

CITY OF MUSKEGON

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

June 12, 2025 @ 4:00 PM

MUSKEGON CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
933 TERRACE STREET, MUSKEGON, MI 49440

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

L. Willet-Leroi called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and roll call was taken.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: L. Willet Leroi, K. Johnson, J. Seyferth, B. Mazade, S. Gawron, and J. Montgomery Keast

Member(s) Absent: S. Blake and L. Simmons II

Member(s) Excused: D. Keener

Staff Present: M. Franzak and S. Romine

Others Present:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the Minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting on May 15, 2025, was made by J. Montgomery Keast, supported by K. Johnson, and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Case 2025-19: Request for a special use permit to operate an urban commercial farm at 2407 Barclay St, by Coty Sloan.** Planning

SUMMARY

The applicant is an urban flower farmer and is moving his business, Restoring Eden, from Georgia to Michigan. He is requesting a special use permit to operate an urban commercial farm at 2407 Barclay St. He would grow flowers on site and supply them to florists, event planners, and customers. The ordinance allows for urban commercial farms in this zoning district with the issuance of a special use permit, but it does not allow for retail sales on site.

The property is zoned R, Neighborhood Residential, and there is an existing duplex on site. The parcel is fairly secluded, with no residential neighbors in the back and a storage facility to the south. The applicant will own the duplex and live in the unit to the north, and a tenant (not involved with the farm) will rent the unit to the south (closest to the farm). Ruddiman Creek runs through the southernmost portion of the lot. The parcel measures 1.7 acres.

Please see the enclosed site plan document that shows the layout of the farm. Please also see the copy of the Community Gardens, Private Gardens, and Urban Commercial Farms ordinance.

Notice was sent to all properties within 300 feet of the property. At the time of this writing, staff had not received any comments from the public.

EXERCISE

Planning Commissioners, please be prepared to answer and discuss the following questions as they relate to Section 2332.4 of the zoning ordinance:

1. Do you believe this use is consistent with all adjacent uses and structures?
2. Do you believe the proposed use would be considered offensive or a nuisance for any of the following reasons?
 - a. Increased traffic
 - b. Noise
 - c. Vibration
 - d. Light
3. Do you find that adequate water and sewer infrastructure exists or will be constructed to service the use?

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the special use permit for the urban commercial farm. Furthermore, staff believe this would be a great location for on-site sales, although the ordinance does not allow for it. It may be worth exploring an amendment to the accessory commercial unit (ACU) ordinance to provide an opportunity for urban farms to operate sales carts/booths on-site, and also designating this area, which is fairly commercial, as an allowed ACU designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

M. Oakes, 2379 Park St.: Has concerns about yard waste being placed on her property, which is adjacent to the applicants.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING - MOTION

A motion to close the public hearing was made by J. Montgomery Keast,

supported by J. Seyferth, and unanimously approved.

MOTION PASSES

MOTION

Motion by K. Johnson, seconded by J. Montgomery Keast, that the request for a special use permit to operate an urban commercial farm at 2407 Barclay St be approved.

ROLL VOTE: **Ayes:** K. Johnson, J. Montgomery Keast, L. Willet Leroi, S. Gawron, B. Mazade, and J. Seyferth.

Nays: None

MOTION PASSES

B. Case 2025-20: Request for a special use permit to operate a cat café at 926 2nd Street, by The Arc of Muskegon. Planning

SUMMARY

The property is zoned FBC, Mainstreet. Cat cafes are allowed as a special use permitted under the following conditions:

- a. Keeping of domestic animals shall be consistent with the provisions of Chapter 26, noise, and Chapter 70, nuisances/littering of the City's Code of Ordinances.
- b. Limited to cats (felines) only.
- c. Capacity: The establishment must provide 62 square feet per one (1) cat and no more than 15 on-site at any one time.
- d. The cats shall always be kept separate from food preparation areas.
- e. The boarding of cats shall take place entirely indoors.
- f. Any cats leaving the establishment must be in a carrier.
- g. A sign indicating a 24-hour emergency phone number shall be kept current and posted on the site in a place clearly visible from the exterior.

