

City of West Branch Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
September 24, 2024
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 North Poplar Street

Chairperson John Fuller called the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Commission members present: John Fuller, Ryan Bowers, Matt Van Scoyoc and Max Kober.
Absent: Brad Bower and Madison Conley
City Staff present: City Clerk Leslie Brick and Zoning Administrator Terry Goerdt.
Public present: Jon Marner, MMS Consultants

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION.

Motion by Bowers, second by Van Scoyoc. Motion carried on a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Approve a revised Final Plat for Heritage Hill. /Move to action.

This item came to the commission in August 2024 and the City Engineer and commission requested revisions to the final plat which now includes platting individual lots for the residential homes. Jon Marner, of MMS Consultants was present on behalf of Heritage Hill and stated that the changes the City Engineer and Commission had been made. Goerdt said he spoke with the City Engineer and upon a site review, it was noticed that the proposed trail and retaining wall at the south entrance (on E. Main Street), has a safety issue for trail users in that the trail will follow the retaining wall and not provide a buffer of green space and could be potential liability for the City. Goerdt asked if the developer could move the retaining wall more to the west and provide at least three feet of green space between the trail and the wall or install a railing along portions of the retaining wall. Marner said he thought the developer would be more amicable to adding green space as a buffer rather than a railing which would require future maintenance. Marner viewed the plat and said there was approximately seven feet between the train and the property line and that additional green space could be added as a buffer. Van Scoyoc asked if the storm water drainage had been corrected since the last ran event where storm water was pouring onto neighboring properties on to the west. Bowers (who also works as a contractor on the project) said that storm water issues have now been addressed. The commission agreed that the revised final plat could move forward to the City Council with the contingency of the green space buffer added along the trail as discussed.

Motion by Bowers, second by Van Scoyoc to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote.

City Staff Reports

Goerdt said Heritage Hill is starting to fill up with new residents. He said one twelve-plex is complete and fully rented and the second one has renters for October 1st. He also said that one of the five-unit townhomes on N. 4th Street all have certificates of occupancy and ready to go. He also mentioned that The Meadow Part 5 (on Prairie View Dr.) has several lots sold with a variety of single-family and zero-lot dwellings.

Comments from the Chair and Commission

Fuller informed the Commission that in recent weeks there has been a lot of discussion surrounding creating an overlay zone in West Branch, specifically along Main Street. Fuller said an overlay zone is defined as regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over existing base zone(s), which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying

base zone. He said that discussions have led the City to consider establishing an interim “Main Street Development Zone” as an overlay has been discussed with the City Council, Main Street and the Historic Preservation Commission, of which all are in support of. Fuller said the reason for the overlay zone is protect the historic nature of West Branch’s Main Street, promote economic development and maintain current building facades. He said this overlay zone would affect new commercial businesses but not residential properties. Fuller said the groups have also discussed that this would initially have a trial period of two to three years to see how things go and if the overlay district should continue. Fuller said a draft ordinance is with the City Attorney for his review and that Fuller would share it with the Commission upon completion.

Adjourn

Motion by Bowers, second by Fuller to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Submitted by:
Leslie Brick
City Clerk