

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
ESCANABA, MICHIGAN
MARCH 13, 2014**

A meeting of the Escanaba Planning Commission was held on Thursday, March 13, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

PRESENT: Chairperson Thomas Warstler, Vice Chairperson Patrick Connor, Secretary Roy Webber, Commissioners: Todd Milkiewicz, Christine Williams, Kel Smyth and James Hellermann

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Jim O'Toole, City Council Liaison Ron Beauchamp, Confidential Secretary Amy Peltin, DDA Director Ed Legault, City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Bill Farrell

ABSENT: Commissioner Brian Black

Chairperson Warstler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Confidential Secretary Peltin conducted the roll call.

Approval/Correction of the February 13, 2014, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hellermann asked a correction be made showing City Council Liaison Ron Beauchamp was present.

A motion was made by Secretary Webber, seconded by Commissioner Smyth, to approve the February 13, 2014, Meeting Minutes with corrections. Ayes were unanimous.

Approval/Adjustments to the Agenda

A motion was made by Chairperson Warstler, seconded by Vice Chairperson Connor, to approve the meeting agenda. Ayes were unanimous.

Conflict of Interest Declarations

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion –Planning Commission Rules of Procedure Amendment – City Manager O’Toole asked to table this discussion until next month. The City Attorney was on vacation for two weeks.

PUBLIC HEARING

Amendment to Zoning Map and Site Plan Review – Lot 23, Block 2, and Lot 24, Block 2 of the Hessel & Hentchel Addition – 1921 3rd Avenue North – Northern Michigan Bank and Trust - The site plan was reviewed (attached). City Manager O’Toole explained there will be two items presented for approval; first being the rezoning and second site plan approval. Everything has been submitted as required and in accordance with the requirements found in Chapter 18 Site Plan Sketch plan standards. In accordance with the requirements found in Chapter 18, Site Plan the official review was conducted and the Site Plan was deemed to be in compliance with the ordinance. Staff is recommending approval of the Site Plan as submitted contingent upon the reclassification of Family Residence “B” District use to a Light Manufacturing “F” use. The construction value of the building is estimated to be \$2,000,000, once the addition is built expected City tax revenue is approximately \$17,000 annually.

Bill Jensen of Northern Michigan Bank and Trust stated the bank has made a decision that they are in need of some additional space. They currently have two locations one at 3rd Avenue North and one on Ludington Street. They currently have their operations & administration departments located at the Ludington Street location and decided it would be more efficient to have all departments at one location and have decided to expand the 3rd Avenue North location for that purpose. Mr. Jensen stated once the project is completed they will eventually sell the Ludington Street location after removing the parking structure and have cleaned up the property. Mr. Jensen does not anticipate a lot of increased traffic as foot traffic is dramatically less due to technology improvements and advances. The 3rd Avenue North location currently handles most of their day-to-day transactural activity and the main office has gotten extremely slow. There are currently fourteen employees at the Ludington Street location with no plans to add any employees at this time. He further stated the building is large, old, and very inefficient and has run its course for their purposes. They did consider renovating the Ludington Street location but based on their estimates it would be too costly. One major challenge with such an old building has been networking/wiring. The advantage of the downtown location will be having all employees/departments under one roof and eliminate files being transferred between the two locations. If approved, the expected completion date will be approximately the first quarter of 2015. The exterior of the building will fit nicely with the existing building to make it look uniform.

City Manager O’Toole explained one of the main areas focused on in the Site Plan was the separation between the bank’s rear property line and the neighboring side yard, which will be series of privacy fencing and vegetation screen (trees). Currently there is a chain link fence there and the proposed addition will upgrade the property. Homes on Lot 11 & 12 will be demolished. Parking will be added as required. Lot 12 will be employee parking and Lot 11 will become the snow storage area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Congleton is the homeowner of 314 North 20th Street, Lots 25 & 26 and had a few questions/concerns. First question being where is the HVAC unit going to be located. Currently the HVAC unit is at the back of the building and is quite loud. Second concern is parking and if

they will need further parking in the future, and third is how will this affect the value of her home.

