

**VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2018 6:00 PM  
FRANKLIN VILLAGE HALL  
32325 FRANKLIN ROAD, FRANKLIN, MICHIGAN**

Peter Halick was sworn in by Clerk Pulker, for another three (3) year term.

**I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Village of Franklin Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman, David Goldberg, at the Franklin Village Hall, 32325 Franklin Road, Franklin, Michigan at 6:05 PM.

Goldberg introduced Albert Haddad, newest member of the Planning Commission and a 25-year resident of Franklin.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: David Goldberg, Albert Haddad, Peter Halick, Dean Moenck

Absent: Raj Abbass, Nena Downing, Bob Wilke

Also Present: Planning Consultants, Sarah Traxler, McKenna & Associates; Mira Stakhiv, Village Council Member; Elina Costello, Main Street Franklin Chairman (MFS) and business owner; Lisa Dunn, Franklin resident and business owner; Jim and Ruth Kochensparger, Franklin residents and business owners, Susan Siegal, Event Bliss business owner

**III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Goldberg suggested the postponement of **IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

**Motion by Moenck, seconded by Haddad to adopt the agenda, as amended.**

**Ayes: Goldberg, Haddad, Halick, Moenck**

**Nays: None**

**Absent: Abbass, Downing, Wilke**

**Motion carried.**

**IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting of June 20, 2018**

Moenck questioned the wording of the first and second line on Page 4, "Council's approval of the Ballot language for the sidewalk and lighting issues..." He understood that there was no need for a ballot on the sidewalk. Creech had proof read the minutes; however, Pulker would ask him to clarify it. Moenck also found a typo on Page 5, under **XI. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion should read, "Motion by Wilke, seconded by Goldberg    to adjourn the meeting."

**Due to a lack of a quorum the Adoption of the Minutes will be postponed until next meeting.**

**V. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

Creech was not in attendance. And due to the large number of villagers present, a report would be provided at the next meeting.

## **VI. BUDGET AND EXPENSES REPORT**

Pulker provided the Planning Commission with its final budget report for FY2017-2018, including the bills just received for June.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made at this time.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Sign Ordinance Review**

Since the last meeting Goldberg had attended a Main Street Franklin Board meeting, followed by a Council meeting at which members of the business community came and voiced their concerns about several of the provisions of the Sign Ordinance. As a result of the lack of communication and timely notification, Council deferred the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) reading and did not officially adopt the Ordinance. The business owners had two (2) provisions which were of concerns to them: 1) Sandwich Boards and PC's desire to eliminate them completely, and 2) PC's decision to reduce the overall size of wall and ground signs. Goldberg noted that Council took into consideration the merchant comments and referred the issues back to Planning in order for the business community to have a discussion about revising the Sandwich Board section and possibly coming up with "a hybrid" of it. Points to be considered are: sizes, materials, the time they were required to be off the streets, and then with Traxler's and the Village attorney's consult, what would be the extent of a penalty provision for violations.

The second (2<sup>nd</sup>) issue was the square footage of the signs. Traxler had forwarded her notes from a joint meeting of HDC and MSF in July, 2017 to which Goldberg indicated HDC's and MSF's directive concerning the size and number of signs. Traxler clarified that regarding the ground signs nothing had changed from the current Ordinance. The proposal was for a smaller size of the wall sign and the size of the projecting sign. Both Goldberg and Traxler thought it to be important to mention that the written purpose and origin of the Ordinance was garnered from many Judges' opinions with standard legalese and consistent with the intent and spirit of any common sign ordinance.

Goldberg brought to the attention of other commissioners the discrepancies in the Ordinance about "projection signs" which needed to be rewritten.

Elina Costello, Smile Builders of Franklin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Main Street Franklin since October, 2017, referenced a letter she had written to the Village Council. In it she expressed her opinions of the proposed Sign Ordinance, specifically the section entitled "Purpose", the reduction of the size of a sign, the prohibition of sandwich signs, and the plethora of directional signage.

Traxler led a conversation about the Temporary Sign Standards in the current Ordinance and specific points, including the construction materials of a sandwich board, which had been discussed when proposing the revisions. She added that during the early meetings with MSF and

HDC, the HDC Chairman had provided specifications of what type of sandwich board signs the HDC would consider acceptable. It was HDC's charge to review a sign and render its opinion.

Lisa Dunn, Deja Vu owner and Franklin resident, stated that she and others were not opposed to uniform signs.

Mira Stakhiv, Crestwood Drive, Council member, was pleased to see the merchants at this meeting and looked forward to their input.

