

REGULAR MEETING – HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2009 – 5:30 p.m.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY CENTER

PRESENT: Mayor Robert Backon, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Megowen, Councilors Rachel Lankton, Craig Kurtz, Gernot Joachim, and Lee Hauswirth.

Also present for the City: City Manager Scott MacInnes, Clerk-Treasurer Kurt Kuure, and Police Chief John Donnelly.

ABSENT: Councilor Eric Peterson.

ALSO PRESENT: A representative of the Daily Mining Gazette and Elaine Wirtanen.

REGULAR MEETING: Mayor Backon called to order a Regular Meeting of the Houghton City Council and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Megowen to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2009, Regular Meeting as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: City Manager MacInnes added under New Business – Item E – Clark Street Block Party.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COUNCIL: No one addressed the Council.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

REPORTS:

City Manager MacInnes reported that the paving patches over the water and sewer repairs throughout town should be done now. A crew is repairing Chutes and Ladders as well as the docks. They will be using recycled plastic boards so that it will hold up better than wood.

Mr. MacInnes explained the stabilization procedure that will be used on the Huron Creek banks at the Kestner Park. This project may be delayed because of a problem finding the correct material to use. It may need to be done next spring.

City Manager MacInnes will be in Lansing next week. He will meet with MDOT to discuss a possible enhancement grant for the new islands on Townsend Drive. He will also meet with the DNR about possible grants for projects at Dee Stadium. The City of Houghton is eligible to receive Rural Development grants of up to 75% because of our sewer rates. He will meet with representatives of Rural Development about a possible 2-3 million dollar project.

City Manager MacInnes expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of the fire in Hancock over the weekend. The Houghton Fire Department was called to assist and because of the tournament out of town there were many back-up volunteers who responded. Members of the public works crew along with the summer help employees responded to the fire. Councilors Megowen and Hauswirth who are both volunteer firemen said the stand-in crew did a great job.

Police Chief John Donnelly reported that his department made 7 misdemeanor arrests, 1 felony, issued 25 civil infraction tickets, 3 City infractions, and responded to 122 complaints. There were 17 accidents of which 5 were in the construction zone. The department shut down the turn lanes going into West Houghton because of the accidents in this area. Councilor Megowen asked if signs could be put up stating that you cannot make a U-turn because motorists are still going around the barrels. The Police Department also assisted with the fire in Hancock over the weekend.

Chief Donnelly responded to the complaint by the Downtowner Motel about patrons of the Downtowner Bar causing problems late at night. Chief Donnelly said officers spend more time in this area than anywhere else at bar closing time in the City. Officers try to be in the area at closing time to prevent problems, however, this is a busy time and they cannot always be in this area at that time because of calls to other areas or arrests.

City Manager MacInnes reported that the Streetscape project is on schedule. The façade projects are almost complete. The survey for the marketing grant is going well. There were 60 people who took part in the survey on the first day. The street lights may not arrive until the middle of September.

UNFINISHED
BUSINESS:

The proposed Travel Policy was again reviewed. A change was made to the first paragraph to cover volunteer firemen “for approved training” to eliminate the possibility of covering tournaments.

City Manager MacInnes said he discussed with our insurance carrier the issues of personal vehicles and rental cars. He said it is his recommendation that an employee take a City vehicle if possible. If it is not possible, the second choice is to use a personal vehicle with the note that their car will be covered up to \$1,000 on their deductible (\$500 from our insurance company and \$500 from the City). The Council said they would like the deductible coverage to be up to only \$500 if the employee is at fault and if they receive a citation for the accident.

Councilor Lankton requested moving some sections around so topics will be grouped together. It was suggested to add an exception to meal costs if a meal costs more at a seminar.

NEW BUSINESS: A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Lankton to approve the Accounts Payable for July 18-31, 2009, as presented.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Joachim, Lankton, Hauswirth, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes explained the proposed contract with MDOT for Small Urban money to pave West Sharon Avenue starting at Oak Grove Parkway south for a half mile. The total project is \$100,700 with a local match of \$10,700 to come from the Major Street Fund (Scott meant to say the TIFA Fund). A motion was made by Megowen and seconded by Hauswirth to adopt **Resolution 2009-1275** authorizing the City Manager to sign the contract with MDOT for this project.

The Clerk polled the Council;

Yes: Megowen, Hauswirth, Joachim, Lankton, Backon, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Lankton to adopt **Resolution 2009-1276** for a liquor license at 915 Razorback Drive.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Hauswirth, Lankton, Joachim, Backon, Megowen, Kurtz

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes recommended that the Council members serving on the Planning Commission receive payment for those meetings at the same rate as the other Planning Commission members receive. A motion was made by Kurtz and seconded by Joachim to pay City Council members on the Planning Commission the same rate as the other Planning Commission members for attending meetings.

Councilor Lankton and Mayor Backon abstained from voting as they are on the Planning Commission.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Kurtz, Megowen

No: Joachim, Hauswirth

Motion denied

Councilors Joachim and Hauswirth stated that they voted no because they feel serving on commissions is part of their duty as an elected official.

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Hauswirth to authorize the closing of Clark Street on August 22, 2009 from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. for their annual block party.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

Councilor Lankton said in another municipality there are small signs on light poles that tell people to clean up after their dog and state the ordinance as well as the penalty. She would like the City of Houghton to do it.

Councilor Kurtz said someone asked him what difference the proposed zoning change will make on the property on the Isle Royale Sands going from Industrial to R-3. City Manager MacInnes said the Planning Commission will have a public hearing on this tomorrow night. The owner of the property requested the change to protect his investment if he decides to sell a portion of this land. He also does not want to put a fence around the property and would like to spend that money on landscaping instead.

A motion to adjourn was made by Lankton and seconded by Megowen.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.
Adjourned 6:23 p.m.

Kurt Kuure
Clerk