



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING PACKET CONTENTS

Wednesday, June 25, 2025 – 6:00pm

1. Notice of Special Meeting and Location – Howard Miller Community Center – 14 S Church St
2. Agenda
3. Rezoning Application with Narrative – 605 & 633 E Main Ave
4. Planning Consultant Memo – June 17, 2025 - 605 & 633 E Main Ave Rezoning Application
5. Staff Memo – June 25, 2025 meeting agenda and rezoning application status
6. City Attorney Memo – Conflict of interest
7. Resolution – Recommendation of approval for 605 E Main Ave rezoning request
8. Resolution – Recommendation of approval for 633 E Main Ave rezoning request
9. Resolution – Recommendation of denial for 605 E Main Ave rezoning request
10. Resolution – Recommendation of denial for 633 E Main Ave rezoning request
11. Correspondence - June 20, 2025 – Jennifer Owens – Lakeshore Advantage
12. Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – June 12, 2025

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Zeeland City Planning Commission

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE
SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE ZEELAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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 special meeting to occur on:

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

at

The Howard Miller Community Center

Lester Hoogland Banquet Room (Main Level)

14 S Church Street, Zeeland, MI 49464

- **6:00pm – Meeting called to order**

Pamela Holmes
CITY CLERK

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 25, 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:

-

ACTION:

- Planning Commission meeting minutes of June 12, 2025
- 605 E Main Ave - Resolutions recommending approval/denial of rezoning request
- 633 E Main Ave - Resolutions recommending approval/denial of rezoning request

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Rezoning Application for 605 & 633 E Main Ave

NEW BUSINESS:

-

OTHER:

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



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 I2 South C2 East I2 West R2			
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)



- o 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)
- o 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: Zeeland Planning Commission
FROM: Paul LeBlanc, AICP
DATE: June 17, 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 the north side of 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.

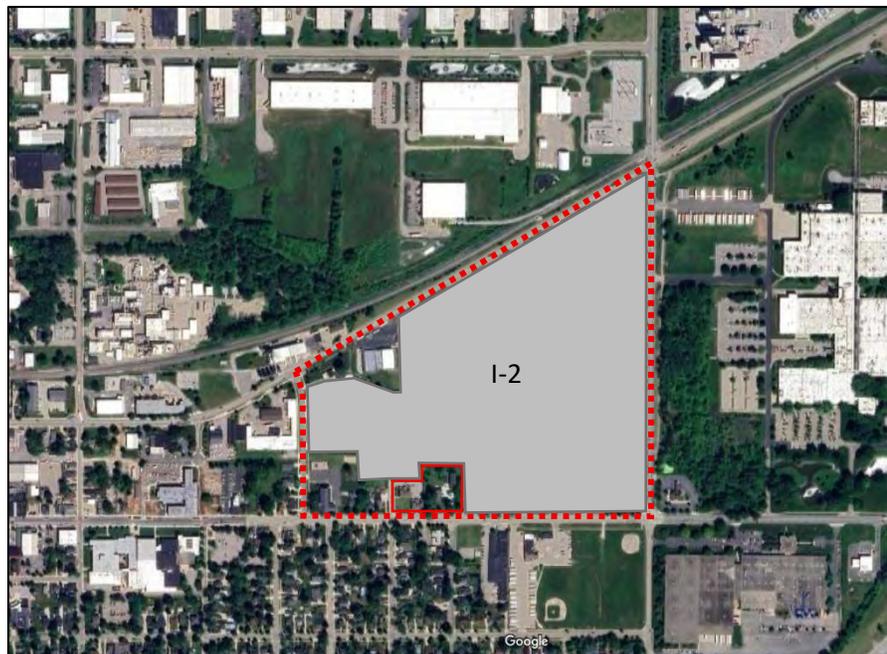
Land to the north and east of the subject properties is zoned I-2, General Industrial. The subject parcels and two lots immediately west of S.

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 (see map).

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

The location of the subject properties across Main Street from a single-family residential neighborhood has aroused significant interest from those residents. Both Planning Commission meetings at which the project was discussed drew large attendance and elicited many comments for and against the request. However, those opposed to the rezoning mostly expressed concern about traffic, noise, odor, and



Finally, both the 2011 and 2020 documents, while stressing the importance of following the plan, acknowledge that change is inevitable and unforeseen conditions may arise that, for good reason, necessitate zoning changes that deviate from the plan. While the Master Plans highlight the inconsistency of the existing pocket of residential in the midst of a predominantly industrial area, the future land use map only designates the eastern parcel (633 E. Main) as “Industrial”, though even several other properties within the block that are currently not zoned I-2 are designated “Industrial”. It should also be noted that properties zoned commercial or industrial along the south side of E. Main in the midst of the single-family neighborhood are designated “Residential”.

Recommendation

I recommend that the Planning Commission recommend **approval** of the proposed rezoning to the City Council for the following reasons:

- The entire block bounded by E. Main, E. Washington, N. Fairview, and N. Carlton is predominantly (90 percent) zoned I-2 and occupied by industrial uses.
- Land use along the north side of E. Main is essentially non-residential from Chicago Drive to State Street.
- The request is consistent with the 2011 Master Plan which identifies this location and this block as having conflicting and incompatible land uses due to the residential uses in the midst of a predominant industrial area.
- The request is consistent with both the 2011 Master Plan and 2020 amendment which stress the importance of industrial growth in the City.
- The existing Mead Johnson facility and other I-2 properties are currently located across the street from the R-1 zoned neighborhood on the south side of E. Main St. and, therefore, the character of the area will not change.
- Concerns expressed at the public hearing regarding traffic impact and compatibility can be addressed during the site plan review process, if warranted. Others related to existing operational noise and odor may be lessened or fully resolved by the construction of the proposed new facilities.
- The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the City by enabling continuation of a vibrant industrial economy, retention and growth of a significant employment base, reduction or elimination of current nuisance conditions, using the land in accordance with its predominant character and adaptability, meeting the needs of the City’s and state's residents for industry, and ensuring that the use is situated in an appropriate location and relationship.



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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: Friday, June 20, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Tim Maday, Community Development Director

RE: **June 25, 2025 Special Planning Commission meeting & Rezoning Application for 605 and 633 E Main Ave**

This memo is being sent to provide an overview of the agenda of the June 25, 2025 special Planning Commission meeting.

Meeting location & information – Howard Miller Community Center

The June 25th Planning Commission meeting will be held at the Howard Miller Community Center in the Lester Hoogland Banquet Room on the main floor. The meeting will be called to order at 6:00pm.

This special meeting was scheduled for the Planning Commission to deliberate and act on the rezoning application that has been filed for the parcels at 605 and 633 E Main Ave. On June 12th, the proposed rezoning was presented to the Commission by representatives of the property owner, Mead Johnson and Company, as part of the public hearing for the application. Following presentation of the application, the Commission heard public comment on the proposed rezonings. The Commission did not act on the application after closing the public hearing following the presentation of the application and receiving comment.

June 12th Public hearing follow up

The enclosed June 12th Planning Commission draft meeting minutes include a summary of the presentation and the verbal and written comments received by the Planning Commission.

During the public hearing, the Commission heard from a resident who questioned if Commissioners who have connections with Lakeshore Advantage, the non-profit economic development agency for Ottawa and Allegan counties, had a conflict of interest due to their relationships with the organization. The City Attorney has provided the enclosed opinion/information on this matter.

June 25th meeting format and next steps

As the meeting on June 12th only had limited discussion from Commissioners, and no action was taken on the application, the June 25th special meeting's primary purposes are for Commissioner deliberation on the proposed rezonings, and initial action on the application.

The general public comment period at the beginning of the agenda will be the only opportunity for public comment during the meeting. The public hearing for the rezoning application was formally closed on June 12th, after all who wished to speak had the opportunity to do so. Because the hearing is closed, the Commission will not accept new testimony specific to the rezoning application as part of the hearing record. However, individuals may still use the general comment period to share their perspectives, and the Commission remains open to hearing public comments.

In addition, Commissioners may ask clarifying questions of the applicant, staff, or others as needed to support their deliberation.

Planning Consultant Report

Following the conclusion of the public hearing and the receipt of public comment, staff requested a report from the City's planning consultant analyzing the rezoning application. The enclosed June 17, 2025 report considers the applications in light of the Master Plan and the input received. It includes a recommendation of approval for both applications, with the reasons for that recommendation outlined on page three of the report.

Action on Rezoning Application

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

1. **Preliminary Commission Action:** After holding a public hearing, the Planning Commission makes a preliminary decision by approving a motion either to recommend rezoning or not to recommend rezoning, supported by findings of fact.
2. **Formal Recommendation:** At a subsequent meeting, the Commission considers and acts on a resolution affirming its initial decision. This resolution includes a formal recommendation to City Council to approve or not approve the rezoning application.
3. **City Council Action:** City Council takes final action on the rezoning request after considering the Planning Commission's recommendation.

The rezoning application before the Commission involves two separate properties: 605 E. Main Avenue and 633 E. Main Avenue. Although both parcels are proposed for the same zoning designation, staff recommends that the Commission consider and act on each request separately.

To assist with deliberation, draft resolutions for both approval and denial of each application have been prepared. The findings of fact in the resolutions of approval are based on the consultants findings contained in the June 17, 2025 report. The resolutions recommending denial include findings based on public comment received during the June 12th hearing.

Staff Recommendation

Staff acknowledges that this rezoning request has generated resident interest and concern. Although the requested rezonings reflect a departure from historical land use on these parcels, staff believes they align with the broader goals of the Master Plan. This recommendation is supported by several factors, including the predominance of industrial zoning and use in the surrounding area, the inconsistency of current residential zoning within that context, and alignment with the City's Master Plan goals for industrial growth. The consultant also noted that concerns raised at the public hearing—such as traffic and buffering—can be addressed during the site plan review process, and that the character of the area will not fundamentally change as a result of the rezoning.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant preliminary approval of the resolutions recommending that the parcels at 605 E Main Ave (PIN 70-17-18-471-008) and 633 E Main Ave (PIN 70-17-18-400-045) be rezoned into the I-2 – General Industrial Zone District.

I hope this memo is helpful in outlining the meeting agenda and topics that will come before the Planning Commission at its June 25th meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have regarding the meeting or any of the items referenced in this memo.

JAMES A. DONKERSLOOT
Attorney at Law

132 E. MAIN AVENUE
P.O. BOX 230
ZEELAND, MICHIGAN 49464

TELEPHONE (616) 772-9000
FAX (616) 772-1212
jdonkersloot@donkerslootlaw.com

MEMO

June 20, 2025

TO: Planning Commission Members

RE: A Conflict of Interest

Dear Planning Commissioners:

This memo is being written in response to the question which was raised at the Public Hearing on the Mead Johnson rezoning request. A question was raised at the public hearing and later by a newspaper reporter as to whether a Zeeland Planning Commissioner has a conflict of interest because of employment.

Michigan state law in MCL 125.3815 provides for the creation of a Planning Commission and also discusses in MCL 125.3815(9) the procedures to be followed if a potential conflict of interest is present. MCL 125.3815(9) in its relevant part states as follows:

“Before casting a vote on a matter on which a member may reasonably be considered to have a conflict of interest, the member shall disclose the potential conflict of interest to the planning commission. The member is disqualified from voting on the matter if so provided by the bylaws or by a majority vote of the remaining members of the planning commission. Failure of a member to disclose a potential conflict of interest as required by this subsection constitutes malfeasance in office.”

An initial question which must be addressed is, what is a conflict of interest? The Zeeland Planning Commission Bylaws do not define what is a conflict of interest. Therefore, under state law, it is left up to the members of the Planning Commission to determine if there is a conflict of interest.

Caselaw in *People v Mayhew*, 236 Mich App 112, 126-127; 600 NW2d 370 (1999) said that a conflict of interest exists in those situations where one has a personal, financial or emotional interest in a matter or a personal relationship with an individual. After a determination has been made that a conflict of interest exists with a supervisor, the Court ruled that “If the ... prosecuting attorney concerned in the conflict of interest has supervisory authority over other attorneys in the office, or has policy-making authority, then recusal of the entire office is likely to be necessary.” 159 Mich App at 645; see, also, *In re Osborne*, 459 Mich 360, 369; 589 NW2d 763 (1999). *Black's Law Dictionary* (10th ed) states that a conflict of interest is defined as “incompatibility between one's private interests and one's ... fiduciary duties.”