Jim Kochensparger, Franklin Grill owner and Franklin resident, was of the opinion that the signs should not be uniform and described some of his design ideas. He also expressed why specific merchants were in support of sandwich board signs. He asked Goldberg to clarify the origin of PC's looking at the Sign Ordinance.

Susan Siegal, Event Bliss co-owner, stated that her "building" was set back behind the Van Every Building on Franklin Road which made it difficult for people to locate it. Therefore, five (5) years ago she and her co-owner were given permission to place a sign on the easement part of the sidewalk (between the sidewalk and their building). It was a larger well-built hybrid sandwich board. She thought the merchants should be given options with parameters for tasteful signs. Visibility is most important.

Elina Costello, owner of Smile Builders, specifically inquired about the lack of signage for her business on Franklin Road. Because the entrance was in the back of the building, patients have a difficult time locating it. Goldberg explained that the Ordinance stated that every business may have a building (wall) sign. It was up to her to figure out how to coordinate a wall sign with the other tenants. He added that since her business was in the back of the building she, like Event Bliss, was entitled to a second ground sign, which Event Bliss does have due to a change in the Ordinance. Costello stated that she supported Kochensparger's views that the character of the signs needed to be historical in nature. She added that as a resource they have access to historic data and design services from Main Street Oakland County which might help with proposed guidelines and historically accurate options.

Traxler mentioned that currently the Village had tools in place to assist merchants with signage. In 2012, HDC prepared a booklet, Village of Franklin Historic District Design Guidelines, with images and affirmative design standards that, if followed, would achieve and protect the character of the Village. It would not result in uniformity but in consistency with the character. If a business proposed a new sign, the owner would be taken through a sign review process which included a review and check against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. She said that she thought the business owners would be surprised at what they were allowed under the current Ordinance and the proposed one. The Zoning/Sign Board of Appeals even had standards which would be a beneficial in helping the property owners uphold the Village character. She stated that she thought the sign environment was not as punitive as they perceived. The discussion has mainly been around the A-frame signs which may have allowed some misconceptions to be perpetuated. Through the meetings and discussion with HDC and MSF some concessions and compromises had been made which were not typical of a community.

Uniformity of signs was never advocated or considered by the Planning Commission. According to Goldberg, Planning just wanted the guidelines to exist as a basis to follow and with the knowledge that if the business was in the Historic District the final decision would always be up to the HDC.

Ruth Kochensparger, owner of the Franklin Grill and resident, wanted to improve the front of her property but the process seemed to be overwhelming. Because she was under the impression that the easement went clear up to the bar inside the building, she never pursued the project. Now with the sign issue, she would like to know the arduous process she must go through. Goldberg corrected her misconceptions. He directed her to apply for a sign permit and then go before the HDC for its approval. If it was a site plan change then she would come to the Planning Commission. Pulker referred her to the Building Department where she would apply for the permit and the Department would advise her on how to proceed. Regarding the right-of-way, Goldberg informed her that the recent Franklin Road survey the Planning commissioned by Hubbell Roth & Clark, did not support her information. She had been misinformed.

Moenck commented that the Village Building Official was mandated to follow the established Ordinance and if the issue required an Ordinance variance he would deny the application. The Sign Board of Appeals was set up to address such sign denials and, as stated in the website "...will study the sign proposal, giving consideration to any extraordinary circumstances that would cause practical difficulty in complying with the sign standards." Moenck was the Planning Commission's representative on that Board.

For the record, Goldberg provided a brief history of his involvement with the Planning Commission itself and his attendance at the Council meetings on behalf of the Planning Commission. He stated it was his impression that the business community was blaming the Planning Commission for creating this situation, which in his opinion was not the case. To support his position he read some of the Stakeholder Comments and Strategic Issues Draft Sign Ordinance, dated July 19, 2017. There were eleven (11) comments from HDC and eleven (11) comments from MSF. For months former Planning Commissioner Ettinger attempted to convene sub-committee meetings with the former Executive Director of MSF, HDC representatives, and herself as the Planning representative to discuss the Sign Ordinance and was unsuccessful doing so. The meetings were scrapped and for a year Planning moved ahead with the Ordinance. Planning had no idea that sandwich boards were an issue with the merchants and, in fact, thought that during the entire time the businesses were informed and on board with the proposals. Planning wants all the businesses to succeed. There was no timetable on when the Ordinance needed to be fixed, however, Council would probably like an answer back in the next two (2) meetings. Tonight there would be discussions, Traxler would be given some direction, and then probably at the next meeting with a full Planning Commission present, recommendations might be finalized so they could be presented to the Village Council.

In order to correct some of the merchants' misinformation, Traxler delineated the role of the Planning Commission, in terms of its responsibilities and what it does and does not do. Education of the entire processes for both sign and site plan approvals was important and necessary.

