



City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Meeting Minutes City Commission

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

6:00 PM

Commission Chambers

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Bonsall, Davis, Hanley, Hill, Mayer, Smith, Stonehouse

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to Approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evan Bonsall and Carried Unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Smith shared information about the Michigan Green Communities Award.

Boards and Committees

1. Appointment

Lori Hauswirth, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, for an unexpired term ending 01-29-25

John Stewart, Presque Isle Park Advisory Committee, for an unexpired term ending 04-01-24

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to Confirm the appointment of Lori Hauswirth to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, for a term ending 1-29-25; and of John Stewart to the Presque Isle Park Advisory Committee, for a term ending 4-1-24, seconded by Commissioner Jessica Hanley and Carried Unanimously.

2. Reappointment

Madeline Goodman, Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, for a term ending 06-01-25

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Approve the reappointment of Madeline Goodman to the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, for a term ending 6-1-25, seconded by Commissioner Jenn Hill and Carried Unanimously.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Alex Cowles shared concerns about the state of the local housing market, and said a

group of residents sent out a survey asking about concerns with the local housing market and got nearly 100 responses. Alex read one of the statements received through the survey.

Christopher Leith said he shares the same concerns and that although he doesn't mind development, he is surprised at the process. He read a statement received through the survey.

John Taylor spoke about housing costs, the economy and the cost of living. He said the City should focus on increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Mike Smith, from the U.P. Construction Council, said he had concerns about the bid being considered tonight for the Lake Superior Shoreline Restoration Project. He said the low bid seems to lead to some questions and he would like the City to evaluate the process used.

Tony Boyle said he was concerned about housing costs and said he knows it will take a holistic, diverse approach to solve problems like these. Said these issues lead to the hollowing out of the community.

Quinn Aspen continued reading statements received via the online survey.

Anna Martin said NMU is one of the best Universities in Michigan, but that housing costs will make it harder for prospective students to come here. She says there are other options available, regarding the hospital redevelopment project plan on tonight's agenda.

Miranda Gohlke talked about the proposed hospital redevelopment project, attainable housing costs and the median local income. She said the units proposed to be made available in this development need to be much cheaper in order to be considered affordable/attainable.

Ryan Labinski said he struggled greatly last year to find housing. He said it took three months and 150 contacts before he found a place to live.

Janna Fox said she works with Habitat for Humanity, which will break ground on its 109th home tomorrow. She said they deal with the issue of affordable housing daily and that peoples' stories are devastating. She said she would love to see a focus on affordable housing in the Veridea plan.

Theresa Wolter read additional statements received via the online survey.

Rob Taylor said he and his partner attended NMU, and wanted to live in Marquette after school. He said they, and many friends they know, were forced to buy homes in Ishpeming, due to housing costs.

Nicholas Overmyer read additional statements received via the online survey.

Geraldine Nault said she sympathizes with the people speaking tonight, but said there is a lot to like in the plan put forth by Veridea. Their ideas, she said, do address some of the concerns related to housing.

Sheryl Feldman said she appreciates what everyone is saying tonight but said that any company that might build housing would need to be able to do so at some level of profit.

Public Hearing(s)

3. Public Hearing - Former Hospital Redevelopment Brownfield Plan - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Smith opened the public hearing.

Jeff Gagnon said he lives in the project area, across the street from the building that will be demolished. He hopes that there is some kind of communication number established in case residents have issues during the demolition.

Patrick Markey said he is not opposed to redevelopment, but said he asked at a

prior session about rezoning and was told there would be none. But the plan now indicates there may be rezoning. He said the RFQ process didn't seem ideal. He said he would love to see the hospital come down, and added that he is concerned with the Veridea relationship.

John Taylor said Veridea has done good things in town and that this plan could solve many of the problems being described. He said the City Commission should push for the inclusion of income-based housing.

Tony Boyle continued reading statements received via the online survey.

Mayor Smith clarified that comments during this public hearing must be related to the topic at hand, the Former Hospital Redevelopment Brownfield Plan.

Ryan Labinski said that all of the statements received via the online survey are related to the development.

As no one else had any comments, Mayor Smith closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to Approve the Former Hospital Redevelopment Brownfield Plan, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis. Discussion ensued.

Commissioners voiced support for the brownfield plan, which will fund the demolition and remediation of the former hospital site. Commissioners and staff discussed future steps in the redevelopment, plans and timelines for demolition and possible future uses for the property.

Mayor Smith thanked everyone for coming and speaking tonight, and said that the City Commission and City staff are working diligently to help where possible with many of the issues mentioned tonight, and she urged those who spoke tonight to volunteer for a City board or committee. She said that she will support this plan, which includes \$166 million in private investment, and that this demolition and remediation will prevent the former hospital site from blighting an entire neighborhood for years to come.

