

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 18, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission (PC) members present: W. Premeau, Vice Chair K. Clegg, M. Rayner, J. Fitkin, Chair S. Mittlefehldt, D. Fetter, S. Lawry, A. Wilkinson.

PC Members absent: K. Hunter (excused)

Staff present: Dave Stensaas, City Planner and Zoning Administrator; Jon Swenson, Director of Community Services.

AGENDA

It was moved by S. Lawry, seconded by K. Clegg, and carried 8-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Feb. 4, 2025, meeting were approved as presented by consent.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Logan Stauber, of 2 Pinehurst Dr. in Marquette Township and owner of a downtown business, stated:

Members of the Planning Commission, I'm here tonight to advocate for the City's Land Development Code to better address the storage needs for our community by clearly separating mini-storage from the current definition of warehousing. With the increasing demand for housing and the number of developments underway in the city, many of which include condominiums, apartments and multiple-family units, there will be a growing need for personal storage solutions. Currently, the city of Marquette's storage facilities are experiencing full occupancy and waiting lists. Most of these facilities are used to store personal items such as recreational equipment and household goods, rather than goods and materials intended for commercial trade – as the current definition suggests. The City's current definition reads "Warehousing/Storage Facilities – "A use engaged primarily in indoor storage (commercial or personal materials), wholesale, and distribution of goods, products, supplies, and equipment, excluding bulk storage of materials."

Currently, mini-storage facilities are only allowed in the Industrial-Manufacturing and Board of Light and Power districts, and by Special Land Use [Permit] in the Regional Commercial District. Many communities nationwide have adopted language to address mini-storage facilities separately from those for commercial storage purposes. An example definition that I believe Marquette should adopt comes from neighboring Negaunee Township. Their definition reads "Recreational and Residential Storage Facilities – A structure or group of structures for storing customers' goods and wares, recreational vehicles and related equipment." Negaunee [Township] allows mini-storage facilities in their general commercial district, restricted business district, and industrial district. Storage facilities designed for personal belongings can be subject to conditions established by the Planning Commission to ensure that they operate harmoniously in areas outside of their currently permitted districts. I'm advocating that these uses be allowed in the General Business [Commercial] and Mixed-Use districts.

I've attached examples of two mini-storage facilities that are currently operating in Mixed-Use districts, along with Negaunee Township's definition of storage, and an example of a regulatory framework from the City of Manistee that I think would work well for the City of Marquette. Thank you for your consideration.

S. Mittlefehldt thanked Mr. Stauber and said they would discuss this when they get to the work session on the Land Development Code.

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NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan

S. Mittlefehldt invited Jon Swenson to begin the presentation.

Jon Swenson, Director of Community Services, thanked the Planning Commission for having the presentation and said that on Zoom we have Dick Horton of Horton Consulting, and tonight we are going to provide a brief summary of what is an in-depth and robust recreation plan that you all have had an opportunity to review. He said they will cover the main topics, and then we'll open it up for questions after the presentation. He also said that the City contracted with Horton Consulting last year, and we've been working on the document for the last year or so, and now we'll have Mr. Horton tell us more.

Mr. Dick Horton, the consultant for the project and speaking to the group remotely via Zoom, thanked the City for hiring him again to work on the project, and he then explained the planning process and the public engagement effort. He explained that the Recreation Plan with facilitated public engagement is updated every five years, and public surveys are updated every ten years. He said the 2020 Recreation Plan was used as a baseline but that every page of it was updated, and a new thing added was economic impact data for programs and events offered by the Community Services Department. He said that they feel good about the data. He related that each plan includes a focus for management challenges and priorities for resource allocation – which they will come back to and discuss further, as well as outside sources for funding. He showed the group the planning themes that came about as a result of the facilitated engagement sessions that are in the report. He said the community has a wide range of focus, which reflects a broad community outlook. Mr. Horton also stated that a portion of the report explores the national best practice model of cost recovery and applies it for recreation services and programs provided by the City, and he talked about the maintenance management plan that is included in the 2025 Plan. He explained that almost all communities have a gap between the resources they have and what is needed to handle all of the things that have to be done within their parks and recreation system and that the extent of the gap limits other things that might be done.

