

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
September 07, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 7th, 2021, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: W. Premeau, M. Dunn, S. Mittlefehldt, A. Andres, Vice-Chair M. Larson
Absent: E. Brooks, Chair J. Cardillo (excused).

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

The minutes of July 20th were approved by consensus.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No certain or potential conflicts were stated.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 01-PUD-09-21 – 1025 Osprey Court (PIN: 0514370)

Zoning Official A. Landers stated that the Marquette County Land Bank Authority and Innovalab Development Group are seeking concept approval of a proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) consisting of two duplex townhouse buildings on the site. She also stated that the public hearing is to determine if criteria for PUD qualifications in Section 54.323 of the Marquette City Land Development Code are met, and to review a request to waive the requirement for the PUD parcel to be at least two acres in size. She also stated that agenda package contained the staff report, which included the amendment to the PUD application. She stated that the package also contained the letter from Innovalab and a letter from the Marquette County Land Bank Authority, submittal site and proposed concept plan. A. Landers clarified that two duplex townhomes were shown in the plan and also pointed out the elevation drawing and any staff comments and responses to staff comments were also in the package. A. Landers pointed out the area map with the parcel outlined in blue. She stated that while viewing the map, she would provide background information on the proposal. She stated that the whole area was originally planned as one development and was subsequently broken down into phases. She stated that in 2005, an amendment was requested to the final development plan, and they were proposing to have three-unit buildings. They were in the end approved for two 12-unit buildings, demonstrating before the attendees on the map the exact location. A. Landers explained that only one 12-unit building was actually completed. She stated that the previous year the Land Bank Authority split the remaining parcel out and that now this is the parcel that the developers are proposing to do a smaller development of the two duplex townhomes, instead of a one 12-unit building. She pointed to the existing zoning map. She stated that one piece of correspondence that was submitted prior the agenda being proposed, and that there were three additional pieces of correspondence which were received on the same day of this hearing. She read each of the three items of correspondence, each one opposed to the proposal, and they were received from the property owners of 1015 Osprey Court #9; 1071 Merlin Lane; and 15 Fairway Drive and 16 Fairway Drive.

M. Larson asked if there were any questions from staff.

M. Dunn inquired if the zoning requirements still apply. He reiterated that the current zoning is still PUD, even though there's no PUD agreement. Mr. Dunn rephrased his question, asking again if the current zoning requirements still apply and if everything that applied to a PUD would still apply to this property.

A. Landers stated that the previous PUD request for the portion of land in question had expired. She further explained that the City of Marquette still needed to take action in order to remove it from the PUD classification. She stated that the City did not take that action because the Marquette County Land Bank Authority stated that they were applying for PUD. A. Landers stated that even if it were being proposed to

construct the original proposal, nevertheless the current PUD classification is still expired. She stated that if the developers wanted to go through PUD, they would need to go through the process which they were going through now.

M. Dunn acknowledged A. Landers response and followed up with an additional question in which he asked what would happen if the parcel was not approved for a PUD zoning classification, what would happen to the underlying zoning in that area.

A. Landers explained that the City of Marquette would need to take action in that case to have it match the Master Plan use.

M. Dunn inquired if the Master Plan also stated that this area was zoned PUD.

A. Landers stated that no, under the Master Plan it would be zoned according to future use, such as multi-family.

M. Dunn acknowledged the answer and then asked if four units under multi-family fit on this parcel.

A. Landers explained there were multiple restrictions under multi-family and that she would not be able to answer the question because she did not have the information.

City Planner and Zoning Administrator stated that the County had been trying for some time to get this property back onto the tax rolls and found a modular developer who can do it at a reasonable price.

S. Mittlefehldt stated she had a similar question, after reading the staff report. She stated that is sounded like the whole area was a PUD and was part of the development that was mentioned. She asked if there had previously been a situation like this one. She noted that she thought there might have been an agreement between the Land Bank and the developer which would leave the impression that this small parcel would also be classified as PUD along with the rest of the larger development.

