



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING PACKET CONTENTS

Thursday, June 12, 2025 – 6:00pm

1. Notice of Meeting Location Change – Howard Miller Community Center – 14 S Church St
2. Agenda
3. Staff Memo – June 12th Planning Commission meeting agenda
4. Notice of Public Hearing – 605 & 633 E Main Ave – Rezoning Application
5. Rezoning Application with Narrative – 605 & 633 E Main Ave
6. Aerial Image – 605 & 633 E Main Ave
7. Planning Consultant Memo – 605 & 633 E Main Ave Rezoning Application
8. Correspondence – June 5, 2025 letter from Ryan Baas of 28 S Sanford St.
9. Correspondence - June 10, 2025 letter from Ann Query of 520 E Central Ave.
10. Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – June 5, 2025

NOTICE OF **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING LOCATION CHANGE**

Zeeland City Planning Commission

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE
JUNE 12TH, 2025
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

TAKE NOTICE that the Zeeland City Planning Commission whose chambers are located at City Hall, 21 S Elm Street, Zeeland, Michigan, and whose telephone number is 616-772-0872, has scheduled a meeting to occur on:

Thursday, June 12th, 2025

at

The Howard Miller Community Center

Main Floor Banquet Room

14 S Church Street, Zeeland, MI 49464

- 6:00pm – Meeting called to order

Tim Maday
Zoning Administrator / Community Development Director

The City of Zeeland will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing with a need for an accommodation, upon being provided with a notice to the City of Zeeland three days prior to the public hearing. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City of Zeeland by writing or calling the City Clerk's Office 616-772-6400.

**CITY OF ZEELAND
PLANNING COMMISSION
AGENDA
JUNE 12, 2025
HOWARD MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
14 S CHURCH ST
LESTER HOOGLAND BANQUET ROOM
MAIN FLOOR**

6:00PM

- Meeting called to order
- Roll Call
- Excuse absent members
- Additional agenda items

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Public comment

COMMUNICATIONS/REPORTS:

-

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 6:00pm – Rezoning Application – Mead Johnson & Company – Application to rezone 605 & 633 E Main Ave to I-2 – General Industrial District

ACTION:

- Planning Commission meeting minutes of June 5, 2025

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

-

NEW BUSINESS:

-

OTHER:

- Consider any other business which may lawfully come before the Planning Commission



21 South Elm Street • Zeeland, Michigan 49464 • (616) 772-0872 • (616) 772-0880

MEMORANDUM

DATE: Tuesday, June 10, 2025
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Tim Maday, Community Development Director
RE: **June 12, 2025 Special Planning Commission meeting agenda**

This memo is being sent to provide an overview of the agenda of the June 12th Planning Commission meeting.

Meeting location & Information – Howard Miller Community Center

The June 12th Planning Commission meeting will be held at the Howard Miller Community Center in the Lester Hoogland Banquet Room on the main floor.

This is a single application, special Planning Commission meeting to hear a Rezoning Application for the parcels at 605 and 633 E Main Ave. On June 5th, a conceptual presentation was made to the Planning Commission related to an expansion that is being planned at the Mead Johnson facility on East Main Avenue. The presentation was intended to provide context to the City's residents, boards, and commissions as they begin hearing the individual applications associated with the project.

Public hearing – Rezoning Application for 605 & 633 E Main Ave

The first application to be heard for this project seeks to have the parcels at 605 & 633 E Main Ave rezoned to I-2 – General Industrial Zone District, so they can be incorporated into the adjacent Mead Johnson site for use in their project.

As is common for applications involving substantive or potentially complex issues, staff has obtained a report from the City's Planning Consultant to support the Planning Commission's review of the application. That report is included in this meeting packet. The City Planning Consultant will be present at the meeting to assist with any questions Commissioners may have.

Public Comment – Rezoning Application for 605 & 633 E Main Ave

Following the presentation of the application by the applicant, public comments will be accepted regarding the application.

In advance of the meeting, staff has received two written communications regarding the application:

1. A June 5, 2025 letter from Ryan Baas of 28 S Sanford St.
2. A June 10, 2025 letter from Ann Query of 520 E Central Ave.

These two communications are included in the meeting packet.

Action on Rezoning Application

Following the public hearing at the June 12th Planning Commission meeting, an initial action on the application will be needed from the Planning Commission. That initial action may occur on June 12th, if the Commission is satisfied that sufficient information has been provided, or at a later date if additional information or time to discern is needed.

In the City of Zeeland, rezoning is a three-step process:

1. Following a public hearing an initial decision is made by the Planning Commission through approval of a motion to rezone or not to rezone.
2. At a later meeting, a resolution affirming the Planning Commission's initial decision, and recommending that City Council approve/not approve the rezoning application comes before the Commission for consideration and action.
3. City Council takes final action on the rezoning application after considering the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

I hope this memo is helpful in explaining the agenda of the June 12, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact with me questions you may have regarding any items referenced in this memo, or anything else.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF ZEELAND
PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING**

Take notice that the Planning Commission whose chambers are in the Zeeland City Hall at 21 South Elm Street, Zeeland, Michigan, and whose telephone number is (616) 772-0872, will meet:

Thursday, June 12, 2025

6:00 P.M.

At 14 S. Church Street

**in the North Activity Room of the Lower Level of the
Howard Miller Library and Community Center**

in regard to the following matters and requests:

First Request: The rezoning of property at 605 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, from R-3, the Two-Family and Multiple-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District.

