

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
ESCANABA, MICHIGAN
SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

A meeting of the Escanaba Planning Commission was held on Thursday, September 12, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

PRESENT: Chairperson Tom Warstler, Vice Chairperson Patrick Connor, Commissioners Todd Milkiewicz, Christine Williams, and Brian Black

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Jim O'Toole and Confidential Secretary Amy Peltin

ABSENT: Secretary Roy Webber, Commissioner Kel Smyth

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

Roll Call

Confidential Secretary Amy Peltin conducted the roll call.

Approval/Correction of the August 8th, 2013, Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Chairperson Warstler, seconded by Commissioner Black, to approve the August 8, 2013, Meeting Minutes. Ayes were unanimous.

Approval/Adjustments to the Agenda

A motion was made by Chairperson Tom Warstler, seconded by Commissioner Black, to approve the meeting agenda. Ayes were unanimous.

Conflict of Interest Declarations

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

National Registry of Historic Places

Administration is seeking Planning Commission approval of the resolution to place the City of Escanaba's Downtown on the National Register of Historic Places through the Michigan Historic Preservation Board. City Manager Jim O'Toole explained there was a joint meeting with the Escanaba City Council, Historic Commission, Downtown Development Authority and Planning Commission whereby the nomination package was publically given at the meeting for downtown Ludington Street from the 200 block to the 1800 block. The City of Escanaba was one of three communities to receive the grant to have the nomination package put together. The hearing for this is September 13, 2013, and the City Council, Historic Commission, and DDA have all done resolutions of support and the Planning Commission is being asked to give their resolution of

support tonight. If approved by the State, it will be forwarded to the Federal Government for inclusion. City Manager O'Toole stated this is consistent with the Master Plan and is one of the objectives in the plan. It's an honorary title which is volunteer, not mandated.

Chairperson Warstler is pleased with the nomination as the City of Escanaba has a lot of history here. Commissioner Milkiewicz is also in favor and likes that it is not mandated and revitalizing downtown is a positive step for the Community. City Manager O'Toole stated the report identifies the best candidates for restoration downtown. The façade programs that the City of Escanaba currently administers can start incorporating/recruiting those buildings to receive the funds. Currently, when the City of Escanaba receive an application for the façade program it is scored and if it is identified as one of the buildings listed as being a historical treasure it would go to the front of the line. This is a powerful tool in competing for MEDC funds. Commissioner Milkiewicz commented on the old Brewery restoration and what an amazing job was done to restore the building. City Manager O'Toole stated the City has an outstanding asset with the Sviland's in their efforts to help building owners in completing their restorations. Commissioner Williams commented on the City of Houghton and their considerable efforts to restore their downtown and one of the unintended positive consequences that occurred was the attachment that people have to a building when it looks the way it's supposed to. They have had positive responses from MI Tech Alumni that come back to visit.

A motion was made by Commissioner Black, seconded by Vice Chairperson Connor, to approve the Resolution of Support for the National Registry of Historic Places. Ayes were unanimous.

Commissioner Williams stated there are a few inconsistencies in the document such as: whereas in italics, and the word historic in italics, and she would like them updated before being filed in historic record. Chairperson Warstler will stop in tomorrow morning to sign the updated document.

Esky 150 Tree Planting Display

A request to install an Esky 150 Tree Planting display at City Hall was discussed. The purpose of the display is to acknowledge the donors to the project and identify specific tree types and locations. The tree project was part of the capital improvements project and in the course of that project there was some discussion on an educational tree plaque showing species type and possibly before/after photos, and a listing of financial donors of the commemorative project. City Manager O'Toole asked that we take a step back and look at the overall commemorative dedication to include all capital improvement projects done as part of the Esky 150, not just the trees, as it will presumably be here 50 years from now.

Marilyn Kinsey-Brown stated as of today's date they have planted 108 trees for the Esky 150 project, with another truck load of trees being delivered next Thursday. Most of those trees will be going to our local schools and possibly some to Bay College, which partners in the Esky 150 project. There are 12 more trees coming for the City and a portion of which will be planted in the EMBEI area as part of our partnership with the Escanaba Migratory Bird and Enhancement Initiative. The U.P. State Fair was also a partner and they planted three trees. MDOT employees also chipped in and bought a tree.

