

**Minutes of the Planning Commission  
Of the City of Portland**

Held on Wednesday, August 12, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.  
In Council Chambers at City Hall

Portland Planning Commission Members Present: Grapentien, Clement, Fitzsimmons, Hinds, Williamson

Absent: Culp, Kmetz

Staff: City Manager Gorman, City Clerk Miller

Guests: Jeremy Ingraham, Charlene Ingraham

City Clerk Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Clerk Miller opened the floor for nominations for Chair.

Motion by Clement, supported by Hinds to nominate Grapentien as Chair.

There were no other nominations.

City Clerk Miller held a vote on the nomination.

All in favor. Approved.

Chair Grapentien opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Hinds to nominate Clement as Vice Chair.

There were no other nominations.

Chair Grapentien held a vote on the nomination.

All in favor. Approved.

Chair Grapentien opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

Motion by Clement, supported by Fitzsimmons, to nominate Kmetz as Secretary.

There were no other nominations.

Chair Grapentien held a vote on the nomination.

All in favor. Approved.

There was no public comment.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Clement, to approve the Agenda as presented.

All in favor. Approved.

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Motion by Clement, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2015 regular meeting as presented.

All in favor. Approved.

Chair Grapentien opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 P.M.

City Manager Gorman presented information on the Special Land Use request for the property at 175 Kent St. to permit the operation of a daycare center pursuant to Section 42-341(m). This property was previously used as a daycare center by Tate's Playhouse but a search of previous records do not show that a Special Land Use was granted as required by the Zoning Ordinance. Due to the tornado that struck Portland on June 22, 2015 the Sunny Bunch daycare that was operating out of the Portland Methodist Church has been displaced. They would like to use the property at 175 Kent St. for their operation until reconstruction is completed at the Portland Methodist Church.

City Manager Gorman noted that this is a permissible use in this district.

Chair Grapentien inquired if this would be a temporary use.

Mr. Ingraham stated that they are planning for this to be a temporary use, but it could be up to a year.

City Manager Gorman noted that when a daycare was in operation at this location trash near the sidewalks was an issue and they were asked to make other arrangements. The current applicant has also been asked to make similar off site arrangements.

Vice Chair Clement asked if all of the requirements for a Special Land Use have been met.

Mr. Ingraham stated that his belief that all of the requirements have been met. Due to the tornado there are 14 full-time employees out of jobs and all of the children and families of the daycare have been displaced. If the daycare has to be closed until the church is restored it will likely be unable to reopen.

Vice Chair Clement stated she is in favor of the building used for a daycare but is concerned the Zoning Ordinance would not allow a favorable vote.

City Manager Gorman stated that the requirement of Section 42-341 (m)(4) can be met with the marking of the designated drop-off area and that the requirement of Section 42-341 (m)(6) states, "or as required by the State." If the location is approved by daycare licensing for the State of Michigan then it will meet the City's requirement.

Mrs. Ingraham stated that per the State of Michigan licensing the useable outdoor area does not have to be on-site and can be something that is walkable; like a park which is available.

Mr. Ingraham stated that State of Michigan licensing is aware of their plans and their request.

City Manager Gorman noted that most drop-offs to the daycare will be at approximately 7:00 A.M.

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Vice Chair Clement confirmed that the appropriate signs will be put in place.

Mr. Ingraham stated that they would be.

Chair Grapentien closed the Public Hearing at 7:15 P.M.

Under New Business, the request was considered by the commission.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Hinds, to approve the request for a Special Land Use Permit for the property at 175 Kent St. to permit the operation of a daycare center pursuant to Section 42-341(m). All in favor. Approved.

Under Member Comments, Vice Chair Clement noted that We Three Strings will be performing at the Band Shell tomorrow night for Thursdays on the Grand.

City Manager Gorman addressed the ongoing issue with potential restaurants without a drive through facility being able to meet the parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance Section 42-186(c). He further stated that in his opinion the first two provisions should be stricken. In comparison to Ionia and Grand Ledge our ordinance is very aggressive and hard to understand.

There was discussion.

Vice Chair Clement suggested looking at what innovative Cities are doing on this type of requirement and looking at proposed language at the next meeting.

There was continued discussion.

Chair Grapentien asked for an update on rebuilding efforts since the tornado struck Portland on June 22, 2015.

City Manager Gorman reported that all of the churches are moving forward with rebuilding. The Goodwill is looking to rebuild but is considering other locations in Portland. They will be going to their Board of Directors for approve this month. Rite Aid is currently making changes to their building. Janice Frewen and Star Nails have had plans approved for demolition to begin soon. In roughly the same time period as last year approximately 30 building permits have been issued compared to 8 last year.

In other development in the City, The WODA Group was awarded funding by MSHDA for its redevelopment project of Old School Manor at 306 Brush St. Environmental studies are currently being conducted on the property. The timber framing of the Red Mill Pavilion is also underway at this time.

Motion by Clement, supported by Hinds, to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 P.M.  
All in favor. Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

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John Kmetz, Secretary