The property for which rezoning is requested is legally described as follows:

PART OF SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 COM ON S SEC LI S 89D 55M 52S W 1310.09 FT FROM SE SEC COR, TH ALG S SEC LI S 89D 55M 52S W 161.08 FT, N 03D 04M 59S W 222.4 FT ALG E LI OF DIVISION ST, TH N 86D 57M 32S E 176.2 FT ALG S LI OF LOT 4 OF NAGELKERK ADD & ITS EXTENSION, TH S 0D 43M 15S W 231.25 FT ALG E LI OF W 1/2 OF SE 1/4 TO BEG. SEC 18 T5N R14W. CITY OF ZEELAND, OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN. PPN: 70-17-18-471-008.

Second Request: The rezoning of property at 633 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, from R-2, the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District.

The property for which rezoning is requested is legally described as follows:

PART OF SE 1/4 COM S 89D 55M 52S W 1099 FT FROM SE SEC COR, TH S 89D 55M 52S W 211.09 FT, N 0D 43M 15S E 304 FT ALG E LI OF W 1/2 OF SE 1/4, TH N 89D 55M 52S E 212.47 FT, S 0D 58M 53S W 304.02 FT TO PT OF BEG. SEC 18 T5N R14W, CITY OF ZEELAND, OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN. PPN: 70-17-18-471-045.

A map of the property may be obtained in the Zoning Administrator's Office from 8:30 to 12:00 A.M. and from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. on any day not a holiday from Monday through Friday. The public or anyone receiving this notice may present their written or oral comments at the said hearing.

The City of Zeeland will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing with a need for an accommodation being provided upon a notice to the City of Zeeland by the Monday preceding the meeting by 5:00 p.m. With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation. Individuals requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City of Zeeland by writing or calling the City Clerk's office 772-6400.

Dated: May 23, 2025

*PAMELA HOLMES
CITY CLERK*



REZONING APPLICATION
Planning Commission
City of Zeeland

MAY 16 2025

Community Development Department
 21 S ELM ST - ZEELAND, MI 49464
 Phone 616-772-0872 - Fax 616-772-0880
buildinginspector@cityofzeeland.com
www.cityofzeeland.com

Received by _____ Date Received _____ \$350 Fee _____ Check No _____

The City of Zeeland will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, nation origin, color, marital status, handicap or political belief.

Please submit this application with related documents at least 30 days prior to the requested Planning Commission meeting (usually 1st Thursday of the month). Please note that additional fees for professional services may be incurred and billed to you if necessary. The applicant or a representative is required to present the application at the Planning Commission meeting.

I. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property address 633 E Main Ave and 605 E Main Ave	Parcel number 70- 17-18-400-045 and 17-18-471-008		
Property size (acres) 1.48 and 0.88	Frontage	Depth	
Current zoning Residential - R-2 & R-3	Requested zoning Industrial - I2		
Adjacent zoning North <u>I2</u> South <u>C2</u> East <u>I2</u> West <u>R2</u>			
Master Plan Land Use I2 for 633 & R-2 for 605	Is request consistent with Master Plan Land Use? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Proposed use of property Property will be used to support the existing Mead Johnson Factory.			

II. CONTACT INFORMATION

Property owner Mead Johnson & Company	Contact Art Pike		
Phone (812) 568-8917	Email Arthur.Pike@reckitt.com		
Applicant Art Pike	Company Mead Johnson & Company		
Address 725 E Main Ave	City Zeeland	State MI	Zip 49464
Phone (812) 568-8917	Email Arthur.Pike@reckitt.com		
Applicant's interest in property Property will be used to support the existing Mead Johnson Factory.			

III. SIGNATURES

The undersigned hereby certifies that the information given in the application and supplementary materials is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. It is also understood that any information requested, and not included with the application, as well as major revisions and/or additional reviews could delay placement on the agenda or action by the Planning Commission.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:  Electronically signed by: Arthur Pike
Reason: I approve this document.
Date: May 16, 2025 11:04 CDT Date: **16-May-2025**

Signature of property owner (if other than applicant) _____

SIGNATURE OF OWNER: _____ Date: _____

City of Zeeland

MAY 16 2025

Received



Request for Rezoning of Residential Property to Industrial Property for Mead Johnson

May 15th, 2025

Dear Mr. Maday,

I am writing regarding the request for rezoning of the residential properties located at **633 E Main Ave** (currently zoned R-2) and **605 E Main Ave** (currently zoned R-3) in Zeeland, Michigan, from Residential and Public Facilities districts to I-2 Industrial. This request is made on behalf of Mead Johnson, a company committed to contributing toward the economic growth and industrial development of the community.

Background and Justification:

The City's Master Plan, both the 2011 version and its 2020 amendment, serves as a guide for future land use decisions. While the Master Plan emphasizes the importance of adhering to planned zoning boundaries, it also acknowledges that conditions may change, and unanticipated opportunities may arise. As stated in the Master Plan:

"Change is constant and usually unpredictable, and there may be circumstances that warrant changes to the zoning boundaries that are not consistent with the Master Plan. If and when this occurs, the Master Plan should be updated to conform to the changed circumstances." (2011 Master Plan, p. 63)

"Although this plan is a comprehensive guide for land use planning over the next 20 years, there is no way to predict what changes may occur that were not contemplated at the time this plan was created." (2011 Master Plan, p. 63)