City Manager O'Toole addressed the parking and Lot 11 & 12 will be the designated parking lot with Lot 11 the snow storage area and additional parking. City Manager O'Toole has spoken with City Assessor Daina Norden and she did not feel it would impact her property and possibly could enhance Mrs. Congleton's property value. Mr. Jensen explained the HVAC unit will be between the existing building and the new building with the ends capped with privacy fence to conceal the units and should quiet down the noise.

Commissioner Williams asked Mr. Jensen if he had an alternate plan if the proposed plan was not approved and he indicated he did not.

Mr. Jensen also explained future plans for the Ludington Street building are to take the overhand down and clean up the surrounding area of the Ludington Street location before selling the property.

Mr. & Mrs. Congleton expressed they are happy the fence will be going up and would also like the berm. They are pleased with the improvements that will be made to the property in appearance and reduction of dust they currently experience due to the gravel alley.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Closed

City Manager O'Toole, DDA Director Legault, and Bill Jensen had a conversation to try and market that facility for re-use and put together a package to entice buyers.

Chairperson Warstler would like to address the rezoning. Secretary Webber stated he lives about 550 feet away from the proposed site and stated they have always been good neighbors and feels this addition will be a positive one for the neighborhood.

Commissioner Williams has concerns with "Light Manufacturing" encroaching on neighborhoods. This is a substantial size building in this neighborhood and asked if anyone else has concerns about rezoning this property. She went to the site and was concerned on how far in from the main street and how large this building will be.

City Manager O'Toole stated the actual property being re-zoned is 100 feet x 120feet.

Commissioner Williams stated one issue she had was the lack of vegetation currently on the property and the new facility drawing shows additional vegetation, which would be positive. City Manager O'Toole stated separation between "Light Manufacturing" and "Residential" has been a primary discussion. The new plans meet the required green space; the existing building does not.

Commissioner Hellerman really liked the A/C unit sited where stated and screened. Commissioner Milkiewicz asked City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell if a berm was allowable or would it interfere. City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell said it would not interfere but it would have to be sloped to not drain into Lot 25.

Commissioner Williams asked if they would have a dumpster in the alley. Bill Jensen stated they would only need a small dumpster; as they shred most of their paper and is then picked up for recycling by an independent company.

Chairperson Warstler asked the home owners in attendance if they would object to some sort of berm in addition to vegetation/plants on the property line. The property owners had no objections and were quite happy with the gravel being removed.

Vice Chairperson Connor motioned to change the zoning ordinance from Residence Two-Family "B" District to Light Manufacturing "F" District as outlined in the draft Ordinance 1145, Secretary Webber seconded, with the Planning Commission recommendation to City Council that the rezoning be changed.

Upon a Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Vice Chairperson, Connor, Commissioners Hellermann, Milkiewicz, Smyth, and Webber, and Chairperson Warstler

Nays: Commissioner Williams

Commissioner Smyth motioned to approve the Site Plan as presented with the following conditions: HVAC and any additional units remain in the present area, and a berm and fence at the rear of the property with vegetation, Secretary Webber seconded.

Upon a Roll Call Vote: Ayes were unanimous.