A. Landers stated that the normal process is that a party would have to ask for a waiver if the property was 2-acres or less. She stated that the code allows for the waiver, but it was necessary to first go to the Planning Commission and the City Commission, that's where a recommendation would be made and then the city would make the ultimate decision on it.

S. Mittlefehldt inquired if A. Landers could tell the attendees of any precedent where such a waiver had been granted.

A. Landers stated that the size requirement was a new item in the code and previously there was not a size requirement.

M. Larson clarified that the new code had been in effect since 2019 when the new standard was brought into PUDs in an attempt to create PUDs which are larger in size, to bring the PUDs classification more in line with its original purpose of preventing the necessity of going through many variances to make it work.

A. Landers clarified that there were indeed several PUDs in the City that were less than two acres.

M. Larson emphasized that there were several PUDs in the city which were less than two acres and that the property under discussion was a perfect example of why the exception rule exists. He reiterated that the original property was a PUD and would have been a much higher density development if it had been successful.

M. Dunn inquired if there was a way that the PUD agreement could be brought to match the surrounding PUD agreements. He expressed that he'd seen neighborhoods that were considered all one neighborhood but due to different HOA's assigned during the different phases of development, there final result was very conflicting.

A. Landers explained there were legal issues and that was the reason that the 12-unit building got separated from the rest of the development. It was all under one master deed but then it got separated out and then parceled out.

M. Dunn asked if this PUD gets approved that the parcel would be its own separate thing.

A. Landers explained that if approved, it would have its own master deed. M. Dunn acknowledged the response.

M. Larson inquired if the condos in question would be free market and not government subsidized.

A. Landers clarified that the condos would be available for sale and would not be rentals, unless the owners of a particular condo wished to lease out their property.

M. Larson asked about the surrounding properties being the same status, and A. Landers stated that they were condos also, not apartments. He then asked if there were any other questions for staff. M. Larson then asked if anybody was present to speak on behalf of the applicants, and no one came forward to speak for the applicants and no applicants were present.

M. Larson opened the public hearing and asked if anyone wanted to speak.

Ms. Linda Hansen, of 1015 Osprey Ct. inquired if the hearing was being recorded and it was acknowledged by the Chairman that the hearing was indeed being recorded. Ms. Hansen stated that she would have two comments. The first comment was regarding the Land Development Code Section 54.323, Subsection F, Subitem 3. She stated that this subsection of the code forbade a development to add service or facility loads beyond those in the master plan. She stated that it was her belief that this section referred to the utilities which would be going to the site. She requested that the commission consider whether the proposed development would put an undue burden on public utilities. Ms. Hansen then mentioned Subsection H, Subitem 3. She stated that if the development was approved that she would request at the appropriate part in the construction process that the commission would require some sort of performance guarantee for the construction of the building according to Subsection H, Subitem 3 of the Land Development Code. She stated that the reason that prompts her to make such a request is because of the layout of the parcel, which has very sandy earth and a steep slope on either side of the property. She expressed concern that it would be very easy for construction contractors to have an earth work mishap or destabilize one of the slopes, or otherwise have adverse events which could be expensive and unforeseen. She also mentioned the fact that the road passing the proposed construction was the only ingress and egress from her condominium unit. She felt concerned that if there were any issues with the development running into problems and not being completed, the residents of the condominium complex might be stuck with impaired access, and particularly concerning was access to emergency services and similar public services. She reiterated her request for the Commission to review the situation regarding the utilities and to also consider a financial instrument or some kind of performance guarantee. .

Ms. Pat Finkbeiner of 1061 Merlin Ln., and the President of the Hawks Ridge Homeowners Association, stated that she believed that A. Landers did not receive the letter from the Hawks Ridge HOA in the past week. She asked for permission to read a copy of this letter before the Commission members. A. Landers stated that the Commission members had not received a copy of this letter and offered her apologies. Ms. Finkbeiner related the contents of the letter, which expressed concerns regarding the affect the proposed development would have on the surrounding property values, negative effect on the private roads which lead to and from the properties on Osprey Ct. and Merlin Ln., also stating that if the proposed project went forward, it would add cost to the HOA's budget. Ms. Finkbeiner also stated that the HOA members expressed concerns over the additional burden placed on the public utility infrastructure, affecting the already existing developments nearby. She asked that these concerns be considered by the Commission before they approve the proposed waiver.