"It is important to understand that the Master Plan is a guide and should be an integral part of decisions related to zoning, land development, and capital investment. However, conditions change; unanticipated opportunities may arise; and new challenges may emerge. The Plan should be kept current. Deviating from the Plan should not occur without sound rationale. When



such a departure is warranted, the reasons for that action should be clearly stated. If the circumstances are widespread, the Plan should be amended to reflect the change and ensure that it remains consistent with prevailing conditions." (2020 Master Plan, p. 32)

The properties in question are currently surrounded by industrially-zoned land on one or more sides. Rezoning these smaller parcels to I-2 Industrial would align them with the adjacent larger industrial properties, facilitating consolidation and industrial development. This approach is supported by the Master Plan's designation of these areas as Inconsistent Land Use Areas, which are intended to be redeveloped into surrounding non-residential uses over time. As described in the 2011 Master Plan:

"The land use designation underlying each of the identified inconsistent land use areas represents the recommended future land use in each area. Most of these residential uses are proposed to be redeveloped into the surrounding non-residential use, and most are already zoned for the dominant use. However, this will likely only occur over time. The existing houses should be preserved until the market demands redevelopment." (2011 Master Plan, pp. 52-53)

Community Benefits:

1. **Economic Growth:** Rezoning these properties will enable Mead Johnson to expand its operations, creating new job opportunities and contributing to the local economy.
2. **Industrial Development:** The Master Plan supports the expansion of industrially-zoned land to eliminate land use conflicts and promote industrial growth. This rezoning aligns with the goals and policies outlined in the Master Plan, including:
 - o Encouraging future land uses to be compatible with one another through ongoing review and modification of the Master Plan and zoning map. (2020 Master Plan, Goal 1, p. 13)
 - o Eliminating land use conflicts over time through zoning land to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map. (2020 Master Plan, Policy 1A, p. 13)
 - o Providing for continued industrial growth in the City, using appropriate local tools and mechanisms. (2020 Master Plan, Goal 4, p. 16)



- Encouraging new industrial development only in areas where there will be minimal negative impact on other land uses. (2020 Master Plan, Policy 4A, p. 16)
- Evaluating areas of inconsistent land uses and determining the best long-range use of these areas, consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Where appropriate, rezone accordingly. (2020 Master Plan, Action 14, p. 30)

Public Support:

The desire for expanded industrial opportunities was clearly expressed in the public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the 2011 Master Plan. Over 78 percent of respondents agreed that more industrial employers are needed, and 67 percent supported the expansion of the industrial park. (2011 Master Plan, p. 79)

Conclusion:

In light of the above points, I strongly urge the City to consider rezoning the residential properties at **633 E Main Ave** (R-2) and **605 E Main Ave** (R-3) to I-2 Industrial. This change will not only support Mead Johnson's growth but also align with the community's vision for industrial development and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Arthur Pike
Vivid Program External Affairs Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'APike'.

*Electronically signed by: Arthur
Pike
Reason: I approve this
document.
Date: May 16, 2025 11:14 CDT*

TO: Tim Maday
FROM: Paul LeBlanc, AICP
DATE: June 9, 2025
SUBJECT: Mead Johnson Rezoning

Request

This is a request to rezone two properties from R-2, Single and Two-Family Residential, and R-3, Two-family and Multiple-Family Residential, to I-2, General Industrial.

Existing Conditions

The parcels comprise approximately 2.4 total acres and abut E. Main Street. Both properties are occupied by residential uses including 8 townhomes on the west parcel and a home and barn on the east property.



Land to the north and east of the subject properties is zoned I-2, General Industrial. The subject parcels and two lots immediately west of S. Division St. are the only residentially zoned properties within the confines of E. Main, E. Washington, N. Fairview, and N. Carlton. The remaining land in this “block” is nonresidential and predominantly zoned I-2, General Industrial.

On the south side of E. Main St., most of the lots are zoned R-1, Single-Family Residential, though two properties immediately south of the subject parcels are zoned for nonresidential uses. One is C-2, Central Business, and the other is I-1, Light Industrial. A second I-1 parcel is located further to the east.



Considerations

• Zoning vs. site plan

The applicant has provided a conceptual layout of the proposed development for the overall site and comments have been made regarding setbacks, access, truck traffic, and building design.

However, it is important to understand that none of those specifics is relevant to the rezoning of this property. The focus must be limited to the appropriateness of I-2 zoning on these parcels. If the

property is eventually rezoned, a detailed site plan will be required and the Planning Commission will be charged with reviewing that plan based on the specific criteria listed in Section 8.100(f). That would be the time to examine building scale, circulation, traffic impact, landscaping, stormwater management, and the many other details relevant to the project and its relationship to its surroundings. Neither the Planning Commission nor City Council can attach conditions to this rezoning. Therefore, any graphic depiction of what might be developed is a potential distraction from the rezoning issue and should not be considered.

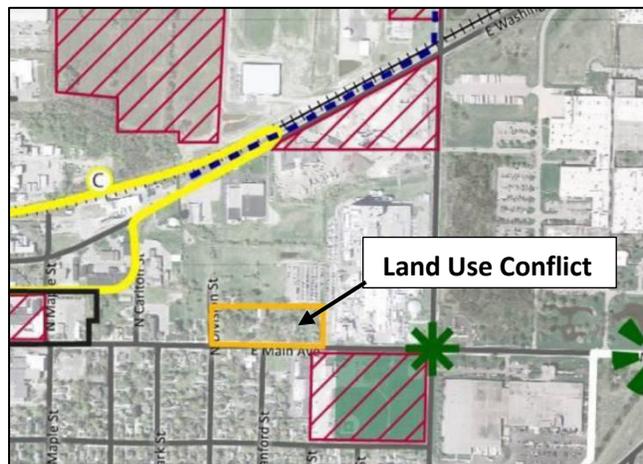
- Master Plan

The Zeeland Zoning Ordinance does not provide specific criteria for rezoning decisions. However, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act does stipulate an essential consideration at Section 203 (1):

“A zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare...”

