

Ishpeming Planning Commission
Joint Meeting with Ishpeming City Council
Meeting Minutes for January 05, 2015 (**Agenda items** are in **bold text**)
7:00 P.M. @ Ishpeming Senior Center

A. Call to order by Mayor Mike Tonkin at 7:00 P.M. Present were Mayor Mike Tonkin, Council Members Claudia Demarest, Joseph Juidici, Justin Koski, and Mike Tall.

Call to Order by Chairperson Gabe Seelen at 7:01 P.M.

B. Roll Call – Present: Planning Commissioners Harry Weikel, Mike Tonkin, Lauren Luce, Gabe Seelen, Angelo Bosio and Larry Bussone.

Absent: Glen Lerlie, Jim Bertucci and Bruce Houghton.

Public present: Dan Perkins, David Savu, Cloe McBeth, Brad Neumann, Mark Slown, many members of the public and Al Pierce, Zoning Administrator.

C. Public Comment – None.

D. Approval of Agenda – The Agenda was approved unanimously upon a motion by Angelo Bosio supported by Harry Weikel.

E. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – Upon a motion by Angelo Bosio supported by Harry Weikel, the meeting minutes of November 03, 2014, were approved unanimously as presented.

F. Presentations

Brad Neumann, AICP of Michigan State University Extension regarding "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 (involving a "market shift" from prior housing sizes), improving economic competitiveness, and creating and transforming places. Placemaking elicits an emotional response from social activities, amenities and physical forms to establish a sense of place. The "new economy" brings together many different aspects as well as quality of life issues. He also anticipated having a Placemaking workshop in Ishpeming in April or May.

G. Public Hearings –none.

H. New Business

1. Partridge Creek Farm License Agreement (received 10-14-2014): Discussion/ Review With the Ishpeming City Council

Mark 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.

Upon questioning, Al Pierce reported the Planning Commission had reviewed this proposed project and they felt it was an appropriate use of the land and the Planning Commission approved the concept of the farm. There was however, no discussion on the term of the proposed lease.

Jim Manty, 317 S. Third, felt the farm would be good for the community and also commented on Dan Perkins commitment to the farm project and the many other projects around the community that Mr. Perkins has donated time or materials to in order to make the community a better place.

Joni Gleason, 300 Malton Rd., 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 it 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, 778 E. Michigan, also a forester for the Alger and Marquette County Conservation Districts, 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, commented he was impressed 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, 412 S. Main, felt the farm would make the area more attractive and potentially encourage entrepreneurs to locate in Ishpeming.

Brent Clark, 619 N. Pine, 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 Koltowezi, a Marquette resident and member of the Partridge Creek Farm Board, indicated he did the draft for the incubator plot which would take a small amount of land to build something manageable and then determine what would work best with the area. This would increase the odds of the project's success.

A J Stone from Negaunee indicated he has 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, 224 N. Davis, was present as a resource person and stated 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. He also indicated 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. Grace had 20 plots and could only fill 10 and was located right in the City. There may not be much interest in private plots at the Farm especially being out of town.

Dan Perkins, 500 W. Division Street advised the big plan for the Farm has not changed but the incubator model would be more manageable to start with. He also wanted to reiterate the Farm was a non-profit organization, felt it would help the community tremendously, and estimated 4 years to build the soil.

Chris Rose, from Ishpeming also the Treasurer for Partridge Creek Farms, stated 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 very willing to do Academic Service Learning Projects which would provide labor for the farm and which in turn would benefit both the students and the community.

There was discussion among the City Council and the Planning Commission regarding the proposed 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.

Mike Tonkin indicated that a small group concept would be an effective way to move this process forward towards a negotiated agreement. Gabe stated that the Planning Commission has affirmed that this use was in accord with the zoning district intent, would utilize land that would be difficult to develop conventionally and had completed their part in moving this issue forward for action by the Council.

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 the City Council portion of the joint meeting at 9:05 P.M. A short break was taken with the Planning Commission resuming the balance of their agenda at 9:10 P.M.

2. Priority of Updating: City of Ishpeming's Zoning Ordinance or the 2010 Master Plan

Al Pierce provided background information for Commissioners starting with the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) initiative which is a certification the City Manager desires Ishpeming to pursue. There are six best practices, each of which involves completion of a rather detailed self evaluation tool. Best Practice Two, Zoning Regulations and Best Practice Three, Development Review Process heavily involve zoning issues and require additions to the Zoning Ordinance. The Ordinance must also be provided on the internet and is in need of revisions. A Master Plan is also part of the RRC and must be less than 5 years old to be considered current. Ishpeming's Master Plan is on line and will be five years old in March 2015.

Commissioners discussed the merits of which document to concentrate on. A motion made by Larry Bussone supported by Lauren Luce passed unanimously to work first on the Zoning Ordinance. The City has budgeted funds in 2015 and Al will request a proposal from CUPPAD to assist with the necessary work.

3. Planning Commission Meeting Dates for 2015

Al had prepared a list of proposed Planning Commission meeting dates including September 7, Labor Day. Gabe suggested that we may want to change that to September 14, which was well received. A motion by Angelo Bosio supported by Mike Tonkin to accept the list as presented with a change in September passed unanimously.

I. Old Business

1. Status of Marquette County Resource Management Digital Zoning Map Review

Al stated that he has not had the availability of any time to work on it and it remains uncompleted.

J. Correspondence – None.

K. Meeting Adjournment was passed unanimously, upon a motion by Angelo Bosio supported by Larry Bussone, at 9:35 P.M.

By:


Alan K. Pierce, Zoning Administrator