Mr. Brad Arnsparger, of 1051 Merlin Ln. and member of Hawks Ridge Owners Association emphasized the concerns over the affect on surrounding property values and the devaluation of this location to prospective buyers. He related that two of the properties in Hawks Ridge were about to be sold, one having a value of

\$385,000 another one at almost \$400,000. He said that building \$200,000 to \$220,000 townhouse units nearby which definitely do not match the aesthetics of either Hawks Ridge on Merlin Ln., or the Lofts on Osprey Ct. is very concerning to everyone concerned financially. Mr. Arnsparger also expressed concerns over the common road and that the two roads of Merlin Ln. and Osprey Ct. were well maintained by both the respective condominium associations. He expressed worries over the unknown factors that putting a private property in this place between the two developments would have if the new property was not able to contribute to the maintenance of the roads in case of unforeseen events like road failure, et cetera. He mentioned easements and stated that he did not know of any existing easements. Mr. Arnsparger thanked all of the members of the community, public and private, for their cooperation and stated that he would like to propose a solution to the problem. He stated that the parcel of land could handle another development matching the Hawks Ridge development without creating any problems. He asked that the Commission members please consider such an option and presented architectural drawings, originals used during the Hawks Ridge development which would be provided free of charge to the concerned parties if they should choose to build an identical development on this parcel of land. He emphasized that this solution would save the City of Marquette money, even after the appropriate updates were made. He suggested that aesthetically it would match and blend with the surrounding area. Mr. Arnsparger stated that his proposed solution would generate revenue for the city and that for \$400,000 of investment on building cost, the city would reap about \$1.2 million. He entered into the record his personal phone number 906-869-7439. He asked for any questions that anyone present might have, and he said he would answer on behalf of the Hawks Ridge Owners Association. M. Larson thanked Mr. Arnsparger.

Mr. Bob Gartner, of 1015 Osprey Ct. expressed his belief that since this proposed development was a smaller unit and adjacent to a ravine, that the critical issue is drainage. He said that an incorrect design could destabilize the entire parcel and the entire piece of land could possibly shift and slide down towards the ravine. He emphasized that this issue should be investigated thoroughly to ensure that it is stable enough for any type of development and noted the possibility of erosion and other unforeseen problems. He stated he would like to see the preliminary drawings when available but stated that this scenario should be considered before any decision was made.

M. Larson closed the public hearing and asked if any members wished to suspend the rules for discussion or to make a motion.

It was moved by S. Mittlefehldt, seconded by M. Dunn, and carried 5-0 to suspend the rules for discussion.

S. Mittlefehldt stated that both the staff members and members of the public had expressed concerns regarding the utilities. She stated there were some questions and because the applicant was not present to give more details regarding what the utility issues were, she inquired of A. Landers whether she was familiar with any information provided by Mr. Cambensy [the consulting engineer].

M. Dunn stated that we could go over the utility issues, but that a plan had not been provided yet and that the Commission members were only discussing the project at the concept level.

S. Mittlefehldt affirmed she thought this would be a fundamental issue, but M. Dunn reiterated that this is not the decision that was currently on the table to be made in this hearing.

D. Stensaas explained that once site plans were provided and input was received from the engineering and public works department, that such concerns that were expressed in this session could be further clarified.

S. Mittlefehldt asked for confirmation that the engineering and public works department would be solving the easement and private road concerns in the future.

A. Landers confirmed that the information would be provided during the preliminary site inspection as well as the rest of the concerns which had been raised previously during the hearing and would be answered if this proposal goes past the concept stage.

