

Ishpeming Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes for February 01, 2021
(Agenda items are in bold text)

A. Call to order -- for the Ishpeming Planning Commission was by Chairperson Gabe Seelen at 6:30 P.M.

B. Roll Call --

Present: Gabe Seelen, John Carlson, Brooke Routhier, Bruce Houghton, Ty Hyatt, Mike Kinnunen, Lindsay Bean, and Harry Weikel.

Absent: None

Public present: Ryan Soucy and Julia Cogger of CUPPAD, & Al Pierce, Zoning Administrator.

C. Public Comment – No members of the Public were present and Public Comment was closed at 6:33 P.M.

D. Approval of Agenda – Upon the addition of H 4. Resignation of Angelo Bosio, the agenda was approved unanimously upon a motion by Bruce Houghton supported by Brooke Routhier.

E. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes of January 04, 2021 have not been typed yet and no action was taken.

F. Presentations.

1. Proposed Lake Bancroft Pavilion

Al presented the information from the Ishpeming Noon Kiwanis for a proposed Pavilion Playground at Euclid and Spruce Streets. A tentative location plan was presented with the playground located Southerly from 2 large Maple trees at the SW quadrant of W. Euclid and Spruce Streets. A materials list and 4 option view schematics were also furnished. They are seeking approval of the concept, general location and permission to begin fundraising. Gabe suggested that the Council provide consideration for future maintenance costs. Fencing is also a consideration due to the proximity of roads and Lake Bancroft. John mentioned Marquette's success with ground rubber for safety surfacing and durability. General discussion ensued.

A motion, by Brooke Routhier supported by Harry Weikel that as this recreational development was in accord with our Comprehensive Plan, the Commission recommend to the City Council that the Ishpeming Noon Kiwanis be authorized to begin fundraising for the Lake Bancroft Pavilion Playground, passed unanimously. The Council was encouraged to consider future maintenance costs, fencing due to proximity to Euclid Street and Lake Bancroft and a ground rubber surface covering to ease maintenance and promote child safety.

G. Public Hearings – none.

H. New Business

1. Ryan Soucy AICP, Master Plan Continuation - housing

Ryan presented an updated thought-provoking Marquette County Housing Market Assessment dated December, 2020 consisting of 40 pages. The report presents population / household economic statistics and trends.

Some findings:

Home prices are increasing more quickly than income.

Housing affordability challenge persists for renters. High demand exists for a mix of housing formats.

Current Zoning may be limiting development opportunities and impacting affordability.

Large proportion of homes are older and in need of upgrades. Housing market is hot.

Opportunities exist to link new developments with existing infrastructure.

Stock of rental units is low and in high demand in some areas. Population over time is dropping.

Single family households headed by women earn the least across all family types.

Section 1 *Demographics* -- there is a projected 6% population increase in the next 25 years.

Section 2 *Socioeconomics* – 25% of households are headed by someone of retirement age.

Section 3 *Housing* – since 2000 the positive percent change in housing prices in Marquette County ranks highest of Michigan's 83 Counties.

Section 4 *Focus Group Feedback* – high cost of building will continue the trend of limited new construction of homes outside of Marquette.

Commissioners brought up a variety of topics from the Housing Market Assessment Report i.e. More reasonable housing for Seniors, 9.1% home price increase, aging in place, improving housing stock quality, short term rentals and their profitability – fire inspections – self policing with on-line reviews – their recreational nature – city staff to check ads and inspect them. Gabe brought up the concept of a discussion regarding how to support people aging in place. A sidewalk discussion commenced with tree roots and an assessment method. Lindsay indicated that that process was in progress. Funding was mentioned and the Safe Routes to school program is a possibility. Other possibilities include NEP (Neighborhood Enhancement Program) through MSHDA, USDA Rural Community Development Initiative Grants, MSHDA home improvement program, USDA Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants. Ryan indicated that there are many other plans.

2. Informational – Preliminary Taco Bell Site Plan being reviewed

Al updated Commissioners on site developments on the proposed Taco Bell site. Positive discussions involving Taco Bell Management and City staff are in progress and nearing completion. The City is also contracting with OHM Advisors for select inspection tasks on and off site. All preliminary site plan details should be completed in 2 weeks or less.

3. Marijuana Recommendations to the City Council

Lindsay stated that upon passage of the prior State referendum the City decided to “opt out”, a decision that involved considerable unknowns of marijuana impact on Federal funding for our water system improvements, State licensing parameters and the unknown impact upon City Police enforcement. The Council, after passage of time, has now decided that it’s in the best interests of the city to “opt in”. Ideas for consideration involve – Downtown / Country Village area – 1000’ from schools – traffic issues – growing & provisioning centers. Al had furnished considerable background information – 2 State Acts, a State Municipal Guide, MML and MSUE webinar, MSUE sample Ordinance, and Negaunee / Marquette Township information.

A wide-ranging discussion ensued regarding “opting in and how”. Central Business District, Country Village, Medical / Recreational Marijuana, vehicle traffic, 1000’ from schools, growing, Provisioning Centers, General Commercial District, outdoors events and probably more items were brought up. A motion by Ty Hyatt supported by Bruce Houghton to select of a sub-committee of 4 Commissioners to address these items and others was passed unanimously. The sub-committee will consist of Lindsay Bean, John Carlson, Brooke Routhier and Mike Kinnunen and they will present ideas for discussion to the Planning Commission at the regular March meeting.

4. Resignation of Angelo Bosio

Angelo has resigned from the Planning Commission after serving as a Commissioner for many years. Gabe Seelen made a motion supported by Brooke Routhier that correspondence be sent to Angelo thanking him for his service on the Planning Commission and long-standing community involvement with the City of Ishpeming.

I. Old Business - none

J. Correspondence – none

K. Meeting Adjournment was unanimous upon a motion by Bruce Houghton supported by Brooke Routhier at 8:37 P.M.

Prepared By:



Alan K. Pierce, Planning Commission Assistant Secretary

Reviewed By:



Bruce Houghton, Planning Commission Secretary