2014 -19 Planning Commission Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) –A public hearing was conducted in February and the Planning Commission did add two items under the section entitled "Opportunity/Improvements for Funding Sources Become Available". First item was an emergency backup generator for the Catherine Bonifas Civic Center. The concept is to retrofit the building so it can become an emergency shelter in the case of natural disaster, power outages, etc. City Manager O'Toole did file a Hannahville 2% Grant today for this item. The second item was the inclusion of the non-motorized pathway and railroad crossing at North 26th Street between 16th Avenue North and Danforth Road out to the Bay College Campus. City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell stated he has been in communications with MDOT to discuss the potential project and it is possible but there are a ton of specifications that need to be met. He also reached out to the Railroad to get their feelings on this and has not received a response at the time of this meeting. There are numerous crossings of railroad tracks that will need to be properly signed, which he is currently looking into costs and fees. The City currently has a maintenance fee for every railroad crossing paid on a yearly basis; currently the City pays approximately \$4,000 a year for all the railroad crossings within the City. A diagnostic team study review to include representatives from the Railroad, City of Escanaba, and MDOT get together, typically on site, and discuss everything that needs to be done to make it a safe crossing for both parties. City Manager O'Toole stated we certainly demonstrate the need to connect to that side of town.

Commissioner Williams asked about the feasibility of creating a tunnel under the tracks on Lincoln Road and possibly be a less costly option. City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell indicated it would be more costly and not enough room and it would take MDOT widening everything out. City Manager O'Toole stated ideally we would like to run non-motorized to pick up the trail here between the berm on the north side and dump out near the boat launch area. The City has been working with Wells Township and the Hannahville Community on a non-motorized bridge over the river connecting to the Gladstone Path.

City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell gave an update on the SAW Grant. The City applied for a \$1,000,000 SAW Grant with 10% local match for a three year project. The project is funded through a lotto system and there are thirteen pages of applicants and the City of Escanaba is on page six. The first two pages have been funded and we anticipate receiving funding approximately in 2016. The City being on page six is a good position to receive funding if it is still available in 2016. City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Farrell explained there are benefits to not being in the first round, such as specific requirements and how they are to be done as the first group will have worked out the specifics and contractors will have had experience with the program. This was a lottery system and the City of Escanaba was lucky to get on page six.

City Manager O'Toole wanted to let the Planning Commission know that Lansing did free up \$215 million dollars for road repair and approximately \$115 million is going to go through the formula programs so the City will receive some additional funding. City Manager O'Toole did submit a place holder for the other \$100 million for "Pet Projects" and the City of Escanaba submitted to have Ludington Street repaved.

Commissioner Milkiewicz motioned to approve the amended the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan and Commissioner Williams seconded. Ayes were unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Project Updates:

- A. Zoning Board of Appeals Hearings/Decisions – No Meeting was held
- B. Delta County Planning Commission Update – Reviewing their zoning ordinances and various housekeeping issues such as by-laws and rules of procedure reviews.
- C. Ordinance Policy Review/Development –None.
- D. Zoning/Land Use Permit Update – One new commercial permit issued and one demolition permit issued for a garage at 117 Stephenson Avenue, a garage at the old UPPCO building site. One new commercial permit for \$2 million for Northern Michigan State Bank addition.
- E. Various – A joint meeting with the Historic Commission, Planning Commission, DDA, and City Council to go over Certified Government process and MEDC Redevelopment Readiness Program. The City is also currently waiting on our National Historic Registry submission determination. The Historic Commission will be meeting on Monday, March 17, 2014, and a representative from SHPO will be giving a presentation. Secretary Webber asked why the new location for the Farmers Market was chosen. City Manager O'Toole explained the UPPCO site was too large and too expensive of a project. The old Ford Dealership location had historical significance and possibly a Brownfield project.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISION/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

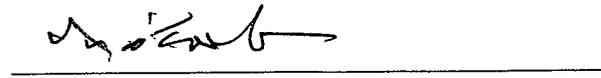
Chairperson Warstler would like to review the zoning ordinances and possibly adding elevations as a requirement for plans submitted in the future.

ADJOURMENT

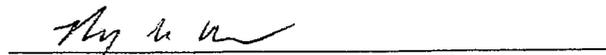
A motion was made by Chairperson Warstler, seconded by Secretary Webber, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m. Ayes were unanimous.



Thomas Warstler, Chairperson
Escanaba Planning Commission



James V. O'Toole, City Manager
City of Escanaba



Roy Webber, Secretary
Escanaba Planning Commission