M. Larson thanked the staff and the public for their comments and emphasized they take everyone's

concerns seriously. He stated that he was unsure at this early stage in the process if there was any action that could be taken directly regarding the final design. D. Stensaas explained that what an owner builds on their own property was not ultimately the decision of others. He sympathized with the contributors that though he agreed it is desirable to make the design harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood, that options were limited if the issue at hand was not specifically delineated in the zoning code. He pointed out that he did hear a couple of things that were of interest to him, and that he thought that these issues would be something for the City Commission or perhaps the Planning Commission. D. Stensaas said that he was wondering if any bond was put up regarding possible damage to the road during the construction. He asked if this would be something that would be looked at further down the road.

M. Larson went over the guidelines for obtaining a PUD zoning classification. He said the first requirement was 'to permanently preserve an open space or natural features because of their exceptional characteristics or because they can provide a permanent transition or buffer between land uses.' He stated that that is not being presented and that he would agree that this was not an applicable objective which was being met.

W. Premeau asked for clarification of why that the proposed development did not meet the criteria.

M. Larson requested confirmation that W. Premeau believed that by having 50 percent of the parcel remaining open that the criteria would be met. W. Premeau confirmed that this was indeed his opinion.

M. Dunn stated that he also was also of the same opinion on the open space and it appeared there was 80 percent of the open space remaining. He emphasized that once the development was placed, nothing else would ever be constructed on the back hillside in the future.

S. Mittlefehldt requested a point of clarification from staff. She asked regarding a communication from the applicant that the stated objective was not applicable. She asked if they did not want the Commission members to consider the possibility that the objective could possibly be met.

A. Landers related that in the applicant's letter, they only stated criteria that the applicant felt they did meet.

S. Mittlefehldt asked for clarification that the applicant did not feel that they met the criteria being discussed.

A. Landers emphasized that in the master deed it would have to be stated and confirmed that the remaining open space could never be developed in the future.

S. Mittlefehldt wished to confirm that staff should only be considering the criteria that the applicant listed for consideration.

D. Stensaas stated that the Commission members could go about it that way and reiterated that the applicant would need to be at least three of the criteria. He informed the staff that the applicant had identified what had been listed as number B in the list provided by the applicant.

S. Mittlefehldt confirmed that also numbers C and H were identified.

M. Larson confirmed the numbers, B, C, F and H. He related that A didn't necessarily meet the criteria, but they did have number C, which is the criteria to 'dedicate or set aside open space areas in perpetuity'. He inquired if S. Mittlefehldt was in agreement with this view and she agreed that functionally number C did the same thing as number A. M. Larson went on to relate the content of criteria number B, 'to permanently establish land use patterns that are compatible or that will protect existing or planned uses.' M. Larson pointed out that the applicant had stated that he intends to continue the original PUD objective with townhomes on this parcel, surrounded by the previous PUD townhomes and apartments that were originally included in this property.

M. Dunn stated that he agreed with the applicant about number B. He stated that he felt that it was most likely that this piece of property would at some point in the future be developed into something and expressed his opinion that utilizing the parcel for residential use would be the best way to protect the other

existing residential uses. M. Dunn expressed this was preferential to have the area rezoned as commercial. S. Mittlefehldt expressed her agreement with this viewpoint.

D. Stensaas read number C, 'to accept the dedication of or to set aside open space areas in perpetuity.' He explained that several objectives were contained therein such as preserving nature features and open spaces. He stated that the proposed development would 50 percent developed upon completion, and that the sloped portion of the property would remain behind the proposed building and that several of the objectives would be met. He went on to say that one portion of the property which is current graveled would be landscaped and/or sodded hence furthering compliance to the desired effect. .

M. Dunn stated that he agreed that number C met the proposed criteria.

M. Larson disagreed with the proposed project meeting the criteria for number C. After a request for clarification, he stated he did not see how landscaping or sodding the parcel would keep the natural environment which is already there. M. Larson clarified that there would be a change from gravel to sod.

M. Dunn related that he while he understood how the proposal could be construed as compliance with number C, he was concerned that there was a lot of potential damage to the sloped area during construction and that during the process, the criteria for number C could be violated.

S. Mittlefehldt brought up that this issue had been mentioned before and that this is a challenging area due to the slope to the ravine. She said that she understood this was probably not to be discussed before the plan was presented to the commissioners, but that she did feel that the site has unusual topography and environmental characteristics and that it is possible that when put into practice there could be challenges and that she'd like to present the potential problems that could arise more strongly to the applicants.

D. Stensaas stated that the plan, once presented, must account for all drainage eventualities such as erosion and the handling of storm water before the plan could be approved. He mentioned other sites where the challenges were met successfully.

M. Larson read number D, 'to provide alternate uses for parcel that can provide transition buffers to residential areas.' He then mentioned the fact that the applicant did not list this as one of their met criteria. S. Stensaas read number E, 'to guarantee provision of public improvement that could not otherwise be required that would further the public health, safety, or welfare; protect existing or future uses from an impact of a proposed use; alleviate an existing or potential problem relating to public facilities.' He stated that the proposed development did not meet these criteria and was not applicable to this site. D. Stensaas then read the criteria for number F, 'to promote the goals and objectives of the community master plan.' He stated that the parcel being zones PUD would be consistent with these criteria.

M. Dunn expressed his view that due to significant housing needs, and despite of the current volatile market, and that the 'public good' portion of number F was significant to him and stood out as relevant.

M. Larson stated that providing housing that was unaffordable may not be improving the public good.

D. Stensaas explained that the criteria in number F was fairly broad and that the community master plan makes recommendations in several areas. He stated that a variety of types of housing was one of the stipulations of the said master plan. He then asked the option of Commissioner Premeau. W. Premeau stated that he agreed.

M. Larson then asked the opinion of S. Mittlefehldt, and she was in agreement that it met the criteria.

A. Andres also agreed that the conditions were met.

M. Larson then went on to read the criteria of Section G, 'to foster the aesthetic appearance of the City through quality building design and site development, the provision of trees and landscaping beyond minimum requirement, the preservation of unique and/or historic sites or structures, and the provision of open space or other desirable features of the site beyond minimum requirements.' He stated that the

applicant provided no response to this section and then asked for comments from the commissioners. No comments from the commissioners being noted, he moved on to Section H, 'to bring about the redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use or requirements is determined to be desirable.' He clarified that the applicant had stated that the site would likely be unable to be used for anything other than the proposed use and therefore the proposed project would be desirable and quality for this objective.

M. Dunn asked for clarification that the applicant was indeed asserting that the parcel would be unable to be developed for anything other than residential and for the proposed plan.

M. Larson stated that that was how he read it; however, only in terms of the residential requirement and did not interpret this to mean the exact plan put forth by the applicant, and reiterated that the applicant was not present to address the issue.

S. Mittlefehldt stated that she did not agree that the proposed project met the criteria in Section H.

A. Andres related that he did not think the proposed project met the criteria for Section H.

W. Premeau related that he did not know what else you could do with the parcel of land and that he didn't think any of the commissioners would mind if such a development were to be completed and that it met the criteria in Section H. S. Mittlefehldt stated that she agreed and that they would like to see the parcel developed. W. Premeau then restated that the plan had not been submitted, so it was not possible to ensure that the plan would be accepted.

M. Dunn stated he could not make a clear judgement without questioning the applicant and knowing more information about how the project related to the master plan, so he would not be able to give an answer at this time.

M. Larson that looking at items A through H, three qualifying items were confirmed for PUD zoning: being B, C, and F. He asked for a motion to approve the request due to the qualifying conditions.

W. Premeau stated to his knowledge that on a residential parcel the rule used to be in effect that if you met the qualification of meeting the necessary amount of square feet you could build a duplex on a residential parcel. D. Stensaas stated that with a Special Land Use Permit in a medium density residential neighborhood, as long as you met the qualification of 6,000 square feet, it would still be acceptable.

