with the following Commissioners present: Jordan Brehm, Lynn Denton, Chelsey Foster, Gregg Guetschow, Tom Maurer, John Resseguie, Dave Tossava, and Dave Hatfield. Commissioners absent: Lois Bowers.

Also present: Community Development Director Dan King and planning consultant Rebecca Harvey.

**Approval of the Agenda.** Chairman Hatfield asked to move new business before old business and to move old business item F to the beginning of old business. It was moved by Commissioner Brehm and seconded by Commissioner Maurer to approve the agenda with these changes. Motion carried.

**Approval of the Minutes.** Recording Secretary Guetschow noted that he had misspelled Commissioner Bowers name on the last page of the minutes. It was moved by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Maurer that the draft minutes of the meeting of August 2, 2021 be approved with this correction. Motion carried.

**INFORMATIVE ITEMS:** None.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Site Plan Approval for Thornapple Credit Union, 202 East Woodlawn Avenue.** Chairman Hatfield asked Dan King and Rebecca Harvey to introduce this issue. Mr. King said that the site plan had been reviewed by City staff members, none of whom had any comments concerning the plan.

Ms. Harvey referred to her written report and said that there were some items on the site plan that were deficient and others for which the Planning Commission had the authority to authorize modifying the standards in the ordinance. She said she had been working with the applicant concerning the deficiencies. She referred to two items the Planning Commission could modify. The first concerns the parking standard. She said the Commission could reduce the number of parking spaces provided if the applicant demonstrates the number that remain is adequate to meet their needs. The second concerns exterior materials to be used. She said the B-4 district language

contains specific standards for these materials but permits the modifications if the materials to be used are consistent with these used in the district and in the area of the development.

Amy Byers, Thornapple Credit Union CEO, and Amy Laverty-Meeker, project architect, spoke regarding matters addressed in Rebecca Harvey's memorandum:

*Parking.* The site could accommodate 47 parking spaces. The proposed plan provides 36 spaces. The project will not result in a material increase in business. Current parking is already adequate to meet demand. It was noted that many employees are continuing to work from home.

*Sidewalks.* No sidewalks are proposed as these would be "sidewalks to nowhere" due to the absence of sidewalks on adjacent parcels. One area of the parking lot is already paved to the road.

*Lighting.* Exterior lighting is now shown on the revised site plan. Lighting is being added to the front awning area and over the ATM which will have a lit canopy. The lights shine down and there are no exposed bulbs. The plan calls for removing flood lights from the top of the building.

*Dumpster.* There is a dumpster on the current site that will be retained. This is now shown on the revised plan.

*Landscaping.* There are four existing trees that are now shown on the revised plan. There is an eight-foot fence on the property line.

*Building Height.* The proposed building height is thirty-two feet. This is about four feet more than the current building height.

*Exterior Materials.* The plan proposes using a horizontal-mount pre-finished metal siding material. The material does not have an industrial or pole barn look. It fits with the surrounding area as most neighboring structures have metal siding.

*Wall Spacing.* This is shown on the dimensioned floor plan.

*Expression Line.* The expression line between first and second stories is defined in a different manner for this property due to the proposed use of metal siding.

*Windows.* Excessive windows are a security issue for a financial institution. The standard in the zoning ordinance for percent of glass is hard to meet for security reasons.

*Roofing.* They will use a metal roof. The color will be black while the siding will be a dark grey.

Commissioner Maurer asked whether they intended to close the north entrance. Ms. Byers said that both drives will remain open.

Commissioner Foster commented on the lack of sidewalks, noting there is a ramp already on the corner and the City has a vision to extend sidewalks in areas where there are none. Commissioner Tossava noted that sidewalks are required for all new builds. The sidewalk currently stops at the Elks but the plan is to extend it to Broadway as a route for school children. Ms. Byers said the concern with installing sidewalk now is that it would deteriorate before connecting sidewalks were built. Ms. Harvey said the zoning ordinance requires sidewalks and the Commission lacks the authority to modify that standard. She said the question of sidewalks would need to be addressed prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Commissioner Maurer said he likes the look of the metal siding but asked why a different color panel could not be used to provide the expression line between stories. Ms. Byers said doing so would take away from the high-tech look they are trying to achieve. Ms. Laverty-Meeker noted that creating that expression line is difficult when one is not using masonry materials. Chairman Hatfield said that the Commission has found itself backed into a corner with specifying the use of particular materials. He said he prefers to ask whether the materials proposed improve the neighborhood. Ms. Harvey said it is better to describe what is desired but create an avenue for getting an exception and asking "How is the proposal compatible with what is described?" Ms. Byers said there is a seam that separates the two floors.

