

CITY OF MANISTEE PLANNING COMMISSION

70 Maple Street
Manistee, MI 49660

MEETING MINUTES

July 10, 2014

A meeting of the Manistee City Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 10, 2014 at 7pm in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan.

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Chair Yoder

Roll Call:

Members Present: Maureen Barry, David Crockett, Bill Dean, Ray Fortier, Marlene McBride, Roger Yoder

Members Absent: Mark Wittlieff (excused)

Others: Walter Grant (FOE 1765 Manistee Eagles) Wally Eaton (FOE 1765 Manistee Eagles), John Bartoz (613 Bryant Avenue), Denise Blakeslee (Planning & Zoning Administrator)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Ray Fortier, seconded by Marlene McBride that the agenda be approved as prepared.

With a Roll Call vote this motion passed 6 to 0.

Yes: Barry, Crockett, Dean, Fortier, McBride, Yoder
No: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ray Fortier, seconded by Maureen Barry that the minutes of the June 5, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting be approved as prepared.

With a Roll Call vote this motion passed 6 to 0.

Yes: Dean, Fortier, Barry, Crockett, McBride, Yoder
No: None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA RELATED ITEMS/PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Since the Planning Commission had housekeeping items on the Agenda Chair Yoder asked if anyone in attendance had any comments.

Walter Grant, President FOE 1765 Manistee Eagles - read a prepared statement (attached). The Eagles received a letter regarding the placement of off premise signs and they want a variance to allow them to place their signs off site.

Walley Eaton, member of FOE 1765 Manistee Eagles – spoke to the commission about the difficulties their organization has had to try to stay open. They installed three signs advertising “Taco Tuesday” (places signs on Sunday and removed Tuesday evening – 3 days) these signs increased their sales from \$300 to \$1,000. They also serve breakfast once a month and have spaghetti dinners. He spoke of all of the political signs all over and why are they allowed and their signs are not. The American Legion and Civic Club are having trouble staying open too. The Casino is killing them. Why were the Art Fair, Lion’s Fish Boil (they are the same type of organization) Signs allowed? What about Yard Sale Signs, Farmer’s Market Signs and the Shoreline Showcase Concert signs?

John Bartoz, 613 Bryant Avenue - asked what they could do to have the signs allowed.

Denise Blakeslee, Planning and Zoning Administrator reviewed the Sections of the ordinance that required her to send the Eagles a letter and responded to questions. The Sections of the Ordinance were:

Article 2 Definitions, Section 220 S. (Definition of Sign, Off-Premise)

O. SIGN, OFF-PREMISE: Any sign that directs attention to a business, commodity, services or entertainment conducted, offered or sold at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located.

Article 21 Signs, Section 2104 Prohibited Signs

The following signs shall not be allowed in any district.

D. *Off-Premise Signs. Except as provided in **Section 1814** of this Ordinance, off-premise signs as defined herein, shall be prohibited in all districts.*

Article 21 Exempt Signs

The following signs shall be exempt from regulations in this Article.

- J. *Political election signs provided such signs shall be temporarily erected not more than four (4) months prior to an election and such signs shall be removed not more than seven (7) days following an election. [Annotation: Size restrictions for signs were removed by Amendment 07-28, effective 5/29/07]*
- K. *Temporary signs advertising yard sales, items for sale or similar temporary activities, provided such signs are erected on private property where authorized by the owner, are not illuminated, do not to exceed four (4) square feet in area, and are removed within three (3) days of installation.*
- M. *Government (Building Signage, Wayfinding Signage and Signage for Outdoor Recreation and Park Facilities).*

Section 2101 Procedures, Item 8.

8. *The Historic District Commission and City Council may approve exceptions to this Article 21 for historically appropriate signage or community events, respectively.*

Section 2107, Use Type 2, Commercial and Office (Example of Uses include Eating and Drinking Establishments); allows the Eagles Club (in the C-3 Zoning District) the ability to have up to 8 square feet portable signage that can be placed on their property.

The language for Off-Premise Signs was part of the Zoning Ordinance re-write that has been in effect since March 27, 2006. Prior to that time there used to be directional real estate signs at almost every corner on the Major Streets in town. A similar situation happened a few years ago when the former owner of the Blue Waters Café had placed directional signage on the corner of US 31 and Eighth Street. They were required to remove their sign. The ordinance also prohibits the installation of signage in the right of way which can create a visibility issue for motorists.

The Art Fair, Lion's Fish Boil was part of the Forest Festival Event that was approved by City Council. Staff has noted that City Council has the ability to approve exceptions for community events and will be working with the Director of Public Safety to see if the event application could include an item relating to signage so it is clear that signs will be installed during the community events and where the signs can be placed so there are no misunderstandings.

The Farmer's Market was endorsed by City Council several years ago when it was allowed to take place on City Property and they have traditionally been allowed to place their signs on

private property (not in the right of way) with permission from the property owners as a community event endorsed by City Council. Staff will contact them and reiterate that signs cannot be placed in the public right of way.

The Shoreline Showcase Concert Series is similar case. Staff will contact them about their signage and proper placement.

Political Signs and Yard Sale Signs are exempt under the ordinance, except that they must also be placed on private property with the owner's permission and are not allowed in the right of way.

A variance cannot be obtained to allow the placement of the Eagle's signs on public or private property; the ordinance would need to be amendment. This would require an application and the fee for the request is \$1,000.

NEW BUSINESS

Redevelopment Ready Communities Program

Several members of the Commission were able to attend the Redevelopment Ready Communities presentation to City Council on July 1, 2014. Staff and the Commission discussed the program and the work the Planning Commission will be doing assist with the Best Practices requirements.

Public Land Review – The County Planning Department has asked the City to review a GIS Map they have drafted relating to Public Lands within the City. Members of the Planning Commission reviewed the map and made corrections as needed. This will be sent back to the County Planning Department along with maps that were reviewed by the Non-Motorized Transpiration Committee and Parks and Beautification Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

STAFF/SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

MEMBERS DISCUSSION

Commissioner McBride spoke of how great a job the Police & DPW did during the Fourth of July Holiday and expressed her displeasure with the Concessions at the Beachhouses and that the restrooms were not stocked and that signage for the restrooms at Fifth Avenue Beach is inadequate.

The Planning Commission does not have a worksession scheduled in July

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on Thursday, August 7, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ray Fortier, seconded by Bill Dean that the meeting be adjourned. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm

MANISTEE PLANNING COMMISSION

Denise J. Blakeslee, Recording Secretary

July 9, 2014

Manistee Planning Commission
To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Manistee, seeking your consideration in granting a variance to the sign posting ordinance.

Our organization, like many other civic non-profits, is struggling to keep afloat. We have instituted a number of events – Taco Tuesday, a monthly breakfast, spaghetti dinners, etc. - in an effort to raise some revenue. The advertising of these events is critical to their success, in that without it, people would be unaware of the them, and participation and support would be minimal. Without advertising, we could almost plan on the event being unsuccessful.

We are seeking only a limited variance, whereby we might be able to post some signs, advertising the event, off premises, two or three days prior to the event. These signs would be removed by our membership immediately afterwards.

We recognize the objective of maintaining a clean and neat appearance for our city. However, being that these kinds of organizations and local events (dinners, pancake breakfasts, etc.) are vital to what makes the fabric of small towns unique and appealing.

We, as an organization, would like to work with the city on parameters that would minimize unsightly clutter but would still contribute to the success of our efforts. Although these events are small, their financial contributions to the overall viability of our organization is critical.

We sincerely hope that you will consider some relief to these advertising restrictions.

Sincerely,



Walter Grant, President
FOE 1765 Manistee Eagles