City of Eaton Rapids

Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes, June 2, 2025

1. **Call to Order**: Chair Vanek called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call:**

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chair Vanek	X		Com Hiltz	X	
Vice Chair Baker	X		Com Wicker	X	
Secretary Tanner	X		Com Davis	X	
Com Wegner	X		Com Millington	X	
Com Jobse	X				

Also present were Building Official Hummel and Financial Specialist Leigh Tyler.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**:

   Commissioner Millington moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Hiltz seconded. Motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

4. **Approval of the May 5, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting minutes**:
   Commissioner Tanner moved to approve the May 5th Minutes and Commissioner Davis seconded. Motion carried to approve the minutes as presented.

5. **Old Business: None**
6. **Public Hearing –** 1401 South Main (Taco Bell)– Site Plan – Public Hearing opened at 7:03 pm Building Official Hummel states that Black River Bells propose to demolish the current building at 1401 South Main Street and build a new building. This will allow for the drive thru on the North side. The existing Marilin west drive will be closed off and the east drive will be used as an exit only. There will be a 6' fence between the drive up lane and the residential properties. The site plan has been approved by the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and the DPW Director.
   The following discussion took place between the Planning Commission, Building Official Hummel and Justin Salter (Civil Engineer for Taco Bell)
   Discussion: Chair Vanek asked if all of the utilities are in place. Hummel answers yes. Commissioner Hiltz asked if the lighting on the North side of the building is tipped up. Engineer Salter said that it is not and that most municipalities require downward lighting. Commissioner Wicker asked that if the Taco Bell drive thru ended up being too noisy, is there something that can be done after the fact. Engineer Justin says that Taco Bell is proposing a solid vinyl fence and extensive landscaping around the drive thru. Building Official Hummel states that the ordinance requires a masonry wall but the Planning Commission has the choice of what type of barrier to require. Commissioner Tanner had questions about the layout. He wants to know if a crosswalk can be added where the customers will

be walking from the east parking lot into the building. Engineer Justin says that it can be presented to Taco Bell. Tanner then wanted to know if there is enough room for the cars to get around the cars waiting in the drive thru line. Justin says that yes there is the standard 12' and maybe more clearance to get around those vehicles but maybe some pavement markers might help. Chair Vanek wanted to know if we can explore redirecting some of the traffic into the Family Fare parking lot to decrease the traffic on Marilin Street. He would also like the ordering station moved to the East side of the building instead of the North side. Commissioner Hiltz wants to require a masonry wall around the drive thru to cut down on the noise. Chair Vanek wants the building to blend in to the neighborhood. He does want the windows taking up 40% of the walls and he thinks that they should be at least 2.6' off the ground. He also would like the colors of the building to be compatible with those already in the neighborhood. Commissioner Wegner wanted to know if we can look into opening up the East side parking lot for entering. Engineer Justin said that he could look into that.
Public Comment:
Mike Foley (211 Marlin Street, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827) came to the podium. Mike states that he appreciates the concern of the closeness to the residential area. He sees problems with the Family Fare parking lot already with traffic getting backed up. He disagrees with moving the order station to the south end of the building and he would like the east driveway to go away completely. Mike proposed that an L-Shaped fence be constructed to reduce the number of headlights into his residence. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:50 pm.
Motion: Chair Vanek moved to table the Site Plan Review and to reconvene with the developer at the next meeting to review a new site plan with the changes that the Planning Commission is suggesting. Vice Chair Baker seconded the motion. Motion FAILS (See Roll Call vote)

Vanek – Aye	Jobse – Nay	Davis - Nay
Baker – Aye	Hiltz – Aye	Wegner - Aye
Tanner – Nay	Millington – Nay	Wicker – Nay

Motion: Vice Chair Baker moved that the site plan be approved with the following conditions:

- That the building meets architectural requirements per the ordinance
- That the east parking lot be connected with Family Fare parking lot on the east side
- That the east parking lot and drive thru lane be screened with masonry barrier wall
- Clear traffic flow identification in the parking lot
- Make the east driveway 8' narrower from the west
- Make a crosswalk from the east parking lot to the restaurant for pedestrians
- Acquire property of the south east corner that abuts Family Fair
- That all these stipulations be approved by the Building Department
- There are mixed opinions on whether we can regulate the stores hours but we also propose that they limit their hours to 6:00 am to 12:00 am

Commissioner Wicker seconded the motion and all commissioners voted Aye – Motion passes

6B. Rezoning of Eaton Rapids Medical Center

Public Hearing – Building Official Hummel states that currently the ERMC is zoned Single Family / Residential and they would like to be rezoned to General Business Zoning. This would benefit the

ERMC. They would be able to increase the size and height of their signage and it would allow flexibility with any future construction plans.

Tim Johnson (CEO of ERMC) and Pamela Colestock (Executive Assistant) spoke in support of the rezoning. They stated that it makes sense to not be zoned residential because no one lives there.

Motion: Commissioner Hiltz moved to recommend approval to City Council to rezone the Eaton Rapids Medical Center to General Business Zoning. Commissioner Millington seconded the motion and all members voted Aye.

7. **New Business – Review 2024 Annual Report**
   Secretary Tanner reviewed the bullet points of the 2024 Annual Report
   Commissioner Hilltz moved that they approve the 2024 Annual Report. Commissioner Davis seconded the Motion and all Commissioners voted Aye.

8. **Public Comments: None**
9. **Correspondence: None**
10. **Reports:**
    Building Official - Building Official Hummel stated that Allen Edwin Homes is looking at extending into the west part of the Inverness subdivision. We are working with a developer to find a property in the city to build a 96-unit apartment complex. 400 Dexter is still in process. There is NO news on the old mill property being transferred to the Eaton County Land Bank.

    Zoning Board of Appeals – At the last ZBA meeting, there was a Public Hearing regarding a variance for the Eaton Rapids Medical Center sign. The sign is in MDOT's right of way so the request was tabled until 0they can get approval from MDOT.

    Councilman Steele – No Report

    Planning Commission – Commissioner Millington expressed that he is very proud of the commission for voting the right way regarding the Taco Bell Site Plan.

    Vice Chairman Baker informed the commission that he has purchased a home outside of the City of Eaton Rapids in Hamlin Township. It will take a while to get moved but he will be resigning from the Planning Commission when the time comes.

    Commissioner Davis made a motion that we adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Millington seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Minutes Recorded by:

Leigh Tyler / Financial Specialist

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