In our situation, the executive director of Lakeshore Advantage appeared before the Planning Commission on behalf of Mead Johnson. It appears that Lakeshore Advantage was acting as a representative, agent or lobbyist for Mead Johnson. Therefore, if the executive director for Lakeshore Advantage had been on the Planning Commission, there would have been a clear conflict of interest. The question in the instant matter is does another employee of Lakeshore Advantage have a conflict of

interest? If the *People v Mayhew* case is analogous, then it would appear that there may be a conflict of interest for another employee of Lakeshore Advantage to vote or participate in deliberations as a Zeeland Planning Commissioner. Questions could arise as to whether the rezoning application was discussed in the office of Lakeshore Advantage, whether Lakeshore Advantage is receiving compensation for its work from Mead Johnson, and whether the executive director of Lakeshore Advantage supervises, evaluates or determines compensation for a planning commissioner.

Pursuant to MCL 125.3815, the Planning Commission should consider and must decide whether a conflict of interest exists. It is recommended that this decision be made prior to any discussion or vote on the Mead Johnson rezoning request.

If a conflict of interest exists, and if a Planning Commissioner participates in questions or in discussions, the question arises, what is the consequent of such participation if a court action should be initiated to challenge the approval of a rezoning application for Mead Johnson? In a 2024 Michigan Court of Appeals case, *Lakeview Vineyards, LLC v Oronoko Charter Township*, 2024 WL 2985593, the Planning Commission Chair participated in multiple meetings and discussions. While the supervisor abstained from the vote, the court held that the applicant was entitled to have an "impartial decisionmaker" and stated that the supervisor should not have emailed or discussed the case with other planning commissioners since he had a financial interest in the matter. The court ruled that the planning commissioner's involvement before and after his recusal likely materially prejudiced the planning commission's procedures, and portions of the planning commission's decision were therefore struck and voided since the planning commission followed unlawful procedures.

As may be noted, the existence of a conflict of interest is a factual question which must be determined by the Planning Commission. In a small town, it is to be expected or likely that Commissioners and Council Members will know or may have a relationship with applicants or representatives of applicants. The question is whether a personal, financial or emotional interest in a matter or a personal relationship will affect or is likely to affect the deliberations or vote of a policy maker. According to the Planning Commission's Bylaws, actions by the Planning Commission require the approval of five commissioners, therefore, a decision as to the existence of a conflict of interest must be carefully considered. If you have any questions in regard to this memo, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



James A. Donkersloot
Zeeland City Attorney

RESOLUTION

(To Approve Rezoning for 605 E. Main Avenue)

**City of Zeeland
County of Ottawa, Michigan**

Portions of minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Zeeland, County of Ottawa, Michigan, held in the Howard Miller Library and Community Center in said City on _____, 2025, at 5:45 o'clock p.m., Local Time.

PRESENT: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, Mead Johnson & Company, LLC has requested a zoning change for 605 E. Main Avenue to change the zoning from R-3, the Two-Family and Multiple-Family Residential District, to I-2, the General Industrial District;

AND WHEREAS, if rezoned, the subject property would be consolidated with the adjacent Mead Johnson properties to accommodate an expansion and complete upgrade of existing industrial facilities;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property abuts I-2 zoned properties on its North side ;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is located within an area designated as a “Land Use Conflict” area in the 2011 Master Plan;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is located within a block designated as “Inconsistent Land Use Area” in the 2011 Master Plan which states: “Most of these residential uses are proposed to be redeveloped into the surrounding non-residential use”;

AND WHEREAS, approximately 90 percent of the entire block on which the subject property is located is currently zoned I-2, Industrial;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan contain goals related to the expansion of industry and employment opportunities within the City;

AND WHEREAS, a community-wide opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the preparation of the 2011 Master Plan found that over 78 percent of those expressing an opinion agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that more industrial employers are needed and when asked 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;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan stress the importance of following the Master Plan when making zoning decisions but also acknowledge that change is likely over time and may warrant deviations from the Plan;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning of the subject property would remove eight existing dwelling units, but such loss is offset by the City of Zeeland's aggressive pursuit of expanding residential opportunities within the community through various amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and approval of nearly 90 new dwelling units within the downtown area;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare by enabling continuation of a vibrant industrial economy, retention and growth of a significant employment base, reduction or elimination of current nuisance conditions impacting surrounding properties, using the land in accordance with its predominant character and adaptability, meeting the needs of the City's and state's residents for industry, and ensuring that the use is situated in an appropriate location and relationship;

AND WHEREAS, reasonable consideration has been given to the character of the expanded I-2 district, its peculiar suitability for the uses, the conservation of property values, and the general and appropriate trend and character of the land and future building development;

AND WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on June 12, 2025;

AND WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered and weighed the comments, communications and testimony of those who have objected to the rezoning of the said parcel compared to the comments, communications and testimony of those who requested the rezoning or who supported the rezoning of the said parcel;

AND WHEREAS, after considering the information which has been received by the Planning Commission, it is believed that the rezoning of such property will not significantly adversely affect the property interests of the adjacent property owners and ;that the rezoning will not be detrimental to adjacent property owners since traffic will be reduced on Main Avenue and since it is believed that the modernization of the Mead Johnson production facilities will reduce and/or eliminate odors and other nuisances which previously had been present;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the public by enabling continuation of a vibrant industrial economy, retention and growth of a significant employment base, reduction or elimination of current nuisance conditions impacting surrounding properties, using the land in accordance with its predominant character and adaptability, meeting the needs of the City's and state's residents for industry, and ensuring that the use is situated in an appropriate location and relationship.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the property at 605 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, be rezoned from R-3, the Two-Family and Multiple-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District. The property 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.

2. This resolution and the attached comments from the public hearing of this rezoning constitute the final report of the Planning Commission.

This Resolution is hereby adopted on the ____ day of _____, 2025, at a Regular Meeting of the Zeeland Planning Commission, with the following votes:

AYES: Commissioners _____

NAYS: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

CITY OF ZEELAND

By: _____
William Elhart, its Chairman

By: _____
Nadine Hopping, its Clerk

RESOLUTION

(To Approve Rezoning for 633 E. Main Avenue)

**City of Zeeland
County of Ottawa, Michigan**

Portions of minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Zeeland, County of Ottawa, Michigan, held in the Howard Miller Library and Community Center in said City on _____, 2025, at 5:45 o'clock p.m., Local Time.

PRESENT: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, Mead Johnson & Company, LLC has requested a zoning change for 633 E. Main Avenue to change the zoning from R-2, the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District;

AND WHEREAS, if rezoned, the subject property would be consolidated with the adjacent Mead Johnson properties to accommodate an expansion and complete upgrade of existing industrial facilities;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property abuts I-2 zoned properties on its North side and on its East side;

AND WHEREAS, 633 E. Main is designated as "Industrial" on the future land use map in the 2020 amended Master Plan;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is located within an area designated as a “Land Use Conflict” area in the 2011 Master Plan;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is located within a block designated as “Inconsistent Land Use Area” in the 2011 Master Plan which states: “Most of these residential uses are proposed to be redeveloped into the surrounding non-residential use”;

AND WHEREAS, approximately 90 percent of the entire block on which the subject property is located is currently zoned I-2, Industrial;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan contain goals related to the expansion of industry and employment opportunities within the City;

AND WHEREAS, a community-wide opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the preparation of the 2011 Master Plan found that over 78 percent of those expressing an opinion agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that more industrial employers are needed and when asked 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;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan stress the importance of following the Master Plan when making zoning decisions but also acknowledge that change is likely over time and may warrant deviations from the Plan;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning of the subject property would remove an existing dwelling unit, but such loss is offset by the City of Zeeland’s aggressive pursuit of expanding residential opportunities within the community through various amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and approval of nearly 90 new dwelling units within the downtown area;

AND WHEREAS, reasonable consideration has been given to the character of the expanded I-2 district, its peculiar suitability for the uses, the conservation of property values, and the general and appropriate trend and character of the land and future building development;

AND WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on June 12, 2025;

AND WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered and weighed the comments,

communications and testimony of those who have objected to the rezoning of the said parcel compared to the comments, communications and testimony of those who requested the rezoning or who supported the rezoning of the said parcel;

AND WHEREAS, after considering the information which has been received by the Planning Commission, it is believed that the rezoning of such property will not significantly adversely affect the property interests of the adjacent property owners and that the rezoning will not be detrimental to adjacent property owners since traffic will be reduced on Main Avenue and since it is believed that the modernization of the Mead Johnson production facilities will reduce and/or eliminate odors and other nuisances which previously had been present;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the public by enabling continuation of a vibrant industrial economy, retention and growth of a significant employment base, reduction or elimination of current nuisance conditions impacting surrounding properties, using the land in accordance with its predominant character and adaptability, meeting the needs of the City's and state's residents for industry, and ensuring that the use is situated in an appropriate location and relationship.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the property at 633 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, be rezoned from R-2, the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District. The said property 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.

2. This resolution and the attached comments from the public hearing of this rezoning constitute the final report of the Planning Commission.

This Resolution is hereby adopted on the ____ day of _____, 2025, at a Regular Meeting of the Zeeland Planning Commission, with the following votes:

AYES: Commissioners _____

NAYS: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

CITY OF ZEELAND

By: _____
William Elhart, its Chairman

By: _____
Nadine Hopping, its Clerk

RESOLUTION

(To Not Approve Rezoning for 605 E. Main Avenue)

**City of Zeeland
County of Ottawa, Michigan**

Portions of minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Zeeland, County of Ottawa, Michigan, held in the Howard Miller Library and Community Center in said City on _____, 2025, at 5:45 o'clock p.m., Local Time.

PRESENT: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, Mead Johnson & Company, LLC has requested a zoning change for 605 E. Main Avenue to change the zoning from R-3, the Two-Family and Multiple-Family Residential District, to I-2, the General Industrial District;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is occupied by eight townhomes which were just recently constructed;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is immediately East of other residentially zoned parcels along Main Avenue and directly across Main Avenue from a concentrated area of single-family homes zoned R-1, and as parcels within the Single-Family Residential District;

AND WHEREAS, the future land use map on the 2011 Master Plan designates that the subject should be residential;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan contain goals related to retaining and improving upon the residential character and housing stock in the City's neighborhoods;

AND WHEREAS, if rezoned, the subject property would be consolidated with the adjacent Mead Johnson properties to accommodate an expansion of the existing industrial facilities;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning of the subject property would result in the removal of eight existing dwelling units;

AND WHEREAS, a community-wide opinion survey conducted in conjunction with preparation of the 2011 Master Plan found that 70 percent of those who expressed an opinion were concerned or very concerned about the removal of homes to allow expansion of non-residential uses;

AND WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on June 12, 2025;

AND WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered and weighed the comments, communications and testimony of those who have objected to the rezoning of the said parcel compared to the comments, communications and testimony of those who requested the rezoning or who supported the rezoning of the said parcel;

AND WHEREAS, after considering the information which has been received by the Planning Commission, it is believed that a substantial industrial development in or near a residential area will be detrimental to the adjacent residential parcels since there are no natural barriers or buffers to reduce the conflict between an industrial use and the residential occupants of the area;

AND WHEREAS, the rezoning of the subject parcel will significantly adversely affect the property interests of the adjacent property owners and the rezoning will be detrimental to adjacent property owners since the character of the neighborhood will be changed;

AND WHEREAS, the rezoning of the parcel would not be in accordance with the Master Plan for the City of Zeeland since the industrial use will be incompatible with the neighborhood, since it will not preserve the integrity of a neighborhood and since housing will not be preserved;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning is therefore inconsistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in that the rezoning of the subject parcel will not promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Planning Commission does not recommend that the property at 605 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, be rezoned from R-3, the Two-Family and Multiple-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District. The property 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.

2. This resolution and the attached comments from the public hearing of this rezoning constitute the final report of the Planning Commission.

