

# HERMITAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

## MINUTES

Monday  
February 2, 2009  
Regular Meeting  
8:30 a.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chuck Rogers – Chairman  
Woody Steele – Secretary  
Ed Benton  
John Coupland  
Matt Liburdi  
Shannon McConnell  
Mark Passalinqua

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chester B. Scholl  
James Tamber

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Marcia Hirschmann  
Tom Kuster, City Solicitor  
Cindy Pagliaroli  
Scott Smith  
Jan Farmakis  
Jeremy Coxe  
Nathan Zampogna  
Gary Hinkson  
Gary Gulla  
Joe D'Onofrio  
Joe Pinchot

Mr. Rogers called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Hermitage Municipal Building.

Mr. Rogers asked for public input. There was none.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Rogers asked for approval of the minutes of the January 5, 2009 meeting. Mr. Benton made a motion to approve the January 5<sup>th</sup> minutes. Mr. Passalinqua seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. The minutes were approved as distributed.

### **SUBDIVISION PLANS:**

#### **Final Lot 2 Buxton Development, LLC Subdivision (Virginia Road)**

Mrs. Hirschmann explained that the purpose of this subdivision is to create a 1.853-acre building lot. She said that the lot is served by existing sanitary sewer and water lines and that planning modules were approved in 2008. Mrs. Hirschmann noted that there are no outstanding contingencies.

Mr. Rogers asked for questions or comments on this plan. There were none. Mr. Benton made a motion to approve the Final Lot 2 Buxton Development, LLC Subdivision. Mr. Passalinqua seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS:**

### **Recommendation on a proposed Zoning Map amendment to change the classification of a parcel of approximately 1 acre on the west side of North Hermitage Road from Planned Technical Park to Highway Commercial. (D'Onofrio property)**

Mrs. Hirschmann stated that the request for rezoning was made because the owner wishes to expand the parking lot of the D'Onofrio Food Center. She said that a commercial zone is required to accommodate a parking expansion for a commercial use. She noted that the public hearing is scheduled for February 25, 2009.

Mr. Liburdi asked if there would be new landscaping requirements to accompany the development of the parking area. Mrs. Hirschmann replied that the owner has been advised that a land development plan, which would include new curbing and landscaping, is required.

Dr. Coupland made a motion to approve the recommendation on a proposed Zoning Map amendment to change the classification of the D'Onofrio property from Planned Technical Park to Highway Commercial. Mrs. McConnell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Electronic Changeable Copy Signs** – Mrs. Hirschmann led a discussion about electronic changeable copy signs, noting that Mr. Rogers, Mr. Tamber, Dr. Coupland and representatives from the Community & Economic Development Commission met with City staff to review current language in the Zoning Ordinance regarding these signs and to make a recommendation for possible changes to the language. She said that the existing ordinance allows for still messages that cannot change more often than every 15 minutes. Mrs. Hirschmann said that there were several local business owners at the meeting who expressed their concerns that the 15-minute interval was too long to use their signs effectively. She noted that after much discussion the committee recommended that the Zoning Ordinance be changed to allow a 5-second rate of message change, while continuing to disallow animation or movement of the message.

Mrs. Hirschmann stated that an ordinance could be introduced by the Board of Commissioners at their February meeting, and it would then be returned to the Planning Commission in March for a formal recommendation.

Mr. Liburdi asked in which zoning districts changeable copy signs are permitted. Mrs. Hirschmann replied that they are permitted in the Institutional, Commercial and Office Building zoning districts. She stated that the committee discussed the possibility of establishing different standards for each of those zoning districts, but then determined that enforcement would be too difficult, thus deciding on the 5-second time change for all districts. Mrs. Hirschmann noted that the size of the signs is not standard to all districts, explaining that a larger and higher sign is permitted in a commercial zoning district than is permitted in an institutional or office building district.

Mr. Liburdi asked if electronic changeable copy signs are permitted in the LindenPointe Technical Park. Mrs. Hirschmann researched the Zoning Ordinance and clarified that there is a 4-foot by 6-foot size limit and she noted that the sign is limited to only be used to identify the occupant tenants of the development.

Mr. Rogers explained that all signs require a specific sign permit that must be approved, and that it is separate from the building permit and land development plan.

Mrs. Hirschmann said that she and Solicitor Kuster will review the language in the Zoning Ordinance in regard to changeable copy signs in the Planned Technical Park district and if any clarification is necessary those changes could be inserted into the proposed ordinance.

Mrs. McConnell stated that she is concerned about sign height regulations throughout the City of Hermitage and felt that this issue should be addressed before businesses erect new signs. Mrs. Hirschmann noted that currently there is a maximum height of 20 feet in the Highway Commercial and Central Commercial districts and a maximum height of 10 feet in the Institutional and Office Building districts.

Mr. Passalinqua asked if all language pertaining to signs in the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed in an effort to achieve a uniform look along a commercial corridor like North and South Hermitage Road that has various zoning districts abutting one another. Mrs. Hirschmann stated that the issue pertaining to the electronic changeable signs should be addressed now and all other aspects regarding signs can be reviewed at a later date. Mrs. McConnell said that she felt the maximum heights of signs should be lowered and Mr. Rogers noted that if the standards are not changed soon and businesses erect signs based on current regulations, there would be new signs that will be grandfathered. Mr. Rogers stated that he felt any significant changes should be made in the very near future so that businesses can order new signs based on revised standards. Mr. Liburdi said that he felt there was no need to revise the standards quickly since there are existing regulations in effect and a thorough study should be done before any changes are made. Mr. Steele stated that the issue concerning the electronic changeable copy signs should be addressed now. Mrs. Hirschmann said that any other changes could be discussed at the March Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Rogers advised that the options available to the Planning Commission today regarding electronic changeable copy signs are to either take no action on the timing change until a full review of the Ordinance is done or approve the 5-second timing for message changes.

Dr. Coupland made a motion to allow the 5-second timing change with no animation permitted. Mrs. Hirschmann noted that all message changes must take no longer than one second. Dr. Coupland added that condition to his motion. Mr. Steele seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Rogers asked if there was a consideration to examine the existing regulations in regard to all signs. Mrs. McConnell made a motion to review the sign requirements as currently stated in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Passalinqua seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Hirschmann noted that a preliminary report would be prepared for the March Planning Commission meeting.

**Hermitage Regional Wastewater Improvement Project** – Mrs. Hirschmann stated that under a consent order from the Department of Environmental Protection, a project to upgrade the Hermitage Water Pollution Control plant has been proposed. She also said that the DEP has lifted a recent ban and the City now has a total of 250 EDUs available for new sewer connections.

Mrs. Hirschmann noted that a letter to the City Manager in support of the proposed Wastewater Improvement Project has been drafted and will be forwarded upon approval by the Planning Commission. Mr. Benton made a motion to authorize the letter of support. Mr. Passalinqua seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Election of Officers** – Dr. Coupland made a motion that all officers of the Hermitage Planning Commission remain in their present positions. Mr. Steele seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Mercer County Regional Planning Commission update** – Mr. Benton stated that there were no agenda items regarding the City of Hermitage at the last meeting.

There were no public comments. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Pagliaroli  
February 4, 2009