

**CITY OF ESCANABA
PLANNING COMMISSION
Official Proceedings – June 29, 2023**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A meeting of the Escanaba Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 29, 2023, at 6:00pm in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

Chair Hellermann called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

ROLL CALL

Chair James Hellermann:	Present	Comm. Patrick Connor:	Present
Comm. Christiana Reynolds:	Present	Comm. Michael Harris:	Present
Comm. Roy Webber:	Present	Comm. Mark Sadowski:	Present
Comm. David Mason:	Present		

With seven in attendance, a quorum of the Planning Commission was present.

ALSO PRESENT

City Administration:

Tyler Anthony, Planning & Zoning Admin.

Ron Beauchamp, City Council

Others:

Ron Coberg, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church Pastor Doletzky, Salem Evangelical Lutheran
Three unnamed individuals were present.

AGENDA

A motion was made by Mason to approve the agenda as submitted. Supported by Connor. MOTION PASSED.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None were made.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PH1: Special Land Use Review- 615 South 30th Street

Anthony introduced the special land use permit application. As filed by Ronald Coberg on behalf of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church (Salem), the application was for an Electronic Message Center (EMC) sign at 615 South 30th Street.

Anthony noted that this permit was exclusively for the exchange of a manual-change message center for an EMC within a larger sign. Per Zoning Ordinance sec. 2003.8.1, EMCs are permitted only in E, F, F-1, G and E-1 districts. However, EMC signs could be approved in other districts by a special land use permit. Being that the sign was in zoning district A (single-family), a special land

use permit was the only way to secure approval for this EMC. Hellermann emphasized to Commissioners that the only reason for this application was because of the EMC component. He noted that the Commission wouldn't review the application if it had been a manual-change sign.

Chair Hellermann opened the public hearing.

With no comments, Chair Hellermann closed the public hearing.

Coberg spoke as Salem's representative. He explained that he had been working with the sign manufacturer in Florida. The EMC was ready to be ordered, pending the Planning Commission's approval. If ordered before the end of business on June 30, the manufacturer would give Salem a \$2500 discount. That time limit is what elicited the scheduling of a special meeting, and Coberg needed to get the ball rolling. Coberg noted that he would be glad to answer any questions. Salem's Pastor Doletzky and three other church members were also available for questions.

Webber questioned the fee amount listed on Salem's application, noting that it was only \$500. This was only the cost of a special land use permit and did not include the extra \$100 special meeting fee. Anthony responded, noting that the extra fee had indeed been paid, but only after the special meeting was set.

A motion was made by Harris to approve the special land use permit for an electronic message center (EMC) sign at 615 South 30th Street. Supported by Webber.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Yes: Hellermann, Harris, Sadowski, Connor, Webber, Mason, Reynolds

No: None

MOTION PASSED.

Coberg thanked the Planning Commission on behalf of Salem. Hellermann reminded Coberg to be aware of the EMC's brightness. He noted that luminance was a constant issue with this type of sign. Coberg indicated that the sign had automatic dimming based on ambient light and that it could also be programmed for different conditions.

Anthony interrupted to note that he had a letter which he had missed the chance to read during the public hearing. He asked for a moment to read it aloud.

Chair Hellermann reopened the public hearing.

Anthony read a letter from Anthony Heathcoat (see exhibit A). Hellermann asked Salem to make sure that the EMC did not become a nuisance. Anthony added that he would attach the conditions as listed in the Ordinance to the sign permit.

With no further comments, Chair Hellermann closed the public hearing.

NEW BUSINESS

NB1: Election of Secretary

On June 7, 2023, Commission Secretary Kelli VanGinhoven announced her resignation from the Commission, effective June 8, 2023. With her departure, the office of Secretary was then vacant.

Anthony explained the Secretary's duties as described in the Commission's Bylaws. Hellermann opened the floor for nominations. Webber expressed a willingness for nomination to the seat.

A motion was made by Hellermann to elect Webber as Secretary. Supported by Mason. MOTION PASSED.

Hellermann explained that he reached out via email to City administration and City Council. He requested that somebody reevaluate the section of the City Code of Ordinances which caused Commr. VanGinhoven to resign. Sec. 21-17(a)(1) barred Commissioners from being declared candidates for any political office, except for City Council. Because VanGinhoven expected to run for County office, she could no longer serve after that announcement, and decided to resign before that time. Hellermann expressed that he didn't feel it necessary for VanGinhoven to resign. Anthony noted that the ordinance did not mention anything about an individual once they were in office. Hellermann added that it was unfortunate to lose her.

A motion was made by Hellermann to formally request that City Council reevaluate City Code Sec. 21-17(a)(1). Supported by Reynolds. MOTION PASSED.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hellermann welcomed the Commission's new members, Christiana Reynolds and Patrick Connor. Connor volunteered to serve as the Commission's liaison to the Delta County Planning Commission. He had been so during previous service on the Commission.

A motion was made by Harris to elect Connor as the liaison for the Delta County Planning Commission. Supported by Mason. MOTION PASSED.

ADJOURNMENT


A motion was made by Harris to adjourn the meeting.

[Note: No support was made for this motion, but Hellermann adjourned the meeting without question. No opposition was shown thereto.]

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM.

APPROVAL

These minutes were approved at the July 13th, 2023 meeting. HC


James Hellermann, Chair
Escanaba Planning Commission



Tyler Anthony, Planning & Zoning Admin.
City of Escanaba

EXHIBIT "A"

From: Anthony Heathcoat
To: the Planning Commission

Regarding the Special Meeting on June 29, 2023 and the review of a special use permit for Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church.

My property is directly adjacent to the area where the new sign would be placed, and in fact the windows of 3 of my bedrooms are visible in one of the pictures of the existing sign. I understand that the new sign will have a static portion for the name and logo, and only the message portion will be an LED-based EMC with changeable messages.

This description is not very precise as such an EMC could be anything from simple text displays (like those used to display prices at gas stations) to full TV-like displays capable of displaying video.

In the former case I do not have any issue with the project. However, if the EMC is the type which would be used to display any kind of video or rapidly switching images then I must ask the Planning Commission to either deny the permit or approve with conditions that address this issue, on the grounds that it would be an unfair nuisance.

Anthony Heathcoat