

**Ishpeming Downtown Development Authority  
Regular Meeting  
(and Joint Planning Commission Meeting)  
Minutes  
Monday, November 27, 2023**

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The regular meeting of the Ishpeming Downtown Development Authority was held on Monday, November 27, 2023 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Aeh at 3:15 p.m.

Present: David Aeh, Craig Cugini, Brian Buchanan, Sarah Trumbley, Brice Sturmer, Carrie Meyer, Tracy Magnuson, (7). Absent: Rob Taylor, David Aro, Daniel Morgan-Heridia, and Renelle Halverson (4). Also present was Linda Andriacchi for Beautification.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Amilia William, Northern Michigan University graduate student, advised she had been working on a project for school that researched the possibility of closing Main Street to only pedestrian and cycle traffic which has been done in other communities. She briefly reviewed some of the benefits other communities have seen by doing this. Her project is currently with her professor and she would be happy to share her report when review is completed.

Member Aeh expressed his concern with the idea and further thought it would be disastrous for the downtown area primarily due to parking. As a business owner he would be very much against the idea.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Member Buchanan supported by Member Meyer and carried unanimously to approve the September 25, 2023 minutes as presented.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Finance Director Grant Getschow reviewed the monthly financial report for period ending October 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Member Trumbley supported by Member Meyer and carried unanimously to approve the financial report as presented.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT** – Manager Cugini provided a brief update on the status of the Chamber of Commerce and further noted a press release would be sent out shortly.

**BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT** – Linda Andriacchi gave a brief overview of the beautification effort over the years; provided some comparisons on prices for baskets with other local municipalities; thanked David Aeh and Iron Range for all their support and confidence and contributions to the beautification effort in Ishpeming; noted that there was a student from Northern Michigan University that was interested in flower watering for 2024; and she has been working with the grower and getting ready to place the flower order for 2024.

Member Aeh thanked Linda and Dominic Andriacchi for all their efforts and personal time spent on the beautification effort in the City of Ishpeming. Residents and visitors enjoy the flowers around the City.

**START UP ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATIONS**

a. Suunta Integrative Health, 308 Cleveland Avenue, Suite 202 - Peter Copenhaver, co-owner of Suunta Integrative Health, was present to answer any questions related to their grant application.

Mr. Copenhaver advised the expansion was necessary to help clients on the west end. They have obtained several grants that have helped their business grow, therefore providing more services, particularly on the west end, which requires additional space. This was an expansion of their business to the West End to address the need for mental

Health. He noted they started to move their business to Ishpeming the end of August 2023 and additional staff is being added with the hope to employ individuals from the City to provide services to this area.

It was debated among members if this was considered a new business or an expansion of an existing business; if it should be considered a new business since the expansion was starting a new business on the West End; and the existing budget for the Start Up Assistance Grant.

Mr. Copenhaver advised expanding their business to the West End will provide more access to care which is a challenge for rural communities that are currently being underserved. He added this grant would provide support for the additional expenses in expanding their business to Ishpeming. They were currently a member of the LSCP and would become a member of the Chamber if it were reestablished.

Member Trumbley felt the intent of the Start Up Assistance grant was only for a new business to the community not an expansion of an existing business from another community.

Member Sturmer would abstain from voting as he was part owner of the Gossard Building where Suunta rents space.

A motion was made by Member Cugini supported by Member Magnuson to approve the Start Up Assistant grant for Suunta Integrative Health but not to include the LSCP membership since they were currently members; with the caveat that Suunta Integrative Health will also become members of the Chamber if it is reestablished. Motion passed 5-1 with Member Trumbley voting nay and Member Sturmer abstaining.

It was the consensus of the members to reevaluate the application process at a future DDA meeting.

**b. MATHER HOSPITALITY INC.**

Bill Anderson, Mather Hospitality, advised they were starting up a new business in the old "Cognition" space and were waiting for their liquor license approval which they just received. He advised it would be approximately a 4200 square foot area to include a bar, music, and wood fire pizza which is a new establishment in the City.

Members reiterated some of the discussion related to the application from Suunta Integrative Health and it was the consensus that this was a new establishment in the City of Ishpeming.

Member Cugini abstained from voting due to Mr. Anderson being a city employee.

A motion was made by Member Buchanan supported by Member Meyer to approve the Start Up Assistance Grant for Mather Hospitality less the LSCP membership fee and the Chamber membership fee if they are already paid. Motion passed 6-0 with Member Cugini abstaining.