Both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendments to that Plan offer guidance regarding industrial zoning in the City and specifically the area encompassing the subject parcels. For example, the map on page 27 of the 2011 Master Plan identifies the cluster of residential uses along Main Street as a land use conflict. Page 30 of the Plan describes these and other land uses as inconsistent with the predominant surroundings:

“There are several areas around the city where established single family homes are surrounded by intensive industrial or commercial uses. Many of these homes are actually zoned industrial or commercial and are, therefore, considered nonconforming uses. While recent changes to the zoning ordinance allow continuation and limited expansion of these homes, they are still faced with the noise and activity impacts related to the adjacent uses.”



The desire for expanded industrial opportunities was expressed in the public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the 2011 Master Plan. In response to question #5 on page 79, over 78 percent of those expressing an opinion either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that more industrial employers are needed and 67 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the industrial park should be expanded. Likewise, when asked in question #6 how much effort should be directed toward attracting manufacturing to the City, 82 percent of those offering an opinion indicated either great effort or some effort. Only 18 percent cited little effort or no effort.

Increasing the availability of industrially-zoned land is also supported by the 2020 amendment to the Plan, as follows:

“Provide for continued industrial growth in the City, using appropriate local tools and

mechanisms.” [Goal 4, p. 16, 2020 Master Plan]

“Evaluate areas of inconsistent land uses and determine the best long-range use of these areas, consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Where appropriate, rezone accordingly.” [Action 14, p. 30, 2020 Master Plan]

Both the 2011 and the amended 2020 Master Plan also recognize the need for flexibility in the face of changing conditions or unexpected opportunities. Page 63 of the 2011 Master Plan emphasizes this point:

“Change is constant and usually unpredictable, and there may be circumstances that warrant changes to the zoning boundaries that are not consistent with the Master Plan. If and when this occurs, the Master Plan should be updated to conform to the changed circumstances.”

“Although this plan is a comprehensive guide for land use planning over the next 20 years, there is no way to predict what changes may occur that were not contemplated at the time this plan was created.”

These statements are further reinforced in the 2020 Master Plan on page 32:

“It is important to understand that the Master Plan is a guide and should be an integral part of decisions related to zoning, land development, and capital investment. However, conditions change; unanticipated opportunities may arise; and new challenges may emerge.

The Plan should be kept current. Deviating from the Plan should not occur without sound rationale. When such a departure is warranted, the reasons for that action should be clearly stated. If the circumstances are widespread, the Plan should be amended to reflect the change and ensure that it remains consistent with prevailing conditions.”

In the case of the area in question, the vast majority of the parcels (which are of substantial size) are currently zoned I-2 and are occupied by industrial uses. Only a half dozen or so much smaller parcels are zoned and used for residential, commercial, or church use. It would appear that these properties, despite being adjacent to and incompatible with the industrially-zoned land on one or more sides, were not planned or zoned for industrial use in order to accommodate their established use and not render them nonconforming. Their size may also have been considered insufficient to accommodate a building and the required setbacks, parking, landscaping, etc. for any allowed I-2 industrial use.

However, if a buyer purchased some or all of these properties with the intent of consolidating them with an adjacent larger industrial property, rezoning them accordingly would not be inappropriate,

as noted in the above quotes. The 2011 Master Plan further reinforces this in designating the subject property as an Inconsistent Land Use Area which is described on pages 52 and 53 as:

“The land use designation underlying each of the identified inconsistent land use areas represents the recommended future land use in each area. Most of these residential uses are proposed to be redeveloped into the surrounding non-residential use, and most are already zoned for the dominant use. However, this will likely only occur over time. The existing houses should be preserved until the market demands redevelopment.”



It is clear from both Master Plans that industrial development is important to the community. Several goals and policies reflect this; the public opinion survey supports this; and both documents acknowledge that unforeseen challenges and opportunities will inevitably arise. When this occurs, decisions can be made that are not in strict conformance with the future land use map if they are otherwise supported by the vision, goals, and policies that serve as the foundation of the Plan, as well as sound planning principles.

Zeeland’s residential character is also one of its prized attributes. The City’s prominent tree-lined grid-street pattern contributes to the quaint character and walkability of the many neighborhoods. Preservation and maintenance of those neighborhoods is among the City’s planning priorities. However, the four homes and two townhome structures lining Main Street between Carlton and Fairview do not constitute a “residential neighborhood” as referenced throughout both Master Plans. Not only do all these properties already abut the I-2 zoning district, the parcel at 633 E. Main (included in the rezoning request) is designated “Industrial” on the future land use map.

It is understandable that home owners along the south side of Main St. are concerned about potential industrial development across the street. However, if the property is rezoned, the City still retains control through the site plan process to address and mitigate potential issues and concerns. Adhering to the ordinance’s site plan review criteria gives the Planning Commission the ability, if necessary, to require changes to the plan and attach conditions to its approval to ensure that the resulting development benefits the community and is compatible with its surroundings.

