

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

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

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Patrick Connor, Secretary Roy Webber, Commissioners Kel Smyth, Todd Milkiewicz, James Hellerman and Brian Black

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

ABSENT: Chairperson Thomas Warstler

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

Roll Call

Confidential Secretary Peltin conducted the roll call.

Approval/Correction of the December 12, 2013, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Black, seconded by Secretary Webber, to approve the December 12, 2013, Meeting Minutes. Ayes were unanimous.

Approval/Adjustments to the Agenda

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

Conflict of Interest Declarations

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

2014 -19 Planning Commission Capital Improvement Plan – This a preliminary review of the Capital Improvement Plan. A final public hearing of the plan will be conducted at the March Planning Commission meeting with recommendation to go before City Council as part of the budgeting process. City Manager O'Toole gave an overview of this year's Capital Improvement Plan and the addition of Category 4 – Opportunity for projects not funded under the current economic conditions but are desired. Within the budget there is a number of revenue sources that pay for operations within the City, explanation of each are listed in the Capital Improvement Plan (Capital Improvement Plan attached to Meeting Minutes). For Fiscal Year 2014-2015 the following improvements are being recommended:

Resurfacing and Curb Repair City Wide – Major Streets – This includes streets such as Lake Shore Drive, Ludington Street, Sheridan Road, and Stephenson Avenue, main arterial streets. Funding for Major Streets has been significantly cut by the State of Michigan so the City is waiting to see what amounts will be received.

Resurfacing and Curb Repair City Wide – Local Streets – This is classified as neighborhood streets and is included in the Major Street funding. The amount of money spent on snow removal will impact the street repairs that will be done in the following year. Once spring arrives, the City Engineering Department, along with a number of other agencies, all get together and rate every street in Escanaba using what's called a Paser System, which is how the City determines what streets need the most work and how much money is needed for repairs.

Sidewalk Repair and Maintenance Program – City Wide – Typically the fund amount is \$5,000 and that money is just for trip and fall situations. For example – fifteen years ago there used to be \$300,000 in that fund.

Non-Motorized Recreational Trail Upgrades – Year Round Trail – This is the cross country ski trail and snowshoe trail. One item that is currently being working on is to move the trail head entrance off of North 30th Street to the paved area right behind the Comfort Inn Suites, as there is no good parking area on North 30th Street. Legal is currently putting together a lease for Comfort Inn Suites. The area currently comes paved, lighted, and with a trail entrance already in place.

Civic Center Cement Entrance – There is a lot of original cement that needs to be replaced with the volume of traffic currently there.

DDA District Curb Repair Program – Downtown Development Authority Fund has funded major curb repairs downtown and will evaluate which blocks need work this spring.

Downtown Building Façade Improvement Program – Currently the DDA is working on architectural designs of ten facades. The DDA is applying for \$400,000 of MEDC monies and with that will come a 25% or 50% property owner match, depending on the level of historical value of the building. It should be a minimum of \$600,000 invested for ten structures.

Street Light Replacement – New LED street lights were installed in front of City Hall and the Courthouse over the past year and have proven to work well. The Electrical Department will continue installing the new LED lights up Ludington Street as they have to be run in line to communicate with each other.

Sheridan Road Resurfacing – This is a two fiscal year project. Public Works will be redoing 8th Avenue North to 17th Avenue North. A significant amount of Small Urban Grant money along with monies from the City's Major Street Fund for a total of \$450,000 will go into this project. This project is bid out and ready to go; Public Works will be weather permitting.

Ludington Street Facelift – Stephenson Avenue to 6th Street – Project Engineering – For twenty-five years the City has been talking about the need to overhaul Ludington Street. There are certain realities here as it is a \$20-25 million project. The challenge given to City Engineer Bill Farrell was what kind of facelift can be done. City Engineer Farrell felt with \$1 million the entire street pavement could be done and about half of the concrete work and corner ramps.

Ludington Street Storm Sewer Relief Project – City Engineer Farrell explained the SAW Grant the Public Works applied for to assess the conditions of both the sewer and storm water. If awarded, it will be huge in the design of eliminating or alleviating the flooding that is seen in the central retail area of Ludington Street. Our storms are high intensity/short duration, which is what causes the problem. The SAW Grant is a very unique grant opportunity which is a 90/10 grant with most of the match being in-kind services and very little out of pocket expenses on the sanitary and storm sewer side. City Engineer Farrell should find out in April 2014 if they have been chosen for the SAW Grant through the State's lottery system. The Storm Sewer Relief Project on Ludington Street gives all field work, pipe sizes, manhole conditions, topography, see what water is going where, all using our existing software, server, and GIS system. The model will help in assessing problems and cost estimating. City Engineer Farrell explained we don't want to do our Ludington Street project until a good design for the storm sewer is in place. Vice

Chairperson Connor asked if there were still clay tiles in our sewers. City Engineer Farrell stated he believes there are clay tiles, which are in three foot sections creating more joints/problems. Today everything is in twenty foot sections creating fewer joints. There is definitely infiltration from ground water, leaking problems, illicit flows into the storm sewers are out there; Public Works will not be able to address them all but will be looking what they can fix with monies available at that time.

Downtown Business Incubator Site Strategy – DDA Director Legault explained the DDA is looking at how putting in place an incubator strategy for students or new businesses wanting to try something new downtown. Originally last year's plan was building a structure in conjunction with the Farmer's Market. The two projects have been separated and the current idea for the incubator is to rent some space close to Center Court offering some business tools. The business would pay rent to utilize the space at a cheaper rate while starting up their business. This will give DDA an opportunity to help them with their venture.

Parking Lot Improvement – 1100 Block of 1st Avenue North – DDA Director Legault explained the DDA will be taking a look at nine to ten parking lots owned by the DDA and will make repairs on each and over a period of years. The parking lot on 1100 Block of 1st Avenue North is the next parking lot to be repaired/renovated this spring/summer and funds are in place.

Farmer's Market Preservation and Upgrade-Construction – DDA Director Legault stated the DDA is very excited about this project. Drawings are currently being completed to build a partially enclosed building on the current Farmer's Market site. A nice portion of grant money from MEDC's Farmer Food Program will help fund the project. It will be a multi-use facility for the City of Escanaba and can be utilized for many different things.

City Manager O'Toole discussed the items listed under "Opportunity Improvement" should funding become available and this is the list of items through the DDA Master Plans, Community Master Plans, North Shore Master Plans as projects identified in the past as desirable and the new section outlines each project. One item that will be added to the plan as a result of the recent power outage is a backup generator at the Civic Center. The reason for this addition is at the time of the power outage the temperature was -15 degrees and if it was going to be an extended outage a location would have been needed to use as an emergency warming shelter. The Civic Center was chosen as a warming shelter due to its central location within the City. The problem with using the Civic Center was the power was out and we do not have a back-up generator at the Civic Center. City Manager O'Toole also explained another item will be to have CUPPAD assist the City in updating the Community Master Plan with respect to projects, which will be community driven.

DDA Director Legault gave an update on the status of Certified Local Government, Historical Registry nomination, and MEDC Readiness Re-Development Communities Program. Training/certification took place and by getting obtaining this certification it puts the City in front to receive grant monies from MEDC. DDA Director Legault explained they submitted their interest in applying and by applying it puts the City of Escanaba in front for receiving some additional grant monies. The Historical District for Downtown application has been sent to the State; approval at the State level has been approved and is currently awaiting approval at the Federal level for all of the downtown Escanaba Historical District. Once approved, the City of Escanaba will be placed on the National Registry of Historical Places. The Historical CLG Program is working with the Historical Commission to change some of the guidelines and identify buildings which are historical gems to the City in order to receive additional funding. City Manager O'Toole explained Blain DeGrave, Ed Legault, and Carolyn Stacey are currently working on a design guideline and development guidelines. City Manager O'Toole has asked the group to identify the top five historical structures on Ludington Street and target them for preservation. There is a Historic Commission training session with educators from the State

Historic Preservation in which Planning Commissioners are invited and City Manager O'Toole encouraged Commissioners to attend.

Vice Chairperson Connor asked if the Downtown Façade Program buildings and the Historical buildings were the same. City Manager O'Toole explained the ten historic buildings were separate from the ten downtown façade buildings. The historic buildings will be for next year's project and will include the interior of the building; which is completely separate program from the Façade program.

Commissioner Black asked if there was ever any discussion about putting in a non-motorized path connection to the YMCA and Bay College Campus. City Manager O'Toole explained there have been discussions with the railroad to get the abandoned rail right-of-way between Drifter's and Kmart and know we are interested. In the meantime City Engineer Farrell has been looking for alternative routes. Commissioner Black stated since Bay Middle School was moved to Bay College he has seen a huge increase in pedestrian traffic on Danforth Road and surrounding area. City Manager O'Toole suggested adding the path to the Capital Improvement Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission Rules of Procedure Amendment – Last month Secretary Webber discussed a possible change on Section 5F – Voting. The proposed language change was reviewed and forwarded to legal for review, legal felt the wording would work for its intended purpose. City Manager O'Toole recommended from administration to adopt the changes. Secretary Webber tried to keep it within the spirit of the wording. Commissioner Hellermann disagreed with the wording and the meaning of quorum. He suggested the wording be "simple majority". City Manager O'Toole stated this discussion will be tabled for the March Planning Commission meeting.

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 for election of officers.
- 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.
- E. Various – None.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

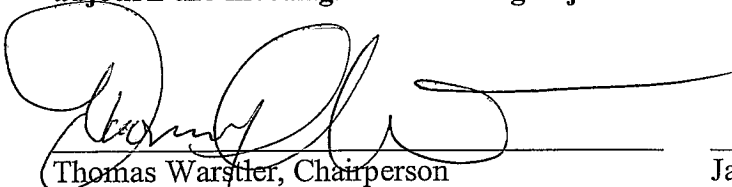
None.

COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

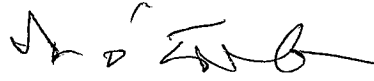
Vice Chairperson Connor would like to welcome James Hellermann to the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

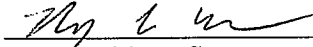
A motion was made by Secretary Webber, seconded by Commissioner Hellerman, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m. Ayes were unanimous.



Thomas Warstler, Chairperson
Escanaba Planning Commission



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



Roy Webber, Secretary
Escanaba Planning Commission