The idea in mind as they worked through this project was not a tag on each individual tree. City Engineer/Public Works Superintendent Bill Farrell was very concerned about tree tagging. His main concern was when the tags fall off and the possible damage to mowers, especially the 12 foot mower, which is a huge disruption and expense to the City. He further has concerns

regarding when they fall off who is responsible for maintenance, etc. The end result of their discussion was no tags on the trees. Mrs. Kinsey-Brown stated some donors were not happy with that decision at all, particularly the larger donors. The trees that were donated for the City were \$500 a piece, which was based on the actual budget for the City crews prepare the soil, planting, and care for 5 years, to include replacing them within that 5 year period if they don't survive. She explained that it may seem like a lot of money for a large landscape tree, but realistically, the difficulty of planting in our public parks is that smaller trees are very susceptible to vandalism. If a tree also has had good watering for 5 years it should be able to survive extreme heat and/or drought.

One concept was to develop a donor display to be located at City Hall, which will show the donors and name of the species of tree donated. Mrs. Kinsey-Brown envisioned a map large enough to cover from Bay College to Sylvan Point and from the Fairgrounds to the tip of Sand Point. Quite a few trees will be planted at City schools to include: Escanaba High School, Upper Elementary School, Lemmer, Webster, and Soo Hill. It has been challenging to decide what goes where due in part to the plant soil that we have and there is no other protective shade to help them get a good start. Mr. Hebner has done a phenomenal job selecting trees that also tie in to the Michigan Curriculum for teaching biology and environmental classes while enhancing the schools. The goal is to have at least one tree in every city park.

Commissioner Williams stated she feels memorial trees will not have the same focus if they are not easily identified as memorial trees as they sometime get cut down. There was an example recently at Bay College where a memorial tree was almost cut down. If trees are tagged properly on a plaque of a significant size then this would not happen. Mrs. Kinsey-Brown responded that early on the mapping of the trees in the City's GIS system to avoid this problem. Each tree through the Esky 150 has a number for reference. Commissioner Black stated how he likes the effort being made to document the trees.

Mrs. Kinsey-Brown wanted to comment on how superb the participation has been with everyone involved. She stated Public Works and the EMBEI group have been great to work with and did a great collaborative effort.

Chairperson Warstler asked how many trees the City plants each year. City Manager O'Toole stated that number is tied to the budget and what the City can afford. Engineering Assistant Terry Flower is currently doing tree inventory. Chairperson Warstler feels the City should make it a priority in the future to replace memorial trees if damaged or destroyed. City Manager O'Toole stated the GIS system should help with the survivability of the existing trees. The problem is we can't keep up with what we have and the City has several hundred thousand dollars' worth of tree maintenance that needs to happen in town.

City Manager O'Toole would get more inclusive with other capital projects that were done and incorporate one large project. He would like to refer this to the Steering Committee on October 3, 2013, at 12:00 p.m. at City Hall for further collaboration. This would be a larger scale project to include brick and mortar sponsors as well as tree sponsors.

Commissioner Black proposed using \$1000 from the Esky 150 fund to hire Genesis Graphics to get proposed layouts and ideas.

Commissioner Milkiewicz commented on how he really likes what Mrs. Kinsey-Brown is doing with the trees.

NEW BUSINESS

Project Updates:

- A. Zoning Board of Appeals Hearings/Decisions – There was no meeting held last month.
- B. Delta County Planning Commission Update – Meeting was held on August 28, 2013m and one gentleman requested a timber resource production permit.
- C. Ordinance Policy Review/Development – There are no updates.
- D. Zoning/Land Use Permit Update – 37 permits issued with a declared value of 8.2 million dollars.
- E. Various – Central U.P. Micropolitan Economic Development Project – None.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

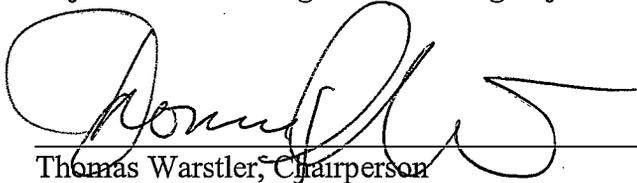
None

COMMISON/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

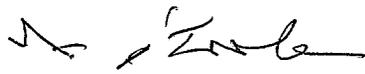
None

ADJOURMENT

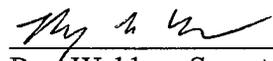
A motion was made by Chairperson Warstler, seconded by Commissioner Black, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. Ayes were unanimous.



Thomas Warstler, Chairperson
Escanaba Planning Commission



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



Roy Webber, Secretary
Escanaba Planning Commission