

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
November 19, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 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, K. Hunter, Chair S. Mittlefehldt, Vice Chair K. Clegg, D. Fetter, S. Lawry, A. Wilkinson.

PC Members absent: none

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

AGENDA

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

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Cultural Center Project

Tiina Morin, Manager of the City of Marquette Arts and Culture office, said that she had a brief update and wanted to present some information on the agenda supplements and then take questions. She said that other City departments would also be reviewing the materials soon, including the architectural drawings. She stated:

This is my first Capital Improvement Project with the City, and I know historically, the Community Services hasn't necessarily brought things that are within the park system to the Planning Commission. I do feel that this one is a little bit different in the sense that there is a lot of impact with right of way right nearby, accessibility, streets right there, crosswalks and a lot of other pedestrian traffic that will impact the space. I think your advisement and thinking about City projects as it connects to this one will be really helpful for the future success. As you can see on this map, one of the big things for accessibility with this DNR grant was to create this accessible walkway all the way down so it connects with the bike path. Right now, there really isn't a direct connection with the bike path or the shoreline and this will create that. One thing that would interest you is where the crosswalk goes. I know that we've talked to Engineering about this, and it seems that the crosswalk between this point and the Hampton will be a mid-block crosswalk and something we're planning on, but again it has to be something that Community Development and everyone has to agree upon. That's a really important part of this.

You can see the parking lot has been evened out. There are now a lot of those unusual curbs and corners, there's not as many planned, but it's still a little bit awkward and I know Facilities had some concerns about the removal of snow and all the back up. We are trying to create more green space up here, so it feels like a park, adding more green space, the parking lot is quite a bit smaller. Looking towards the future - walkability and slowing traffic down for the long-term on Front St. I know that *complete streets* are a policy of the City and I think it will be interesting as this project develops, can there be a complete street on that side with more plantings, to let people know they have arrived in downtown? Right now, it's quite the speedway. People race as soon as they get off that roundabout, and that is a concern since we will be inviting people there for events. The DDA wants to get rid of the staircase across from where Provisions is. That is not a part of this grant, these grant dollars, but it's dangerous because you get down the stairs, and there's no crosswalk, and you can't see the traffic

coming from Baraga Ave., so that's a concern, but we know it would be great to find a way to get that removed. And also, there curb cuts on this corner that are not yet accessible. Things to keep in mind as we are looking at rights-of-way for the future plans, we are looking at future planting more trees at the south end of the park so there's just a little bit more of that urban forest feel. Those won't be done right away either, but we are working with the Lions and Beautification and hopefully a lot of other partners. Once we get into the space and live there, kind of see how people are using it and the pathways that are made, I think it will be easier to understand where more plantings can go and pathways and things like that. Conceptual designs are shown along with handicapped parking spots, the old walkway, the old flagstone with a flagpole. A new flagpole will be acquired and placed somewhere else on the property, but it is not included in the plans. Another area facing Front St. was pointed out as a placeholder map of the cultural trail. We're looking at putting up a mosaic that is inspired by the community. It would be quite a significant piece of public art that would be on the side of that building. There were a couple of designs that were sent to you, one was of the front. We got rid of this gable roof and it was a higher glassed-in gallery entryway, but things cost a lot and when we got the prices back from potential costs, we said that we have to keep the roof as it is because we don't want to go over the amount we had to spend. We're not fundraising additionally for this right now. The biggest thing is securing the envelope and making sure the building is really efficient, tuck-pointed with no drafts. The side of the building was pointed out containing a lot more windows and a green, almost nest-like gathering space, next door to it which really adds a lot of dimension to the entire space and draws people in. Hopefully some kind of fire space in the winter for story telling in those months. But a lot more expanded windows, as shown in the picture. And that is the multi-purpose public space that people can rent just like the Presque Isle pavilion. Also included are pictures of conceptual inspirations. So, looking at kind of light staining of the brick so it's lighter but these aren't the final colors. I think the wood should be a little bit lighter in color too. Kind of going with that Scandinavian feel. And keeping it really simple, we couldn't get really fancy with it. A lot of it's on the inside, really having to open that space up on the inside and the windows. But the outside perspective, just cleaned up and simplified. We're looking to send it out to bid in December and have a contractor by early January.

K. Hunter asked - because the parking lot has gotten smaller, are you planning on having the people use the parking lot across Front St. for the overflow parking?

Ms. Morin said the idea is the parking lot below the hill that is often empty during the day, that is further down, as these are mostly handicapped parking spots or short-term parking. Once we are in there, I don't see us opening right away, how do we do more wayfinding with the DDA?, how do we let people know where the parking is?, because there is enough parking in this community, ample parking, but it's a 1 or 2 minute walk. There's a parking lot right near the Ore Dock, on the corner of Baraga and Front and then across the street.

M. Rayner said that is the one she was speaking of, the Front St. parking lot, because there used to be a crosswalk there and that is now gone. So just thinking if that's going to be there, we might want to consider that as a crosswalk across to that Rock St. parking lot.

Ms. Morin stated Jon [Swenson], Dennis [Stachewicz] and Dave [Stensaas] will have to work together, I don't know what is involved with getting a crosswalk.

K. Hunter said there was one and I don't know how that works, if it just disappears, the paint goes away and then it's gone. I don't understand why it all of a sudden went.

D. Stensaas said that the snow plowing literally scrapes the paint off of the roads.

S. Mittlefeldt stated that ideally when this becomes a vibrant hub of artistic and creative activity, it will be fantastic, and I mean we will hopefully have people walking there, walking across, and I think that's a really important concern.

Ms. Morin said I don't know all the details, I know the department heads deal with capital improvement projects, but I think we need to be prepared - the community will want to know how to safely cross the street and it's going to become an issue – so, how do we prepare for that and maybe make it part of our long term strategy? I think that narrowing the street would slow things down. The landscape architect was really much about how there used to be parallel parking on that street. We were looking at old pictures from the '70s and '80s and there was parallel parking, street parking. That's why it's so wide there, which is really interesting. So, how you visually slow people down and make them feel like it's not just to get to the other end quickly.

S. Lawry asked Ms. Morin how coordination is happening with the Lions and the Beautification Committee and perhaps even the Knights of Columbus, those that are taking care of some of the stuff around Father Marquette Park.

Ms. Morin said that there's been a lot of engagement with the community, and we started meeting with community members in January, with listening sessions and talking about all the concerns. I know the Lions especially have a lot of history and connection with that place. Then there were more listening sessions this summer, with lots of different stakeholders and I think there was consensus, even with the Lions and Beautification, that this is one park. Right now, it's actually three different spaces. You have Lakeside Lions Park, Father Marquette Park, and a building in the middle. Things have changed and we are looking at some creative ways to brand it as one park that has this incredible history and amenities and has people's stories in it, with interpretive signage. I have met with Lions recently to talk about simplifying the space right now and waiting until the building is completed and the parking lot is completed to really look at how the plantings are to go and how we could use the space. We are planning on some interpretive signage, specifically that the Lions will work on, so they feel connected to that space, and also to talk about the future of what groups that are invested in spaces like this - what is the relationship between the City? Is there a formal agreement with these groups? And how do we get more people invested and make it everybody's park? So long answer - it's complicated. I think we're making good headway but it's not without any bumps or challenges and all the groups could tell you that.

S. Lawry stated:

I do know they have been doing some fundraising over the last couple years for improvements. I just wanted to make sure that whatever they have planned is something the City is aware of, and they're aware of what changes are coming.

Ms. Morin stated:

What I think was hard about that was that no one planned that this building would be available. We'd write grants, then they were successful and all of a sudden, everything shifted. It wasn't just green space next to a building that was privately rented. So, the whole mission shifted and we're all kind of adjusting to that.

