

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
November 12, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall. A video of this meeting is available on the City's website.

ROLL CALL

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

PC Members absent: none

Staff present: City Planner and Zoning Administrator Dave Stensaas, Zoning Official Andrea Landers.

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

The minutes of the 10-01-24 regular meeting were approved as presented, by consent.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. 16-SPR-11-24 - 401 E. Fair Ave., Site Plan for YMCA Expansion

S. Mittlefehldt stated:

The first item on the agenda tonight is 16-SPR-11-24, a site plan for expansion of the YMCA, and we'll turn it over to staff for an overview of the project.

A. Landers stated:

Staff have reviewed the proposed site plan for the construction of a two-story addition. In the Site Plan packet, there is option one with plus or minus 14,500 square feet or option two which is plus or minus 19,300 square feet. In site improvements performed at E. Fair and 1420 Pine St, provided comments regarding the plan and that was in the attached staff report. Also attached was the application submitted, the area map, the parcel here outlined in blue, the leased area blocked out in green, the block map with the City's parcel outlined in blue with the Y's lease area outlined in green polygon, photos of the entire site and then the site plan set.

S. Lawry said as far as the options, are we approving something that allows them to build either option and then they make their decision once they get bids?

A. Landers stated that is correct.

W. Premeau said it is referred to as a two story but it's just a tall building, correct?

Mr. Travis Hongisto, representing consultant IDI, stated:

I agree with that, there's a mezzanine in there with mechanical, but it's probably more a one story and a mezzanine.

S. Mittlefehldt said with no more questions, we will have opportunity for Commission discussion but at this point, I'd like to call the applicant to come to the podium to give us a quick overview of the project and perhaps talk a little bit about the intended use and we'll go from there.

Mr. Andrew Mansfield, 1021 W. Baraga Ave., representing consultant IDI, said as City staff said, we're proposing a building addition on the west side of the existing YMCA in the parking lot, which is in the lease area. It's an expanded gym area with turf, bay and mezzanine. Other work as part of the project is parking lot improvements as required to construct our building inside the parking lot, as well as some modifications to the existing storm sewer system on the site to accommodate the new building.

Mr. Travis Hongisto, representing consultant IDI, said he is also a YMCA board member representing the owner as well.

S. Mittlefehldt said I think we saw pickleball courts, which the community will be thrilled to hear we finally have pickleball courts, but could you talk a little bit more about the intended use.

Mr. Hongisto said I'll cover the interior with the base bid and the alternate. With just the base bid, it's a 50/50 split of turf area, as Andrew mentioned, some batting cages, potential for youth soccer, flag football, that sort of thing and then there's rubber sports flooring on the opposite half which you can see includes three pickleball courts side by side. Right now, the existing gym is used for pickleball so it's going to alleviate and allow the existing gym to be better utilized for basketball or more of a traditional gym use. From a programming standpoint with the bid alternate, that would just be an extension of additional turf. The city in general for residents, Y members, little league, soccer, there's a lack of indoor space especially with being up here for indoor winter space, winter training for those kinds of sports. It could be bigger, but we've got what we've got to work with. I think in 2012 this location of this addition is similar to what it was previously when we had a gym addition planned for it but the use of this is more a field house type building versus a basketball gym. A space for gymnastics if needed, it's really flexible from the standpoint of what that entire space could be used for allowing a bit more programming for the Y.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if anyone would like to ask any questions at this point. No questions were asked so it was asked if any correspondence was received.

A. Landers stated there was no correspondence received.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if anyone from the public would like to discuss, add to or provide feedback on this. Now is time for public comment on this particular project. With no public comment, we will now move on to Commission discussion.

M. Rayner said she was excited about the pickleball courts.

S. Mittlefehldt said yes, that was fast – we put in our new Master Plan and – poof – it happens.

S. Lawry said that he fully agrees with the concerns of Superintendent Cambensy with his memo in the packet. Really, we need to plan the whole site under our existing ordinance. Under the terms of lease agreement, apparently, we don't have that option in this case. I don't know that we can actually require anything more of the Y as an organization. And we are unable to actually require the city to make improvements to the parking lot, but I would like to attach a strong recommendation to the city to redesign, reconfigure the parking lot and make the necessary improvements. There is definitely a traffic flow problem out there, there's definitely a pedestrian safety problem and I believe there's also a capacity problem. The arena was constructed in '74, there was one additional parking lot constructed in the rear of it. After that, as additions were put on both the arena and the Y, the wetland is an encroachment of the parking lot, the skate park is an encroachment to what was the designated snow storage for the

entire parking lot. So, I think what may have been an adequate parking lot to begin with has just been whittled away at and if anybody was out there for the Kiwanis chicken barbeque this past summer, you would have seen a true mess traffic wise. There was traffic backed up all along Pine St., Fair Ave. and around the corner onto Lakeshore Blvd. almost back to Wright St.

Mr. Hongisto came to the podium and said Jenna, the CEO, and I did sit down with City staff. Andrew has been back and forth with them as well. This is something we were trying to work with them on. The bid for this project is obviously what you see there but we're coordinating with the City to address probably more so the safety issues with the condition of the parking lot. And obviously if there's things we can do with the layout to get additional spaces, that would be beneficial.

S. Lawry said when I was employed by the City, at least three different arena managers repeatedly submitted budget requests to reconfigure and improve that parking lot. None of them ever got funded that I'm aware of. I think there's probably been at least two more arena managers since I left and no doubt, they've probably had the same requests, I don't know for sure.

S. Mittlefehldt said she would like Dave or Andrea to talk a little bit about at the beginning of the packet, the parking is something we were at this stage required to review but Superintendent Cambensy brought it up. Can you just quickly explain why that is not something to be reviewed right now.

D. Stensaas said there are a couple issues. The main thing is the Y has a lease hold area that is within the parking lot. It doesn't touch any of the frontages so there's a limit to what the code requires for landscaping and parking. Basically, it's what is the lease hold area. The other issue is the original lease with the YMCA, specified that the City is responsible for snow removal on their lease hold area and that lease has been updated three times now and the language always says the conditions of the original lease are carried forward. The City is responsible for snow removal and as Steve pointed out, the available snow storage keeps changing but it's ultimately the City's responsibility to figure it out, per the lease. The code only requires planning for the lease hold area. We sat down and talked to the City attorney about this at some length and she agreed it's not fair to require them to design the parking area for the City when their only redesigning the lease hold area per the City's agreement with them to do that.

W. Premeau said that they were given a variance so they could skip 164 parking spaces. This is a problem all over limiting the amount of parking. Another project, the City is saying even though they spend 10-12 million dollars, they can't complete their project because they don't have enough parking. This parking should be up to the individuals.

D. Stensaas stated:

There is a small inset parking plan that we put on the bottom of page 2 of the staff report and that is from 2018, and that was designed for the expansion of the Y at that time. That is just for parking spaces, and it's really close to what they're proposing now, but Commissioner Lawry and I met and were looking at the site yesterday and there are a variety of different measures that could be taken that aren't considered in any of this – like moving access points, possibly moving where the drainage come out to a spot a bit farther north in the wetland area, potentially even creating a winter access point from the back of the parking lot, south of the outlet to L. Superior, to allow for movement through that parking lot in the winter but not in summer, as the majority and peak use of that lot is when hockey season is in full swing. There are a variety of things the City could do in those terms, and also reduce the buffer areas on Fair Ave., to increase parking capacity and even make it look a little better, if they took a deep dive into that and can find the money to do it.

W. Premeau said that in no way was his comment meant to say that this is a great thing to do, my comment was just that in my opinion the parking ordinance is screwed up.

S. Mittlefehldt said that she'd like to turn to section 54.1402 in our packets and move through the site plan review standards. The following comments that were made about compliance with or concerns about the standards in this case:

S. Lawry said that this would be an improvement to public health. S. Mittlefehldt said yes, there will be more pickleball.