The building unit measures 907 sq ft, which would allow up to 14 cats on site. The applicant has stated that they plan on having between 4-6 cats.

Notice was sent to all properties within 300 feet of this parcel. At the time of this writing, staff had received one email in support of the project.

EXERCISE

Planning Commissioners, please be prepared to answer and discuss the following questions as they relate to Section 2332.4 of the zoning ordinance:

1. Do you believe this use is consistent with all adjacent uses and structures?
2. Do you believe the proposed use would be considered offensive or a nuisance for any of the following reasons?
 - a. Increased traffic
 - b. Noise
 - c. Vibration
 - d. Light
3. Do you find that adequate water and sewer infrastructure exists or will be constructed to service the use?

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the special use permit with a maximum number of 14 cats.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

C. Larsen, 932 2nd St: Concerned about smell, the proximity of cats to the common areas within the condo association, and the units that are above the commercial spaces.

E. Prow, 934 2nd St: Owns the business next door and worries about smells from the cats, and for those who may have allergies.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING - MOTION

A motion to close the public hearing was made by J. Seyferth, supported by J. Montgomery Keast, and unanimously approved.

MOTION PASSES

MOTION

J. Montgomery Keast moved, seconded by J. Seyferth, that the request for a special use permit to operate a cat cafe at 926 2nd Street be approved with the following conditions:

- 1. The maximum number of cats is 6.*
- 2. The special use permit becomes revocable if an unreasonable number of odor or noise complaints are received.*

ROLL VOTE: **Ayes:** J. Montgomery Keast, J. Seyferth, K. Johnson, S. Gawron, and L. Willet Leroi

Nays: B. Mazade

MOTION PASSES

C. Case 2025-21: Request to rezone the property at 62 Irwin Avenue from R, Neighborhood Residential, to RM-1, Low-Density Multiple Family Residential. Planning

SUMMARY

The property is zoned R, Neighborhood Residential. The parcel measures 13,200 sq. ft, and the former, vacant church on site measures 2,583 sq. ft. The applicant would like to convert the former church into residential units. The current zoning would allow up to a duplex, but the building is large enough to host more units. A rezoning to RM-1 would allow up to 16 units per acre, which would be four units on this property, assuming each unit would meet the necessary size requirements. With RM-1 zoning, the applicant would also have the option to apply for a special use permit for a single-room occupancy building, which he is also considering.

The parcels to the west along Peck Street are also zoned RM-1. However, staff have been holding focus group discussions with these business owners about the possibility of rezoning the district to form-based code. Initial discussions were very positive and well-received. Even if these parcels were to be rezoned away from RM-1, the rezoning of 62 Irwin should still be considered for a rezoning to this designation, and staff do not believe this would be considered a spot zone. The Master Plan specifically talks about being flexible with the zoning of former civic buildings and allowing more density in their redevelopment.

Notice was sent to all properties within 300 feet of this parcel. At the time of this writing, staff had not received any comments from the public.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: I move that the request to rezone the property at 62 Irwin Avenue, from R to RM-1, be recommended to the City Commission for approval.

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENCED:

No public comments were received

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING - MOTION

A motion to close the public hearing was made by J. Montgomery Keast, supported by K. Johnson, and unanimously approved.

MOTION PASSED

MOTION

Motion by K. Johnson, seconded by J. Montgomery Keast, that the request to rezone the property at 62 Irwin Avenue, from R to RM-1, be recommended to the City Commission for approval.

ROLL VOTE: **Ayes:** K. Johnson, J. Montgomery Keast, J. Seyferth, L. Willet Leroi, S. Gawron, and B. Mazade
Nays: None

MOTION PASSES

D. Case 2025-22: Request to rezone the property located at 1188 Lakeshore Drive, from Lakefront Recreation (LR), to Form-based Code, Urban Residential (FBC-UR). Planning

SUMMARY

This vacant lot measures 1.6 acres and is zoned LR, Lakefront Recreation. It is located between the Lakeshore Yacht Harbour Marina and Adelaide Pointe, and is owned by Cole's Quality Foods. The applicant is considering purchasing the property and would like to build a single-family house to live in. The LR zoning designation does not allow for housing. The lot does not have frontage on a street, but the applicant is working with the Lakeshore Yacht Harbour to obtain an easement from the southern end of this lot to W. Western Avenue.