Ryan Baas

28 Sanford St.

Zeeland, MI 49464

Email: ryanebaas@gmail.com

Phone: 708-846-8744

Date: June 5th, 2025

To: The Honorable Planning Commission of Zeeland at 21 S Elm St, Zeeland, MI 49464

Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding Reckitt (Mead Johnson) Proposed Expansion and Rezoning Request – Preservation of Neighborhood Integrity, Property Values, Community Amenities, and Future Educational Support

Dear Honorable Planning Commission Members,

I am writing to you today as a deeply concerned resident of Zeeland to express my serious apprehension regarding Reckitt (Mead Johnson)'s proposed expansion and their request for rezoning of properties located in the direct vicinity from my home at 28 Sanford St. This expansion, if approved in its current form, poses an unacceptable threat to the character, livability, and financial stability of our cherished neighborhood.

Our community is united in its opposition to this proposed development, as evidenced by the collective efforts of the "Neighborhood First" project. We understand that economic development is important, but it must not come at the expense of established residential areas, the well-being of long-term residents, and the vital amenities that define our community. My primary opinion is that the rezoning requests be rejected.

If, however, the rezoning request is approved, my primary concerns, shared by many of my neighbors, include:

- **1st: Loss of Neighborhood Character and Decline in Property Values:** The prospect of a large industrial or commercial tower being constructed in the heart of our residential neighborhood is deeply unsettling. Such a development would undoubtedly alter the aesthetic appeal and residential nature of the area, leading to an evident decrease in property values for homes like mine and those of my neighbors. I urge that **any new buildings constructed be significantly set back away from Main Avenue**, maintaining a respectful distance from our homes and the main thoroughfare.
- **2nd: Critical Need for Green Space:** To mitigate the impact of any industrial presence and to preserve the residential character of our community, there must be a **heavy emphasis on robust green space and landscaping, particularly along Main Ave**. This is vital not only for aesthetics but also to help maintain our neighborhood's quality of life and, consequently, property values. Adequate green buffers are essential to prevent our neighborhood from being overwhelmed by industrial expansion.
- **3rd: Preservation of Public Playgrounds:** I am particularly concerned that one of the properties Reckitt has already purchased contains a public playground, the "Blue Park", as everyone calls it. This playground is a valuable asset for our community, especially for families with young children like mine. If this existing public playground is to be removed, it is absolutely essential that **Reckitt's new plans include a public**

playground of equivalent or superior quality. Furthermore, as a parent with young children who would directly benefit from such a facility, I strongly request the opportunity to be involved in the design and planning of this new public playground to ensure it meets the needs of our families.

- **4th: Mitigation of Traffic Impact – Protecting Sanford Street:** Our street, Sanford Street, already experiences significant traffic volume from vehicles going to and from Reckitt's current facility. There are cars constantly sitting directly outside my home, and it is a safety concern and disruption to our daily lives. Having an 8 year-old son with special needs and two other younger daughters, I instill safety lessons into them about playing outside, but a big part of why we moved where we did was the confidence that they would be able to ride their bikes and scooters around the neighborhood freely. Any expansion must include a comprehensive plan to **steer all associated traffic away from Sanford Street.** We cannot tolerate an increase in industrial traffic on our residential roads, and we demand solutions to alleviate the existing burden on our street.
- **5th: Precedent for Future Unsuitable Development:** Approving this rezoning request without stringent conditions could set a dangerous precedent, opening the door for further industrial or commercial encroachment into our residential zones. We must protect our zoning regulations to ensure the long-term integrity of our neighborhoods.
- **Lastly: Genuine Community Benefit and Educational Investment:** It is vital that any corporate expansion in our community brings tangible, long-term benefits to its residents, not just to the corporation. To demonstrate a true commitment to the well-being and future of our neighborhood, I propose that Reckitt establish a **scholarship fund specifically for educational support for children living within a certain radius of their facilities.** This fund would provide invaluable assistance to our youth, directly benefiting the families most impacted by the company's presence and fostering goodwill within the community.

We implore you to consider the voices of your constituents and the long-term ramifications of this decision. We urge you to demand that any rezoning requests and potential future development adheres to stringent conditions that protect our neighborhood's character, property values, community amenities, traffic flow, and includes meaningful community investments. We believe that sustainable development must prioritize the existing community and protect the sanctity of our residential areas.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical matter. I am available to provide any further information or to participate in discussions that may help you understand the depth of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Ryan Baas

JUN 10 2025

ZEELAND: UNITY IN COMMUNITY

Received

As a long-time resident of Zeeland, I salute the efforts of governmental leaders and involved citizens in focusing on community development that finds the best-balanced use of property, services and all the aspects that make a community a great place to live and to work. Our unity in community includes a need to provide good commercial and retail services, jobs in industry and supporting businesses, and opportunities for a good quality of life for residents who live in the area. Sometimes though, there is a “crossroads event” which demands needs to be weighed and a solution found that is the best possible.

Mead Johnson has been a part of Zeeland for 101 years. They have been good partners in providing well-paying jobs and creating difficult to manufacture milk-based products that are in demand for infants and for critically ill patients who need very specially crafted food products to survive. At this time there are approximately 450 people employed in Zeeland, at an average entry wage of \$ 63,000. They are the Zeeland BPW’s second largest customer for water and are in the top five users of electricity in our service area. Their annual property taxes are in excess of \$1,000,000 annually.

Why does this matter to residents of Zeeland who are not employed by the company? Our water, electric and clean water utilities are a component of support for city services, which along with property taxes provide police and fire safety, city staff to manage government and care for our community, pay for street projects, downtown development, events and activities for residents, and so much more. Employees who work in Zeeland shop and eat and recreate in our community, supporting the market for retail and service businesses that we all enjoy. Some live in the city that we call home.

