



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Hecht, Novak, O'Rourke, Palmer, Whitt, Wolfson

**ABSENT:** Owsinek

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Recording Secretary Pesta, City Attorney Vanerian, Planning Consultant Ortega

**PC 09-01-19 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSIONER OWSINEK FROM TONIGHTS MEETING**

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Palmer, CARRIED: To excuse Commissioner Owsinek from tonight's meeting.

**REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**PC 09-02-19 APPROVAL OF THE JULY 9, 2019 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Wolfson, seconded by O'Rourke, CARRIED: To approve the July 9, 2019 Planning Commission minutes.

**COMMUNICATION:** None

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Delphine Hall – 105 Liberty – discussed the possible different uses for her property. She also discussed code enforcement issues with outdoor storage and signage.

Chairman Hecht responded by asking if anyone approached the City with plans prior to putting up the sign? Mr. Hecht mentioned that the commission works with people to get signs approved. Mr. Hecht explained in regard to outdoor storage, that it is allowed in some places in the City and the ordinances must be abided by per zoning district.

Commissioner Whitt said he would talk with the consultant planner and give Mrs. Hall some options for use of her property. Mr. Whitt said outdoor storage is not allowed in the C-3 zoning district and would require special land use approval. Mr. Whitt commented that abandoned vehicles are also in violation.

Mrs. Hall asked a question regarding her son's jet ski and weather or not it could stay there.

Commissioner Whitt responded by noting that abandoned vehicles can be cited.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion – Modular Homes & Residential Standards**

Consultant Planner Ortega said there has been an uptick of modular homes coming into the City. Mr. Ortega comments that a characteristic of these homes is the lack of aesthetic appeal. Mr. Ortega said traditional stick-built homes bring all pieces onto the site and are built stick by stick. Mr. Ortega said modular homes have components that are built in a factory set and assembled on site. Mr. Ortega explained a modular home built in a factory and wheeled onto a site, are typically put in a mobile home park. Mr. Ortega explained most communities in the 80s started having higher standards on manufactured homes due to the stigma that they acquired. Mr. Ortega said this is why some modular homes are no longer on wheels that one can see and that the home needs to be secured onto a foundation and enclosed. Mr. Ortega comments that these were some early regulations on how a modular home could look. Mr. Ortega explains that because manufactured homes typically are from a catalog, some lack the aesthetic appeal that a traditional stick built home has. Mr. Ortega explains the impact of modular homes in neighborhoods is that modular homes do not have to be placed in a mobile home park. Mr. Ortega stated that they can be placed in a normal lot in any subdivision, as long as they meet the standards for the zoning ordinance. Mr. Ortega said Walled Lake currently does not have specific standards on some of the aesthetic attributes that a traditional home has. Mr. Ortega elaborates on the architectural terminology that the standards encompass such as peak of the roof, porch, windows, and window- sills. Mr. Ortega explains that by having residential design standards, homes will be built to a specific standard and these standards can be as strict or as lenient as the community would like them to be. Mr. Ortega presented two examples. Mr. Ortega first referenced a community that had general design standards for the neighborhood. Mr. Ortega elaborates by describing that the standards were broad and tailored for the neighborhood overall. Mr. Ortega explained that some of their standards were already embedded in their City code. Mr. Ortega's second reference described design guidelines that were more specific. Mr. Ortega further explained that some standards encompassed items such as percentage of building materials, windows, garage locations, porches, and roof elements. Mr. Ortega stated that some communities use a point system which works alongside an evaluation checklist for zoning districts. Mr. Ortega explained that points are assigned based on the material and design of each specific residence. Mr. Ortega further explained that homeowners are given the option of what

elements they want to incorporate to receive extra points. Mr. Ortega said he wanted the planning commission to discuss the standards of home design. Mr. Ortega said that way he can design an ordinance to fit the community.

Mr. Hecht asked if the commission should address this from a specific zoning area. Mr. Hecht also asked if it is an option that upon a sale of a home that it be brought up to code at the same time?

Consultant Planner Ortega suggested doing an analysis of how many lots that would affect and then determine how the standards be applied; whether it by zoning district, street, frontage, or for certain width of lots. Mr. Ortega discussed in regard to existing homes, that a way to redevelop a house is by determining the percentage of value or footage, which then triggers the homeowner to come up to building code. Mr. Ortega mentioned to be mindful that some standards could be extensive. Mr. Ortega explained an alternative way to redevelop a home is through evaluation and building permits that would require the house to comply with the design standards.

Commissioner Wolfson commented that there are some neighborhoods that have no garages and/or driveways. Wolfson questioned if these homes could sell if the homeowner was required to bring it up to code compliance.

Chairman Hecht discussed that by using an evaluation method for specific neighborhoods it would be helpful for homes that are looking to sell.

Consultant Planner Ortega said whether a modular or stick built home there are standards for each. Mr. Ortega suggested that the guidelines can be designed for modular homes or residential homes. Mr. Ortega comments that same approach can be used for commercial properties. Mr. Ortega additionally suggested having a commercial vacancy ordinance, where the property needs to be registered with the City after a specific number of months of vacancy. Mr. Ortega said this ordinance can trigger vacant properties to be in code compliance to get a C of O for future tenants. Mr. Ortega said this ordinance will provide the City with a list of vacancies and contact information to hold property owners responsible of keeping their property in safety compliance.

Consultant Planner Ortega described that the ordinance would include three items: location requirement, architectural details, and enforcement and administrative procedures.

Commissioner O'Rourke commented that he liked the idea of working in sections. O'Rourke brought up the concern of buying a pre-existing home and how the standards would address houses that would need to be brought up to code. O'Rourke also mentioned his concern with how the standards would be communicated to new homeowners.

Chairman Hecht suggested to include various situations within the ordinance that would trigger owners to be in aesthetic compliance. Hecht discussed the possibility of creating a rental ordinance to supplement the continuation of residential standards.

Commissioner Palmer said he has been watching Keego Harbor and notices their effort in maintaining their point system. Palmer mentioned it is important to be mindful of the standards to make them nondiscriminatory.

Commissioner Whitt said the commission needs to take baby steps. Mr. Whitt's concern is regarding enforcement and regulation of the standards. Mr. Whitt said the first focus should be on modular homes, a few have come into the City recently and the commission should take baby steps to regulate them. Mr. Whitt said we cannot regulate homes to the extent where people are forced out of their homes.

**COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:**

**PC 09-03-19            ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Novak, seconded by O'Rourke, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

  
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Chelsea Pesta  
Deputy City Clerk

  
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Kyle Wecht  
Chairman