Ms. Harvey addressed the proposed landscaping, noting that only two trees are required. She said the B-4 regulations require a landscape buffer when abutting a multi-family district. She noted that a landscape buffer exists on the neighboring parcel. She also said that the reference is to a buffer, not to a screen. Commissioner Tossava said the fence is existing. Ms. Harvey said the intent is to create a visual separation between differing uses. She suggested this could be achieved by putting plantings into the lawn area.

It was moved by Commissioner Resseguie and seconded by Commissioner Tossava that the revised site plan for the development be approved subject to the following conditions and findings: 1) the modification of the parking standard to provide thirty-six spaces is found to be adequate; 2) sidewalks must be installed in accordance with the zoning ordinance; 3) the lighting as shown on the plan is acceptable; 4) the dumpster as shown on the plan is acceptable; 5) a landscape buffer that includes plantings in the lawn area is acceptable; and 6) modification of the design standards to permit the installation of horizontal-mounted metal siding is found to be consistent with materials used in the district and on parcels in the area. Chairman Hatfield said that Commissioner Brehm would be abstaining from voting on the matter because he is employed by the applicant. He said

that his wife serves on the applicant's board of directors in a non-compensated position which does not represent a conflict. Motion carried with one abstention (Commissioner Brehm).

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Site Plan for Ground Sign at 400 West State Street, EWB Enterprises.** It was moved by Commissioner Tossava and seconded by Commissioner Foster that this matter be removed from the table. Motion carried.

Mr. King said, when this was matter was before the Commission in August, the owner, Eric Butler was out of town and his assistant was not available to attend the meeting. He said he had met with Mr. Butler to discuss alternatives to the proposed sign.

Mr. Butler said that the sixteen-foot sign had been reverse engineered to meet tenants' needs. He noted issues with vision obstructions on the site and noted this is a particular problem for seniors patronizing the pharmacy. He said there were safety concerns and that accidents had occurred in the vicinity. He said drivers on State Street have a very short time to view the sign due to speeds on the street. The proposed tenant panels were sized so as to be readable.

Commissioner Resseguie asked whether the new sign would also be a vision obstruction. Commissioner Tossava noted that trees block a tall sign on a property nearby. Chairman Hatfield said that drivers will find scanning a tall sign difficult to do. He suggested making the street number more prominent versus the tenant names. Commissioner Maurer said he agreed with Chairman Hatfield, that a sixteen-foot sign would be way above drivers' sight lines. Commissioner Guetschow said the proposed sign is taller than would be allowed in any other zoning district. Mr. Brehm said that the focus should be on a sign design that works such as only the address. Chairman Hatfield asked whether other sign designs had been mocked up. Mr. Butler said that had not been done. Chairman Hatfield asked that he bring back alternative designs to the October Commission meeting.

**JPA/JPC.** Commissioner Guetschow reported that both the Joint Planning Alliance and Joint Planning Commission did not meet in August.

**General Work Task List.** Mr. King said there were no changes of significance to the work task list.

**Tracking of Terms and Conditions.** Mr. King said there were few if any changes to the report.

**Accessory Dwelling Units and Multi-Family Dwellings.** Ms. Harvey provided a summary of the work of the committee the Planning Commission had established to look into these two matters. She said the work was driven by the master plan and shows how this fits with housing strategies in the plan. She said the committee also looked at other issues not part of their original charge

including single-family house conversions and how not to discourage new single-family developments.

Ms. Harvey said that duplex developments were discouraged in the zoning ordinance by limiting the districts where they are permitted and further limiting areas within those districts. As a result, few spots are available for duplex construction. The committee chose a strategy of identifying where such construction would be desired and in which areas. The choice is to regulate these developments through use of an overlay district. This approach would not require a massive rezoning. The proposed language parrots that already used for duplexes with some exceptions. The idea is to remove arbitrary design limitations but offer other parameters.

Mr. Brehm left the quorum at 9:00

Ms. Harvey said that the approach to duplexes would be to provide style guidelines that suggest what the Commission is looking for. Chairman Hatfield said that these would be guidelines, not mandates and suggested providing renderings of examples that could be shown to builders.

Ms. Harvey said the proposed language for accessory dwelling units had been vetted through the committee. Chairman Hatfield said this would allow for them to be placed selectively in the community without changing the character of the neighborhoods.

Chairman Hatfield asked Commissioners to review the proposed language for duplexes and ADUs in advance of discussion on these topics at the October meeting.

**Master Plan Action Item Tracking.** Mr. King and Commissioner Guetschow provided a brief introduction to using the Planner tool in Office 365 to track progress on addressing action plan items found in the recently approve master plan.

**Open Public Discussion and Comments:** None.

**Commissioner Comments:** None.

**Adjournment:** It was moved by Commissioner Foster and supported by Commissioner Tossava that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg Guetschow  
Recording Secretary