In reviewing the drawings and plans provided at the June 5, 2025 Planning Commission meeting regarding information about Mead Johnson’s request for rezoning of residential properties necessary for their expansion in Zeeland, I see lots of visual and street/intersection safety improvements to the Reckitt Mead Johnson facility. Promises have been made to continue to seek measures to ensure less odor with new processing protocol. Additional jobs will be provided as the modernization plan continues. A playground and planting area is being looked at, hopefully in an accessible spot on the south side of Main Avenue which will increase safety for young families and older adults. A public green space/park area at the Main and Carlton corner will create visual appeal for neighbors and passers-by. All of these improvements will add screening and beauty to the area, and they may even escalate neighborhood property values as the improvements are realized.

If the company is not able to expand in their current location with the addition of frontage on Main Avenue to allow for safer property access, appropriate parking for employees and the addition of new and improved employee and production facilities, we would likely lose Mead Johnson which has been a part of our industrial community for over a century. Zeeland would lose the current employee base as well as property taxes and utility usage that supports many services in our city. The industrial property may become abandoned and unusable or be acquired by businesses that may not maintain the same level of responsibility and productivity as Mead Johnson has demonstrated for 101 years.

Please consider all of the aspects of this “crossroads event” decision as a determination is made about the future use for this large parcel of property at our eastern gateway to Zeeland. The remaining parcels along the north side of Main Avenue are a key component to whether we experience job growth, beautification, and street/intersection safety ... or risk a property which is on largely industrially zoned acreage that is unsuitable for anything BUT other industry which may not be as responsible as Mead Johnson has proven to be.



**CITY OF ZEELAND
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY HALL – 21 SOUTH ELM STREET
JUNE 5TH, 2025
5:45PM**

-5:45PM – Chairman Elhart called the meeting to order and requested a roll call of Planning Commissioners.

Present: Commissioners Rebecca Perkins, Bob Blanton, Sheri Holstege, Glenn Kass, Kevin Klynstra, Tim Klunder, Dan Klompmaker, and Chairman Bill Elhart.

Absent: Commissioner Amanda Cooper

Also Present: City Attorney Jim Donkersloot, Planning Consultant Paul LeBlanc, Zoning Administrator Timothy Maday, and Recording Secretary Nadine Hopping.

Staff Liaison Tim Maday informed Commissioners that the presentation regarding rain gardens, and the 791 Case Karsten Public Hearing on the agenda had been postponed to occur at later meetings.

Chairman Elhart opened public comment.

Thomas Humbert of 532 E Main Ave explained that he would like to highlight several concerns regarding Mead Johnson's rezoning application that will be heard on June 12th. He stated that the rezoning application highlights language pulled from the City of Zeeland Master Plan. Humbert stated that he agreed that plans should be flexible at times. However, he felt that turning residential property into industrial property is not what the City of Zeeland needs.

Humbert stated that Reckitt's entire 'public support' section of their application uses statistics pulled from a citywide survey conducted in 2011, where he identified some of the inconsistencies he found between Mead Johnson's application and their report. Additionally, Thomas noted that the employment rate in 2011 was 8.9%, more than double of last year's rate of 4%.

Ericka Humbert of 532 E Main addressed the Commission. She explained that her primary concern is not with industrial expansion in Zeeland, but rather residential property being converted to industrial use. Humbert then referenced statistics from the citywide survey that was conducted in 2011, related to housing. Humbert stated that people in the room have family or friends who would love to live in Zeeland but cannot find a home. She noted that the 605 E Main Ave parcel that is proposed to be rezoned contains eight dwelling units.

Humbert explained that she does not find it reasonable to sacrifice or compromise residential property. She added that she, her husband, and a neighbor met with City Manager Tim Klunder, and Mead Johnson in March, where Mead Johnson reiterated that this was not an expansion, but instead modernization. She stated that Mead Johnson told them only temporary jobs such as constructions and transition jobs would be created. Humbert questioned if things have changed since their conversation, as the application states "Rezoning these properties will enable Mead Johnson to expand its operations, creating new job opportunities, and contributing to the local economy."

Ryan Baas of 28 Sanford St read a letter that he prepared for this meeting. The letter is attached with these minutes.

Sue Vanden Beldt of 40 S Division shared her concerns about the proposed expansion, noting that she lives just five houses away and that she and her neighbors already struggle with noise, odor,

and traffic—issues she fears will worsen if the rezoning is approved. She urged Commissioners to consider the impact on residents' property values and quality of life.

Vanden Beldt noted that 605 and 633 E Main were purchased at high prices despite being zoned residential and expressed doubt that approving the rezoning would serve Zeeland's best interests. She cited 25 violations and over \$1 billion in penalties incurred by Mead Johnson since 2000, referencing data from *Violation Tracker – Good Jobs First*. These included violations from agencies such as the EPA, OSHA, and the SEC, though none occurred in Zeeland.

She also referred to the April 3, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting, where Commissioners supported an ordinance amendment requiring that any demolished home on residential property be replaced, to avoid the loss of residential housing. Sue emphasized that since Mead Johnson now owns residential property, they should be held to the same standards. She closed by reminding the commission that their decision will have long-term consequences for the city, and concluded with a reading of Philippians 4:8.