Dan Costello, business co-owner with his wife, inquired about having a second stand-alone sign for the renovated barn located off Franklin Road. He noted that he was in favor of tasteful sandwich board signs, the bigger the better, and also believed there was a tremendous amount of “sign clutter” with directional signs. He thanked the Planning Commission and Village Council for taking the time to address these matters. Goldberg acknowledged Costello’s comments and opinions about directional and traffic signs, wayfaring signs, and municipal signs.

(7:18 PM Stakhiv left)

Goldberg instructed Traxler to review and revise the sandwich sign board language and chart, including the size. Material of the sign should also be considered, as weight is a factor when moving it in and/or out. It was requested that the restoration of 36 ft. wall signs be considered and the discrepancies of the projection signs be corrected.

Next month Planning would be able to discuss these changes and take action on them so that they could subsequently be presented to Village Council.

## **B. Master Plan Implementation**

### **1. Parking and Cross Access**

Because Wilke was not in attendance, Goldberg updated the Commission about the latest correspondence Wilke had had with Elisabethe Havrilla of Comerica Bank (dated June 28, 2018), a copy of which was in the Planning Commissioners’ packet. Elisabethe’s response, as of two (2) days ago, was that she was sorry but she had not looked at it. Wilke would continue trying to connect with her.

### **2. Lighting, Base Survey by HRC**

Goldberg reported that Council was moving forward, asking Staran to draft the Ballot language which Council needed to approve so it could be sent to Oakland County by mid-August to be on the November ballot. He suggested that at Planning’s next meeting a subcommittee be created to connect with DTE and explore the infra-structure for the lights, locations for the lights, possible designs, and the cost. Pulker stated that Creech thought the Road Right of Way money which comes with the Act 51 Gas Tax would be available to fund pedestrian projects like the sidewalk and lighting.

### **3. Cell Phone Service**

Halick had a very recent revised quote of \$11,500 which would be for a more sophisticated study to gather more coverage information. Haddad joined the cell phone committee which would continue its investigation.

Halick suggested that the Planning Commission make an official request to Council to prepare a Resolution giving the Planning Commission permission to solicit AT&T and Verizon for their opinions on the cellular issues in the Village. Discussion ensued about the parameters of the request.

Traxler will write a proposed resolution and a letter to the different carriers which would be considered at the next meeting.

## **IX. GENERAL COMMUNICATION**

### **A. Franklin Cemetery Proposal**

This issue was briefly discussed at the last meeting. Goldberg had forwarded the Cemetery Board's letter to Haddad and further detailed the situation for Haddad's clarification and understanding of the issues. Haddad saw this situation of the Village giving away public land as a challenge. Goldberg pointed out that the Village Council had already voted to review the prospect of giving land to the Cemetery Association and wanted Planning to discuss the matter; if a need exists and, if justified, determine which land to give away. Haddad said that he would like the Cemetery Board to do some due diligence by providing an inventory of how many existing plots the cemetery has, how many plots were sold, how many plots were vacant, and an operating statement. Goldberg would ask those questions of the Cemetery Association Administrator, Steve Bancroft.

There was a cursory discussion about the different parcels in the cemetery.

Haddad will join Goldberg and Downing on the Cemetery Committee.

### **B. Downtown Planning**

#### **1. Sidewalks**

#### **2. Landscape Improvements**

At the last meeting Planning determined that it was time to retain a consultant. Since that meeting Goldberg has had a meeting with Village Council President Hansen and, according to her, Council will be selecting three (3) consultants to write proposals for a downtown sidewalk designs. That being said, Village Council will move forward with the project and hire a consultant to begin the process. Traxler also suggested the establishment of a program/plan to rebuild those structures that burn down. It would be called "Urban Design Plan" and use the original building footprint; maybe in a different location, but in close proximity to the original.

Goldberg also noted that Hansen had mentioned that the process was in the works to create another corridor of frontage which, as suggested by Main Street Oakland County would be another means of generating revenue. Traxler had some suggestions that she would like to discuss with Hansen.

Goldberg confirmed that Traxler would be working on a Resolution and the revised Sign Ordinance and he would get in touch with Steve Bancroft to get some data on the cemetery acres pursuant to the Cemetery Board's request for Village land.

**C. Upcoming Meeting Dates: Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting, August 15, 2018, at 7:00 PM.**

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Haddad, seconded by Moenck to adjourn the meeting.**

**Ayes: Goldberg, Haddad, Halick, Moenck**

**Nays:           None**  
**Absent:       Abbass, Downing, Wilke**  
**Motion carried.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Beke, Recording Secretary

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Eileen H. Pulker, Clerk