

A Special Meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Monday, December 5, 2015, in the Ishpeming Senior Center. Mayor Tonkin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mike Tonkin, Council Members Claudia Demarest, Joseph Juidici, Justin Koski, and Mike Tall (5). Also present were City Manager Mark Slown, City Attorney Bonnie Hoff, and Zoning Administrator Al Pierce.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was no public comment.

PRESENTATION "PLACEMAKING AND THE MIplace INITIATIVE"

Brad Neumann from MSU Extension made a presentation on placemaking and the MIplace Initiative. This included how to attract entrepreneurs to the community and keep them in the area, improving economic competitiveness, and creating and transforming places. He also anticipated having a placemaking workshop in Ishpeming in April or May.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE ISHPEMING CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Pierce reported the Planning Commission had reviewed the Partridge Creek Farm proposal, they felt it was an appropriate use of the land, and they approved the concept of the farm. The Planning Commission did not discuss the term of the proposed lease. Mr. Slown indicated the Council requested a special meeting to discuss this proposal with the Planning Commission because of the questions regarding the best use of the land and the term of the lease.

Jim Manty from Ishpeming felt the farm would be good for the community and commented on Dan Perkins commitment to the farm project; along with the many other projects around the community that Mr. Perkins has donated time and materials to in order to make the community a better place.

Joni Gleason from Ishpeming and owner of Heritage Hills Riding Facility supported the farm and felt there would be many ways they could work together and share resources. In addition, she submitted a letter from Joan Duncan, who boarded horses at her facility, regarding her concern about groundwater contamination with the use of fertilizer/chemicals. It was confirmed by members of the Farm Board that the Farm would be all organic.

Andrew Sear from Marquette and Vice-Chairman of Partridge Creek Farm, stated the Farm was very interested in providing education to the community in terms of growing, processing, and preserving food. He felt the project would be very good for the City of Ishpeming.

Matt Watkeys from Ishpeming and also a forester for the Alger-Marquette County Conservation District advised the District and USDA Service could provide services to the farm and would be willing to help where they could.

Anthony Gibbs, 311 S. Main Street, Ishpeming, commented on how impressed he was with Dan Perkins and his commitment to the Farm and to the community.

Crystal Perkins, from Ishpeming and currently a resident and student in Massachusetts, felt this project could bring the community together, motivate citizens to learn about farming and preserving food, and it would also turn the soil into something sustainable.

Angie Konkel, South Main Street, felt the farm would make the area more attractive and could potentially encourage entrepreneurs to locate in Ishpeming.

Brent Clark, 619 Pine Street, Ishpeming, commented on the value of farming and felt it was a craft; and, if the community would get involved and work together farming could prosper in the area.

Alexi Koltowczi a Marquette resident and member of the Partridge Creek Farm Board indicated he prepared the draft for the incubator plot which would utilize a small amount of land to build something manageable and it could then be determine what would work best with the area. This would increase the odds for the projects success.

A.J. Stone from Negaunee indicated he had a mutual interest in farming with Dan Perkins and also had various other community outreach projects he was working on including bat habitat.

David Savu from Ishpeming was present as a resource person and felt the project had merit however; he thought the meeting was to discuss the proposed lease. He questioned what the benefits to the community were in financial terms and noted the license agreement had no language for community plots. If the Plan now was a downsized incubator parcel, which he felt would be more manageable, the license agreement would have to be redone.

Diane Darlington and Tom West represented the Grace Community Garden in Ishpeming. They reported Grace had 20 plots and could only fill 10 and it was located right in the City. They felt with the Farm being located out of town, there may not be much interest in private plots.

Dan Perkins, 500 W. Division Street, Ishpeming advised the big plan for the Farm had not changed; however, the incubator model would be more manageable to start with. He also wanted to reiterate the Farm was a non-profit organization and felt it would help the community tremendously.

Chris Rose from Ishpeming and also the Treasurer for Partridge Creek Farms noted the goal of the farm was to train, educate, and provide some public outreach for the community. It was a non-profit organization that would help the community and it would hopefully help other community gardens in the area by getting people interested in gardening.

Cloe McBeth a graduate student from Northern Michigan University reported the University was willing to do Academic Service Learning Projects which would provide labor for the farm and this in turn would benefit both the students and the community.

There was discussion among the City Council and the Planning Commission regarding the Partridge Creek Farm, what would be the best use of the property, and potential development along Malton Road. In addition, there was discussion pertaining to the terms of the proposed lease.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Demarest and supported by Councilman Tall to approve the Partridge Creek Farm project conceptually contingent upon the lease being approved; and to set up a committee consisting of two members of the City Council and the Partridge Creek Farm Board, the City Attorney, and the City Manager to work on the proposed lease. Ayes: Mayor Tonkin and Council members Demarest, Juidici, and Tall (4). Nays: none (0). Abstained; Councilman Koski (1). Motion passed.

Councilwoman Demarest and Councilman Juidici would be on the Committee.

A motion was made by Councilman Tall, supported by Councilman Juidici and carried unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Smith
Recording Secretary