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property to Form-Based Code, Urban Residential, which would allow up to a duplex and an accessory dwelling unit, in terms of density. However, he is only planning on developing one single-family house. Much of the lot is unusable for construction as it lies below the ordinary high watermark, and there is also a large slope in the building footprint area. Utilities will need to be installed underneath the former railroad ROW, and the applicant will be responsible for obtaining easements from CSX. A driveway will also need to be installed at the end of the cul-de-sac and across the bike path. A permit from the City Engineering Department will be required.

The Future Land Use map in the Master Plan identifies this parcel as "Lakeshore", which is described as "Mixed-Use development and recreational, water-related activities located along the Muskegon Lake shoreline. The large lot sizes, uniquely shaped parcels, and wide range of permitted uses, Planned Unit Developments (PUD), are common in this land use category."

A site plan is not required for a rezoning project, but one has been provided to show how the development would work. The applicant has worked with City

staff to create a driveway that would be placed in a way to minimize conflict with the bike path.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the request, with the condition that the project moves forward. The applicant will have to purchase the property and obtain easements for the driveway and utilities before permits can be pulled. While the rezoning to FBC-UR does not totally align with the mixed-use designation in the Future Land Use map, the low elevation of most of the lot prevents its redevelopment into anything substantial. A single-family house may be about as large of a development that could fit on this lot, given its development challenges. The addition of a housing unit will contribute to the mixed-use along the shoreline.

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENCED:

No public comments were received

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING - MOTION

A motion to close the public hearing was made by J. Montgomery Keast, supported by J. Seyferth, and unanimously approved.

MOTION PASSES

MOTION

Motion by B. Mazade, seconded by J. Montgomery Keast, move that the request to rezone the property at 1188 Lakeshore Drive from LR to FBC-UR, be recommended to the City Commission for approval with the following conditions:

1. The applicant receives permission to install all necessary utilities under the former railroad easement within the next 18 months of this meeting.
2. Building permits are issued within 24 months of this meeting.
3. The zoning of the property shall revert back to LR if these conditions are not met.

ROLL VOTE: **Ayes:** J. Seyferth, J. Montgomery Keast, K. Johnson, B. Mazade, S. Gawron, and L. Willet Leroi

Nays: None

MOTION PASSES

- E. **Case 2025-23: Request to amend the Planned Unit Development at 1148/1204 W Western Ave (Adelaide Point) to allow retail and other commercial uses in the boat storage/warehousing buildings.** Planning

Removed from the agenda at the applicant's request.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

A. Case 2025-24: Request for a site plan review for building additions at 2034, 2084, and 2140 Latimer Dr, by GE Aerospace. Planning

SUMMARY

GE Aviation owns the three contiguous parcels at 2034, 2084, and 2140 Latimer Dr. The buildings at 2034 and 2084 Latimer Dr were combined a long time ago, although it is unclear how that was accomplished on two separate parcels. The proposed 33,800 sf addition will connect the rear portions of these two buildings. The maintenance building is located on 2084 Latimer Dr, but the proposed addition to it will be located on 2140 Latimer Dr. At the staff's request, the applicant has begun the process of combining the lots. This review can be conducted as all three parcels have been combined.

The plan also proposes 244 additional parking spaces with improvements made to the northern portion of the parcel. Trees and landscaping have been added to the parking islands. The stormwater permits for the properties must be updated with the Engineering Department.

The parcel is zoned I-2, General Industrial, and is located in the Port City Industrial Park. Please see the attached site plan.

Motion by B. Mazade, seconded by J. Seyferth, to approve the site plan for 2034, 2084, and 2140 Latimer Dr with the conditions that the lots be combined and the stormwater permits are amended.

ROLL VOTE: **Ayes:** J. Seyferth, K. Johnson, L. Willet Leroi, J. Montgomery Keast, B. Mazade, and S. Gawron

Nays: None

MOTION PASSES

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Marie Meisch, MMC City Clerk