S. Mittlefehldt added that in 50 feet of lot width you could do a duplex, and the applicant is requesting two on the parcel in question.

It was moved by M. Dunn and seconded by S. Mittlefehldt, and carried 5-0 that after conducting a public hearing, and reviewing of the applicant's concept submittal and request for consideration of project qualifications documents and the STAFF FILE REPORT/ANALYSIS for 01-PUD-09-21, the Planning Commission finds that the request meets the following objectives - b, c, f, - and the other criteria of Section 54.323(F) of the Marquette City Land Development Code, and therefore the proposal is eligible for a PUD.

M. Larson stated the next step since the Planning Commission has determined the property is eligible for a PUD, is to review and make a recommendation to the City Commission regarding the waiver request since the site is less than 2 acres. He asked if there were any commissioner comment regarding this.

S. Mittlefehldt stated the minimum requirement was put in the Land Development Code to target larger areas that has some kind of unique or unusual characteristics that might be more appropriate as a PUD then the standard zoning district. She stated she wonders if they did recommend this request does that create an issue for future projects or are we going to be doing this a lot, and if so what was the purpose of putting in the minimum size.

M. Larson stated he was thinking the same but what he believes it comes down to is this PUD request was part of a much larger original PUD contiguous piece, then parcels were split out, and due to timing this

essentially has not been completed. He stated in his thinking it is not a new standalone 2 acres, it was originally part of a larger PUD than has been timed out and now has become a standalone parcel.

D. Stensaas stated to clarify the situation that was created when the development failed and left a part of the PUD incomplete with now vacant land. He stated the County Land Bank got involved at some point and said this is a valuable piece of property that should have been developed and is not producing any taxes and could be for the City and the County. He also stated the County Land Bank looked at options to work with it as an existing PUD which would require the former PUD to be re-approved, and for whatever reason they abandoned that idea. He stated that would have been the default position, and it would have been a barrier to get all the PUD condo owners in agreement. He also stated it seems more sensible the way they are proposing it, as they can get something built there that is not totally out of character.

M. Dunn stated he looked at this request kind of liked how we would look at a variance request, and one of the criteria is that it has a unique hardship. He stated in this case since it was split off from the original PUD it created a unique hardship. He also stated the intent is being met of the master plan, and in the original PUD this was not open space this was going to be a 12-unit building. He stated had it not been a failure of the original PUD this could have had a lot more density there then what is being proposed now, so that makes him think a smaller size parcel is ok in this instance.

It was moved by S. Mittlefehldt and seconded by M. Dunn, and carried 4-1 that after conducting a public hearing, and reviewing of the applicant's concept submittal and request for consideration of project qualifications documents and the STAFF FILE REPORT/ANALYSIS for 01-PUD-09-21, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Commission waives the PUD size requirements.

Yes: S. Mittlefehldt, M. Dunn, M. Larson, W. Premeau

No: A. Andres

NEW BUSINESS

A. 01-STR-01-21 College Ave. Street Reconstruction Project

City Planner and Zoning Administrator D. Stensaas stated that all the information for this project is in the agenda packet, and we have the City Engineer, Mik Kilpela, here to go over the details.

City Engineer Mik Kilpela stated that this project has not yet been approved by the City Commission yet, but if approved there is \$375,000 of funding available, stating that it might be approved in new year's projects. M. Kilpela stated that the proposal is to upgrade the existing street and bring the street up to modern standards. He emphasized special attention would be placed to upgrading the sewer and drainage systems. M. Kilpela discussed the condition of the roads and bicycle lane and road features that needed to be upgraded and upsized. He demonstrated, by showing a slide, how the driving lanes, turning lanes, and parking would be reconstructed.

M. Larson asked if the commissioners had any questions for City Engineer M. Kilpela.

S. Mittlefehldt inquired regarding any information or discussion that might have occurred pertaining to the special utility needs which might occur due to the potential redevelopment of the old hospital in this area and other potential developments which could occur in the area.

M. Kilpela answered that consideration had been given to the surrounding population density and if the sanitary sewers needed to be upsized in anticipation of the potential needs of the hospital.

S. Mittlefehldt accepted this response and stated she was glad that preparations had already been made to handle future developments.

M. Larson stated that he had a different question, but along the same line as the previous question. He also asked, due to the fact that the reconstruction of the hospital had not been decided, why was this road chosen when there were plenty of other roads that needed work also.

M. Kilpela explained that the project first been proposed back in 2013 and had been postponed for a

number of years. In 2018, the city applied for a Category F funding through the state and the money was received specifically applies to this project. He emphasized that the road was in extremely poor condition and since the renovation project met the criteria for the funding granted, those were the reasons for considering this project above others.

M. Larson agreed it was a good reason.

S. Mittlefehldt related that she felt that the road was visibly unappealing and obviously in need of repair and that the attention was urgently needed to improve this area.

M. Kilpela stated that the Category F funding would only cover a portion of the project, the remaining amount to be covered by the \$375,000 which was mentioned previously.

M. Larson asked if there were any other questions, and none were given.

It was moved by S. Mittlefehldt, seconded by A. Andres, and carried 5-0 that after review of the proposed cross-sections and associated background information for 01-STR-01-21 – the College Ave. Street Reconstruction Project - the Planning Commission finds that the proposed project meets the intent of the Community Master Plan, and hereby approves the street reconstruction design as presented.

WORK SESSION

A. TRANSIT PLANNING

D. Stensaas stated that the City Commission approved the MarqTran 2021 - 2021 Strategic Plan, which included an item from Community Development for public transportation planning. He explained that the City Commission was set to approve fixed routes and discussed the pertinent areas of the city where fixed routes were to be planned, including part of the NMU and the hospital campus. D. Stensaas reemphasized that full go ahead had been granted to get action started on this proposal. He stated he had met with the outgoing director and three MarqTran staff members a few months ago and discussed route proposals and that it was frankly discussed why past plans had not worked out. He stated that they discussed ideas for the future which could be mutually agreed upon and that the ample funding was available on the MarqTran side to turn these into actionable ideas.

Mr. Taylor Klipp, one of the City's appointees to the MarqTran board, stated that there had been a director change at MarqTran and that he felt that the organization members will now be willing to experiment a bit more. He stated that the transportation organization has been adding drivers and as the pool of qualified drivers is built up and reemphasized the budget was there in order to carry out plans in accordance with the new capacity. T. Klipp explained that with the idea of using the available buses and drivers, they were looking at non-dependent routes within the City of Marquette, the cities of Negaunee and Ishpeming and then also some point-to-point commuter routes as well, and that would be the starting point.

M. Dunn inquired as to the definition of a non-dependent route.

Mr. Klipp explained that such a route would be routes where the passenger did require a bus change. He also stated that MarqTran was most likely going to implement a GPS system so that riders would know where buses are, when they're coming and when they're going. He expressed the opinion this would be a good time to work together, knowing that there was going to be a new master plan and that it was important to note that a major problem was the complaints that the vestibules were not large enough. He stated there could also be some changes to the parking arrangements due to the difficulty drivers have been having in turning around.

A. Andres inquired about any plans to change the hours of the operation of the MarqTran buses.

T. Klipp stated that due to the number drivers being hired, it would expand capacity. He explained that one of the obstacles for keeping driving staff was not having regular routes for the drivers to be assigned. T. Klipp stressed that continuity in the planning would be vital, and that efficiency of bus utilization needed to

be improved due to some of the current routes only having two or three passengers. He discussed the potential types of new clientele such as citizens and commuters from nearby towns.

S. Mittlefehldt inquired as to how much COVID money was under discussion. She also inquired about what climate actions were being discussed.

T. Klipp explained that almost all of the funding through grants concerns electric busing.

S. Mittlefehldt stated that marketing the ecologically friendly aspects of electric busing would be very popular with students, if marketed correctly. She mentioned the parking problem on campus and that this would be a potential area to bring in new customers.

