CITY OF ISHPEMING PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 1, 2024

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Ishpeming Planning Commission was called to order in the Council Chambers at City Hall by Chairperson Brooke Routhier at 6:30 p.m. April 1, 2024.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Mike Kinnunen, Lindsay Bean, Philip Carter (left at 7:30 p.m.), Torrey Dupras, Dave Lawler, Cory Richards, Kari Getschow, and Brooke Routhier, and Mike Elliott (9). Also present was Al Pierce, Zoning Administrator (ZA).

Member Routhier congratulated the Ishpeming High School Basketball team for winning the State Championship.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Routhier reviewed the procedures and time limits for Public Comment.

Ray Olds, 1165 Ninth Street, asked the Planning Commission to introduce themselves.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Member Lawler, seconded by Member Richards and carried unanimously to approve the agenda incorporating the changes of moving the presentation of Eli Williams after the Public Hearing, removing the 9-12-22 minutes, and adding the introduction of Planning Commissioners.

The Planning Commissioner introduced themselves to the public.

E. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES FROM ~~9-12-2022~~, 3-4-2024 & 3-11-2024

Minutes not typed yet: 10/4/22, 11/14/22, 12/5/22, 12/21/22

Clerk Smith advised the minutes from September 12, 2022 were ready for approval at this time.

A motion was made by Member Lawler, seconded by Member Kinnunen and carried unanimously to approve the March 4, 2024 minutes incorporating the correction of the typo on page 2 "Mater" to "Master" and adding "two of each" on page 3 before the listing of each proposed license.

A motion was made by Member Bean, seconded by Member Carter and carried unanimously to approve the March 11, 2024 minutes as presented.

F. PRESENTATIONS

1. Elizabeth Williams – The presentation will be made after the public hearing.

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. City of Ishpeming Marijuana Ordinance 2-1600: Proposed Revisions to Expand Uses

Member Routhier advised the Planning Commission was proposing to make a recommendation to Council to add (2) Marijuana Processor license; (2) secure transport facility licenses; and (2) Safety Compliance Facility licenses. All licenses would be conditional uses in the General Commercial, Central Business, and Industrial districts. The marijuana processor would only be a conditional use in the Industrial District.

Member Routhier advised part of what the Planning Commission does is look for places for more commercial opportunity that would provide growth within the city. Based on the success of the two retail establishments and have provided additional revenue to the City, the additional licenses could potentially be a business growth opportunity.

Member Bean explained the City received $120,000 in taxes from the retail business in the City. One of the business has closed, however, the space that was occupied has been rehabilitated and now meets all code requirements. She spoke with the Chief of Police related to these business affecting arrests within the City. The transport license would only be for the transportation of marijuana from retail facility to facility and there were currently none of these licenses in the Upper Peninsula. This would primarily be garages with vans used for transport which would be located in Ishpeming. She further reviewed the number of the various licenses in the U.P., locations available in the City for these types of licenses, and the possibility of retaining some of the new NMU grads in the marijuana processing/testing degree program.

Chair Routhier opened the public hearing.

Raymond Olds, 1165 Ninth Street, he expressed his concern with Ishpeming being known as "weed town" like a town in Colorado is known for. He would like to see the proposed amendment dropped and only have the establishments currently allow in the City.

Ann Olds, 1165 Ninth Street, would like the proposed amendments withdrawn because it would not be good for the City. She worked in Marquette for 20 years and Ishpeming was always known as the drug capital of the U.P. She added the Police Department are working tirelessly to make our town better, the town was starting to change, and now more licenses are being considered. She did not want the City to go backwards and asked the Planning Commission to revoke the proposed change.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, stated she was totally against any type of marijuana licenses being added to the City and she did not think this what the residents of the community wanted.

Dennis Kratz, 416 W. Empire, expressed his concern with promoting marijuana and did not want the City to be known as the drug capital of the world. He would like to see new business in the City but not marijuana.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, was against any new licenses for marijuana being allowed in the City and this should not be forwarded to the City Council. He added he sees many State Police and Sheriff's cars in town more and more often.

