

**CITY OF ISHPEMING
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
AND JOINT MEETING WITH
DDA AND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, March 11, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Ishpeming Planning Commission was called to order in the Council Chambers at City Hall by Chairperson Brooke Routhier at 4:35 p.m. March 11, 2024.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mike Kinnunen, Lindsay Bean, Philip Carter, Dave Lawler, Cory Richards, Kari Getschow, and Brooke Routhier. (7). Absent: Torrey Dupras and Mike Elliott (2). Also present were City Manager Craig Cugini, Finance Director Grant Getschow, and DPW General Foreman Bill Anderson.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Corkin, member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, talked about the possibility of starting a Christmas Mart in Ishpeming which would bring numerous benefits to Ishpeming ranging from economic stimulation to cultural enrichment to the community. He has talked with Lisa Petersen and Bill Anderson, owners of The Mather, and they have agreed to allow the use of their parking lot for the event. He has received interest from contractors for the construction of the huts and will also be talking to the High School class about possible construction of some huts. Also suggested was partnering with the Library for indoor children activities. This would be socialization for all ages around the holidays and could tie in with the visits with Santa and other Christmas festivities.

There was some discussion related to other possible partners for the Christmas Mart and the proposed budget for the event.

4. DISCUSSION RELATED TO THE POCKET PARK LOCATED ON THE VACANT LOT ON CANDA STREET AND THE SCREENING OF ALLEY ALONG HEMATITE DRIVE

DDA Members Present: Sarah Trumbley, Renelle Halverson, Tammy Magnuson, David Aeh, David Aro, Craig Cugini, and Brice Sturmer (7). Members Absent: Carrie Meyer and Brian Buchanan (2). Two vacant seats.

Parks and Recreation Commission Members Present: Kevin Corkin, Claudia Demarest, Lindsay Bean (3). Members Absent: Lisa Thompson, Jane Hendrick, Stephen Piereson, and Carrie Meyer (4).

Member Routhier opened the discussion for the joint meeting. She advised one item for discussion was the possibility of creating a pocket park located in the vacant lot on Canda Street across from the Mather Inn. During past discussions it was felt this would be a nice connection area to the Mather and the Library and also add some green space, flowers, and lighting to the area. Also discussed, was the screening of the alley along Hematite Drive and the Heritage Trail between Main and First Streets making the area look more visually appealing when entering the City.

The following items were suggested and discussed:

- Installing bike rack at the pocket park
- Planting of grass and placing no parking signage to stop parking on the site by surrounding properties
- Picnic table and a garbage can at the site.
- Installation of elevated planters that match those already around town with low maintenance plants, particularly since the Beautification Committee is having trouble finding volunteers.
- Visual screening of the alley with fencing and/or signage similar to that used by the IOHT
- Screening the dumpsters located in the alley.
- Planting of trees (ie. small cedars) at the pocket park and along Hematite Drive

- Incorporating some form of artwork/murals for screening.
- Utilize the (3) photo signs that were donated to the DDA that were originally to be used on the grates at the AT&T building on Division Street.
- Utilize CUPPAD to provide a rendition of that pocket park and/or screening options.

There was additional discussion related to the above points along with the overall visual enhancement of that area. It was noted that if fencing was used for screening of the alley it could cause issues with plowing and the snowmobile trail that runs along that block. It was suggested the Railroad be contacted since Hematite Drive was an old railroad to check on any funding that might be available for screening.

It was suggested the first phase take place this spring and would include:

- Place no parking signs at the site
- Top soil and seed the area
- Add some items in the park (picnic table/plants/shrubs)
- Contract with CUPPAD to provide a rendering of that site

Completion of the project within 3-5 years with discussion on additional phases at future joint meetings.

Members also discussed the deterioration of the murals on the railroad trestles. There was debate on whether they should be redone, sandblasted and left natural, or painted a solid color. It was felt they were not very inviting due to their condition. It was suggested the Planning Commission, DDA, and Parks and Recreation Commission prepare a letter for Council with a recommendation on what should be done to the trestles.

5. NOTIFICATION OF THE MICHIGAN COMMUNITY CENTER GRANT

Manager Cugini provided an update on the grant dollars that have been received from the Michigan Community Center grant. He advised the grant award was for \$300,000 primarily for programming, however after discussion he had with the grant administrators, the City will receive an additional \$100,000 towards the skate park/gathering area. There was a commitment of funds from the City Council for the project and at the upcoming DDA meeting, funding from the DDA will also be discussed. The proposed timeline for construction would be 2025.

There was some brief discussion related to the skate park, the rendering of the area and if there would some green space, the timeline for construction; and any possible additional grant funding that could be looked into.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT – Merideth Seppanen expressed her concerns with the proposed Christmas Mart as it related to the population of the City, the County, and the Upper Peninsula compared to the areas in Wisconsin that were brought up during discussion. She felt it may be difficult to find vendors for the Mart and to have enough people interested in attending.

She also had concerns with the discussion of murals around the City, due to the fact that they require maintenance and need updating through the years.

6. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

At 6:10 p.m., a motion was made by Member Bean supported by Member Demarest and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Prepared by:


Cathy Smith, City Clerk