This Resolution is hereby adopted on the ____ day of _____, 2025, at a Regular Meeting of the Zeeland Planning Commission, with the following votes:

AYES: Commissioners _____

NAYS: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

CITY OF ZEELAND

By: _____

William Elhart, its Chairman

By: _____

Nadine Hopping, its Clerk

RESOLUTION

(To Not Approve Rezoning for 633 E. Main Avenue)

**City of Zeeland
County of Ottawa, Michigan**

Portions of minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Zeeland, County of Ottawa, Michigan, held in the Howard Miller Library and Community Center in said City on _____, 2025, at 5:45 o'clock p.m., Local Time.

PRESENT: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, Mead Johnson & Company, LLC has requested a zoning change for 633 E. Main Avenue to change the zoning from R-2, the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District;

WHEREAS, the subject property is occupied by a single-family home;

AND WHEREAS, the subject property is immediately East of other residentially zoned parcels along Main Avenue and directly across Main Avenue from a concentrated area of single-family homes zoned R-1, and as parcels within the Single-Family Residential District;

AND WHEREAS, both the 2011 Master Plan and the 2020 amendment to that Plan contain goals related to retaining and improving upon the residential character and housing stock in the City's neighborhoods;

AND WHEREAS, if rezoned, the subject property would be consolidated with the adjacent Mead Johnson properties to accommodate an expansion of the existing industrial facilities;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning of the subject property would result in the removal of an existing dwelling unit;

AND WHEREAS, a community-wide opinion survey conducted in conjunction with preparation of the 2011 Master Plan found that 70 percent of those who expressed an opinion were concerned or very concerned about the removal of homes to allow expansion of non-residential uses;

AND WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on this matter on June 12, 2025;

AND WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered and weighed the comments, communications and testimony of those who have objected to the rezoning of the said parcel compared to the comments, communications and testimony of those who requested the rezoning or who supported the rezoning of the said parcel;

AND WHEREAS, after considering the information which has been received by the Planning Commission, it is believed that a substantial industrial development in or near a residential area will be detrimental to the adjacent residential parcels since there are no natural barriers or buffers to reduce the conflict between an industrial use and the residential occupants of the area;

AND WHEREAS, the rezoning of the subject parcel will significantly adversely affect the property interests of the adjacent property owners and the rezoning will be detrimental to adjacent property owners since the character of the neighborhood will be changed;

AND WHEREAS, the rezoning of the parcel would not be in accordance with the Master Plan for the City of Zeeland since the industrial use will be incompatible with the neighborhood, since it will not preserve the integrity of a neighborhood and since housing will not be preserved;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning is inconsistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act in that the rezoning of the subject parcel will not promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Planning Commission hereby does not recommend that the property at 633 E. Main Avenue, Zeeland, Michigan, that is owned by Mead Johnson & Company, LLC, be rezoned from R-2, the Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District to I-2, the General Industrial District. The said property 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.

2. This resolution and the attached comments from the public hearing of this rezoning constitute the final report of the Planning Commission.

This Resolution is hereby adopted on the ____ day of _____, 2025, at a Regular Meeting of the Zeeland Planning Commission, with the following votes:

AYES: Commissioners _____

NAYS: Commissioners _____

ABSENT: Commissioners _____

CITY OF ZEELAND

By: _____
William Elhart, its Chairman

By: _____
Nadine Hopping, its Clerk

Tim Klunder

From: Jennifer Owens <jennifer.owens@lakeshoreadvantage.com>
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2025 8:00 AM
To: Tim Klunder; Tim Maday
Cc: Amanda Murray
Subject: [External] Perrigo Closure Example and Potential Impacts of Mead Johnson Decision
Attachments: Mead Johnson Closure Impact Report.pdf

Attention: This email was sent to City of Zeeland / Zeeland BPW from an external source. Please be extra vigilant when opening attachments or clicking links.

Hi Tim and Tim,

As an economic development organization, we frequently monitor both best practices and worst-case scenarios to proactively plan for changes at our region's major manufacturing sites.

I wanted to share a recent example: Perrigo announced it will close its infant formula manufacturing plant in Georgia, Vermont by 2027 due to increased regulatory requirements. This facility employs more than 420 workers. Here's an article with more details:

<https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-03-06/infant-formula-manufacturer-perrigo-to-shutter-vermont-plant>

As Mead Johnson has shared, federal regulations in this highly regulated industry have grown more stringent, leading some manufacturers to exit the market entirely due to the cost of compliance.

If Mead Johnson does not move forward with its proposed investment in Zeeland, we will closely follow how this Vermont community repurposes its closed facility—so we can prepare for the worst-case scenario: Mead Johnson closing its Zeeland plant.

Additionally, I've included a summary report from our research platform, Lightcast, which models the economic impact of a potential closure in this industry sector. In short, the closure could result in the loss of approximately 1,600 local jobs and \$6.3 million in local tax revenue.

Please feel free to share this information with your Planning Commission or Board Members as you see fit.

I will be out on vacation all next week. Amanda Murray will take the lead on this project and plans to attend the Planning Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Owens, President

Lakeshore Advantage

65 E. 7th Street, Holland, MI 49423

616.772.5226 x204 | c: 616.510.6982

jennifer.owens@lakeshoreadvantage.com

lakeshoreadvantage.com

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We've moved! Be sure to update your records.

Infant formula manufacturer Perrigo to shutter Vermont plant

Vermont Public | By [Elodie Reed](#)

Published March 6, 2025 at 9:05 PM EST



Elodie Reed / Vermont Public

Perrigo's Vermont closure is expected to happen in phases over the next couple years and impact about 420 employees.

The infant formula manufacturer Perrigo plans to shut down its plant in the Franklin County town of Georgia.

According to company spokesperson Joe Shields, keeping the facility open is not cost-effective due to its age and ["evolving regulatory requirements."](#)

(The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has [increased its oversight of infant formula production](#) following the 2022 safety recall by Abbott, [one of the largest manufacturers in the country](#). This led to a nationwide shortage. That

Perrigo's Vermont closure is expected to happen in phases over the next couple years.

Shields said it will impact about 420 employees, who got the news this week.

"The dedication and commitment of our Vermont employees have been invaluable in ensuring a reliable infant formula supply throughout the United States," the spokesperson wrote in an email. "We deeply appreciate their continued efforts as we navigate this transition together."

Shields said the company is looking into "redeployment opportunities and workforce support" for those employees, plus a severance package.



Elodie Reed / Vermont Public

The Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation plans to talk with the state about what could replace Perrigo in the manufacturing facility.

Those workers also will most likely find opportunities at nearby manufacturers, according to Tim Smith, the executive director of the Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation.

"I know Mylan is always looking for help, as is Ben and Jerry's and Barry Callebaut," Smith said.

He added that the FCIDC plans to talk with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development about what else could go in the building.

“There’s a lot of trickle-down effects that will be impactful for the region, for sure, and if we can stem that tide a little bit and be able to use the facility and the infrastructure, the impact will not be as great,” Smith said.

The region recently found a new occupant for its former Energizer battery plant in St. Albans, which shut down in 2013. The electric aviation company Beta Technologies [signed a lease in 2022](#).

Have questions, comments or tips? [Send us a message](#).

Have questions, comments or tips? [Send us a message](#).

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Vijay Singh
CEO, Vermont Public



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**CITY OF ZEELAND
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY HALL – 21 SOUTH ELM STREET
JUNE 12th, 2025
6:00PM**

-6:00PM – Chairman Elhart called the meeting to order and requested a roll call of Planning Commissioners.

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

Absent: Dan Klompmaker

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

-Moved by commissioner Klynstra to excuse absent commissioners. Supported by commissioner Holstege.

-6:00PM Chairman Elhart opened the public hearing for the 605 and 633 E Main Ave rezoning application.

Jennifer Owens of Lakeshore Advantage discussed her personal and professional connections to the Zeeland community. She provided an overview of Mead Johnson's core operations and emphasized that the proposed expansion related to the rezoning application is focused not only on job creation but also on modernizing the facility, improving operational efficiency, reducing odor, adding greenspace, and enhancing the site's overall appearance.

She noted that if the expansion does not move forward, the future of the facility is uncertain. If Mead Johnson were to close, it is unlikely that another company would repurpose the site. Owens concluded by stating that such a closure could leave Zeeland with a large vacant industrial building, reduced property values, and a significant loss of utility revenue—potentially leading to higher rates for residents.

Justin Griner of Mead Johnson responded to earlier concerns about air quality, pointing out that infant formula is one of the most strictly regulated food products in the world. He shared that Mead Johnson's most recent EPA audit—like many before it—found no compliance issues. After reviewing records going back to 2006, no violations were identified. He stated that the company has not, and will not, negatively impact the health of Zeeland families. He also followed up on previous comments about noise and odor from the plant. Griner explained that the current use of a "sonic horn" to move product is outdated technology and will not be part of the new equipment. He added that their lead engineers are actively working on odor reduction and he's confident in their progress.

Griner stated that rezoning the nearby residential properties is necessary for the facility's modernization. If the request is denied, the company would have to take those investments elsewhere. He also noted that Mead Johnson donated the baseball field mentioned in the last meeting to the school system in 1938, and expressed pride in the company's long-standing partnership with the Zeeland community.

Aaron Holder of Mead Johnson explained that the properties at 605 E. Main and 633 E. Main are directly adjacent to Mead Johnson's existing industrial operations and are located within a predominantly industrial corridor. He noted that approximately 90% of the block is currently zoned industrial, with less than 5% zoned residential. Given the surrounding context, he stated that these

parcels are appropriate candidates for rezoning and that the proposed change aligns with the City's long-term vision. He emphasized that the request supports several key planning objectives, including enhancing land use compatibility, supporting ongoing industrial activity, and reinforcing the established industrial character of the area. Holder also referenced the City's zoning map and Master Plan, both of which anticipate future industrial adjustments within this block.

He explained that rezoning these parcels would allow for a more functional and efficient site layout, describing the request as a practical step to align transitional properties with the prevailing and planned use of the area. He concluded by stating that the proposal supports a long-standing local employer and is consistent with the City's planning framework, and respectfully requested the Commission's approval.

Art Pike of Mead Johnson addressed a previously raised question regarding employee parking on a grassy area off Main Street. He stated that this issue will be resolved by July 1st and that Mead Johnson will utilize paved parking across the three recently acquired properties. He went on to discuss the properties at 605 and 633 E. Main, noting that they are part of a block that is overwhelmingly zoned industrial, with less than 5% of the block designated as residential. While evaluating their investment strategy, Mead Johnson aimed to contribute to the City's ongoing beautification efforts while also offering fair and respectful options to local residents. Pike emphasized that no homeowners or industrial neighbors have been—or will be—pressured to sell, and the company has no plans to acquire land beyond this block.

Pike also highlighted that the rezoning would help secure the jobs of approximately 500 on-site employees and additional contracted workers, representing a total of about 1,000 jobs connected to the facility. He reaffirmed that Mead Johnson has been, and remains, a committed corporate citizen—supporting Zeeland's tax base and honoring the city's manufacturing heritage. Pike noted that the company is carefully considering community feedback and making adjustments where feasible through its planned investment. He concluded by stating that Mead Johnson is at a pivotal moment that requires reinvestment, and that the company remains dedicated to being an active partner in the community, committed to preserving its longstanding presence in Zeeland.

Chairman Elhart then called for staff comment.

Staff Liaison Tim Maday discussed the purpose for the meeting and reviewed the process for reviewing. Maday noted that all correspondence received prior to 4pm on June 12th, 2025 have been added to the Commissioner's packet & uploaded onto the website at www.CityofZeeland.com. Additionally, they will also be attached and added to the meeting minutes as part of the record. Maday mentioned that staff only received one correspondence after 4pm, when the meeting packet was updated.

Maday then read a letter expressing support of the rezoning that was submitted to the Community Development Department by Matt McCauley, Senior Vice President – Regional Development of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The letter is attached to this record.

Maday introduced the city's Planning Consultant Paul Leblanc. LeBlanc reviewed his written report regarding the application. This report has been attached to this record.

Chairman Elhart then opened the floor for public comment.

Ann Query of 520 W Central Ave read a letter submitted to the Planning Commission in support of the rezoning. This letter is attached to this record.

Chris Tanner of 344 E Central Ave expressed his opposition to the rezoning due to concerns of increased traffic flow, proximity to downtown Zeeland, and job loss. He noted that he has concerns of how much money Mead Johnson has spent purchasing the residential properties. He expressed that he felt that Mead Johnson could have funneled that money back into the community by donation to the city. He concluded that as a resident of Zeeland, he would prefer to see an agreement worked out between the City and Mead Johnson, where Mead Johnson will have the opportunity to modernize but not at the resident's expense.