S. Lawry said there are couple of monuments identified on the site plan, but it doesn't say what's going to happen with those. He asked if those still going to be accommodated somewhere on the site afterwards. Specifically, there is an old bronze plaque from the 1880s.

Ms. Morin said the bronze plaque has to be incorporated into one of the interpretive signs that will be there. She said that hasn't been done yet, but that was made very clear that it has to be incorporated, the one that is by the flagpole there on a rock.

S. Lawry said the Lions have a couple of plaques because they adopted that park in the 1980s when the City first started the Adopt-A-Park program.

Ms. Morin stated:

We're going to have to work really, really closely. My hope, and I've told them, is that this is an opportunity. This park is all about civic engagement, coming together, and having listening sessions. I've talked to all of you and think this park really represents a place where our community can gather to share things. It's their space, it's warm, it's inviting, and I'm hoping that some of the civic groups like the Beautification and the Lions actually get more attention than they ever have. If they're engaged with the space, people are going to engage with them as well - maybe increasing membership with some of these groups. I hope it will be the start of a cultural ambassador program for their community, or a volunteer program, working with other groups. I think there is a lot that will come out of this. Hopefully it will engage a lot of community groups. And the Lions hopefully will continue to be an invested partner in that.

S. Lawry asked if the flagpole will be replaced.

Ms. Morin said they would like a smaller flagpole, don't have the money for it yet, but that is the intent.

S. Lawry stated:

Being a municipal building, it should have a flagpole. And I used to be a custodian at that building in the '60's and '70's and had to take the flag in every night to store it, before you were allowed to keep flags out overnight. Another thing is the WPA installed the flagstone walk that is scheduled for demolition and I would encourage the City to find some place to store that material in some out of the way place. It was extremely difficult to find any kind of similar material to that to repair the walls and fountains at Harlow Park and Williams Park that have the same stone. It's originally from the US 41 south rock cut. There was a quarry there back in the '30's or '40's.

K. Hunter said she just want to make sure she understands – and asked if there's stone that is being removed from Harlow or from Father Marquette.

S. Lawry said at Lakeside Park, in front of the flagpole.

Ms. Morin said that part of the grant is to make an accessible pathway all the way around that would connect right in the way of that flagstone, and that is a handicap-accessible pathway that will connect both sides of the park.

S. Lawry said the flagstone is very valuable material and adamantly suggested that the City find a way to keep it. He also stated: I realize you are limited with the budget but I'm a little disappointed that I didn't see anything in the plans for incorporating any type of alternative solar energy into the building.

Ms. Morin stated:

I do have an update about that. We were talking about solar energy, and to get the electrical hooked up so we can have that solar energy, I think it was \$90,000 to have it ready to go. We didn't have that money for solar, but SWP recently identified \$30,000 that they could put towards the actual solar panels, but we still have to figure out the funding for the electrical - about \$90,000-\$100,000.

S. Lawry stated:

Even if you could get part of it done with the construction, then do electrical connections later or something, but that building has a tremendous amount of solar gain both in the morning and in the evening. I know the windows aren't as big as they used to be when I worked there but you're looking at putting some of the large windows back in.

Ms. Morin said that is definitely what we want to do.

D. Stensaas said that maybe passive solar could be utilized. S. Lawry concurred as well as S. Mittlefehldt.

S. Mittlefehldt said she has a passive solar home and with awnings and things like that it can be temperature controlled. She stated:

Thank you so much for your work on this Tiina, it's great to have an actual physical home for the Arts and Culture center. I know there's a budget and everything, but I think we all have things we would love to see in the design. One thing I think I would encourage is, I think you mentioned you were going to do

a mural or something local, and when we have these amazing opportunities to express our community in creative ways if we could look to local artists to do things, I think that would be great. We have some amazing designers in our community.

Ms. Morin stated:

I agree. One thing that were working on, the public art commission, is first of all offering professional development. Brian Wignaw, who did the dragonfly, had a whole day for people to understand locally how to apply to RFPs [requests for proposals], as we don't get a lot of submissions from local artists for public art because, these fabrications for example - like the dragonfly, not a lot of artists are fabricating large sculpture here, so this was about how to find fabricators, because they don't do it themselves, and hooking them up with resources. We don't have a lot of outdoor mosaic artists here. A mural would be great. So, we are working with all different levels of projects so we can get more local artists, but also working on some resources to offer our artists so they can participate in some of these other projects.

S. Lawry said the City's recent projects include huge investments in landscaping, tens of thousands of dollars, the boardwalk behind the Hampton, the piers, and such. It's being installed, but there is no ongoing routine maintenance of it and it becomes quite shabby looking after a couple of years if it's not maintained well. The city does not budget for a gardening staff

Ms. Morin stated:

It would be great if the City could work together to develop a long-term, sustainable method of recruiting volunteers. Unless you're with a group you can't volunteer, it's liability so you just can't volunteer for the City, so how do other City's do it, how can we dot spaces more formally out and a budget also. I know with the public art commission; we are looking, we did write some grant funding for landscaping around Seven Grandfathers that's going to take care and the public art commission is like if there's landscaping around public art we will put aside money every year to maintain that. We are just starting to think about those things definitely. I know the Beautification really is concerned about the hillside right now and I know they would like to work towards a long term solution to make that hillside look better. There's invasives growing around Ryan Brayak's sculptures, benches have vines, and it's no one's job right now to take care of those. I think also us being in that space and having the community visiting will really activate hopefully a lot of other groups and our eyes will be on it and we'll be there. We'll bring it to the forefront for sure.

S. Lawry said there is a program for volunteering under adopt-a-park, and that he is one of the volunteers that maintains park gardens at the Park Cemetery. He said there's a group of us and the site has been maintained by the group for 30 years or more under this program.

Ms. Morin said that she was interested in learning more about that program.

D. Stensaas asked Ms. Morin about the trailhead concept that had been discussed for the location, and said the site plans and renderings don't show any typical trailhead elements like bike parking facilities and map kiosks.

Ms. Morin stated:

I do have some answers for that. I'm not calling it a cultural center anymore; we're starting to refer to it as a cultural trailhead. The trailhead, your right, we need to look at bike rack options below the hill. We are looking at that inside way - it will be on a timer so you can enter the building, the bathrooms, and the water bottle filling - probably until 8 or 9 p.m. It will be an automatic close. So, you will be able to enter that warm entryway to 2 bathrooms and a water bottle filling station, and also maps. I think that's going to be more of a long term, I see this more as a living trail project - how can we work with the DDA and reconnect for that wayfinding - this is cultural wayfinding. It's a cultural trail so we're bringing people to Wildcat Way on campus, bringing them to shoreline, letting people know where the bike paths are. I don't have all the answers, but I do also see that information having to be there. Maybe it's directing people where bike storage is, but yes, you're right, it's a trailhead and it's going to need to have some of those things.

K. Hunter asked about the interior - is there going to be a community gallery space?

Ms. Morin stated:

I think there's a floor plan in there. I was really disappointed with how far \$1.2 million goes. The first option came back as \$600,000-\$700,00 when we did the pricing. We are still going to include it in the bid because it sets it off as something different. Looking at the floor plan (not included in the planning commission packet) and talking with the DDA. Because the bathrooms are inside we'll have a lot less mess with cameras, and the upkeep and cleaning should be a lot less. We're leaving a door-size window here in case we ever find the money for that balcony area, this is glass here as well and this is your multi-purpose room. You can come into this section and work with staff on whatever project. Staff is over here and then the multi-purpose room, which is not messy arts. We're not looking at that. It really is a multi-purpose room where we can have exhibits if we'd like, but I don't want to commit to anything because it's hard to know how much staff capacity we have, but art will be throughout this space. It can be used for exhibits or just rented out for a baby shower or a meeting. It's a rental space, but I think part of our job as a cultural trailhead is to work with our partners so there are programs happening there. We might not be doing the programs, but I would love for cultures to meet there, or any community groups to meet there and feel like it's their space. The offices are small, a conference room for the community, intern space, a copier, and a tiny kitchenette. It's a small space, so you can see we are going to have much smaller workspaces here, and this is the community open space. And a cozy, little gas fireplace. We're hoping you guys will want to get coffee at Provisions, come up there and hang out.

K. Hunter said it's mostly just a rental space, it's not a gallery.

K. Clegg asked - square footage-wise, is this bigger, smaller, the same, compared to the Arts and Culture Center currently?

Ms. Morin stated:

The new space is much smaller and that's okay. The reason that we're moving is we're an office that transitioned from programming to capacity building, becoming more of a resource hub for the community. We're working on projects like public art, public art policies, writing grants for projects like this - and to build that capacity - we had to leave the library. That's also \$30,000 annually that goes to the library. The library is excited about having that space. They're going to operate it very much the same way. The community will be able to rent that space like they do now. I think it's great for the library for all their programming staff to move downstairs. They're excited about being in our [current] offices. Right now, their offices are these little spaces upstairs, but all their programs are downstairs. So, they're excited to use that area and we've developed the gallery program, so we're transitioning it. We're going to help them, and we wrote a grant this year so they can hire their staff to manage the gallery spaces. Those will also continue. We're hoping to rent a lot of spaces but also build more capacity to do the work that's set forth in the Arts and Culture Master Plan. And then encourage a community art center, help write grants, and hopefully some other exciting things will happen.

K. Clegg said I'm glad to hear that the gallery space will continue at the library.

Ms. Morin said absolutely, it is already committed to that and I'm already working with different groups, and it's a great gallery.

S. Mittlefehldt asked - if there are no more questions, would anyone like to make a motion?

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by D. Fetter, and approved 8-0 that the Planning Commission supports the plans as presented, for reasons that this allows for community gathering space, provides handicapped accessibility, and is generally of the character and extent, and in a location, to serve the purpose of community cultural development.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

WORK SESSION ON REPORTS/PLANS/ORDINANCES

A. Land Development Code Amendments

D. Stensaas said that A. Landers will lead us through a partial set of amendments to the Land Development Code (LDC) that have accumulated since the last update to the LDC. Numerous sections of the LDC were discussed in detail, including the following content:

Adding asymmetrical gable rooves to the roof diagram; adding text for a notification process related to Site Condominium development; adding text related to roofing and fences for animal pens/coops; the inclusion of commercial logos/branding on directional signage; text regarding the review and expiration period for the expansion of Class A Non-Conforming property permit applications; the number of pennant signs allowed at commercial properties; text related to permitted uses in the Third St. Corridor district; and possible changes to the text regarding Intentional Community dwellings.

The Planning Commission reached decisions on each item, but wanted to see draft changes to the Article 13 item changes to add text regarding the review and expiration period for the expansion of Class A Non-Conforming property permit applications. Regarding the Intentional Communities issue, the Planning Commission recommended removing the Special Land Use permit requirement for an application in multiple-family residential zoning districts, but determined that the recent problems brought to them by members of the public were not rooted in difficulties with the LDC standards, which they found to be generally acceptable.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

K. Hunter thanked the staff for assembling the LDC amendment materials.

D. Stensaas said that staff would be putting together more draft LDC amendments that would continue to create flexibility and more space for housing, such as reducing setbacks and greenbelt buffers. He also mentioned the upcoming work session with the City Commission and made some remarks about preparation for that meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair S. Mittlefehldt at 7:35 p.m.



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