CITY OF ISHPEMING PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 17, 2026

A. CALL TO ORDER
The special meeting of the Ishpeming Planning Commission was called to order in the Council Chambers at City Hall by Member Mike Elliott at 6:00pm on Monday, August 17, 2026.

B. ROLL CALL
Present: Dax Richer, Jennifer Morrow, Stefani Vargas, Mike Elliott, Cory Richards, Todd Prillwitz. (6). Absent: Brooke Routhier, Matt Loos, and City Council Representative, Jason Chapman. (3). No vacant seats (0). Also, present was Andrew Duerfeldt, Zoning Administrator (ZA), Lexi Hart, Account DPW Clerk/ Deputy Clerk, and Emilie Stack, City Clerk.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT
Karen Taras, 835 Maurice Street, stated that she is confused why we are rezoning an entire area if the plans are to build right off Malton road and asked why the notice was sent out to the neighboring residents with such short notice. Karen also asked why some of the residents got notified while other neighboring residents didn't.

Joni Gleason, 300 Malton Road, stated she was also confused with the notice she got and was concerned about if the rezoning would affect her specific property and what she is allowed to do with it.

Public comment closed at 6:05pm.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
A motion was made by Member Richer, seconded by Member Vargas, and carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Member Morrow was curious when the Planning Commission would like to discuss Senior Center Business, which they agreed could be on next months meeting agenda.

E. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
There was none.

F. PRESENTATIONS
There was none.

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS
1. RZ 2026-02: To rezone a parcel in the (DD) Deferred Development zoning district to the (GR) General Residential Zoning district
Member Elliott opened public comment at 6:07pm. Tim Kinney, 400 E New York Street, asked if the property was declared surplus because he never saw any notices on that, and if this was the final sale offer being presented. He noted that he was under the impression when he bought his property that everything under the bluff would be purely recreational and is curious to why that has changed.

Lynn Dalton, 824 Maurice Street, noted that she had absolutely no notice of this to even think about what their concerns as residents may be and to give residents time to voice their concerns. She tried getting more residents to come to the public hearing, but there just wasn't enough notice to get many people to the meeting. She also noted that the road used to say no motor vehicles, now they are allowing motor vehicles to drive through.

Public comment closed at 6:13pm.

The Planning Commission then opened discussion. As the legal descriptions can be hard to comprehend, the commission clarified to the public that items G1 and G2 are purely about the rezoning and item H1 is purely about the development taking place on Malton road. Zoning administrator, Andrew Duerfeldt, read through the facts and findings he provided. Member Elliott answered some of the questions that came in from the public comments. He noted that one of the goals of the Planning Commission's Master Plan is to create more opportunities for housing. Item G1 is rezoning a parcel in the (DD) Deferred Development zoning district to (GR) General Residential zoning district, which aligns with that goal. Ishpeming seems to be growing and this is one way for the City to provide more housing.

A motion was made by Member Richards, seconded by member Richer, to discuss item G1. Member Vargas asked for some clarity on the current zoning. She noted that it is already split-zoned and Mr. Duerfeldt mentioned how they are trying to resolve that issue. Mr. Duerfeldt mentioned that they are planning to rezone it to (GR) General Residential instead of (SR) Single Residential to allow flexibility due to the proposal for the development of Mr. Neimi's project, which is to build duplexes on the parcels. (SR) Single Residential zoning does not allow for that, but (GR) General Residential does. He also noted that per public notice requirements, he is required to put a notice out in the newspaper at least 15 days before the public hearing and anyone within 300ft of the parcel needs to be notified at least 15 days before the public hearing.

The commission realized that they failed to get the notices out in time, so they won't be able to move forward with any action items. A motion was made by Member Richards, seconded by Member Richer, to table item G1 until the next meeting. The motion was withdrawn. The commission wanted to clarify is there are trails that could be affected by the rezoning, but very limited. Currently the parcels in G1 are owned by the City. A motion was made by Member Richards, seconded by Member Richer, and carried unanimously to table Item G1 until the next Planning Commission meeting.

2.RZ 2026-03: To rezone a parcel in the (DD) Deferred Development zoning district to the (GR) General Residential zoning district

Member Elliott opened public comment at 6:32pm. Jo Ann Betts, 1215 9th Street, said she did not get notice but her neighbor across the street from her did. She was confused why she wouldn't get notice if her neighbor did.

The commission noted that only residents within 300ft of the parcel will get notified, and she must not be within 300ft.

Tim Kinney, 400 E New York Street, asked the commission if there has been any offers made to the City for this property; is New York Street still going to be a dead end or go all the way through now; how is this going to affect the bike races, walkers, hikers, etc.; he mentioned how there are other locations that could be developed instead of these parcels.

The commission answered some of the public's questions. Member Richer noted that the Commission works strongly to preserve the trails and if a developer wanted to come in, they would have to try and work around the trails. They noted that although the Bluff is included in the rezoning, doesn't mean it will be developed on. After rezoning, the Bluff may be legally developable, but that doesn't mean the Bluff is physically developable. Rezoning the Bluff solves some of the issues regarding split-zoning, which the City is trying to get away from. Once the rezoning occurs and the parcels then get spilt, the City can rezone the remaining parcels back to (DD) Deferred Development zoning district so that the Bluff cannot be developed on. Mr. Duerfeldt stressed that this would not be considered spot-zoning and fits the minimum legal requirements. He also mentioned that this is an easier process considering the timeline they have working with the developer.

Public comment was closed at 6:50pm.

A motion was made by Member Vargas, seconded by Member Richer, to open discussion on item G2.

Further discussion took place. Mr. Duerfeldt mentioned that the current parcel is already split-zoned into (DD) Deferred Development and (SR) Single Residential, so they are trying to do some zoning cleanup. (GR) General Residential allows more flexibility with multi-family homes than just (SR) Single Residential. To resolve the current split-zoning, both parcels will be rezoned to (GR) General Residential, then parcels will be sectioned off for sale, then the City could always propose to rezone the remainder of the parcels back to (DD) Deferred Development. The commission also stressed that there is huge need for more housing in Ishpeming.

A motion was made by Member Richer, seconded by Member Prillwitz, and carried unanimously to table item G2 until the next Planning Commission meeting.

H. NEW OR CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. Discuss: Malton Rd. Development

Zoning administrator, Andrew Duerfeldt, read through the facts and findings he provided on the Malton Road Development. Randy Scholz, City Manager, gave some insight into this development. He noted that Jason Niemi, Niemi Group Development, reached out to the City and asked if it was a possibility to develop here. Mr. Scholz stated that there is a RFQ going for property going to be received from Cliffs for multi-family homes off of Empire Street, is working on a RFQ off of Wabash which will be put out and the City will decide which developer they would like to work with. This Malton road property has been declared surplus by Council. Niemi Group Development will take care of all the infrastructure and Mr. Scholz stressed that this is one of the best scenarios for the City for development. The City hasn't done anything with this property and really needs the tax base, which these homes will bring in. The intent with these homes is to rent them, not sell them. Further discussion took place between the commission.

Member Vargas clarified to the commission and the public that the notices will go out 15 days prior to the next public hearing, and that Mr. Duerfeldt will provide a presentation to make the explanations a bit easier to comprehend. Member Vargas stressed that this commission is very passionate about conserving the trails as much as possible while still making room for development.

I. Old Business

There was none.

J. CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

K. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:34 p.m. a motion was made by Member Richer, supported by Member Prillwitz and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Prepared by:

Lexi Hart, DPW Clerk/Deputy Clerk

Andrew Duerfeldt, Zoning Administrator

Dax Richer, Secretary