

Ishpeming City Council Proceedings: June 20, 2024
Ishpeming, MI 49849

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Special meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Thursday, June 20, 2024, in the Ishpeming City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Jason Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jason Chapman, Council Members Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (5). Also present was City Manager Craig Cugini and City Attorney Caroline Bridges.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Mayor Chapman read the proposed Ordinance #5-1400, Recreational Vehicles, Trailers, and Campers into the record.

Councilmember Scanlon explained this proposed ordinance would not affect residents that would like to have grandkids or other family members use their camper when staying in the area and visiting. This Ordinance was being developed for those individuals that live in their camper and causing a blighted property.

Councilmember Firby added this draft of the proposed ordinance incorporated feedback from the first reading that was held a few months ago, which was not approved, and reminded everyone that an adoption of a new ordinance or amendment to an existing ordinance requires two readings.

Mayor Chapman explained public comment was limited to four minutes and comments under the Public Hearing were limited to three minutes.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - Public comment was offered through Zoom and in person.

Mayor Chapman read the letter received from Debbie Elliott, 628 Teal Lake Road, co-owner of White Bear Maple Products and Gifts, into the record.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, explained Manager Cugini called the Pastor, where her grandson is a Reverend, telling him her grandson was involved in the anonymous website that has been created about the City of Ishpeming; she questioned what kind of Council allows this type of behavior.

Peggy Chapman, 204 Ready Street, questioned the Manager about his retaliatory behavior and hurting people by contacting an employer, she suggested it was time for him to move on.

Amy Lerie, 725 N. First Street, also owned a duplex on 404 S. Third Street, and has lived in Ishpeming for 20 years. She felt this proposed ordinance always gets discussed when the issue of blight comes up. She further thought the ordinance was well written, however, she was concerned with the language related to utility trailers and watercraft such as canoes and kayaks on properties. She also suggested sections of the Master Plan be reviewed.

Ray Chapman, 204 Ready Street, spoke to his thought of ethics and morals, and added the City Charter or any government handbook was not needed to be ethical. The accusations by the Manager to the grandson of a potential council candidate was not appropriate.

Clint Collick, 412 E. High Street, expressed concern with the ten-foot setback from property lines in the proposed ordinance; was glad that this would not be enforced if family was staying in a camper; he felt passenger vehicles being parked on sidewalks should be addressed; and also questioned if this could be handled through the zoning ordinance. In addition, he questioned if the new meters were radio reads, and if so, what was the need for hiring a full-time employee.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, reviewed what he thought was wrong with the proposed ordinance, which included storing items on property owned by the resident and the City should not say what and how items could be stored on private property.

Cathy Schooler, 769 Michigan Street, understood the need for the proposed ordinance, however, she expressed her concern with the parking of trailers and utility trailers; in addition, she has known Claudia Demarest's grandson his whole life and he is a wonderful person.

George Ward, 811 N. Third Street, expressed his concerns with the language being vague in the ordinance and thought it should specifically state in the ordinance that family members and children utilizing a camper would not be fined. He felt the proposed ordinance should be reconsidered.

Jeff DeGabrielle, 413 Vine Street, suggested Council review supreme court rulings on personal property which covered a jurisdiction's control over personal property.

John McCabe, 811 S. Pine Street, via zoom, agreed with the other comments that have been made particularly city control over private property and further questioned why the zoning ordinance could not be used to enforce this issue. He felt the proposed ordinance should be reconsidered.

Kevin Corkin, 604 N. Pine Street, thanked Council for holding the public hearing; he understood the ordinance and thought blighted properties were an issue and devalued the surrounding property; and parking vehicles, snowmobiles, campers on the sidewalk needed to be addressed. He was glad that this ordinance would not stop families from staying in campers at someone's residence. He thanked Council and staff for all they do for the City.

Janice Lovel, 304 Euclid Street, questioned how many ordinances the City needed and that many ordinances did not seem to be enforced. She felt the 10-foot setback from property lines was too much.

Sharon Rushton, 820 N. Third Street, was concerned with those residents that had campers or motor homes but did not have a yard to park it in. She suggested this be addressed.

Valgene Dobson, 829 S. Pine Street, did not think a wide spread approach should be taken by the City. If there was a problem, it should be addressed directly. The camper he owns is kept neat and orderly on his property but this ordinance would still affect him.

Dennis LaCome, 626 Bank Street, understood the problem, but agrees with many of the comments being made by others; and he added, the City should not add an ordinance because of a couple of problems within the City.

Mike Jarvis, 626 Bank Street, questioned why the City was infringing on private property.

Craig Heikkala, 137 W. Superior Street, explained it was absolutely necessary to stop people from living in trailers; he further explained there was someone living in a utility trailer near his residence and once they are there, nothing can be done unless there is an ordinance to enforce it.

5. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance #5-1400, Recreational Vehicles, Trailers, and Campers

Mayor Chapman opened the public hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, appreciated all the public comment made tonight and hoped that Council would listen to what the public had to say.

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Mayor Chapman closed the public hearing at 6:59 p.m.

Mayor Chapman appreciated hearing from the members of the community. He would like the ordinance to be more specific to allow residents the ability to use their campers for family and children during the summer months; appeals to violations should be made to the City Council; and noted the City has no ability to enforce if individuals live in their campers within the City, cause site issues at intersections, or create a blighted property. He further stated he did not think the City should infringe on people's rights.

Councilmember Bean thought that many of the comment made could be addressed and talked about amongst Council and staff; she suggested two members of Council meet with Chief Radabaugh, the main author of the ordinance, to determine what feedback received during the public hearing could be incorporated into the proposed ordinance. She also agreed the set-back from property lines could be reviewed and defining watercraft such as canoes and kayaks that are usually not mounted on trailers. She was not in favor of over regulating; however, most recreation vehicles look good and are ready to use, others become an eye sore and would fall under the blight category and the ordinance should cover those properties.

Councilmember Halverson advised she has a motorhome, a boat, and kayaks and added living in the UP everyone needs to provide their own entertainment and many people have boats and RV's. She suggested this ordinance be very well defined.

Councilmember Scanlon explained Council was not here to infringe on anyone's rights. He suggested including tents into the ordinance to cover individuals that have set up camp along the trail systems and leaving drug paraphernalia all over should also be addressed in the ordinance. This proposed ordinance would help with enforcement in the problem areas; and the City owes this to the residents.

Councilmember Firby suggested the ordinance reference "permanently living" in an RV.

Councilmember Bean would like to have two members of Council review this ordinance with Chief Radabaugh and since Council seems to be in a consensus as to what the ordinance should say and cover in terms of blight and health and safety issues. She offered to sit on the Committee to review the ordinance.

Chief Radabaugh advised he has put over a year and half into developing this ordinance and has done a lot of research on allowable language and what other communities have done. He added he would no longer work on the ordinance and would withdraw this current proposed ordinance from consideration. He further noted only one councilmember stopped in and talked to him about the language in the proposed ordinance. One main reason the ordinance was being developed was because of safety issues, particularly with parking RVs on City streets and blocking site distance at intersections.

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to set a workshop up in the month of September and authorize Councilmembers Bean and Halverson to work with the Chief of Police to come up with a draft of the proposed ordinance for Council at that time.

b. Consideration of increasing the part-time Meter Reader to a full-time position in the DPW

Manager Cugini and Finance Director Getschow explained the need for the position and what the duties of the position would involve. This position would be 100% funded by the Water and Sewer fund. Manager Cugini advised discussions have taken place with the AFSCME Union related to the position.

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to allow the Manager to work with the Union to develop a job description for this position and move forward with filling the position.

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6. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:43 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Bean seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to adjourn.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cathy Smith", is written over a horizontal line.

Cathy Smith, City Clerk