**JOINT MEETING WITH THE ISHPERING PLANNING COMMISSION BEGINNING AT 4:10 P.M.**

Roll call of the Planning Commission: Brooke Routhier, Mike Kinnunen, Cory Richards (left at 5:07 pm), David Lawler, Lindsay Bean, Philip Carter, Mike Elliott, Kari Getschow (8). Absent: Torey Durpas (1).

Brooke Routhier, Chair of the Planning Commission, advised as part of the Master Plan joint meetings of the DDA and Planning Commission should be held at least twice a year to discuss various topics.

One topic to discuss was the vacant lot next to Buck's Sub Shop.

A brief history of the lot was discussed. Some of the points discussed were:

- Creating a pocket Park at that location.
- If a pocket park was created, maintenance of the park could be an issue.
- Possible designs of a pocket park; authorizing CUPPAD to design a park making it low maintenance.

- Include trees and raised beds with plants that need little to no care, benches and picnic tables.
- Enhancing the park with art or and local/history information boards
- Provide lighting
- Place bike racks and pump stations
- A plan for the park should be developed then funding could be sought (ie. grants, Placemaking).

A second topic was the Iron Ore Heritage Trail along Hematite between Main and First Street. Points discussed were:

- Adding directional signage to the downtown
- The use of murals along with signage in this area to make the area look nicer
- Add QR Codes to signage
- Walkability
- Provide information about history of Ishpeming similar to other areas on the IOHT and/or art work
- Discussed ideas for blocking some of the view of the alley

Malton Road was another topic. Point discussed were:

- Discussion related to preserving the trail network in the Malton Road area
- Creating a future zoning area for low impact recreation area on a portion of Malton Road
- Adding directional signage near Brasswire Campground and at the intersection of Malton Road and M-28 to direct people to downtown Ishpeming
- The DDA's initial intent for creating and developing Malton Road
- The possibility of adding some residential development on Malton Road to increase tax base and bring families to Ishpeming

Other topics discussed included:

- Several studies done by outside firms indicated that the traffic pattern did not direct traffic to the downtown. Hematite was not good for the downtown.
- Redesign of sidewalks and parking in the downtown, bump outs on the corners with possibility trees planted.
- Problems with the sidewalk plow in clearing the downtown.
- Discussed the ADA issue at West End Bike due to the configuration of the sidewalk
- Directional signage being consistent throughout the City.
- Branding was a top priority.
- Potential areas in the City for future housing development

It was agreed between the Planning Commission and DDA members to hold two joint meetings in 2024. The first joint meeting will be held at the Planning Commission regular meeting on March 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. and the second would be held at the DDA regular meeting on September 23, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

### INFORMATIONAL SESSION

Member Aeh opened the informational session of the DDA.

Mr. Anderson, Mather Hospitality, suggested the DDA consider offering a shuttle service during the Ski Jump Tournament to keep people in the City of Ishpeming and the downtown.

Member Aeh closed the informational session of the DDA.

### UPDATE ON THE 2023 FAÇADE GRANT PROJECTS

Manager Cugini advised one façade project, Olson Woodworking, has been completed and payment has been submitted. Jackson's Hardware project is currently underway as there was a delay with the contractor. Payment has not been submitted for the Jackson's Hardware project to date.

**CONFIRMATION LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE ANDERSON BUILDING STABILIZATION**

Member Aeh advised he signed a letter of support stabilization of the wall on the Anderson Building for the Land Bank, but want to DDA to confirm approval of the letter. There was brief discussion related to the proposed Anderson/Peninsula Lofts project.

It was the consensus of the DDA to concur with the letter of support to the Land Bank for the Anderson Building as submitted.

**ISHPEMING COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Member Magnuson reported Ladies Night was well attended; the Christmas Parade was again a success and was well attended; and added Visits with Santa would be taking place every Thursday evening from 5-7 p.m. She also noted a donation bucket would be placed at the Santa House because many people would like to make donations but there was no place for them.

**OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Manager Cugini provided a brief update on the Skate Park and advised staff should be hearing shorting from the grant submitted in conjunction with Partridge Creek Farms.

City Clerk Smith advised Daniel Morgan-Heridia resigned from the DDA effective today; and she also reported that Robert Taylor has not attend several meetings and has not returned phone calls. She has received return mail indicating he has moved to Gwinn.

A motion was made by Member Cugini, supported by Member Magnuson and carried unanimously to send a letter to Rob Taylor advised the DDA vacated his seat.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:18 p.m., a motion was made by Member Magnuson , supported by Member Sturmer and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Smith

City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager