

**CITY OF BRIDGMAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
September 3, 2020
2:00 PM**

The special meeting of the Bridgman City Planning Commission was held September 3, 2020 remotely by means of electronic conferencing and called to order by Chair Parsons at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Parsons, Richard Kading, Dorothea Crocker, John Truesdell, Eugene Herrman, Mark Hurray, Tom Woerdehoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Ganum, City Clerk Holm, Building Official Mattner, Attorney Senica

Pledge of Allegiance was led by the board.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA:

Motion by Member Woerdehoff, seconded by Member Herrman to approve the agenda for September 3, 2020 as presented,

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell

Nays: None

Absent from Vote: Crocker

Motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Motion by Member Herrman, seconded by Member Woerdehoff to approve the August 6, 2020 minutes as presented,

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: Parsons, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell, Woerdehoff, Hurray

Nays: None

Absent from Vote: Crocker

Motion carried.

Chair Parsons read through the agenda and meeting procedures

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

- No one wished to be heard.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing at 6:36 p.m.

Purpose of the Public Hearing

The City of Bridgman proposes to amend the Bridgman Zoning Ordinance to create a new Interstate Gateway District (IG), and proposes various amendments to Section 2.09 (Corridor Commercial District), Section 2.10 (Transitional Industrial District), Section 5.09/5.10 (Parking), Section 6.02 (Sign Permits), Section 6.03 (Regulations Regarding Signs), Section 6.04 (Exempt Signs), Section 6.05 (Prohibited Signs), Section 6.07 (Sign Definitions), Section 7.19 (Landscaping), Section 8.12 (Standards for Specific Special Land Uses), Article IX (Definitions) and Section 7.02 (Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures).

Presentation by the Petitioner

The petitioner is the City of Bridgman and Ganum explained the process of working on these amendments over the last several months. Since this is the 4th meeting talking about the amendments, he is not going to go over it again in detail. The amendments have been available on the City's website at least 15 days prior to the meeting. He read through the intent of the Interstate Gateway and the proposed changes to the landscaping, parking, and signage in the new IG district and the amendment to the accessory structures.

Mattner went over a few of the proposed amendments. The "greenbelt" area is now called the "buffer zone" and has been reduced from 20 feet to 10 feet. There have been no changes to the setbacks though and all residential districts abutting will still need a buffer zone. He explained the current sign ordinance and how restricting it is to attract businesses. He went through several examples. He also touched on the amendments to the accessory buildings and reducing the side yard setback to 4 feet from the property line.

Public Comments

- Michael Bingen, Attorney for KG Petroleum LLC – Does not feel that the Master Plan adopted in 2019 is being followed especially in Goals 8 and 10. He read aloud Goal 10 and states the proposed amendment is completely inconsistent to the Master Plan. The Commission should not be influenced with people wanting to gain from this. It is not right nor appropriate and told the board if they are to implement the spirit and intent of the Master Plan, they should vote no to the proposed amendments.
- Arthur Havilicek, President and CEO of the Regional Chamber – He supports the amendments and referenced the 2019 Master Plan. In it talks about the high-quality commercial strip on Red Arrow Highway and the zoning that maintains the natural beauty. Bridgman is unique to growth and businesses and is a strategic location between St. Joseph and New Buffalo. The area by I-94 needs to be developed and the community stands everything to gain from this. He along with the Chamber cannot support this enough. He appreciates the diligence in hearing from everyone and would like the board to vote yes.
- George Lepenoitis is a resident and property owner in the City – Owns land in the Gateway District and would like to echo Havilicek's comments. Bingen and his client are in objection because it will further their own interest. His client owns the only gas station on that exit. He is not a resident and his gas station is in Lake Charter Township. There is nothing in the proposed changes that will reduce or violate the Master Plan. Master Plans are not set in stone and changes can be made. These changes will allow for planned development and further development down the road.

Correspondence

- Ganum read aloud the two letters that were received. Peter Loveland, 10051 Weko Dunes – is in favor of the proposed Zoning amendments. Ryan & Audrey Ueck, 4436 Lake Street are in favor of the Accessory Building amendments.

Close the Public Comments Session

Motion by Member Crocker, seconded by Member Woerdehoff to close the public comment section at 7:08 p.m.,

Roll call:

Yeas: Kading, Herrman, Truesdell, Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Session for Commission to ask questions and address the chair on the petition

None of the members had any questions.

Close the Public Hearing

Motion by Member Woerdehoff, seconded by Member Hurray to close the public hearing and resume the regular meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Roll Call:

Yeas: Herrman, Truesdell, Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading

Nays: None

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration of an amendment to the Bridgman Zoning Ordinance to create a new Interstate Gateway District (IG), and proposes various amendments to Section 2.09 (Corridor Commercial District), Section 2.10 (Transitional Industrial District), Section 5.09/5.10 (Parking), Section 6.02 (Sign Permits), Section 6.03 (Regulations Regarding Signs), Section 6.04 (Exempt Signs), Section 6.05 (Prohibited Signs), Section 6.07 (Sign Definitions), Section 7.19 (Landscaping), Section 8.12 (Standards for Specific Special Land Uses), Article IX (Definitions) and Section 7.02 (Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures).

Motion by Chair Parsons, seconded by Member Truesdell to approve the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments as presented,

Roll Call:

Yeas: Truesdell, Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Chair Parsons, seconded by Member Truesdell to amend the previous motion to include the language “and to recommend to the City Council for consideration of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments”,

Roll Call:

Yeas: Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell

Nays: None

Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Non unfinished business.

STAFF UPDATE:

- Ganum told the board the Emma’s Hearth and Market on the corner will have a soft opening next Tuesday. He has already informed council and encouraged the board to stop in and wish them well. He will find out a time and let the board know.
- Ganum updated the board on both the proposed housing project and habitat for humanity projects. They are both still moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Member Woerdehoff, seconded by Member Hurray to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Roll Call:

Yeas: Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell, Crocker

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Tom Woerdehoff, Secretary

Allyson Holm, City Clerk/Recording Secretary