

**ISHPEMING DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2015**

A Special Meeting of the Ishpeming Downtown Development Authority was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at the Ishpeming Senior Citizens Center. Chairman David Aeh called the meeting to order.

Present: David Aeh, Diane Gauthier, David Aro, Rosemarie Strom, Jay Clancy, Judy Hodges, Claudia Demarest, and Mark Slown (8). Absent were Sandy Arsenault and Anne Giroux.

Agenda Comment – There was none.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE ISHPEMING CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Presentation by MEDC on Redevelopment Ready Communities

Michelle Parkkonen from the MEDC reviewed the process to become a redevelopment ready community which included completing a self-evaluation of the six best practices that addressed key elements of community and economic development; and briefly summarized each of the best practices. She further explained RRC certification would signal to business owners, developers, and investors that the community had fair and consistent processes. To be competitive, a community must be ready for development and must create a place where talent and businesses want to locate, invest, and expand.

Public Spaces Community Places Grant Opportunities

Mrs. Parkkonen explained Public Spaces Community Places was a collaborative effort of the MEDC, the Michigan Municipal League and Michigan-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity. This program mobilizes community members, residents, and general supporters to make individual contributions while promoting their efforts to others. Projects that meet fund raising goals could receive a matching grant from MEDC. She explained some of the project that could be included were access to public amenities, farmer's markets, community kitchens, alley rehabilitation, and any other place based (or public space improvement) project. She also pointed out these would be community driven projects.

Priority Sites for Redevelopment

Mr. Slown advised one of the key parts of the Redevelopment Ready Communities was for the community to focus on redevelopment sites and to begin a process to determine the top priority sites. RRC would like one fully packaged site, but the goal would be to determine the top three sites for redevelopment.

It was felt the Old Bell site was a very important site to redevelop. There was a need for parking in that area do to the school events; a possible playground; and potentially a location for a skate park. A skate park would need to be kept low maintenance for the DPW and it was suggested using it as an ice skating rink in the winter.

The “Nardi Building” was also discussed and it was felt it was an important redevelopment site in the core of the downtown. It was noted the owners were very willing to sell.

Another site discussed was the Lake Bancroft area. It was felt this was a jewel to the community and an important area for redevelopment. The Brownstone and the Senior Center were also discussed as important redevelopment areas.

Discussion followed on marketing Ishpeming and its uniqueness in terms of recreation, being a “bedroom” community to Marquette, and the quality of life in the area. Matt DeWitt, from Brogie’s Tavern, would like to see a network of small businesses in the area and capitalize on being a small town and the closeness of businesses.

It was the consensus of the members for each group to individually determine what their top three or five sites for redevelopment would be and then hold another joint meeting to come up with the top three sites.

Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Slown advised he had no information on this item and it would be added to a future agenda.

Adjournment

The joint meeting with the Ishpeming City Council and Planning Commission adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Smith
Recording Secretary