D. Stensaas stated that when he met with MarqTran they stated that do not need to buy any new buses to make this happen. He stated he got feedback that what was needed was the tweaking of the existing routes, and that inter-city buses should be of a certain appearance or 'wrapping' which would indicate them as such, for example.

T. Klipp stated that with the funding they have, the buses they have and the drivers they have already, and the new leadership who is more willing to experiment with the necessary changes, such as the physical appearance of the buses, that he felt MarqTran could definitely make this happen.

D. Stensaas stated that he believed that MarqTran had recently acquired four new small sized buses.

T. Klipp confirmed this statement as accurate and stated that have buses which are sitting unused, and they were training drivers at the moment.

D. Stensaas stated that despite all of the buses were not currently eco-friendly, the fact of simply having a regular route to key areas would be a big leap forward and the fact that creating new regular routes would help phase out the general public owning gas-powered cars.

T. Klipp mentioned that now it was just a matter of getting students and the public onboard with the idea.

D. Stensaas discussed persuading Northern Michigan University to redesign one of the parking lots to accommodate the turning around of buses.

S. Mittlefehldt stated that she has been appointed to NMU's carbon-neutrality task force and stated that she felt this idea would be in line with the ideals of the task force and this would be a good thing to do and offered to act as a liaison.

D. Stensaas discussed the need, according to his conversations with MarqTran, for there to sheltered stops. He said currently the drivers are used to picking up passengers by the customers hailing the ride. He stated some amount of that is okay, but there is also the need of some shelters in specific locations where the public needs them. He stated it might be problematic to find the public spaces in order to do that, so he expects there to be a necessity to find willing business partners that would allow a shelter to be placed on business property. Also discussed were the vestibules already existing and the fact that they were not large enough. He stressed the need for such organizations to work cooperatively with MarqTran on these types of issues and that hopefully the hospital would be willing, at a minimum, to build a covered shelter outside.

T. Klipp stated that that would be a good place to start, and if they had to begin with painted demarcations without covered shelter in the beginning, that would be okay. He said the big key would be to get a route going and to get passengers on it and then the rest of the issues could be figured out afterwards. He reemphasized MarqTran's willingness to listen to feedback and begin the process immediately and that he felt that there is going to be more expertise and ability for these ideas to be accomplished in the future.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

W. Premeau inquired if there was any survey performed on ridership before the route was put in. He stated that most businesses would determine if the need was there or not before moving ahead.

D. Stensaas stated there were surveys done but he did not have the data sets. He discussed strategies to acquire customers who would regularly utilize public transportation.

S. Mittlefehldt discussed the significance of climate change and reiterated the fact that she was a member of the carbon-neutral task force at NMU.

M. Dunn discussed his own personal experience with owning an eco-friendly electric vehicle. He then stated that he would like to discuss the code requirement for the minimum 12-inch separation of new driveways from the side lot line and explained that this requirement may have caused a bigger problem than it was intended to solve with the new driveway that he recently had paved.

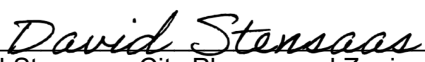
A. Andres stated that transit planning is wonderful, and he would like to be involved, if possible, with the committee.

D. Stensaas stated that he had a few things to touch on briefly. One item is that the Superior Culture business on N. Third St. is generating a lot of complaints and that we may need to take some action on their Special Land Use Permit and stated some of the details and said at the next meeting he would provide some more details. He also stated that he is working on an update to the PC Bylaws and that he would put that update on the next agenda, and that he would also have some of the draft updates to the Land Development Code that he has been working on for the next meeting. He said there is going to be a lot to review in the latest LDC updates, and it would be good to get started on reviewing the material soon.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair M. Larson at 8:00 p.m.

Prepared by:



David Stensaas, City Planner and Zoning Administrator
Planning Commission Secretary
rw/ lmedat