Sarah Tibbe of 11 S Division spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning, expressing concern that Mead Johnson may not fully follow through on the plans as presented. She urged Commissioners to carefully consider the long-term and potentially irreversible impacts of the rezoning decision. She specifically voiced concern for the residents currently living in the townhomes at 633 E. Main Avenue, and raised the issue of potential declines in property values as a result of the rezoning and proposed expansion. Tibbe also cited worries about increased noise, traffic, and environmental pollution. She concluded by emphasizing the importance of zoning buffers as a safeguard for the community and stated that once the properties are rezoned, the decision cannot be undone.

Thomas Humbert of 532 E Main Ave spoke in opposition to the rezoning request, expressing concern over the loss of residential housing stock, which he noted is already limited in Zeeland. He stated that the proposed rezoning does not support neighborhood stability or protect residential areas. Humbert raised additional concerns that converting residential property to industrial use would bring increased traffic, noise, lighting, and other disturbances to the surrounding community. He specifically mentioned the impact of approximately 200 employees entering and exiting parking lots directly in front of homes along Main Avenue, which he believes would be significantly more disruptive than current conditions.

He also expressed concern regarding a proposed detention pond shown in Mead Johnson's presentation, noting its proximity to residential properties. He cited potential risks including drowning hazards, maintenance challenges, and the possibility of stagnant water attracting mosquitoes or geese. Thomas concluded by stating his distrust in Mead Johnson's proposed plans, indicating he felt the company had not been fully transparent. He urged Commissioners to consider not just what might be built, but what the community stands to lose.

Sue Vanden Beldt of 40 S Division conveyed her opposition to the rezoning request, questioning the urgency behind Mead Johnson's timeline and why the company is reportedly paying up to ten times the assessed value for the properties. She expressed concern about a lack of transparency in the process and stated that Commissioners may not have had sufficient time to thoroughly review the proposal or engage with residents for their input. Vanden Beldt acknowledged Mead Johnson's positive history in the community but emphasized that the company has adequate space within its existing I-2 zoned property to expand. She voiced concern about emissions from the drying tower, particularly given the facility's proximity—only one block—from Cityside Middle School. Additional concerns included runoff into the Brower Drain, noise levels from the dryer towers, odors, and the reported dumping of white sludge on the interior property.

Vanden Beldt also raised the issue of corporate stability, noting that Reckitt's CEO has indicated the company may sell its nutrition division, which includes Mead Johnson. Vanden Beldt concluded by urging the Commission to take their time, conduct their own research, and thoroughly consider the long-term impacts before making a decision.

Ryan Gamby of 11 Division voiced his opposition to the rezoning request, stating that it is inconsistent with both the 2011 and 2020 City of Zeeland Master Plans. He provided background on the development of the townhomes at 605 and 633 E. Main Avenue, noting that the properties

were originally zoned residential to support housing growth. He referenced portions of the 2020 Master Plan that emphasize the importance of preserving the city's housing stock.

Gamby read a statement from a resident, Justine, who currently lives in one of the townhomes. Justine shared that she is a single mother without a driver's license, and living near downtown Zeeland has allowed her to walk to work while her daughter walks to Cityside Middle School. She has lived there for approximately seven years and expressed sadness about having to leave a home she loves. Gamby clarified that his opposition is not against Mead Johnson's desire to modernize or expand its operations, but rather against the conversion of additional residential properties for industrial use. He respectfully asked Commissioners to vote against the rezoning request.

Ericka Humbert of 532 E Main Ave expressed her opposition to the rezoning request, citing concerns that Mead Johnson's interpretation of the 2020 Master Plan overlooks key goals and protections intended for residential areas in favor of industrial expansion. She stated that the proposed rezoning poses a threat to the character and fabric of the neighborhood.

Humbert described the request as a significant departure from the guidance of the 2020 Master Plan and questioned the relevance of Planning Consultant Paul LeBlanc's report, which she believes is based on outdated information from the 2011 plan. She urged Commissioners to look beyond visual renderings and assurances offered by Mead Johnson and to critically assess the long-term impact of the proposal. She also referenced a 2012 chlorine leak at the Mead Johnson facility, recalling a statement from the Fire Chief that evacuation of the city and the nearby middle school was only avoided due to favorable wind direction. Based on this incident, she questioned how bringing industrial activity closer to residential properties could be in the community's best interest.

Marge Klein of 553 E Main Ave voiced her opposition to the rezoning request, beginning with a personal account of her family's long-standing history in Zeeland and her deep connection to her home at 553 E. Main Avenue. She outlined the timeline of her interactions with Mead Johnson leading up to the rezoning proposal for 605 and 633 E. Main Avenue. Klein emphasized that Zeeland has a strong industrial presence and, to her knowledge, has never approved a request to rezone residential property to industrial use. She raised concerns about the message such a decision could send, particularly given Zeeland's visibility as a gateway between two major highways.

Klein also expressed distrust in Mead Johnson's project, referencing unfulfilled promises from a Grand River Construction representative who had assured her that the area where white sludge had accumulated would be graded, reseeded, and treated for standing water and mosquito concerns—tasks she stated remain incomplete. Klein also raised questions about how Mead Johnson plans to manage the high-pressure gas line running under Main Avenue near the townhomes. She concluded by reiterating her concerns about the growing shortage of housing in Zeeland and surrounding communities, and the risk of losing valuable residential space.

Joe Bennett of Bennett Wood Specialties Inc spoke in support of the rezoning request, sharing his and his family's deep roots in the Zeeland community. He acknowledged that the decision to sell their property was not made lightly, as the business has been in the fourth and fifth generation of family ownership. However, he felt it was important to share his positive experience working with Art Pike and the Mead Johnson team. Bennett expressed his appreciation for Art's professionalism, describing him as respectful of their family's history and fully aware of the weight of the decision. He praised Pike for being honest, humble, transparent, and of high character and integrity, noting that Art has made a genuine effort to listen to and address community concerns.

Bennett stated his belief that the proposal is beneficial to the residents of Zeeland and found the presentation to be thoughtful and well-organized. He also mentioned that the sale will support

Bethel Church, which has a long-standing ministry presence in Zeeland, by helping fund future ministry efforts in the community. Bennett highlighted that the key reason for selling was so that his son Casey could further his education in ministry, in turn planting new seeds for the furtherance of the gospel in Zeeland as well.

Steven Sprick, an employee of Mead Johnson expressed his support for the rezoning request, citing his deep family ties to the Zeeland community and his pride in being a Mead Johnson employee. He stated that, in his experience, the company consistently strives to do the right thing, and he has witnessed that commitment firsthand during his time there. Sprick acknowledged that the concerns raised by community members and affirmed that Mead Johnson is listening. He highlighted elements of the proposed plan that reflect the company's sensitivity as a community partner, including beautification efforts such as a park, garden, zoning setbacks for visual appeal, and the expansion of a community playground. He emphasized that the project would provide new job opportunities, strengthen the local tax base, support surrounding industries and trades, and promote community involvement. Sprick concluded by encouraging the Commission to vote in favor of the rezoning of 605 and 633 E. Main Avenue.

Armondo Falcon of 605 E Main expressed his opposition to the rezoning request, noting that he represents one of eight families currently residing in the townhomes at 605 E. Main Avenue. While he stated that he is not opposed to development or business growth, he emphasized that progress should not come at the expense of working residents striving to remain stable and self-sufficient. Falcon shared that although he was told a \$2,000 relocation package would be provided, he has yet to receive it. Based on his own estimates, the actual cost of relocation is significantly higher—ranging between \$3,100 and \$4,000—even when accounting for his own labor. He also anticipates a rent increase of approximately \$200 to \$300 per month. Meanwhile, he noted that nearby homeowners are reportedly receiving compensation well above their assessed property values, highlighting what he sees as an unequal approach between renters and homeowners.

Falcon stated that this situation presents an opportunity for Mead Johnson to show its commitment not only to expansion but to supporting the community equitably. He respectfully requested that any approval of the rezoning be contingent upon relocation support for the residents who are being displaced as part of the project.

Hugh Bartels of Bethel Church expressed his support for the rezoning request and shared his deep personal and institutional ties to the Zeeland community. While acknowledging the validity of concerns raised by residents, he offered insight into his own experience working with Mead Johnson throughout the property negotiation process. Bartels stated that Mead Johnson approached Bethel Church with a sincere interest in purchasing the property, expressing a desire to make the project meaningful for employees, neighbors, and the City. Over a period of three months, church leadership engaged in ongoing conversations with Mead Johnson, followed by deliberation and prayer before ultimately reaching their decision to sell.

Bartels shared that they came to believe if selling the property could be used to further their ministry, it was the right choice. During this process, initial skepticism was replaced with trust, grounded in facts and transparency. He shared a personal anecdote, noting that when he first met Art Pike, he jokingly felt he wouldn't buy a used car from him—but over the past five months, that relationship evolved into one of trust and mutual respect. He now even seeks Art's advice on church matters, such as mergers. Bartels concluded by expressing his trust in the City to hold Mead Johnson accountable to its proposed plans and emphasized the importance of working together to achieve the best outcome. He respectfully urged the Commission to approve the rezoning application.

Joe Dyer of Disher Engineering in Zeeland expressed his support of the rezoning request and noted that Disher is a proud partner of Mead Johnson. He emphasized that this decision is not solely about economic competition, but also about understanding the engineering and manufacturing

realities required to ensure long-term viability. Dyer stated that the proposed expansion would help secure hundreds of jobs in Zeeland and that the current infrastructure at the facility cannot meet future efficiency standards, regulatory requirements, or competitive market demands. Drawing from Disher's experience working with Mead Johnson in various capacities, Dyer affirmed that the upgrades tied to this expansion are both necessary and beneficial.

He expressed concern about the risks posed by aging systems, explaining that modern manufacturing technologies offer substantial improvements in performance, reliability, and environmental impact compared to what currently exists on-site. While acknowledging community concerns about noise, odor, and traffic, Dyer emphasized that responsible development—when paired with modern technology—can successfully coexist with residential neighborhoods. He concluded by highlighting Mead Johnson's longstanding commitment to the City of Zeeland and Zeeland Public Schools, and stated that this expansion will strengthen that mission by continuing to provide high-quality nutritional products for future generations.

Brenda Staat-Tomilson of 224 101st St, a 14-year resident of Zeeland and current employee of Mead Johnson, expressed her support for the rezoning request. She noted that Zeeland continues to evolve, and viewed the proposed modernization as the next chapter in the city's growth and history. Tomilson acknowledged that some may judge the facility's current appearance, but emphasized that it has been retrofitted and adapted over the years to meet production needs—serving as a legacy of nourishing families not just in North America, but around the world. She concluded by stating that this project represents a chance to honor the past while stepping confidently into the future. Tomilson framed the expansion as an opportunity for the community to grow alongside a dedicated and long-standing local partner.

Brandon Bacon of 919 88th Ave & employee of Mead Johnson expressed his support for the rezoning request, sharing his personal story of moving to Zeeland with his wife after college and establishing roots in the community. He stated that Mead Johnson has been a stable and reliable source of employment for his family. Bacon noted the high demand for the products manufactured by Mead Johnson and emphasized that the current facility is aging and no longer sufficient to meet the ongoing needs of their vulnerable customer base. He explained that the company is eager to invest in the Zeeland site because they view it as a strong and strategic location for their long-term future. He also highlighted that both Mead Johnson and the City of Zeeland play a significant role in the national infant formula supply chain, and that the specialized equipment used in production cannot easily be relocated. Bacon concluded by affirming Mead Johnson's commitment to doing the right thing and voiced his full support for the rezoning proposal.

Colin Ebels of 19 S Park expressed his opposition to the rezoning request, citing concerns about the transparency and fairness of the process surrounding Mead Johnson's proposed expansion. He raised specific concerns about members of the Planning Commission having close personal or professional ties to Lakeshore Advantage, an organization that has actively supported the project. Ebels stated that individuals with a conflict of interest are expected to recuse themselves not only from the final vote but also from all deliberations leading up to it. He asserted that the Commissioners in question have participated in meetings and discussions related to the project, which, in his view, undermines public trust in the impartiality of the process. Ebels respectfully requested that the two Commissioners with connections to Lakeshore Advantage step back from the decision-making process to preserve the integrity and credibility of the proceedings.

Jeff Zylstra of 40 S Sanford St voiced his opposition to the rezoning request, expressing strong concerns regarding long-standing odor issues associated with the Mead Johnson facility. He urged Commissioners to include specific regulations and requirements related to odor mitigation if the rezoning is approved. Zylstra shared a personal anecdote, recalling that he first noticed the odor decades ago while playing football at the nearby athletic field. He emphasized that despite the passage of 40 years, the issue has persisted, and residents continue to deal with the same

unpleasant smell. With the proposed expansion bringing operations closer to residential neighborhoods, Zylstra warned that the odor would only become more intrusive. He also noted that his family is frequently disturbed by loudspeaker announcements and vibrations from machinery at the plant—sometimes even while lying in bed at night. Zylstra concluded by encouraging the Commission to stand firm and not allow Mead Johnson to pressure or “bully” them into approving the expansion.

Bobbi Eskes of 532 E Central Ave expressed opposition to the proposed rezoning and related project. She stated that alternate methods of expansion should be reviewed.

Jessica Corner of 30 N Carlston St expressed her support for the rezoning request, highlighting the company’s commitment to growth—not only in its operations, but also in its people. She shared that as a young student, she felt genuinely supported by Mead Johnson and was given the opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways. Corner emphasized that the rezoning request is not solely about buildings or property boundaries, but about creating a safer and more efficient work environment. She noted that although the company is more than 100 years old, it continues to evolve and strive for improvement. She concluded by expressing hope that this spirit of growth will continue to benefit future generations.

Aaron Dewitt, a longtime resident of Zeeland and employee of Mead Johnson, expressed his support for the rezoning request. He offered his perspective as someone who works within the company, noting that Mead Johnson consistently encourages employees to be strong community partners. He shared that as conversations around the expansion have progressed, this message has only been reinforced. Dewitt reflected on a personal experience—when his daughter was born—and how it shifted his priorities, helping him fully appreciate the impact of his work in supporting families who rely on Mead Johnson’s products. He emphasized that the proposed expansion is essential to ensure a consistent and high-quality supply of infant formula to meet growing demand. He concluded by stating that a vote in favor of the rezoning would be an acknowledgment of the importance of the product Mead Johnson produces and would support the company’s ability to continue delivering safe and nutritious formula to families in need.

Mayor Pro Tem Sally Gruppen of 516 W Lawrence expressed her deep love for the Zeeland community, sharing her perspective as both a long-time resident and council member. She highlighted her strong family ties to Zeeland and recalled fond memories of living near 633 E. Main, describing her time there as joyful and meaningful for her family. Gruppen spoke highly of City Manager Tim Klunder, explaining that she hired him because she recognized his integrity and professionalism. She praised his character and leadership, emphasizing that City Council, the Planning Commission, and City staff have all acted with residents’ best interests in mind while navigating difficult decisions. She reflected on meetings in nearby communities, noting that many lack the resources, relationships, and industrial presence that Zeeland is fortunate to have. In this, she expressed deep gratitude for the strong foundation Zeeland enjoys.

Gruppen addressed recent criticisms directed toward City Council, clarifying that members were not fully informed about the details of the proposed expansion until the most recent Planning Commission meetings. She emphasized that the City has actively supported the addition of 92 new residential rental units and continues to prioritize the wellbeing of its residents. She concluded by encouraging all members of the community to work together in a spirit of collaboration as the process moves forward.

Joe Geerlings of 38 Sanford shared his long-standing history as a Zeeland resident and reflected on the loss of housing and trees over the years, including the demolition of the barn at 633 E. Main Avenue. While expressing support for responsible development, he also raised several concerns about the current proposal. Geerlings questioned why Mead Johnson is focusing solely on acquiring and rezoning approximately six acres if the company is committed to a long-term partnership with the City. He pointed out that an additional 2.3 acres to the north has not been

considered for expansion, suggesting that developing in that direction could allow for more greenspace and create a more inviting entrance to the city. He also expressed concerns about the proposed plan for 640 E. Washington Avenue, noting that, according to state records, Mead Johnson does not currently own that property. This led him to question whether the proposed parking solution is truly part of a long-term strategy or a temporary measure to improve financials post-construction. Geerlings briefly addressed the concern of potential job loss but noted that, should Mead Johnson relocate, another industrial company could occupy the space and potentially create new employment opportunities. He concluded by stating his belief that if the City were to challenge Mead Johnson to revisit and revise their proposal, a more thoughtful and community-oriented plan could be developed.

Chris Morgan of Kenco Logistics expressed his strong support for the rezoning request, speaking on behalf of Kenco, the company responsible for handling materials manufactured by Mead Johnson. He highlighted the ongoing growth and successful partnership between Mead Johnson, Kenco, and the Zeeland community. Morgan shared that through their collaboration with Mead Johnson, Kenco has been able to provide employment to 570 associates across multiple sites in Zeeland. Since 2021, Kenco has added 46 employees—representing a 57% growth in their workforce—demonstrating the strength of both the partnership and the positive economic impact it has had.

He emphasized that this collaboration supports local investment, as the majority of Kenco and Mead Johnson employees live, shop, dine, and send their children to Zeeland Public Schools. Morgan concluded by stating that this expansion is more than just a building project; it is an opportunity to continue providing stable employment and to further support the city's economic development.

David Will of 17 S Division voiced his opposition to the rezoning request. He noted the significant time, money, and effort he has invested into improving his home and increasing its value. Will acknowledged that he was aware of the existing facility when he moved to the area and initially accepted the associated noise and odor. However, he emphasized that most companies tend to expand away from residential areas—not further into them. He expressed concern about the visual impact of the expansion, stating that instead of seeing homes at 605 and 633 E. Main, he would now face the view of a factory.

Will also voiced concerns that traffic on Main Street would increase and that noise and odor may persist or worsen, particularly during construction. He concluded by stating that he values the improvements he has made to his property and fears that the rezoning could diminish the return on those efforts and investments.

Bruce Vanden Beldt of 40 S Division expressed his reservations about the rezoning request. While acknowledging the passionate support voiced for Mr. Pike and the proposed Mead Johnson expansion, he urged Commissioners to carefully consider the full scope and potential consequences of the decision. Vanden Beldt emphasized that appreciation for the project should not overshadow the broader impacts it may have on the community. He concluded by stating that he believes more time is needed for thorough review and deliberation.

Scott Vanhaitsma of 30 S Division expressed concern about the pace of Mead Johnson's rezoning request, describing the company's timeline as aggressive. He stated that the urgency of their schedule should not influence the Planning Commission's decision-making process.

Vanhaitsma characterized Mead Johnson's current proposal as preliminary and fluid, rather than firmly established. He urged commissioners to vote against the rezoning and to take additional time to fully evaluate the implications of the proposed development. He also encouraged the commission to collaborate with Mead Johnson to explore a "Plan B"—a solution that would allow the company to meet its goals while still coexisting respectfully with surrounding residents.

Vanhaitsma emphasized that while only 5% of the corridor is zoned residential, it remains a vital and meaningful part of the neighborhood and the community he is proud to be part of.

No further public comment was heard. Chairman Elhart asked if commissioners wished to comment.

Commissioner Klynstra expressed appreciation for the professionalism and collaboration shown by Art Pike and his team at Mead Johnson throughout the process. He extended his gratitude to the citizens of Zeeland who attended the meeting to voice their concerns, as well as to the Mead Johnson employees who came in support of the rezoning request. Klynstra emphasized that the decision before the Commission is not being taken lightly by any member of City staff. He noted that staff first saw the proposed plans around the same time they were made available to the public. He highlighted the City's efforts to remain transparent throughout the process and acknowledged that this decision is a challenging one for all involved.

Commissioner Klunder clarified that his comments were made as a member of the Planning Commission and the City Manager, not City Council. He expressed openness to postponing a vote on the rezoning request to allow Commissioners additional time for thoughtful consideration. While choosing not to speak in detail on the Master Plan, Klunder stated that he is a strong proponent of planning and emphasized that both challenges and opportunities warrant serious evaluation. He believes this particular opportunity deserves a full analysis and consideration for change. He added that granting Mead Johnson the ability to use the subject properties, as well as others, through appropriate zoning could help address ongoing traffic concerns.

Klunder commended Mead Johnson's continued efforts to operate in an environmentally responsible manner and shared that, after consulting with the City of Zeeland Fire Chief, it was confirmed that no hazardous material (hazmat) incidents have occurred at the plant during the Chief's tenure. Addressing public concerns about property values, Klunder cited a high-level analysis conducted by the Community Development Department. According to the study, residential properties in the neighborhood adjacent to Mead Johnson saw a median annual value increase of 12.9% between 2011 and 2025. Comparatively, residential areas south of Main Avenue saw a median annual increase of 12.1% over the same period. He noted that these findings suggest no significant negative impact on nearby property values, even as Mead Johnson made major capital improvements and removed residential structures along Main Avenue.

Klunder also highlighted that 89 new residential units have been added to the downtown area over the past five years, some of which were designated for households earning between 80% and 120% of the area's median income. If the rezoning is approved, he stated his support for requiring a formal development agreement—similar to those used in other City projects. He concluded by stating that this is a watershed moment for the City and a major decision for the Planning Commission. Klunder encouraged fellow Commissioners to consider the long-term implications for the community and to set aside immediacy when making their decision.

-8:38 Moved by Commissioner Klynstra to close the public hearing. Supported by Commissioner Holstege. All voted aye.

Staff Liaison Tim Maday noted that the commission has the option to table the vote to allow more time for commissioners to further discern, or the option to vote on the information they have received from tonight's meeting and previous Planning Commission meetings. Maday noted that if the Planning Commission were to table the vote and a decision were to not be made tonight, Mead Johnson has requested that a special meeting take place prior to the scheduled July 10th, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting.

Planning Consultant Paul Leblanc noted to Commissioners that whether the Commission decides to recommend the approval or denial, it is very important to have finding of facts to record in the

minutes to reason why you've decided one way or another. Therefore, Leblanc suggests that the Commission table the vote to be able to come up with the finding of fact, and for the opportunity for City staff to prepare resolutions for both outcomes.

Motion 2025.08

Moved by Klynstra to table the rezoning application for 605 & 633 E Main Ave.

Supported by Kass

Roll Call Vote on Motion 2025.07

Ayes: Perkins, Blanton, Holstege, Kass, Klynstra, Klunder, Cooper, and Chairman Elhart.

Nays: None.

Absent: Klompmaker.

Motion Passes

- Moved by Commissioner Holstege to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes from the June 5, 2025 meeting. Supported by Commissioner Cooper. All Commissioners voted aye.

-8:48PM Moved by Commissioner Holstege to adjourn. Supported by Commissioner Cooper. All voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine Hopping
Recording Secretary

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.

JUN 11 2025

Received

June 10, 2025

City of Zeeland Planning Commission
21 S Elm St
Zeeland MI 49464

RE: Written Statement Opposing Mead Johnson's Application to Rezone 633
and 605 E Main Avenue

Dear Chairman Elhart:

Please accept my written statement opposing Mead Johnson's application to rezone 633 and 605 E Main Avenue from residential to I-2 General Industrial. As the owner and resident of 11 S Division St, I live directly across the street from the proposed rezoning and contemplated development.

Mead Johnson's rezoning application is arbitrary and does not serve the public health, safety, welfare, and prosperity of the City of Zeeland. The Zoning Enabling Act (ZEA), 2006 PA 110, requires a zoning ordinance *be based upon a plan* that promotes enumerated criteria, including the health, public safety, and the general welfare. MCL 125.3203(1); see also *Baker v City of Algonac*, 39 Mich App 526 (1972) (whether the rezoning serves the public interest is the essential question in rezoning). While each zoning case must be analyzed in the light of the applicable facts, there are a variety of factors to consider when analyzing the reasonableness of a rezoning application. Zoning regulations only constitute a valid exercise of the police power when they have a rational relation to the public health, safety, welfare and prosperity of the community and are not such an unreasonable exercise of power as to become arbitrary, destructive or confiscatory. *Biske v City of Troy*, 381 Mich 611, 616 (1969), citing *State v. Hillman*, 110 Conn. 92, 100, 105, 147 A. 294.

**Rezoning 605 E Main Avenue is Contrary to the 2011 and 2020 City of Zeeland
Master Plan and Future Land Use**

The ZEA governs zoning ordinances whereas the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), 2008 PA 33, governs the creation of a master plan. Under the MPEA, the general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish development and must satisfy enumerated statutory criteria, including being coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical. MCL 125.3807(2)(a). Plans must also, in

accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare. MCL 125.3807(2)(c).

Developing a master plan is an extensive and detailed process. The planning commission must make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies on the present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction; consult with representatives of adjacent local governments; and cooperate with state and federal departments, public transportation agencies, and other public agencies. MCL 125.3831. Notice must be provided to the regional or county planning commission. MCL 125.3839(2)(d)-(e). Before approving a master plan, a planning commission must hold at least one public hearing on the proposed master plan. MCL 125.3843(1). Approval requires a 2/3 affirmative vote of all members of the planning commission. MCL 125.3843(2). A proposed master plan must be transmitted to City Council for review and comment. MCL 125.3841(1).

Given the extensive planning process associated with a master plan, Michigan courts have understandably given it weight when reviewing rezoning decisions. Whether a zoning classification advances a city's master plan is a factor in determining reasonableness. *Troy Campus v Troy*, 132 Mich App 441 (1984). "A master plan serves as a general guide to future development . . . and is a factor in determining the reasonableness of a particular zoning classification." *Inverness Mobile Home Cmty v Bedford Twp*, 263 Mich App 241, 248-249 (2004). If a zoning decision allows uses for specific land that are inconsistent with the overall plan, the courts will apply greater scrutiny. *City of Essexville v Carrollton Concrete Mix, Inc*, 259 Mich App 257 (2003).

There is good reason for this. As the Michigan Supreme Court explained in *Raabe v City of Walker*, 383 Mich 165 (1970), this is particularly true in the context of contradictory rezoning after years of original zoning upon which concerned persons have come to depend. In quoting from McQuillin, *Municipal Corporations* (1965 Rev Vol.), §§ 25.06 and 25.68, the Court explained that:

Amendment or repeal of zoning laws should be just as carefully considered and prepared, perhaps more so, since private arrangements, property purchases and uses, the location of business in commercial or industrial zones, and the making of homes in residential districts, occur with reasonable anticipation of the stability of existing zones. Consequently, procedure in the amendment of zoning ordinances ordinarily embraces safeguards similar to or greater than those of the original zoning, against unreasonable, capricious, needless and harmful rezoning or changes of use classification, including petitions, notices, protests, hearings, study by

commissions or committees, and initiative and referendum of amending measures.

* * *

Since the purpose of zoning is stabilization of existing conditions subject to an orderly development and improvement of a zoned area and since property may be purchased and uses undertaken in reliance on an existing zoning ordinance, an amendatory, subsequent or repealing zoning ordinance must clearly be related to the accomplishment of a proper purpose within the police power. *Amendments should be made with utmost caution and only when required by changing conditions; otherwise, the very purpose of zoning will be destroyed. In short, a zoning ordinance can be amended only to subserve the public interest.* (emphasis added).

The City's master plan largely reflects this sentiment noting that "[d]eviating from the Plan should not occur without sound rationale." City of Zeeland Master Plan Revisited- 2020 (July 6, 2020), p 32.

Mead Johnson's application to rezone 605 E Main Avenue is contrary to the City's master plan. The property's future use was designated as residential in the City's 2011 Master Plan. Consistent with the designation, the property was acquired by Cityside Townhouses LLC in 2016, and the property was rezoned to R-3 Two-Family and Multi-Family Residential sometime in 2016 or 2017. The current Townhouses were constructed shortly thereafter. The City's 2020 Master Plan Revisited similarly contemplates the future use of the property to be medium density residential.



Figure 1: Townhouses under construction, 605 E Main Ave, July 28, 2017.

McQuillin and the *Raabe* Court are prophetic to the current situation in Zeeland. I purchased my residence in 2015 and, like so many neighbors, did so with the

understanding that the neighborhood's future land use would be residential. In reliance on the City's master plan and future land use, many neighbors have made considerable investments in their homes with the intent to remain permanent residents in the City. I would not have purchased my residence or invested in it if the property directly across the street was zoned I-2 General Industrial.

Mead Johnson's rezoning application relies extensively on the concept of "changed circumstances" to justify their rezoning and deviation from the master plan. Mead Johnson, *Rezoning Application* (May 16, 2025). Yet they fail to acknowledge that, to the extent there are any changed circumstances, it is one entirely of their own making. The neighborhood on E Main Avenue is thriving with many residents now owning their homes. The single family residential properties Mead Johnson purchased, or is attempting to purchase, have been owned and occupied by their current residents for decades.¹ These were not vacant lots or a systemic retreat of the neighborhood that would warrant changed circumstances and rezoning. If anything, the residential rezoning and construction of the Townhouses in 2017 is evidence of the neighborhood *expanding*. The only reason the rezoning application exists today is because Mead Johnson paid a significant amount of money to these homeowners at a price they could simply not refuse. These are not changed circumstances to warrant deviation from the master plan.

The Rezoning Application is Not Based on a Plan

The proposed rezoning application is shockingly inadequate for a project of this magnitude, especially when attempting to contravene a carefully considered master plan. In total, it appears the record before the Planning Commission is comprised of a four-page rezoning application and a half hour PowerPoint presentation. The application timeline is as concerning as its lack of detail. Mead Johnson purchased 605 E Main Avenue on May 15, submitted a rezoning application on May 16, and apparently requested a special rezoning hearing to expedite their application. The public and Planning Commission were first made aware of their intentions on June 5 and the public hearing is scheduled on June 12. These actions reflect ad hoc, arbitrary planning rather than careful and comprehensive zoning consideration.

The Application is Premature

Mead Johnson's rezoning application is also premature—it only seeks to rezone 633 and 605 E Main Avenue despite a contemplated development of all parcels north of

¹ 633 E Main Avenue owned by Craig and Lila Meyer since 2006; 549 E Main Avenue owned by Kyle and Camaal Murray since 2004; 553 E Main Avenue lived in by Margie Klein for 52 years.

Main Avenue between Fairview Rd and N Carlton St. The Commission should be aware that Mead Johnson does not yet own all the properties necessary to effectuate their intended development and might very well be unable to do so. As noted in a recent Wood-TV interview, Earl and Margie Klein have not sold their property at 553 E Main Avenue—a home of 52 years.² Ms. Klein is quoted in the interview as saying:

We love our place, but we don't want to sell to Mead Johnson because they are pushy and demanding . . . this has nothing to do with the money, it's the whole principle of the thing. We have lived here for decades, been so involved in the City of Zeeland, Chamber of Commerce back in the day, and we love this town.

The Planning Commission should deny Mead Johnson's application because they have not yet acquired all the properties necessary for this development. Furthermore, Mead Johnson should submit their rezoning applications as a comprehensive whole, so the Planning Commission has the benefit of reviewing the entire project plan. A piecemeal approach to rezoning is speculative and does not promote rezoning that is based on a comprehensive plan.

Lack of Comprehensive Planning Reports and Studies

There are no comprehensive planning reports or studies on this development or its impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. With projects of this scale, it is not uncommon to have professional reports from engineers, traffic consultants, noise consultants, or other experts. Through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, I obtained a February 11, 2025, memorandum from a consultant to Tim Maday, Community Development Director for the City of Zeeland. In it, the consultant reviewed the City's 2011 and amended 2020 version of the Master Plan and opined that "if a buyer was to purchase 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[.]" Mead Johnson appears to have drawn heavily upon this memorandum when drafting their current rezoning application. However, this memorandum is misleading on certain substantive components.

First, the memorandum does not cite applicable case law or relevant statutory provisions the City should consider with rezoning applications, except for a general

² Kolker, *Some Zeeland neighbors want to block Mead Johnson expansion* (June 6, 2025) <https://www.woodtv.com/news/ottawa-county/some-zeeland-neighbors-want-to-block-mead-johnson-expansion/>.

reference to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The only cited authority is the language in the Master Plan itself.

Second, the memorandum appears to rely on a cluster of residential uses along Main Avenue between N. Division Street and N Farview Rd that the 2011 Master Plan identified as a land use conflict.



Figure 2: Identified Inconsistent Land Use, 2011 City of Zeeland Master Plan

The 2011 Master plan notes that “[m]any of these homes are actually zoned industrial or commercial and are, therefore, considered nonconforming uses.” City of Zeeland Master Plan 2011, p 30. This is accurate and the residences located at 701 and 658 E Main Avenue have since been purchased and demolished by Mead Johnson. However, the opposite is true for 605 E Main Ave (Townhouses), which had a future land use designation as residential and was rezoned as such. *Supra*, pages 3-4. Additionally, the remaining properties Mead Johnson seeks to develop (553, 549, and 515 E Main Avenue) were not identified as inconsistent land use and have never been identified as industrial use on the future land use map.

Third, the memorandum selectively quotes goals from the 2020 Master Plans that support industrial growth, but does not identify any of the goals associated with Housing and Neighborhoods. *Infra*, pages 9-10

Finally, the memorandum is misleading regarding the reported level of public support for industry from a public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the 2011 Master Plan. The memorandum states that “over 78 percent of those expressing an opinion either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that more industrial employers are needed and 67 percent strongly agreed or agreed that the industrial park should be expanded.” (emphasis added).

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they “strongly agreed,” “agreed,” had “no opinion,” “disagreed,” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement that “[m]ore industrial employers are needed in Zeeland.” Out of a total of 489 responses, 166 expressed no opinion on this question. The memorandum excluded these 166 responses from percentage calculations, resulting in 78 percent. But when those who expressed “no opinion” on the question are included in the analysis, **only 51.9 percent** of all respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

The same is true regarding the statement that “[t]he existing industrial park needs to be expanded.” When the 301 respondents who expressed “no opinion” are considered, the percentage of those supporting expansion of the industrial park drops from 67 percent to **25.4 percent**.

In any event, the data cited is 14 years old at a time when the unemployment rate in Ottawa County was more than double what it is today (7.8 percent in 2011, 3.8 percent in 2024). Ottawa County Dashboard, *Average Annual Unemployment in Michigan and Ottawa County* <<https://miottawa.org/dsi/statistics/>>. The respondents were also only asked about expanding the industrial park in general. The question is not location specific and does not ask respondents if they agreed with expanding the industrial park on Main Avenue while demolishing four homes, the Townhouses, and Bethel church. It stands to reason that, if surveyed today, the percentage of respondents agreeing with these statements would be much lower than it already is.

The Planning Commission should use caution when considering this memorandum for the purposes of making a rezoning decision on the current application.

Diminution in Property Value

The City has not completed a comprehensive review of the potential reduction in property values associated with the proposed rezoning and development.

In a March 19, 2025, one-page email obtained through FOIA, Tim Maday reported the results of his neighborhood sales trends analysis to Tim Klunder, City Manager. The analysis appears to have compared the increase in sale price per year for a group of residences south of Main Avenue between 104th Ave and Plainfield Ct, and an area of residences located within four blocks of industrial sites in the area during a time that Mead Johnson had construction projects.

While I appreciate Mr. Maday’s preliminary efforts to analyze the potential reduction in property values, he readily acknowledged it was a “simple, high level review.” Additionally, the facts as they existed at the time of the analysis are not remotely analogous to the expansive project Mead Johnson is currently considering. Today,

there are adequate buffer zones between Mead Johnson’s factory and most residential properties. But the contemplated expansion will be just a stone’s throw away from our front doors—there are no natural barriers or buffer zones. As City residents, we deserve a more comprehensive assessment regarding the potential reduction in our property values before any rezoning decisions are made.

There is No Identifiable Public Need to Rezone Residential Properties to I-2 General Industrial

In the context of rezoning decisions, courts will occasionally consider whether there is a need for additional land to be rezoned into the proposed classification. See *Raabe* (rezoning to industrial invalidated where other land available in the city for industrial expansion); see also *Baker v Algonac*, 39 Mich App 526 (1972) (rezoning to multiple-family residential upheld where rise in housing costs forced to rent rather than to buy).

