City of Charlevoix
Planning Commission Special Work Session minutes
Monday, October 24, 2022 - 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, 210 State Street, Charlevoix, MI

A. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chair Waddell at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

C. Inquiry into Potential Conflicts of Interest

D. Approval of Agenda

E. Call for Public Comment Not Related to Agenda Items

F. New Business

1. Downtown Building Height Presentation

   Chair Waddell summarized the previous Planning Commission discussions regarding downtown building height. He gave examples of downtown building height issues in Petoskey and Traverse City. He stated that presently Charlevoix had a 40' height limit in place with an allowance of 6' over that to hide mechanicals like air conditioning, stairways, etc. He stated that the question is how do they keep the charm and feel of the downtown and still make the downtown buildings viable. Chair Waddell stated that they had invited the groups to provide input on this issue and he proceeded to invite each group representative to speak:

   <u>Downtown Development Authority (DDA) & Historic District Commission:</u>
   Lindsey Dotson, DDA Director, stated that she was representing both groups this evening, explained the roles of each, and provided a PowerPoint presentation. She described the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties as a list of guidelines created by the National Park Service for the treatment of historic properties. A building is supposed to be a physical record of the time it was built. She explained that they were nominating the entire commercial corridor of Charlevoix to the National Register of Historic Places, which is not a local regulatory historic district, but is a designation, a nod of importance and acknowledging the significance of what the commercial corridor did for the development of Charlevoix and its history. This national designation opens the door to numerous resources, including some grants that have been applied for to try to convert a building that doesn't look the way it did when it was built to something similar to what was originally built, so that it can be considered a contributing resource to the District. This is an incentive for the property owner to maintain or restore the history of the building and they

could receive financial savings in the form of tax credits from both the national and state levels. She provided examples of under utilized square footage and the potential for additional housing in the downtown.

Director Dotson stated that in moving forward if they were talking about changes in height she did hope that they could keep in mind that the design and form matter. She stated that the DDA did work extensively on the Design Guidelines for the downtown.

Shade Tree & Park Commission:
Chair Perry Hodgson explained the duties of the Commission; trees enhance/frame a view of a space, and the street trees program with a diverse mix of trees.

Zoning Board of Appeals:
Chair Richard Hodgson stated that most of the time the ZBA meets it's about dimensional variances in aligning with planes, usually not height, but they did have an interpretation and finding on a variance request on Bridge Street related to height limitations.

Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce:
Brett Binkley, member of the Chamber Board of Directors, stated that they did a major renovation of what was known as the Pine River Bookstore that has been split and now includes an office that backs up to Van Pelt Alley for his business. He spoke in favor of a height increase that would allow more versatility and opportunities.

Chair Waddell opened and closed the meeting for public comment as there were no other speakers.

2. Comments from invited boards and commissions
   Director Dotson showed historic photos of the Bridge and Clinton Street area.

   Perry Hodgson questioned if anything could be done about the overhead utility lines that detract from the look of downtown.
3. Closing remarks
   Chair Waddell stated that he and Vice Chair Muladore appreciated everyone's attendance and participation at the meeting.

   Chair Waddell stated that everyone of the homeowners in the Earl Young Historical District had to agree to include their home in the District and he questioned if that would be true of a Historical District for the downtown. Director Dotson stated the owners were not required to agree but they would be notified and, because the District was not regulatory, it did not depend on whether or not a majority agreed with the designation.

G. Requests For Next Months Agenda or Research Items

H. Adjournment by 8:00 p.m. unless extended by a motion

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

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Sarah J. Dvoracek/fgm Clerk RJ Waddell Chair