

VILLAGE OF SPARTA PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
February 6, 2023 @ 7:00 PM
75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)

Present: Chairman Bob Liscombe, Commission members Jon Braybrook, Robert Carlstrom, Rose Frederick, Emilie Henry, and Robert Whalen.

Absent: Gary Moody, Betty VanPatten, and Ryan Wolford.

Also present: Interim Village Manager Blaine Wing and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 2) **ROLL CALL:** Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
- 3) **MINUTES:**
 - a. January 3, 2023. Motion by Carlstrom with a second by Whalen to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.
- 4) **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA – APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**
 - a. None.

5) PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Please Note: This Public Comment portion of the meeting is reserved for comment on agenda items. Personal or abusive attacks on Council members, staff members, or other participants will not be tolerated and may result in the Village President taking action, up to and including, having the speaker removed from the meeting by law enforcement officers.

Joe Jangda from Nature’s Releaf spoke about marijuana dispensaries. He asked the Commission for an update on the progress on the issue of allowing dispensaries in the Village. He also asked if there was any sort of time frame for further action. The Commission said that further discussion of this issue would happen during the “New Business” portion of this meeting later tonight.

6) COMMUNICATIONS:

- a. None.

7) PUBLIC HEARING:

- a. None.

8) NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Maps Showing Various Exclusion Areas for Possible Marijuana Dispensary Sites:** Interim Village Manager Blaine gave an update on this issue. He said that the Planning Commission had asked for maps showing “exclusion areas for marijuana dispensaries” in the January 3, 2023 meeting. He said that he had created two different maps with differing exclusion areas. The exclusion areas deal with how far from parks and playgrounds, day care facilities, schools, and churches marijuana dispensaries need to be located.

The Commission then discussed the two maps. Items discussed included whether the Village needs to exclude dispensaries from all or some of those above mentioned businesses/public areas exclusion zones. Commissioner Whalen discussed the survey that the DDA had done with downtown businesses regarding this subject. Commissioner Braybrook asked about the resident survey which was taken last fall on this subject and whether the results of that survey would be taken into consideration when the Planning Commission voted on this issue. The Commission discussed whether residential areas needed to have an exclusion area and if so, how far.

The next step will be for the Interim Village Manager to create a third map that will reflect the discussion on this subject from tonight's meeting. He will also contact similar nearby communities to see how they have dealt with this subject and whether any litigation might have resulted regarding this issue.

It was mentioned that the Master Plan that is being worked on right now by McKenna will incorporate this issue in their plan for the Village. That plan will provisionally be available in September or October of this year. It was also mentioned that at least two or three well publicized public hearings by both the Planning Commission and the Village Council need to be conducted on this issue before it can move forward formally. Also, the Planning Commission will deal with the zoning on this issue, and the Village Council will deal with the associated ordinances.

- b. **Master Plan Update: Interim** Village Manager Wing updated the Commission on the progress so far on the Master Plan. He said that he has been working with Danielle Bouchard from McKenna as well as Liz Morse from the DDA on this. The next step will be for the Master Plan Rewrite Team to meet later in February to discuss progress so far as well as the results of the survey dealing with this issue. He also handed out a schedule for proposed further steps and their timing.
- c. **Conceptual Discussion on Cascade Die Improvements:** Interim Manager Wing said that Cascade Die would like to add a lunch/break room area as well as a loading dock to their facility and has submitted the relevant conceptual drawings to the Village. He has forwarded these drawings to various entities in the Village as well as to our engineers. If all progresses as anticipated, this issue will be further discussed in the March Planning Commission meeting.
- d. **Discussion on Parks & Recreation Plan Proposal:** The Interim Manager gave a status update on this. He said that the Village's current plan became outdated at the end of 2022, which means that the Village will NOT be eligible for any grants in 2023. It is impossible to apply for grants without having an official Parks and Recreation Plan. Typically, having an outside firm create such a plan costs in the neighborhood of 15K-20K. He contacted McKenna, who is doing the Master Plan for our Village, to see what their charges would be. Because they are also working on our Master Plan, they told him that they would be able to create a Parks and Recreation Plan for 10K. He said that typically the creation of such a plan takes about nine months, so the Village needs to address this quickly in order to be able to apply for grants for 2024. Motion by Frederick with a second by Braybrook to move forward with having McKenna begin designing such a plan. Consensus from

the Commission to move this to the Village Council for discussion at their next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

9) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. None.

10) PUBLIC COMMENT:

- a. Joe Jangda spoke regarding the marijuana dispensary issue. He invited all Commission members to come view his dispensary in Grand Rapids. He offered to set up a specific time for members to all meet at the dispensary for a tour of the facility. At that time, he could answer any questions or concerns that members had.

11) VILLAGE MANAGER REPORT: Interim Manager Wing spoke about various activities with which he's been involved. He also discussed the Local Government Law Bulletin which he included in this month's Commission packet. This month's bulletin deals specifically with a marijuana appeals case as well as using drones for zoning issues. He also said he's met with two of the Village's engineering firms and will be having monthly staff meetings.

12) COMMISSION COMMENT:

- a. None.

13) ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Liscombe at 8:12pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.