Mead Johnson’s application asserts a need to modernize their facilities; however, they do not assert a public need or rationale to demolish and rezone four residences, two Townhouses housing up to eight families, and a church to I-2 General Industrial. Zeeland has a significant industrial base and a sizeable portion of the City’s northeast side is already zoned industrial. Mead Johnson’s own actions indicate they can acquire other industrially zoned properties for their development—their proposed renderings suggest they have acquired the 5.49-acre lot at 640 E Washington Avenue owned by Highpoint Leasing, LLC. The acquisition of additional properties north of Mead Johnson’s current facility and development along N Fairview Avenue or north of E Washington Avenue would be ideally suited for this development.

One Planning Commissioner asked a particularly insightful question at the end of Mead Johnson’s presentation on June 5, 2025, which is captured below.

COMMISSIONER: What happens if this is not approved? Are you able to still operate?

MR. PIKE: Yeah, um . . . our assets are aging, we will not be able to use those assets forever. We have to build new assets because requirements change, regulatory requirements change, we have internal standards that we have to meet as well so the assets will not be fit for purpose for much longer, and so we need to, and that’s why you have an active project, we’ve identified that, we know that we need to do that, and that’s why we are spending a very large sum of money that we know we

need to build new assets, the one's that we have are nearing the end of their shelf life.

Again, there was no asserted need to rezone residential properties contrary to the City's Master Plan. However, there *is* an identifiable public need and emphasis on maintaining housing and neighborhoods. According to the City's 2020 Master Plan, the City of Zeeland's population declined by 5.2 percent between 2000 and 2010, from 5,805 to 5,504. The following stated goals in the 2020 Master Plan reflect the planned priorities and needs for the City of Zeeland.

Housing and Neighborhood

Goal 1 is particularly relevant, stating that “[r]ecognizing that Zeeland’s physical character is largely a result of its existing residential neighborhoods, preserve and improve the existing housing stock and supporting neighborhood facilities.” City of Zeeland Master Plan Revisted – 2020, p 18. This includes initiating “efforts to improve and protect houses and their properties so that a balance is maintained against the exposure of non-residential uses.” *Id.*

Similarly, Goal 2A is to “[p]reserve housing that is still viable, even if it is situated in a sensitive area, such as abutting industry or busy streets.” *Id.* at 19 (emphasis added). This is directly applicable to Mead Johnson’s attempt to rezone 605 E Main Avenue. The Townhouses are certainly viable, house up to eight families, and are abutted to industry. Demolishing the Townhouses would require the relocation of these families, possibly outside of the City.

Land Use: Goal 2A is to “[p]lace a priority on preserving the integrity of Zeeland’s neighborhoods,” which *includes identifying and monitoring land use in neighborhoods where there are potential threats to the preservation of housing.* *Id.* at 13 (emphasis added). Furthermore, Goal 4 is to “[e]ncourage future development to occur in accordance with the Master Plan.” This includes providing buffer areas as transitions between incompatible land uses. *Id.* at 15.

Commercial and Industrial: As it relates to industrial development, the City is committed to encouraging new industrial development, but “only in areas where there will be minimal negative impact on other land uses.” *Id.* at 17. This includes restricting the construction of facilities of new industries to the industrial districts. *Id.*

Many Zeeland Residents Oppose Mead Johnson’s Contemplated Development

In their rezoning application, Mead Johnson infers public support for their proposed development by pointing to a public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the

2011 Master Plan. These are the same misleading figures originally contained in the previously mentioned memorandum.

However, a much better—and more recent—barometer of public sentiment involves reviewing public comments offered during City Council and Planning Commission meetings, comments offered on the City’s social media webpage regarding this proposed development, and the prevalence of Neighborhood First yard signs throughout the City. The first stated goal on the Neighborhood First website is to Preserve Existing Zoning.³ More specifically, “No rezoning of residential or public facilities district classes on E Main Ave between Fairview Rd and N Carlton St. Ensure neighborhoods remain residential to maintain the community’s character and quality of life.”⁴

Figure 3 below maps each residence in the City of Zeeland that requested or is currently displaying a Neighborhood First yard sign as of June 8, 2025. Figure 4 is a more detailed area map of Neighborhood First yard signs in the area most directly impacted by this proposed rezoning and development.



Figure 3: Neighborhood First Yard Signs, City of Zeeland, June 8, 2025.

³ Neighborhood First, *What We Stand For*, < <https://neighborhoodfirst.org/what-we-stand-for>> (accessed June 10, 2025).

⁴ *Id.*



Figure 4: Neighborhood First Yard Signs, City of Zeeland, Centennial to Fairview, June 8, 2025.

Both maps are indicative of strong city opposition to Mead Johnson’s expansion and rezoning of residential and public facilities properties along Main Avenue.

Effect on Surrounding Property

Courts may also consider the effects of the uses that would be allowed by the zoning ordinance amendment on surrounding property. See *McLain v Hazel Park*, 357 Mich 459 (1959) (close proximity to residential neighborhoods and light, air, and traffic safety issues considered in upholding denial of rezoning); *Mr. Don’s, Inc v Battle Creek*, 39 Mich App 325 (1972) (fast-food restaurant would operate into late hours and increase traffic, litter, noise, and odors).

The current rezoning application represents one of the most extreme forms of rezoning—residential to I-2 General Industrial. I-2 General Industrial is intended to accommodate wholesale, general manufacturing, storage, and other industrial-related uses which have a greater potential to impact surrounding properties than light industrial⁵. Although the contemplated development would be subject to special land

⁵ Permissible land uses in I-2 General Industrial include, body shops; commercial kennels; lumber and planing mills; metal plating, buffing, and polishing; commercial storage warehouses; the manufacture, compounding, processing, packaging, or treatment of products requiring stamping or punch press operations; planned industrial parks; recycling centers; adult bookstores, adult live entertainment theaters, adult motion picture theaters, and massage parlors; junkyards; truck terminals; outdoor storage, display area, and sale of farm implements and commercial construction equipment; manufacture of corrosive acid or alkali, cement, lime, gypsum, or plaster of Paris; petroleum or other inflammable liquids, production, refining, or storage; connector corridors; antennas and towers for antennas; indoor recreational and indoor public assembly uses; medical offices and buildings used for

use approval under City of Zeeland Zoning Ordinance § 3.1502, the development would unmistakably alter the fundamental character and appearance of our neighborhood. Mead Johnson's current employee parking lot is located approximately 260 feet from Main Avenue, is mostly to the east of many residential properties, and is partially obscured by trees. In contrast, the current proposal seeks to place the primary employee parking lot mere feet from Main Avenue, directly across from residential homes, with their building only set back approximately 150 feet. Mead Johnson claims this will reduce traffic because contractors will be required to park off Washington Avenue. Yet in their presentation, they noted that contractors only represent a small portion of their overall workforce.

Developing a parking lot of this size so close to a residential neighborhood will invariably disrupt the enjoyment of neighborhood properties—light pollution, the starting and stopping of vehicles for a factory that operates around the clock, vehicles speeding out onto Main Avenue, and snow removal in the early morning hours of winter.

Additionally, Mead Johnson has a reputation in Zeeland for their odor and noise. Mead Johnson claims to be working on a new manufacturing process to reduce the odor associated with Nutramigen® Infant Formula production, but offered no guarantees and explained that regulatory approval of new processes take time. The use of fans or blowers on the tower in the *current* location can easily be heard from several blocks away. The risk of neighborhood disruption is simply too great to permit rezoning to this zoning classification.

Conclusion

For the previously mentioned reasons, the Planning Commission should deny Mead Johnson's rezoning application. This vote is not about whether Mead Johnson should modernize their facilities. A "no" vote on the rezoning application is not a referendum on Mead Johnson, the importance of the work they complete, or their contribution to the City. A "no" vote is *not* a vote against development or Mead Johnson's investment in the City. And a "no" vote is certainly *not* a vote against the hard-working employees of Mead Johnson. Instead, a "no" vote simply reflects the fact that rezoning residential properties along Main Avenue to I-2 General Industrial is not in the public's interest. It is an instruction for Mead Johnson to reconsider their project and construct it on industrially zoned properties away from residential neighborhoods.

medical purposes; rooming houses; light vehicle repair facilities; large vehicle repair facilities. City of Zeeland Zoning Ordinance, § 3.1502.

I remain convinced there is still a way to facilitate this development in the City that does not involve demolishing and rezoning homes, Townhouses, and a church. Please continue striving for a true “win-win-win” for the neighborhood, City, and Mead Johnson by voting down this application.

Respectfully

Ryan P. Gamby

Ryan P. Gamby
11 S Division St
Zeeland, MI 49464



City of Zeeland

JUN 12 2025

Received

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. TIM BORING
DIRECTOR

June 11, 2025

Mayor Kevin Klynstra
City of Zeeland
21 S. Elm Street
Zeeland, MI 49464

Dear Mayor Klynstra:

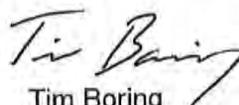
The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is committed to the growth and attraction of business opportunities in the food manufacturing and agribusiness sector and stands ready to support Project Vivid. This initiative aligns with our mission to promote a strong, safe and resilient agricultural and food economy across the state.

Expanding infant formula production in Michigan represents a critical opportunity to strengthen our local food supply chain, improve access to safe and reliable nutrition for infants, and support working families across this state and beyond. Recent national shortages have highlighted the vulnerability of our infant formula supply and the need for increased regional manufacturing capacity. FDA's [Long-Term National Strategy to Increase the Resiliency of the U.S. Infant Formula Market](#).

Moreover, the project will bring meaningful economic benefit to our state. By investing in new infrastructure, creating high quality jobs, and supporting Michigan's agricultural sectors, this expansion directly contributes to economic vitality, a core component of MDARD's strategic priorities.

Michigan is well positioned to lead in this area, with its diverse agricultural base, advanced food processing sector and a strong commitment to food safety and innovation. The project will additionally support Michigan farmers with increased purchases of Michigan soy-based products. Supporting this project reflects our shared goal of ensuring food security, nurturing our youngest citizens, and fostering economic resilience.

Sincerely,


Tim Boring
Director

Tim Maday

From: Dan Klompmaker <dan.j.klompmaker@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2025 3:11 PM
To: Tim Maday
Subject: [External] Planning Commission Meeting June 12

City of Zeeland

JUN 12 2025

Received

Attention: This email was sent to City of Zeeland / Zeeland BPW from an **external source**. Please be extra vigilant when opening attachments or clicking links.

Hi Tim,

I won't be able to make the meeting tonight and wanted to share my thoughts and a potential question for the applicant.

In general, I am in favor of the site development that Mead Johnson is proposing. They have been a solid employer in the Zeeland area for over 100 years and could be for another 100 years. I would like to see us do what we can as a city to keep them. Our city does not exist without employer partners like this. I would urge Mead Johnson to be far more aggressive on mitigating the noise, odor, traffic, and other such concerns as expressed by Zeeland residents.

In regard to the rezoning of the residential spaces, were I present, I would be hesitant to approve the rezoning request without first fully understanding the need for it. It seems that these sites are proposed to be parking lots. I am having a hard time reconciling that use with both our future land use map and the continued housing shortage in the Zeeland Area. My question would be: Is it possible to preserve these residentially zoned lots and have sufficient employee parking in other locations on site?

Blessings on your deliberations and voting.

Warmly,

Dan Klompmaker

Tim Maday

From: Hugh Bartels <hughbartels@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2025 1:37 PM
To: Tim Maday
Subject: [External] Message to ZPC

City of Zeeland

JUN 12 2025

Received

Attention: This email was sent to City of Zeeland / Zeeland BPW from an external source. Please be extra vigilant when opening attachments or clicking links.

Rezoning

Tim,

Thank you for accepting written input for the decision regarding the rezoning of property on Main.

If the request tonight is a limit to three minutes then I will summarize this message.

My name is Hugh Bartels and my address is 10091 Switchgrass Ln. but i spend a lot of time at Bethel Church on 515 East Main where I'm the clerk of council. I'm a former resident of 241 N State and 505 E Central.

I appreciate your role in the community, it's an important one. I'm here to encourage you to approve the applications for rezoning.

Certainly you have your own criteria for making a decision based on the risk and the benefit of this change. I think one of the questions you might have is "can we trust Mead Johnson to follow through on the plans they are showing?"