Ryan Gamby of 11 S Division shared that he helped form the Neighborhood First group and lives directly across from the proposed project site. He expressed concern about how quickly the project is moving and urged both staff and Commissioners to slow down and allow for more thoughtful consideration and public input.

Gamby stated that Commissioners should focus on the core issue—whether it is appropriate to rezone two residential properties to I-2 General Industrial. He anticipated that Commissioners will likely see a presentation later that evening that details the company's background, importance of the work they do, site plans, and renderings that showcase the intended development. Gamby discussed how green spaces can be touted as a selling point, even though many residential homes, apartments, and parks already afford green space.

He stated that I-2 zoning can significantly impact surrounding properties and noted that Mead Johnson has not offered any voluntary restrictions on future use or development. Therefore, Commissioners must weigh all potential uses permitted under I-2 zoning. Gamby concluded by urging Commissioners to consider the long-term impact of their decision on the community.

Ryan Vandam of 16 S Park acknowledged the value of economic growth but urged Commissioners to carefully consider whether the proposed project aligns with Zeeland's long-term community interests. He pointed out that the Future Land Use Map in the City's 2020 Master Plan Update designates the north side of Main Street, between Division and N. Carlton St. for residential use, not industrial. Vandam referenced several sections of the Master Plan that emphasize the importance of preserving neighborhood character and integrity. He argued that the proposed expansion conflicts with these goals and could ultimately undermine neighborhood appeal, reduce livability, and decrease property values.

Vandam acknowledged that increased property tax revenue may be a motivating factor for the proposal but urged caution, noting that Mead Johnson would likely qualify for a tax abatement lasting up to 12 years. He added that it's common for companies to appeal their property assessments once the abatement ends. He also expressed concern that nearby homeowners, if negatively impacted by the expansion, may pursue reassessments of their own, potentially placing a greater financial burden on the city and its residents.

He stated that the City's long-term planning priorities should not be compromised due to a private company's lack of foresight. He pointed out that Reckitt has owned Mead Johnson and its current facility since 2017 and should have anticipated future growth needs and secured properly zoned land in advance. Vandam expressed that development must be consistent with the community's shared vision, not in conflict with it. He further added that he believes Reckitt should be able to grow, but it should do so with the community, not at its expense.

Jessie Foster of 550 E Main told the Commission that I-2 zoning is not required to create greenspace. She explained that green or open space can exist within residential zoning and that specific zoning options already allow for such use. As a Zeeland Public Schools teacher, she expressed concern about rezoning 605 and 633 E Main to industrial, questioning whether it's appropriate to place industrial development directly in front of children's ballfields.

Chairman Elhart asked the public if anyone else would like to make a public comment prior to Mead Johnson's presentation. No further comment was given from the public.

Jennifer Owens, President of Lakeshore Advantage—the regional Economic Development Organization for Ottawa and Allegan Counties shared a brief overview of the Mead Johnson's history. She then introduced Art Pike of Mead Johnson to speak further.

Art Pike of Mead Johnson explained that they will provide Commissioners and the public with an initial overview of the proposed project to modernize their equipment and facilities at their Zeeland Facility. He explained that normally they would finalize their master plan first, then should share with the local officials. But given the situation, they thought they would share their current thinking on where they are at with their plans.

Pike explained that Mead Johnson's assets are approaching the end of their useful lives and require ongoing upgrades to meet both internal standards and evolving global regulatory expectations. He highlighted the 2002 infant formula shortage, during which employees at the Zeeland facility—some of whom were present at the meeting—worked around the clock to help ensure that infants worldwide continued to receive the nutrition they needed. Pike then introduced Justin Griner to present the current factory plans and outline their modernization efforts.

Justin Griner of Mead Johnson expressed gratitude to the Zeeland community for supporting the company for over a century. He emphasized Mead Johnson's ongoing commitment to the highest standards of quality and safety in their infant formula products. He also highlighted that the Zeeland facility plays a vital role in both domestic and global supply chains, particularly as a production hub for Nutramigen—their specialized hypoallergenic formula developed for infants with cow's milk protein allergies.

He stated that Mead Johnson has been a responsible corporate citizen for over a century and is committed to building on that legacy as they modernize their supply chain to continue serving parents both in the U.S. and globally for the next 100 years.

Griner stated that Mead Johnson hears the community and acknowledged that it is both unfortunate and understandable that a lack of information has resulted in speculation and assumptions that have generated concern to the community members and possibly even the commission. He added, however, that their modernization efforts represent a significant undertaking—the largest investment in the company's greater than 100-year history. Griner explained that plans of this complexity take time, and their team has been working diligently. He mentioned that they are excited to share more with the community and hope that this facilitates a more focused, and fact based discussion.

Griner affirmed that all of Mead Johnson's infant formula products are safe and nutritious, and clarified that none are classified as hazardous materials. He stated the company's strong compliance record with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the EPA, and other state and federal regulatory agencies. He further stated that both the current facility and the proposed expansion will meet—and exceed—all environmental and regulatory requirements.

Griner stated that Mead Johnson met with community members in March, where they identified key concerns including site appearance, odor, noise, and the impact on Main Avenue. He reiterated that the company views their planned investment as a “win-win-win”—a benefit for the City, the residents, and Mead Johnson itself. Griner noted that Mead Johnson has their best engineers and scientists working on new technologies that will greatly reduce or eliminate odor coming from their facilities. He explained that the project will address each of the concerns raised, noting enhanced curb appeal with landscaped green spaces and a modernized facility design. Additionally, he highlighted that advancements in technology will help significantly reduce site noise.