Cathy Schooler, 769 Michigan Street, expressed her concerns with marijuana being available in the City and did not want to see more licenses allowed; did not like marijuana being legal.

Renelle Halverson, 655 Park Street, was as resident and also sits on the City Council, found it very disturbing that consideration was being given for additional licenses. She came to Ishpeming to put her kids through a good school system and told her kids to stay away from marijuana; and now the City is saying it is ok and encourages the businesses in the City. She brought up a drive by shooting near her house, where a child died in the house, was thrown out the window and dumped in the park. Questioned if this was how the City should be promoted. She thought the Planning Commission has spent more than enough time on licenses, and some residents are upset that we are not working on the short-term rentals. She did not want more licenses, and was against it.

Ray Chapman, 204 Ready Street, he was totally against adding more marijuana licenses in the City.

Jason Chapman, 204 Ready Street, resident and also on the City Council, completed reading the statement from Ann Olds. He added his biggest concern was that the stakeholders in the community were not brought into the process. The School Superintendent and the Chief of Police were not asked and also thought business owners should have been consulted along with churches. He advised he would not state his support or objection, but he has a running list of names of residents that were not in support.

Joanne Betts, 1219 Ninth Street, was opposed to the changes being proposed to the ordinance. She was very proud to be a resident of the City; and adding more licenses would not be a good image for the community. The community's image was more important the money.

Dennie Korpi, 1185 Ninth Street, was a teacher at Ishpeming High School and has lived in Ishpeming for over 35 years and his children went through the Ishpeming School system. He added he understands the many challenges that are faced; however, it is important to look for ways to better the community. He did not think the proposed amendments were good for the City and it was the wrong direction to go in.

Jackie Koski, 1130 Highland Circle, was against the proposed amendments for additional licenses.

Cheryl Marietti, 508 E. North Street, has lived in Ishpeming her whole life, and thought adding additional licenses in the City would not be in the best interest for the community.

Valerie Poutanen, 122 New York Street, was concerned with adding processing licenses and she did not like having the retail business in the community. She was against the amendments and did not want to see more licenses added in the City. She questioned if the Chief of Police, the schools, community organizations, and churches were contacted about the proposed additional licenses.

Chair Routhier closed the public hearing.

Member Lawler questioned if this was in line with the Master Plan, considering the comments received tonight. We work hard to bring families and business to the City and is this sending the appropriate message. He suggesting tabling this for further review and discussion.

Member Routhier noted the retail sites do not seem to be causing a lot of issues in the City. She reviewed the history of the ordinances after the passage of the law in 2018. There was a difference between marijuana and methamphetamines. She added with regards to the smell comments, all facilities are required to have order control. She further reviewed the compliance with the Master Plan and the zoning districts. There was a limit on the licenses.

Member Bean advised legalizing marijuana in Michigan was on the ballot and did pass. The two retail establishments have been open for two years, but the proposed licenses were not retail licenses and there would be no sales or storefront. The transport license would be similar to a liquor distributor, however there would be no marijuana on site, it would just be for transport from a processor to retailer, it is not a store front. She pointed out the Planning Commission was not the final decision maker, this would only be a recommendation to the City Council. She added the Planning Commission made the decision to pursue looking into some changes to the ordinance and during her Council report she advised Council the Planning Commission was doing this.

Member Richards pointed out marijuana is legal but how many licenses should be in the City. He advised there was discussion regarding consumption but it was thought that license would be very controversial and should not be considered. With no public present in support, should it be looked into further. No support was a concern.

Member Dupras said the long-term vision for the City is important and should be considered, revenue was important but it was not the most important.

Member Getschow added these facilities are run by educated professionals with college level educations. The processing facility was only considered in the industrial zone. She reiterated these licenses are not for retail sales, there would be no selling of marijuana.

Member Elliott heard some items brought up tonight that he had not thought about. He was glad to see the community engagement and he agreed that the heritage of the City was important to the community.