The Commission then voted on the motion to approve the brownfield plan, which Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

4. Public Hearing - UPPCO Limited Franchise Ordinance - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Smith opened the public hearing.

Lindsey McWebb, on behalf of UPPCO, provided background on UPPCO activity in the City, as well as a history of UPPCO communication on this topic. She said this request would maintain the status quo and that UPPCO is not requesting the right or opportunity to serve any other customers in Marquette.

As no one else was looking to speak, Mayor Smith closed the public hearing.

Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer moved to Reject the attached Ordinance for a Limited Franchise for UPPCO to provide electric services to Marquette Range Coal Services Company within the City of Marquette and authorize the City Manager to

provide 60 days written notice to UPPCO to remove its personal property from City real property, seconded by Commissioner Jess Hanley. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Mayer stated that UPPCO has been operating without an official franchise for years, and noted that the City has a robust municipal electric utility in the Board of Light and Power.

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse said he would vote against the motion, as UPPCO has been providing power in this manner for decades, they have a physical office space in the City and he sees no great benefit to the City in rejecting this proposal.

The Commission then voted on the motion to reject the proposed ordinance. This motion carried 6-1 by roll call vote, with Commissioner Stonehouse voting no.

5. Public Hearing - Land Development Code Amendments - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Smith opened the public hearing.

Tony Boyle said there are some good changes in here but that they don't go far enough. He advocated for medium-density residential districts to be more accommodating for multi-family housing.

As no one else was looking to speak, Mayor Smith closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Evan Bonsall moved to adopt Ordinance #709 - Land Development Code Amendments, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis.

Commissioner Bonsall said he agreed with Tony Boyle, but also said this is a concrete step in the right direction. Commissioners thanked staff for the work on this, and said it would be important to make sure residents were aware of the changes, and what they mean.

The Commission then voted on the motion to adopt Ordinance #709, which carried unanimously by roll call vote.

6. Public Hearing - Rezoning of City-owned Properties Adjacent to McClellan Avenue - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Smith opened the public hearing.

John Taylor said this is rare property, controlled by the City and near the university, and said the Commission should retain the ability to use this land for residential development. He said that rezoning this property would be working against what the commission has been trying to build.

Tony Boyle says he appreciates conservation of natural spaces and said the City needs green spaces, but that residents also need more affordable housing, which was already proposed for this site.

Sheryl Feldman said the former prior proposal at this site was going to destroy

nearby property values and create too much local traffic. She said she has no objection to affordable housing if the location is right.

Karen Jimar-Johnson said the City Commission directed the Planning Commission to review this topic, and this recommendation is what came back. She said she supports the re-zoning.

Anne Donohue said this should be rezoned, as the Planning Commission advised it. She said she understands the push and pull between the needs for green space and affordable housing.

As no one else was looking to speak, Mayor Smith closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to adopt Ordinance #710, rezoning several parcels of City-owned property located adjacent to McClellan Avenue from Municipal to Conservation-Recreation as recommended by the Planning Commission, and direct the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Jenn Hill. Discussion ensued.

Commissioners discussed statements made by previous Commissions, the need to have a broader discussion on housing and land-use issues, the lack of a public park in this area of town and the Land Development Code's emphasis on retaining tree canopy.

The Commission asked staff about the history of this property. Community Development Director Dennis Stachewicz said the City has owned most of the land for decades or longer and said the City previously extended utilities to the parcels in preparation for future residential development.

Commissioner Hanley said there are real concerns in the community about affordable housing and noted that the City has expended resources to prepare these parcels for future residential development. She said she thinks it would be irresponsible, in light of that, to essentially remove these parcels from the City's surplus property list, via rezoning. She said she will vote no, as she thinks the Commission should keep its options open, as far as this property is concerned.

The Commission then voted on the motion to adopt Ordinance #710. The motion carried 6-1 by roll call vote, with Commissioner Hanley voting no.

7. Public Hearing - Single Lot Assessment Roll #589 - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Confirm Single Lot Special Assessment Roll #589, and authorize the Mayor to sign the Warrant, seconded by Commissioner Jenn Hill and Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

8. Consent Agenda - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Evan Bonsall moved to Approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer and Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

