

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
January 19, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19th, 2021 by remote means (due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

ROLL CALL

Present: A. Andres, E. Brooks, M. Dunn, S. Mittlefehldt*, W. Premeau, Vice-Chair M. Larson

Absent: Chair J. Cardillo

** joined meeting after its start*

AGENDA

It was moved by A. Andres, seconded by M. Dunn, and carried 5-0 to approve the agenda.

MINUTES

The minutes of December 15th were approved by consensus.

M. Dunn stated that he noticed that the draft minutes seem to be more abbreviated than usual and he is wondering if that is true and why. City Planner D. Stensaas stated that the minutes are typically transcribed and presented fairly close to verbatim for cases, as there is often a lot at stake and the record should leave no doubt about what was said. He also stated that work sessions are different, and that Robert's Rules of Order require only that motions and other board action is reported accurately, but that in this case he thought the work session was fairly important and he wanted to make sure he captured everything that was meaningful and so he didn't leave anything meaningful out but that the text isn't verbatim. M. Dunn stated that he thinks the minutes are accurate and that makes sense.

S. Mittlefehldt joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No certain or potential conflicts of interest were expressed.

WORK SESSION

A. 2021-2022 Strategic Plan Initiatives

D. Stensaas stated that the City Charter was amended about 5 years ago to include a requirement that the City maintains a Strategic Plan for a two-year period, which are priority items from plans and other board actions of boards and commissions, as well as issues that staff departments put forward for consideration, as part of the budget process every other year. He also stated that it has been close to a year since the Planning Commission first addressed this task with a work session in early March, right before the pandemic rearranged priorities for the City. He stated that the timing is relevant to the budget cycle though, and so the intent is to have a number of these strategic issues considered for funding before a budget is adopted. He also stated that previously, in March, the PC reviewed the CMP table of recommendations and determined to work on three issues that are the same ones that are in the agenda packet for this meeting, consisting of winter maintenance and programming, public transportation-urban transit service, and long-range planning study for the N. Lakeshore Boulevard corridor. He also stated that all of these issues have been submitted before and that he has updated the sheets and so this is what you have for your discussion.

D. Stensaas also stated that the winter maintenance and programming item stems from the 2004 Community Master Plan, which was for Marquette to become a "Premier Walkable Winter City" and that is an unfilled aspirational goal and the recommendation here is similar to that you made for affordable housing a few years ago – to appoint an ad-hoc committee to research the issue and also look at programming of winter events and possible improvements – and that the DDA has found with their planning projects that there is a desire among local businesses to see more activity downtown during the winter months.

M. Larson stated that he has read these and on the winter issue he isn't sure of the criteria that would be used to become a premier, walkable winter city, and he knows that there are plow routes and there is winter maintenance of the path network. A. Andres stated that he thinks that it should be accessible to all, including the elderly and disabled. M. Larson stated that as a follow-up, what are the criteria that we would consider aside from plow routes and maintenance of the path network, and so on? A. Andres stated that the memo mentioned a collaboration idea with students to help clear snow. He also stated that the climate here is not conducive to creating a walkable winter city, and he doesn't think all roads and sidewalks can be fully cleared all the time, but he thinks that it should be more of a possibility that all individuals will have access and not just fully-capable individuals but also those that aren't capable of ambulating their own limbs.

E. Brooks stated that he thinks the "snow angel" program is a good idea, and like adopt-a-highway and adopt-a-hydrant programs, maybe we could also consider an "adopt-a-sidewalk" program that recognizes citizens that clear sidewalks on a block or side of a street, and that could ease the burden on the city maintenance crews. A. Andres stated there are multiple groups that need volunteer hours.

S. Mittlefehldt stated that NMU has a student leadership group, and she likes the idea E. Brooks mentioned, but she is wondering about the decision-making authority on these issues and asked D. Stensaas to clarify the process on this and whether we are getting into the weeds.

D. Stensaas stated that the board does need to submit only three items, and the City Commission is considering issues from each city board and also departments, and the Commission then decides which of them it wants to fund and it may fund some, but it may not fund any of the issues the PC submits. He stated that there is no detailed plan behind this, there is no cap on how much can be spent on these issues, and that it is up to the Commission to decide how this unfolds. He also stated that there was a very positive response to the concerns that J. Cardillo presented to the City Commission on December 21st as part of the annual report to the Commission. He also stated that there aren't necessarily any funds that need to be raised or spent to get started on the three issues that we are discussing and that is one of the good things in favor of making some progress on those issues. He also stated that establishing committees doesn't cost anything, and work sessions don't cost anything, but the Planning Commission can't start on any of these issues on their own.

M. Dunn asked about what has been done in the past and what are the hurdles. D. Stensaas stated that related to the winter planning issues is that in the past 10 years the only thing that materialized is that he and Dennis Stachewicz did initiate a meeting about five years ago that was intended to be a "snow summit", which was held by the City Commission at Lakeview Arena and included several stakeholders, but that it fell well short of what the vision they had for it was and that it ended up just being a discussion of how much money would be required to make improvements above and beyond what can be done with the money now being spent on winter maintenance programs and that it would require a lot of money to make a significant impact.