S. Mittlefehldt said that, related to vehicular and pedestrian circulation, that I agree with Commissioner Lawry, that the site needs some attention in terms of pedestrian use and parking and traffic, but again that is kind of out of the scope of what we're reviewing tonight.

S. Mittlefehldt said that, related to stormwater management, she has a question for staff – would a project like this be subject to the stormwater standard that it is required to be managed on site?

A. Landers said yes, but in this case the [project] space is entirely paved and they are adding greenspace, they meet the stormwater requirement because they are reducing stormwater by adding the greenspace.

S. Mittlefehldt asked, after review of all of the Site Plan Review standards, if there was any final discussion about this or would anyone like to make a motion.

It was moved by S. Lawry, seconded by M. Rayner and carried unanimously (8-0) that after review of the site plan and the supplemental documentation dated 9-30-24, and the Staff Report for 16-SPR-11-24, the Planning Commission finds substantial compliance with the City of Marquette Land Development Code, the Site Plan Review Standards of Section 54.1402(E), and hereby approves the site plan as presented with a strong recommendation that the City of Marquette promptly complete a redesign and improvements of parking facilities on the adjacent Lakeview Arena site to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety, and that the City pursue an overflow parking agreement with Northern Michigan University to address parking capacity issues.

B. 2025 Planning Commission Proposed Meeting Dates

A. Landers said that the Planning Commission should review the proposed 2025 meeting dates, and that a motion is needed to approve the dates.

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by K. Granger, and carried 8-0 to approve the meeting dates as presented.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jane Fitkin, of 226 W. Hewitt St., stated:

I want to comment today on the City's current restrictive code for Intentional Community Dwellings or Housing Cooperatives. A Housing Cooperative can be functionally the same as a housing rental with the exception that it generally does not profit a landlord. Housing Cooperatives can be family style living with a mission in community aspect or private apartment complexes with very few noticeable differences from traditional rentals. However, because cooperatives remove the landlord from the equation and are instead managed by the tenants in an organizational structure, they are very effective tool to achieve more affordable housing in our community. Currently to my knowledge, the City of Marquette has one housing cooperative. The Marquette Congress Co-op on Fourth St., which I had the pleasure of living at for over two years, ending late last year. This house presents a beautiful example of what collaboration and community can accomplish while providing a low cost flexible housing option for folks. The MCC has

been around for 12 years now and it's because of the MCC and its previous members that co-ops are legal in Marquette all. However, we often wondered why more housing co-ops haven't popped up after establishment of ours. After looking into the City's regulations for what you guys call an Intentional Community Dwelling, we figured out why there aren't more co-ops. First, the Land Development Code requires a Special Use permit for a building in Marquette to be converted into a Housing Co-op. As you know, that requires Site Plan Review, which requires a survey of the property, which ends up being a major cost prohibitor to any regular person or group trying to establish a Housing Cooperative. A group currently interested in converting their house into a co-op is running into this issue with survey costs alone running about \$30,000. Second, the requirements for intentional dwelling communities require a 1500' barrier of separation or a major physical barrier between two housing cooperatives. This prevents two houses across the street from each other or on the same block from becoming sources of tenant-owned property housing. Why are these regulations so restrictive? I understand the City's sentiment from years ago as trying to prevent frat houses from taking over in response to the definition of Intentional Dwelling Communities, however I do not see this as a reasonable concern given the lack of "Greek Life" at NMU. You hear people ask for affordable housing, yet your own land use code encourages housing for profit while heavily restricting housing for people. I hope you will take this comment, and you will debate it to at least look at completing changes that will benefit your residents and help our community thrive. I'd be happy to have further conversations about this.

Alex Conklin, of 410 E. Ridge St., Apt. 2E, stated:

I had spoken to Jane earlier, knowing she was going to make a public statement about cooperative housing in Marquette. We were trying to establish a co-op earlier in the year at 410 E. Ridge, unfortunately our building has sold. We did find that this code the City has on Intentional Communities was kind of a barrier for us. We were trying to establish a co-op, having a non-profitable building instead of a landlord. No difference to the property, no difference to the neighbors, it was all just band together and try to stay in the community and not be pushed out. Currently the building has sold and we're all losing our housing at 410 E. Ridge. We are forced to go somewhere else, find other rentals and our neighborhood structure is no longer there. I would love to see the code be changed in the future to help accommodate residents and also make cooperative housing for people like us that don't want to change our building, don't want to change our neighbors, just want to stay members of the community. And that is a way we could potentially have a stake and have ownership in this as community members. And having said that, it would be great to see something, maybe in the future there might be a code to help restrict the sale of multi family housing units to a person turning it into a single family home because currently thirteen folks are losing their house and it's being replaced by one. Thank you.

CORRESPONDENCE & REPORTS FROM OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

A. Materials from Climate Adaptation Task Force Learning Circle #3 – Housing, Health, and Transportation

D. Stensaas commented on the related agenda materials being available for this and the other sessions that have been held so far, and that the last scheduled Learning Circle session in the series is going to be held on Dec. 4th and is on the topic of *Land and Water Use*.

S. Lawry said that he attended the last session, and Jes Thompson said that although the December session is scheduled to be the last one, it is possible that the series will be extended for another two or three sessions.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

W. Premeau said that we have cut back on parking in our ordinance and said he has been working with the City since 1959 and has done a lot of building around town and owns two apartment buildings. He

said we allow for too little parking and thinks that the City should allow as much parking as property owners want and need for residential units and not have that dictated by the City.

K. Granger thanked Ms. Fitkin and Mr. Conklin for coming and speaking about the cooperative living issues and said that it was informative and hopefully we can help out somehow.

K. Clegg thanked Ms. Fitkin and Mr. Conklin and welcomed A. Wilkinson to the Planning Commission.

D. Fetter thanked Ms. Fitkin and Mr. Conklin for their information about the housing co-op issue, said it is a great idea and that she is interested in looking into it.

A. Wilkinson thanked the Commission members for welcoming him.

S. Lawry welcomed A. Wilkinson to the Commission and congratulated City Commissioner Gottlieb on his now position and offered his thanks to him for his contributions while serving on the Planning Commission.

S. Mittlefehldt also welcomed A. Wilkinson and thanked everyone else for their continuing service on the Commission. She also thanked the public comment speakers and said that those comments are timely and that there are things that other communities have been able to implement that the Commission should start to look into and think about what our next steps are in terms of our Code and what more we can do to try to keep Marquette affordable and keep people here that work here.

D. Stensaas stated:

Our 2018 Community Master Plan made recommendations on how to bridge the affordability gap in housing and ever since then the Planning Commission has been working on all kinds of measures that have created more options, more flexibility, and easier rules. We created the rules for Intentional Community housing for the Climber's Co-op, because there was no framework in place to allow for that illegal use, at the time. The City made it legal. The Planning Commission agreed to the standards that were adopted at that time, and that the City Commission adopted those, just to put that history out there. And to address the parking standards issue that Commissioner Premeau brought up, we've amended the Land Development Code six times since 2019, and we are going to start working on another set of amendments next week. Those were all comprehensive amendments, save for one special-purpose amendment, and just a reminder – we've tweaked the parking standards each time we do amendments – and a target of that for a long time was to create more flexibility. He said that some parking minimums that were required were reduced, and maximums were added, and some minimums were made extremely low - such as two parking spaces being all that was required for office and retail uses like a Shopko. He also said that he wasn't aware of the particular case that Commissioner Premeau mentioned, but it would be good to look into the specific case and site mentioned and find out what the issue is and to try to get at it, but there is always an appeals option, and what's built into the Code now allows for the presentation of data or information that the Planning Commission or staff can consider for modifying the parking standards. He also spoke a bit about the upcoming joint work session with the City Commission, which will take place on December 4th and be held at the Municipal Service Center beginning at 5:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair S. Mittlefehldt at 6:45 p.m.



Prepared by A. Cook - Administrative Assistant, and D. Stensaas - City Planner and Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission Staff Liaison.