I'd like to share the highlights of Bethel's experience with Mead Johnson since February. I call it "Trust, but verify"

But first, some context from last week at the meeting I heard many object to the plans from Mead Johnson because they fear for the worst potential outcome of more property being zoned as Industrial. Why do we fear for the worst?

Why can't we imagine the best? To me the best is

Mead Johnson and the City and the neighbors working together for the Best possible outcome of these plans!

But working together takes trust.

Building trust takes time, communication, understanding.

When Mead Johnson first knocked on the door of Bethel Church we heard much of what you heard last week, but without pictures.

They wanted to buy our property but said they didn't need it for the project to be completed.

But then why buy it? The answer:

To make this project something special. Something Mead Johnson employees and the city could be proud of for years to come.

A big surprise, a big project and a big decision.

BUT

There wasn't much trust

Plenty of Skepticism

several concerns and

We had a couple months to decide.

We dove deeper into the 40 days of prayer we had scheduled before the offer.

We talked with our members.

Skepticism was high there too.

We talked with our neighbor.

Why did Bennett Wood Specialties sell?

The timing was right

The price was right

It seemed an answer to prayer. We were happy for them.

But why would a church sell?

Our answer:

If God could use this opportunity to do more for His Kingdom in selling than in staying - then we should sell.

But it was time to Verify:

We talked to the city: where were the plans, what did they know?

We researched the city plans and the zoning.

(It was getting personal and I started to resent 'them' wanting to remove 'my' church from the corner. But it wasn't about me. It wasn't about just Bethel Church.)

Bethel and Mead Johnson kept talking.

We worked with Jason Webb of Cushman Wakefield and Art Pike of Mead Johnson. Two men I've come to highly respect.

They promised to move the playground and even enhance it.

They raised their offer.

We had regular communication

They listened and responded to our concerns.

Trust was building
We, as a church, stayed in discussion & prayer

Our skepticism was being eroded by facts.

Then Bethel's proposed relationship with another church stalled and we needed more time.
They gave us more time.

Trust was building.
We stayed in discussion & prayer.

We needed more verification.
What would the corner look like?
What would the playground look like? Where would it be?
Are you sure you can mitigate the concerns of the neighbors?

They shared the renderings
They shared what they could at the time
They never pressured us to sell.
It was always about Win-Win.
Trust was building.

But they needed to know our answer soon to complete their Master Plan.

And God provided a new potential relationship with a church and two weeks ago our council with congregational approval decided to sell.
We are scheduled to close by June 30.

Our decision to sell has little bearing on your decision tonight.

Our journey in building trust with Mead Johnson has much to do with your decision.

But the trust doesn't end there.
We are also trusting that the city will do all it can to keep the verification in place. We expect Mead Johnson to be held accountable to the guidelines you put forth.

In closing, I was recently reminded how good we have it in Zeeland. A recent trip to Laurel, MS reflected a town that died twice as its single pillar industry boomed and busted.

Zeeland has been blessed beyond measure with a diversity of industry. Many large companies with integrity and character demonstrated for decades.
Most cities long for just one of these pillars.
We need to value each one.

In summary,
I believe working together can achieve the best for all involved.

I was resentful of the plans at first but my attitude has changed completely.

Yes it's discouraging to lose any residential property in Zeeland.
But I am grateful that Mead Johnson is ready to cut a ribbon for a new project instead of cutting out of town and moving to Kentucky.

Yes, there will be plenty of noise and mess during construction.
But I am grateful they're ready to invest nearly a \$1 billion into one city block instead of letting their assets quietly rust away.

Yes, it's sad to lose the Bethel church building, but we believe there are good days ahead for Bethel church members. And a bundle of blessings for our ministry partners.
So I am grateful Mead Johnson is buying extra property for breathing space on the project instead of getting by with the bare minimums.

Yes there are still concerns.
But I am grateful they listened to our concerns and are taking steps to mitigate them.

Please approve the applications.
Thank you for listening.

Hugh

City of Zeeland

JUN 12 2025

June 12, 2025

City of Zeeland Planning Commission

21 S Elm St
Zeeland MI 49464

Received

Written Statement Opposing Mead Johnson's Application to Rezone 633 and 605 E Main Avenue

Dear Chairman Elhart:

I am the owner and resident of 23 S Division Street, and I live 3 houses down from the proposed rezoning and contemplated development. I've been a resident of Zeeland for nearly 7 years, born in Holland, growing up in Hamilton, going to college at U of M Ann Arbor, serving my country in the US Air Force as a Flight Test Pilot before finally returning home and settling here in 2018. My Father worked at Herman Miller for over 30 years, so I remember the changes that Zeeland has gone through over the years, some good and some bad. I have put nearly \$150,000 worth of work into my home in the last 7 years. Siding, windows, stamped concrete patios, and a new garage. I would not have gone through this effort if I did not want to live here or improve the look of the block. I have a lot of pride in my house. Once all the renovations were done, I even put my house into the Zeeland Historic Society being that it was built in 1919. Now given all that, what would make sense about putting a MASSIVE chemical plant right across the street from so many houses like mine?

Residents have been opposed to this rezoning and development plan since we discovered it through word of mouth and then FOIA requests. The city was hiding this from us, and they did not inform the public as they should. They never did and still have not taken a stand on what their opinion is. People are losing their homes because the city council did not take an opinion. Why could they say there will not be any re-zoning regardless of what properties Mead Johnson purchases? Like we have said over and repeatedly in council meetings, nothing that is taking place on the east side of Zeeland fits in the Master Plan. How will this affect our property value? If you had to live next to a massive factory, would you not be upset? We bought houses in Zeeland to be in a quiet, historic community for our spouses and children. Every resident and I in this community honestly can't believe that this has gotten this far or that the city has not immediately shot it down based on the feedback from the residents. It is incomprehensible, and it is not something we should have to think about as residents. If my kids can play in the street now with the smell and added traffic or if my house value will go down \$70,000 instantly. The ideas and words that Mead Johnson uses are lies. They do not have a complete plan and yet we are talking about giving them everything they want and rezoning Residential to Industrial...during a housing crisis!! Once they have their zoning, they can do whatever they want. I will likely leave Zeeland if I'm forced to stare at a massive parking lot and massive building across the street that once housed 8 families, had a beautiful big red barn with Christmas lights, and a Church. What this Commission does will determine the future of Zeeland.

There is no reason that Mead Johnson can't develop a plan to expand north (into the actual industrial park). Whether in Zeeland or Zeeland Township. This is an obvious win-win. I have so much anger (as do all my neighbors) but I really hope and pray that you will make the right decision to vote down this rezoning application and future applications by Mead Johnson that encroach into our community. I have prayed this to God and now I look to the Commission to do what is right.

Very Respectfully,



Josh Campbell
23 S Division Street
Zeeland, MI 49464



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

June 12, 2025

City of Zeeland
Mayor Kevin Klynstra
21 South Elm Street
Zeeland, MI 49464

To Kevin Klynstra, the Esteemed Mayor, City of Zeeland:

On behalf of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), I am pleased to write in support of Mead Johnson & Company, LLC's (Mead Johnson) plans that will make the company the world center for specialized infant formula and bolster the economic growth and vitality of the Zeeland community for another generation.

The MEDC isn't just in favor of this project because Mead Johnson has been a successful business in Zeeland for over 100 years. This project is important because of the community it supports and its residents' triumphs. When COVID caused an infant formula shortage in 2022, making it hard for families across the country to get the formula they needed, Mead Johnson – and Michigan – stepped up. The company increased formula production by nearly 40% to overcome empty shelves so parents could continue to feed their children.

It's also the everyday wins. Mead Johnson is a central part of Zeeland's vibrant community. The company employs hundreds of local friends and neighbors, sponsors local events, from Zeelmania to the Spring Peddlers Market, and donates to the Community Action House and Nestling Diaper Bank.

These stories are why the MEDC is proud to offer support to Mead Johnson's plans. The upgrades to its existing facility will allow it to meet essential standards and regulations while ensuring families across the country continue to receive the formula they depend on. The investment will mean increased business for Mead Johnson's local contractors, suppliers and service providers. The added jobs will mean restaurants, grocery stores, retailers and other small businesses will see benefits.

Mead Johnson continues to be a shining example of the Make It in Michigan economic strategy. A strategy that shows how foundational employers can make a difference around the world while helping our communities thrive at home.

We are pleased to express our support for Mead Johnson's facility in Zeeland and this next chapter of success for families in Zeeland and beyond.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed by:

Matt McCauley

Senior Vice President, Regional Development
Michigan Economic Development Corporation



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.

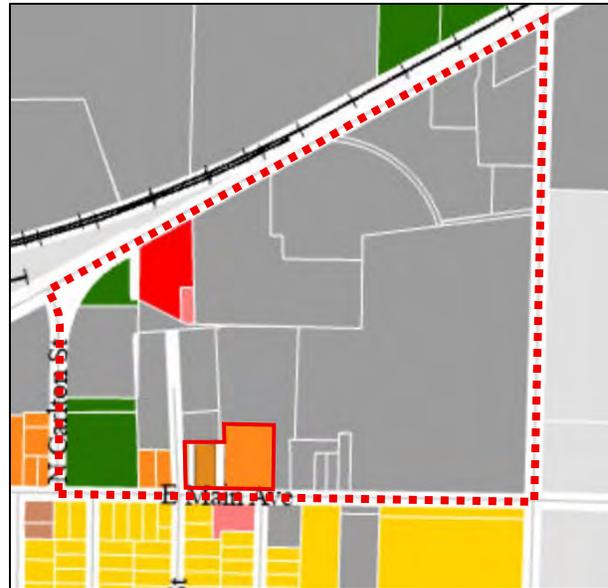
Existing Conditions

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.

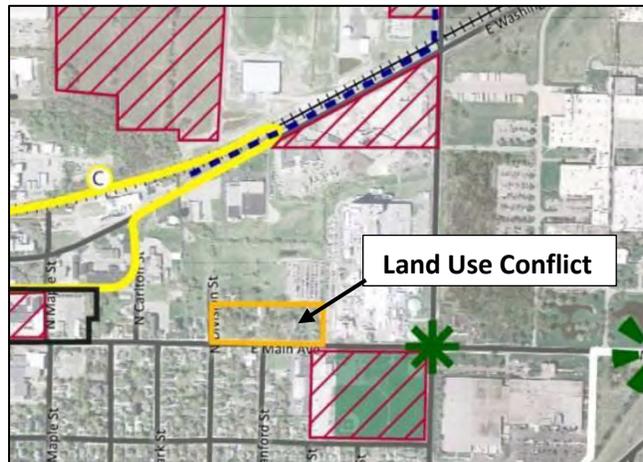
- Master Plan

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.

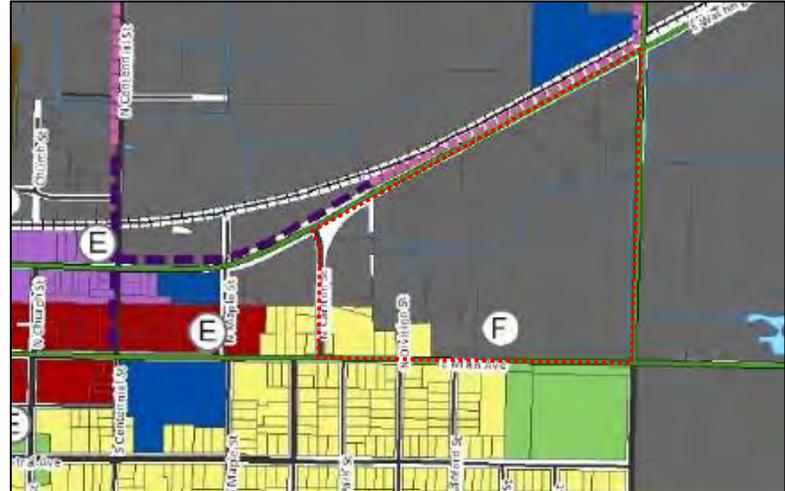
The Plan should be kept current. Deviating from the Plan should not occur without sound rationale. When such a departure is warranted, the reasons for that action should be clearly stated. If the circumstances are widespread, the Plan should be amended to reflect the change and ensure that it remains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