M. Dunn stated that he is wondering if the Planning Commission could include survey information with this item to put some weight behind it. D. Stensaas stated that the Commission wants a brief statement of each issue and the way this brief, summary version of the issue is what they want. M. Larson stated that the ad-hoc committee idea seems like a reasonable way to move forward. A. Andres stated that he would like to see more ideas presented, not just to submit a piece of paper to submit a piece of paper with what we think they should do. S. Mittlefehldt stated that she is wondering if we are sure these are our greatest hits, that she doesn't want to reinvent the wheel, but maybe there are more important and pressing things and maybe that warrants conversation now. A. Andres stated that it is in our Master Plan to create a more walkable winter city. S. Mittlefehldt stated that there are many things the City should be focusing on and these three issues are great, but she would like to throw out that a lot of communities have plans for meeting carbon neutrality reduction goals like the one's set by the Governor and she said the City doesn't have a strategic plan for carbon neutrality and that would be a good framework for talking about these issues. E. Brooks stated that he agrees and all of the issues we are talking about come into play with

carbon neutrality and is that one thing we want to address more than one of the other issues and why would we not explore that more. M. Larson asked D. Stensaas if he knows if there has been any discussion at the City to evaluate that on a more formal level. D. Stensaas stated that he isn't aware if there is, but some of the Commissioners have mentioned it and are considering that themselves.

M. Larson stated that the three items are all important issues and haven't moved a lot, but incorporating climate goals early on is a recommendation that could be worked into all of these or as a separate recommendation. S. Mittlefehldt stated that there is language in the Master Plan about transportation and energy efficiency and other things that would be required to meet carbon neutrality and maybe there is a way to reframe what we have into a larger recommendation about climate neutrality goals. D. Stensaas stated that J. Cardillo's December presentation to the City Commission made clear that the Planning Commission was very concerned about the carbon footprint of the City and meeting the state goals and several Commission members commented on it and one of the City Commission members stated that she was thinking along the same lines. A. Andres stated that he would go with these three issues, but if S. Mittlefehldt wants to add something that he supports that. M. Larson stated that another side option, if we want to encourage this, is to draft a follow-up letter to the Commission and try to encourage them to set goals if they are going to move forward and we can make it known that we are supportive of the 2050 initiatives. M. Dunn stated that he would really like to put some kind of statement in there that going after the Governor's climate goals are one of our top priorities. There was more discussion of this item.

D. Stensaas stated that the fact that there has been so little progress on this is a reason to keep it in front of the commission and it's a serious issue, especially with winter isolation and people who don't have good mobility end up getting trapped in their homes. M. Larson stated that he thinks that maybe they should include reference to some other examples like the adopt-a-sidewalk and remove the emphasis on the snow summit, it might create an image of dollar signs, but otherwise he is satisfied with this and would like to move on if everyone else is.

M. Larson stated the public transportation issue seems to be laid out well and clear cut. D. Stensaas stated that he and Taylor Klipp did a presentation to the MarqTran board on this issue when Taylor was the PC chair and moving forward the next step is pretty simple and that is getting people that know how to move forward around a table with the City officials and have an information exchange and then figure out how we can move forward together. There was a discussion about past transit service in the city, and about electric vehicle charging stations. D. Stensaas stated that there is a confusion here about short-term and long-term planning, and the Community Master Plan contains a transportation chapter that is fairly extensive and detailed and would be the place to include issues like EV stations and automation, but the focus of the strategic planning effort is issues that can be implemented in the short term, and he said that sometimes it takes so long to plan and get things implemented that they are outdated by the time they get implemented. He also stated that the public transportation route isn't necessarily going to result in a bus operated by MarqTran, it could be a van and a public-private partnership. A. Andres stated that he likes this page. M. Dunn stated that it would be good to include some of the major stakeholders in the beginning to help with the buy-in. M. Larson stated that he thinks this is fine to move forward agrees and that he agrees with the issue S. Mittlefehldt raised is good and he thinks they can consider that in future conversations.

D. Stensaas stated that the last issue, planning for N. Lakeshore Boulevard, is probably going to be a bit better understood by some of the City Commission members since the Coastlines and People project was completed by NMU. M. Larson stated that he is wondering, since this is a seek-funding request, would this be a staff project or would it be a committee project. D. Stensaas said that he wouldn't want to set any expectations, but he would hope that staff could seek funding, but one thing that needs to be worked out is whether NMU would still have capacity and willingness to work with the City on the community outreach part of this. He also stated that professor Jen Thompson had previously expressed willingness to help coordinate or be the lead for public outreach and he isn't sure if that is going to be an option in the future, if she would still be willing and able, but he thinks it's a great opportunity to collaborate on a project and a no-brainer if the opportunity was available. Mittlefehldt stated that she would be great and could bring that outreach piece together. M. Larson stated that the only thing he sees that could be added is that if adopted staff would coordinate with other parties, to assign responsibility. W. Premeau stated that there is a paragraph in there that references completing the Land Development Code and asked if needs to be there. M. Larson stated that text was just added for context.

D. Stensaas stated that he doesn't have anything else and if that is all he will make the changes as noted and send the issues back to the board as final draft when he sends it to the Manager's office.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

M. Dunn stated that the Winter Cities planning presentations were very good.

W. Premeau stated that the way the roads get done can be changed, and that the program they created twenty years ago could be changes and they could get more done every year.

S. Mittlefehldt states that she wanted to congratulate M. Larson on organizing another great UP Clean Energy Conference session.

M. Larson stated that there are lots of important issues and other ways to engage the community. She also stated that she put a link to the Coastlines and People report in the chat box and there are lots of cool photos of Marquette and

M. Larson stated that he thinks there are lots of important things that they talked about and there are other ways to communicate some of the issues that we are concerned about outside the confines of this process and I hope we will keep those

D. Stensaas congratulated M. Larson on the UP Clean Energy Conference and asked if there are ways to access the content now. M. Larson stated that the turnout was good and they promoted it with a link in the Mining Journal and Upper Michigan Source.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chair M. Larson at 7:40 p.m.

Prepared by:

David Stensaas, City Planner and Zoning Administrator
Planning Commission Secretary