8.a. Approve the minutes of the May 16, 2022 special Commission meeting

- 8.b.** Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$1,798,998.01
- 8.c.** BCBSM Plan Change Agreements
- 8.d.** City of Marquette Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Utility Financial Plan Contract
- 8.e.** Juneteenth - Special Event Permit
- 8.f.** Marquette County Community Resource Fair - Special Event Permit
- 8.g.** Long-Line Traffic Markings Contract
- 8.h.** Marquette Mountain Resort, LLC - Paddle Sports Concessionaire Permit
- 8.i.** MDOT Bridge Rehabilitation Grant Application - Roll Call Vote
- 8.j.** Pride Festival - Special Event Permit
- 8.k.** Resolutions for Unpaid Stormwater and Unpaid Water and Wastewater - Roll Call Vote
- 8.l.** Schedule Public Hearing- Conditional Rezoning of Parcel 0510156 on Forestville Basin Trail
- 8.m.** Schedule Public Hearing - Rezoning of Parcel #1170101
- 8.n.** Schedule Public Hearing- Vacation of a Portion of Center Street
- 8.o.** Vango's, Inc. - Concession Lease Agreement

New Business

9. Lake Superior Shoreline Restoration Project - Conditional Contractor Selection

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to conditionally select Smith Construction's proposal for this project with the intent to enter into a contract with this contractor if the City receives the required permits within 120 days of the bid opening, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis. Discussion ensued.

Commissioners asked staff several questions about the proposal, and about recourse if the cost of a project comes in over what was bid. Commissioners indicated that the City should make certain there is sufficient oversight of the project, and noted that the City's current budget situation makes it extremely clear that they should be as cost-conscious as possible.

The Commission then voted on the motion to conditionally select Smith Construction's proposal, which carried unanimously.

10. Notice of Intent Resolution - Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Improvement Bonds - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to Approve a Notice of Intent Resolution to issue and sell General Obligation Bonds in an amount not-to-exceed \$6,000,000 for Capital Improvements, and authorized the City Clerk to sign the Resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer and Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

John Taylor thanked the Commission for voting to improve and maintain the stretch of Lakeshore Boulevard.

Alex Cowles thanked the Commission for sharing information on the background and history of the local housing conversation. Alex said people throughout the community were having trouble with housing and it became clear that someone needed to speak up and get involved.

Mike Smith said he understands tonight's decision on the shoreline restoration project, from a financial responsibility standpoint. He highlighted some areas in the selected bid that raised questions in his mind.

Janna Fox said affordable housing is not something that can be solved by one person or group and said that Habitat for Humanity would love to work with the City in the future and lay groundwork for a countywide affordable housing networking. She urged people to volunteer and said volunteer time helps to make the Habitat developments affordable.

Tony Boyle said he and others of his generation are exhausted, tired of platitudes and tired of being told to do more. He spoke about systemic issues, anger and the difficulty of spearheading change.

Quinn Aspen said he came tonight because he was born and raised in Marquette and kept seeing new construction representing very expensive housing. Quinn wanted to see the responses from everyone here and stated there were a lot of promising things said tonight.

Miranda Gohlke talked about homelessness and housing challenges and said tonight's meeting may be the start of a positive conversation that the group will hopefully stay involved in.

Comments from the Commission

Mayor Pro Tem Mayer thanked everyone for coming and staying for this long meeting. He said it was incredible to see people's passions and what they care about. Responding to a previous comment, he praised the diversity of the current City Commission.

Commissioner Hill said this has been a good conversation tonight. She said local government is where change happens, but noted that the state doesn't adequately fund local government.

Commissioner Stonehouse urged people to volunteer on a board or committee and to join the conversation in some way. He discussed the ongoing issues with state revenue sharing, and then explained the possible negative consequences that could stem from the adoption of a currently proposed state law, which would remove local control over short-term rentals. He said that, for those interested in housing issues, the Marquette Housing Commission may be a great place to direct their efforts.

Commissioner Bonsall said he will share his vote explanations on his website. He

thanked people for coming and for staying tonight and said he wants to hear more. He said he understands the tendency toward frustration and anger, but said he believes if there is anything that will stop his generation from solving some of the world's biggest problems, it is cynicism.

Commissioner Davis thanked people for speaking tonight and said she is especially pleased to hear those in the audience tonight saying that they want to stay involved.

Commissioner Hanley thanked everyone in attendance and spoke about the impacts of the rising cost of housing. She said if she hadn't been lucky enough to purchase her house seven years ago, she very possibly would be unable to afford to buy or rent in the City now. she said she wants to help and she wants to continue this discussion.

Mayor Smith said she appreciates seeing all the new faces tonight. She said she hears the issues being voiced and wants to help, but she also looks to those in the audience to join together and continue a positive conversation. She talked about the importance of working jointly in a positive manner.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs told people how to find the board and committee application on the City's website and reminded residents that she would be holding community office hours next week.

Adjournment

Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

If you require assistance to participate in any meeting, program or activity offered by the City of Marquette, please provide advanced notice to City of Marquette ADA Coordinator Eric Stemen at 906-225-8978 or via email at estemen@marquettemi.gov.