



4:30 PM, Wednesday, February 12, 2025
IONIA CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bailey called the February 12, 2025, regular meeting of the Ionia Planning Commission to order at 4:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Planning Commissioners Logan Bailey, Ryan Gregory, Tim Lee, and Judy Swartz present.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Bailey introduced the agenda and asked if there were any requested changes. Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Swartz, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(IV.1.) January 8, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the regular meeting of January 8, 2025, were reviewed. Planning Commissioner Swartz made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to approve the January 8, 2025 meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION

(VI.1.) RAVE – Rezoning Application for 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue

Assistant City Manager Bowman introduced the request to rezone 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from the B-1, Neighborhood Business District to the HDR, High-Density Residential District submitted by Relief After Violent Encounter (RAVE), a 501C (3) nonprofit agency that supports and advocates for the adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence. As directed by the City of Ionia's Master Plan, Bowman reviewed the following analysis with the Planning Commission for their consideration of the request:

A. Does the proposed new classification meet the qualifications noted in the appropriate

portion of the Future Land Use chapter?

The 2019 City of Ionia Master Plan Future Land Use Map designates 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue as General Commercial, however the property to the west is designated as Multi-Family High-Density Residential. It is important that the result of the new classification does not result in a “spot zoning” which means it is the sole property with the new classification in the surrounding area. The City must consider the anticipated future development of the area and how this rezoning aligns with this vision.

B. Are the uses allowed in the requested district appropriate for the proposed location or can the uses be designed to fit the proposed location without a negative impact on the nearby land uses?

RAVE’s existing use is a legal nonconformity in the current zoning district even though it has been in place since the 1990’s. It does not appear that there will be a negative impact on the nearby land uses because the uses are well established and tend to be more intense along the M-21 corridor. For example, the SKLD nursing home is located on the adjacent parcel.

C. Have any conditions changed in the area since the Plan was adopted which might justify this change?

The area has not changed since the Plan was adopted, however the rezoning will address the nonconforming use that has existed since before the 2019 Master Plan was adopted.

D. Will there be any community impacts which should be considered, such as increased traffic, or others which might create a need for additional services or improvements?

As the use is existing, there will not be immediate changes or direct community impacts that result from the rezoning. All potential uses permitted by right and special land use in the proposed HDR, High-Density Residential District should be reviewed. Typical community impacts occur from “spot zoning” because the new uses do not align with what is already permitted on adjacent properties. as mentioned, "spot zoning" is not a concern for this proposed rezoning.

E. Are there any potential environmental considerations which will be contrary to the intent of the existing or proposed classification of land use?

The City is not aware of any potential environmental considerations contrary to the intent of the existing or proposed classification of land use for the respective parcels with the requested rezoning.

F. Will there be any adverse effects on adjacent properties as a result of the proposed land use change?

As mentioned, the property to the west is SKLD and to the east is a commercial property. The other properties to the south are commercial operations. M-21 creates a natural buffer between the properties in this area because it is a prominent corridor. It is not believed that the adjacent properties will experience any adverse effects as a result of the proposed land use change. Public notice letters were mailed to all properties within 300 feet of the rezoning. No input was received from the public.

G. Will granting the rezoning request likely lead to significant changes contained in the Master Plan for the area where the rezoning is requested?

While the requested rezoning does not directly align with the zoning classification designated on the Future Land Use Map, it is not unreasonable to consider the rezoning because it will not result in a “spot zoning” issue, and an HDR district parcel is adjacent. Staff do not believe the request would lead to significant changes contained in the Master Plan.

H. Could this use be accommodated in some other location or in the proposed location by some other zoning measure such as a special land use or a planned unit development?

The City has limited property within the HDR, High-Density Residential District. Reviewing the City’s Zoning Map, it is evident that these properties are spaced out throughout the community in key areas. Taking a deeper look, the majority of these parcels have longstanding dense residential uses. Another factor to consider is the longevity of the existing nonconforming use. The proposed rezoning appears to be the best solution to remedy the nonconforming issues and support the future plans for the property. After meeting with the property owner, all possible zoning options were reviewed prior to the request. Transitional housing is not allowed as a special land use in any of the business zoning districts, and a Planned Unit Development was not needed because the use is allowed as a special land use in the HDR district.

RAVE's Executive Director Jennifer Butler was present at the meeting and informed the Commission of current operations and future plans for the shelter. The Commission asked questions and expressed appreciation to RAVE for going through the process of correcting the nonconformity.

Chairperson Bailey opened the public hearing for comments on the proposed rezoning request at 4:51 PM. The public hearing was subsequently closed at 4:51 PM following no public comments.

Planning Commissioner Lee made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Gregory, to recommend to City Council the approval of the rezoning request for 848 and 850 E. Lincoln Avenue from the B-1, Neighborhood Business District to the HDR, High-Density Residential District.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

(VIII.1.) Master Plan - Goals and Priorities

Planning Consultant Bradley Kotrba presented draft Master Plan goals by organizing them into categories including Downtown Ionia, Neighborhood Development and Housing Needs, and Parks, Recreation, and Environmental Sustainability. The Commission provided feedback on the sample goals. A main emphasis from the Commission was the desire to combine similar themes and start with broad topics that allow for more specific priorities to develop within the Plan and

from respective City departments.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

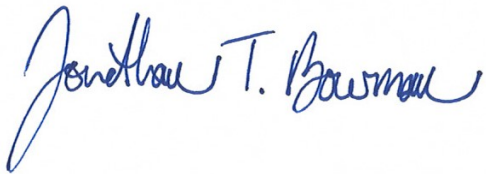
X. ADJOURNMENT

Planning Commissioner Swartz made a motion, seconded by Planning Commissioner Lee, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan T. Bowman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan T. Bowman, Recording Secretary
for Judy Swartz, Secretary