Lori Sprague of Mead Johnson discussed the company's longstanding partnership with the Zeeland community, highlighting that most of their employees are actively involved locally. She emphasized that Mead Johnson's commitment to the community spans over a century and is founded on building trust, preserving resources for future generations, and nurturing the community. Lori also noted Mead Johnson's support through sponsoring local events, making donations, and volunteering.

Art Pike of Mead Johnson stated that their redevelopment plan aligns with the East Main Avenue beautification initiative. He shared that Mead Johnson has been working to relocate the playground at 515 E Main Avenue, noting that this move has been part of their plan from the start. The company is actively collaborating with Zeeland Public Schools to find a suitable nearby location. Additionally, Pike explained that Mead Johnson is working with the City to identify a potential site for a community garden. Art noted that this is not meant to be all that they are doing, but that they wanted to address those concerns.

Aaron Holder of Mead Johnson presented their preliminary site master plan, emphasizing that it is still in development and represents a long-term vision for the facility. He explained that the plan aims to support the factory's future growth by retaining top talent and attracting leading manufacturing professionals to Zeeland, thereby strengthening the community. Holder highlighted key features, including a new front office called the “flagship building,” modernized manufacturing spaces designed for efficient workflows, enhanced automation to boost employee safety and product quality, and improved site logistics to better separate personnel and truck traffic. He concluded by stating that the purpose of the meeting was to share Mead Johnson's vision for the community's future. Holder also noted that Mead Johnson has since bought 605 and 633 E Main Ave and are seeking that they be rezoned from residential to industrial and that they believe this rezoning request is in line with the City of Zeeland Master Plan published in 2011 and updated in 2020.

Art Pike of Mead Johnson presented the renderings of the proposed park on the corner of E Main Ave and N. Carlton St, as well as the proposed moved & enhanced playground “blue park”. Pike stated that they are considering two different locations for the park and are working with Zeeland Public schools to find the best spot. He added that the park on the corner of E Main Ave and N. Carlton St would be a public space for the entire community to enjoy, not just Mead Johnson employees. Pike added that he believes Zeeland to be a wonderful place and that the Mead Johnson / City of Zeeland partnership was established over 100 years ago. He noted that not many communities and businesses have that legacy.

Chairman Elhart asked Commissioners if they had any comments or questions they would like to add?

Commissioner Blanton questioned if the entire flagship building would have a complete setback of 150ft. Holder responded that yes, the entire south wall is proposed to have approximately 150 feet of setback.

Commissioner Perkins asked if the playground would be located on Mead Johnsons facility. Art Pike clarified that the playground would not be located on their facility and explained that Mead Johnson is working closely with Zeeland Public Schools to determine the best location for the park. He added that the schools currently have ongoing activities that will take a few months to complete before finalizing a solution. Afterward, Mead Johnson plans to coordinate with the church, the City of Zeeland, and local residents.

Commissioner Perkins then asked if the "flagship" building height would be 4 stories. Holder clarified that the plans and renderings presented during the meeting are part of the preliminary master plan. He stated that the envisioned height of the building is currently being considered as either three or four stories. However, he emphasized that this detail remains under review, as the plan is still in the planning stages.

Commissioner Klompmaker asked if the primary parking lot for employees would be along E Main Ave in front of the "flagship" building, and if the parking area shown off Washington Ave on the preliminary plan would be used for overflow parking. Holder responded that the primary parking will be along East Main Ave, with the idea that employees would enter through the "flagship" building and then head to their individual work areas across the campus. He added that the parking area off Washington Avenue is planned for contractors and also for overflow parking, which may be needed during shutdowns, construction, or similar activities. Art Pike also noted that this setup would help reduce traffic on Main Avenue.

Commissioner Klynstra asked if the entrance would stay the same, or if they would be putting in a new entrance. Holder replied that their team does not have that information at this time, as the appropriate location for the entrance has not yet been determined. Art Pike added that the team is open to feedback and willing to consider different options as the planning process continues.

Commissioner Blanton asked what the future facility would look like in comparison to the current facility, and asked what happens to the facility space after everything has been shifted. Pike responded that when new assets are introduced, they are subject to significant review by regulatory agencies, and depending on the country, there is an extensive qualification process. He explained that once the facility has passed regulatory review and is actively producing, the team can begin assessing the footprint and determining how to potentially scale it down or repurpose the space.

Commissioner Perkins asked what happens if this is not approved, and if Mead Johnson would still be able to operate. Pike responded that their assets are aging, and that they will not be able to use them forever. He explained that new assets need to be built because both industry and regulatory requirements continue to evolve. He also emphasized that Mead Johnson has internal standards that must be met. Pike noted that the existing assets will not remain fit for purpose much longer, which is why the need for this project has been identified and why they are here today.

Staff advised Commissioners and the public that on June 12th, 2025 at 6:00PM a special Planning Commission will be held to hear the rezoning applications for 605 and 633 E Main Ave. Commissioner Klunder added that all information presented tonight, including updates on this project, will be located on the City of Zeeland's website.

Commissioner Klynstra thanked the residents of Zeeland for attending to express their concerns and thanked the Mead Johnson team for their presentation.

-Moved by Commissioner Klompmaker to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes from the April 3rd, 2025 meeting. Supported by Commissioner Holstege. All Commissioners voted aye.

-6:38PM Moved by Commissioner Klompmaker to adjourn. Supported by Commissioner Klynstra.
All voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine Hopping
Recording Secretary