Mr. Swenson explained that three Public Works employees maintain all of the City's buildings working under one supervisor from the Facilities Department, with the addition of some temporary, seasonal employees. He also said that there is a long-term struggle around how to take care of all of the facility assets with such a small number of employees, and the plan calls out staffing needs, including another person in the facilities department and a grant writer.

Mr. Horton said that this kind of message is difficult to relay to community members, and that people don't understand the issue, but it's a constant issue for the City to confront. He also said the expansion and upgrades are another section of the Plan, and mentioned that soccer fields, the Senior Center, the Cultural Trail are items in that section, and there was some detailed discussion about how and why the Cultural Trail project is described in the document as it is. He also asked Mr. Swenson if he wanted to discuss some of the items on the slide.

Mr. Swenson discussed the fact that there were some accomplishments in this area, including the recent extension of the pathway on Sugarloaf Ave. to the north and around Tourist Park. He said the pickleball courts and dog park requests are the most numerous they've received of any particular items. He clarified some issues about the Cultural Trail, stating that the grant they've received will provide for creating and placing interpretive "storymarker" signs at eight locations on the lakeshore. He said they are finalizing the marker designs now and they will be made soon after and placed this summer. He related that the project is also listed in the "New Vision" portion of the Plan because there is a framework plan to expand the project if funds and staff resources become available to add sites to the eight currently funded. He also discussed the "large conversation coming forward" about the future of Lakeview Arena.

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He said there has been a lot of discussion about the need for more space for non-winter sports practice and an aquatic facility and that there is a high demand for ice time. He discussed the increased demand for services at the Senior Center, with a sixteen (16) percent jump in seniors served in the past ten years, which is a difficult reality to confront.

Mr. Horton said that in terms of the location of things like pickleball and dog parks, for example, the Plan referenced the need for land use plans for the developed area of Presque Isle Park and the Jack Reynolds Athletic Complex (baseball fields in N. Marquette) and that during the process of creating those plans there will be plenty of discussion of a lot of things and dog parks and pickleball courts will probably be at the top of the list.

Mr. Swenson said that the Plan states that we need to have an in-depth process with either a consultant or our own engineering department to look at the land and determine if those locations make sense for needs that we need to find a place for, and if the current uses are appropriate there. He related that there is a land use planning process needed for specific areas that will provide the information needed to move forward at any City facilities, including the Jack Reynolds Complex and Presque Isle. He also said that doing the citizen survey every ten years has led to the validation of data previously collected and new trends and recreation opportunities. He said the 2019 survey data was based on a survey done in 2009 and that most of the results are still quite similar. He said that on page 405 is a map that shows that 85 percent of our shoreline provides public access.

Mr. Horton said that was the end of the presentation and asked if there were any questions.

S. Mittlefehldt asked what the timeframe is for studies on the Presque Isle and north ballfield areas?

Mr. Swenson said that it would be proposed through the budget process to have them done and that the Jack Reynolds area should come first and then Presque Isle, and it could be fairly soon, but both of those should happen before we do another Recreation Master Plan.

S. Lawry said he had some questions that Jon is probably best positioned to answer. He said that partners are mentioned in the Plan as being needed to accomplish much of this, and about ten years ago he was part of the study group working to create a regional recreation authority with several other organizations, and it made a lot of progress until the City said that Lakeview Arena had to become part of it along with its outstanding debt of about a quarter-million dollars, and that basically killed the whole effort.

He went on to say that if you are looking at new facilities - especially for the senior center, and aquatics facility, maybe a remodel or replacement of Lakeview Arena – I think a recreational authority is a vehicle that should be explored quite heavily, and I didn't see that mentioned in the Plan at all.

Mr. Swenson said that some of the recommendations are not specific because we want those processes to lead to that conversation as we get into them, but if the Commission decides it wants to pursue building a community center or other facilities that we don't now have, that situation would be right for exploring a recreation authority and bringing in the townships and local user groups. He said that makes sense but doesn't think that it needs to be called out as such, and we could probably accomplish the goals either way and I think we should probably let that process play itself out.