There was discussion among Members related to the zoning map and the removal of the central business district as an allowable district for the secure transport and the safety compliance license and only allows those licenses in the General Commercial and Industrial District and the processing license only in the Industrial District. The various licenses and the zoning district were further discussed.

A motion was made and amended by Member Routhier, seconded by Member Kinnunen to recommend the proposed changes to Ordinance 2-1600 to the City Council; incorporating the removal of the central business district as an allowable district for the secure transport facility licenses and safety compliance facility licenses. Ayes: Members Brooke Routhier, Mike Kinnunen, Kari Getschow, and Lindsay Bean (4). Nays: Cory Richards, Torrey Dupras, Dave Lawler, and Mike Elliott (4). Motion failed 4-4.

2. ZTA 2024-02 - Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Marijuana Processing, Safety Compliance Facility and Secure Transporter
Chair Routhier opened the public hearing.

Jason Chapman, 204 Ready Street and Councilmember, pointed out many were in favor of legalizing marijuana but were not in favor of allowing this in Ishpeming and going with old data is not a good thing to do.

Renelle Halverson 655 Park Street and Councilmember, advised this was put out on the website and channel 189 and many people showed up that were opposed; and the people that supported the licenses also read the same notice but chose not to attend the meeting. She felt certain members were being tone deaf; and, this proposal was not moving the City in the right direction. She hoped this would continue to fail; or she would have to decide if she wanted to continue to live in this community.

Ann Olds, 1165 Ninth Street, seeing pot in the school, if we allow a processing facility then we are saying this is a good thing and not a good message to send out.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, this public hearing was not necessary because of the action just taken.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, thanked the Planning Commissioners that voted no; residents do not want it hear.

Ray Olds, 1165 Ninth Street, everyone in the City had an opportunity to give public comment and thanked the Planning Commission for listening to the residents that attended.

Cathy Schooler, 769 Michigan Street, alcohol is legal but doesn't make it right and pot parties are going on at night.

Joanne Betts, 1219 Ninth Street, thanked the Commission for not approving the amendments and voting no.

Jackie Koski, 1130 Highland Drive, appreciated the Commissioners voting no.

Member Routhier closed the public hearing.

Member Routhier advised with the action taken under item #1, there was no need for action on the proposed zoning amendments.

PRESENTATIONS: Elizabeth Williams – This presentation would be placed on the May agenda.

H. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. Recommendation for Railroad Trestle Murals

There was discussion about revitalize the murals on the railroad trestles. It was suggested if they are power washed and painted, consideration should be made to repaint new murals. The first step would be to remove the old murals so something new could be done in the future. It was pointed out that with the closure of Lakeshore for the construction of the roundabout, it would be a good time to consider revitalizing the entryways into Ishpeming.

A motion was made by Member Dupras, seconded by Member Richards and carried unanimously to recommend to the City Council that the murals on the railroad trestles be revitalized.

Due to the time, the presentation from Elizabeth Williams and items 2-8 would be placed on the May meeting agenda.

2. Initial Draft Short Term Rental Ordinance – No further work performed yet
3. Master Plan: 2024 Goals Continuing Review / PC input
4. Sign Ordinance and Lighting – Not started yet
5. Recreational District Overlay Discussion : (Ryan Soucy will be at our May 6 meeting for assistance) 6. Accessory Structure Violation - 440 Ready St. Permit - too high - Variance required
7. Update Zoning Map – Mqt. Co. Resource Management – staff function
8. Begin Update on Zoning Ordinance Section 35.0 Rezoned Areas in Zoning Ordinance - staff function

In addition, the Commission asked that the "Status of Replacement of the Zoning Administrator" be added to the May agenda also.

I. Old Business – There was none.

J. Correspondence – There was none.

K. Meeting Adjournment

At 8:54 p.m., a motion was made by Member Elliott, seconded by Member Bean and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Prepared by:

Cathy Smith, City Clerk

Alan K. Pierce, Assistant Secretary

Torrey Dupras, Secretary