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S. Lawry said that many partners are mentioned in the Plan, but there are some major partners that are not mentioned and he hoped that none of them would take offense, and though it's probably inevitable that you would miss somebody, but looking at a few of them – Harlow Park has been revamped by the American Legion, and the Legion baseball has probably invested as much in the Reynolds athletic complex as the City has in the past.

He said there are others like the Little League at Kaufman [Fields], the Beautification Committee at Father Marquette Park, even the South Shore Fishing [Assoc.] at Mattson Park. He continued, saying that if we are going to continue to rely on them to help fund improvements, it would be good to recognize both their past contributions and that we hope to rely on them in the future.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if anyone else had questions or comments and, hearing none, thanked Mr. Swenson and Mr. Horton for their work on the Plan and said that she hadn't had the chance to read the draft Plan thoroughly, but the presentation was helpful for giving us a sense of what you've been working on and things to look forward to in the years to come.

D. Stensaas said that the links to the draft Recreation Plan were just posted to the City website today, and that last week he emailed a link provided by the consultants to a zipped folder with all of the Plan files, but he was sorry that the members didn't have easy access to the files earlier. He said that part of this presentation was informational, and part of this is for you to determine if this Draft Recreation Plan is generally aligned with the Community Master Plan, or if there are any conflicts between the plans and then to make a motion to that effect.

S. Lawry said that he has read most of the draft Plan, and that he thinks it is very well done and addresses a lot more detail than our Community Master Plan does, and seems to line up with goals that have been in master plans for the last fifty years.

D. Stensaas provided visuals of the areas of the Community Master Plan "guidebook" and the Supplement Report that touch on elements of the Draft Recreation Plan and discussed those, relating that there is only a small overlap between the two plans, there doesn't appear to be any conflicts between them, and the overlap is limited mainly to references to the facilities.

The Planning Commission discussed their considerations of the draft Recreation Plan.

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by S. Lawry, that the Draft 2025 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan is generally consistent with the Community Master Plan, and the Planning Commission recommends it for adoption to the City Commission.

S. Lawry stated that, regarding plans for the neck area of Presque Isle Park, the City has a master plan for that area prepared by Frederick Law Olmstead, which would be a great starting point for any future master plan for that area. Mr. Swenson said that he agreed and that Mr. Olmstead's recommendations are always the starting point for him concerning any new planning discussions about the park.

Mr. Horton told the group that as he travels around the country doing his work, there is never a time that he doesn't find a way to mention the "incredible community" of Marquette and how special it is. He also said that he has been coming to Marquette for about twenty years and isn't bashful about bragging about the community. He thanked the group for their work and said he greatly appreciated the opportunity to work with the City.

WORK SESSION ON REPORTS/PLANS/ORDINANCES

A. Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments

The Planning Commission and staff reviewed each of the draft LDC amendments in the agenda packet, with some items needing further clarification and/or refinement. In particular, changes to the proposed setback requirements that would be required to accompany additional height allowances residential buildings needed further discussion with the Fire Department. The Planning Commission wanted staff to clarify that shipping containers could not be used as residential accessory dwelling units or accessory structures.

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The Planning Commission discussed Mr. Stauber's public comment issue about the expansion of storage uses with him and the staff.

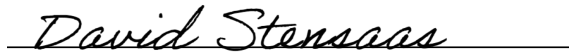
D. Stensaas said that staff had been working on an amendment to the storage definitions and to the uses by zoning district chart to provide more clarity and possibly increase options for the development of some storage types, and this is an opportunity to clarify the direction regarding the expansion of any such uses. He said staff has received many inquiries over the past few years about self-storage development. The Planning Commission discussed the idea of self-storage being allowed in Mixed-Use and General Commercial districts, and did not provide a certain answer, but it was stated by the Chair that the stated priority in the Mixed-Use districts is housing, with commercial uses generally being local businesses supporting residential needs. It was determined to return to the indoor storage issue at a future meeting after staff is able to assemble and present some recommendations for any changes to permitted and special land use storage classifications.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

W. Premeau stated that the bids for the new Bandshell and Cultural Center came in way over budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair S. Mittlefehldt adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David Stensaas", is written over a horizontal line.

Prepared by D. Stensaas, City Planner and Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission Staff Liaison & Secretary.