

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2007 - 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY CENTER

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

ABSENT: None

Also present for the City were City Manager Scott MacInnes, Deputy Clerk Ann Vollrath, Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, and Police Chief John Donnelly.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives from the Daily Mining Gazette, WOLV, WMPL, MTU Lode, Lisa Rouleau, Kim Stoker, representatives of towing companies.

PUBLIC HEARING: Mayor Peterson called to order a Public Hearing concerning an application to Michigan Economic Development Corporation for a \$150,000 Economic Development Infrastructure Grant to provide public infrastructure for the GS Engineering project.

Kim Stoker of WUPPDR is administering the grant for the City. Mr. Stoker said the check was presented today for this grant. This project goes hand-in-hand with the renovation of the Powerhouse. G.S. Engineering will construct a new building on the Pilgrim Terrace site which has 8,000 square feet of office space and 6,000 square feet of high-bay space. G.S. Engineering has committed to create 12 new high-paying jobs. The total project is \$1,659,700 which includes a private investment of \$1,494,700. The City has committed \$15,000 which is the local match. The MEDC will provide a \$150,000 grant which is for road, water, sewer, contingency, engineering, permits, and administration. Mr. Stoker asked for public comment.

There were no questions or comments from the audience or Council.

A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Lankton to close the Public Hearing.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REGULAR MEETING: Mayor Peterson 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 Lankton and seconded by Joachim to approve the minutes of September 26, 2007 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND
APPROVAL OF
AGENDA:

City Manager MacInnes deleted New Business - Item C - Towing Bids.

OPPORTUNITY FOR
PUBLIC TO
ADDRESS
COUNCIL:

No one addressed the Council.

PETITIONS AND
COMMUNICATIONS

None.

REPORTS:

Director of Public Works Mark Zenner reported that crews are working on the Franklin Square islands when weather permits. They would like to have sod down before winter. He is looking at different kinds of lighting. The water in the Clark Street alley is coming from Sharon Avenue and the MTU baseball fields. Crews are working on this drainage issue and improving drainage on Garnet Street. Crews are working on the Woodhaven Pond. There are 16 water leaks in the City. Crews are concentrating on the Franklin Square Inn leak at this time. They cannot find where the water leak is at the City Center. The paving job is 80 percent completed.

Mr. Zenner is dealing with the drainage issue in the mechanic garage. He is looking at dropping the road in front of the garage so the water will drain in another direction. U.P. Engineering is taking samples to determine if there is mold in the building from previous water overflows.

Police Chief John Donnelly reported that the department was busy with MTU Homecoming and the parade. Over the past couple of weeks they had 14 MIP's and six civil infractions. The department is undergoing first aid training by Corporal Roberts.

City Manager MacInnes reported that he met with the DNR and DEQ in Lansing on the Nara Park grant. The bids are now ready to go out.

His presentation on the Vibrant Cities Grant went well. He should know soon if it was received. He is trying to pare down the Downtown Streetscape Project so that we will have a better chance for an MDOT Enhancement Grant. The Ishpeming TSC will apply for the grant and will administer it if it is received.

City Manager MacInnes reported that the RV Park had another great season. Income was down slightly due to providing a free space to Jim and Pat Janda who worked all summer at the Dee History Museum and Carnegie Museum. Richard and Janet Hanner will return next year as park hosts. A question was asked about taking reservations. Mr. MacInnes explained that reservations are a problem when people do not show up and there are issues with credit card companies. Parks that do take reservations report many problems with it.

OLD BUSINESS:

City Manager MacInnes said he reached an agreement with the Police Patrol Officers Union. It is a three-year contract. They will receive a 4% pay increase the first year and 3% pay increases the next two years. There are changes to the shift differential which will match the start and finish of shifts instead of starting during a shift. They changed the promotion language to state that promotions will not be solely determined by seniority. They would also like the City Manager to try to work on a MERS pension plan. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Backon to accept the contract with the Police Patrol Officers Union as presented.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes explained that the Keweenaw Brewing Company would like a sign variance to erect a sign on the wall of the parking deck next to their entrance. The wall is presently in bad shape. They will erect a wood carved sign which he believes will improve the look of the wall. Councilor Joachim was concerned that this will cause future people to ask for signs on the deck and on other City property. There was a question as to liability if a City plow hits the sign while plowing. City Manager MacInnes said the City will have no responsibility if the sign is hit.

A motion was made by Kurtz and seconded by Hauswirth to approve the sign variance for Keweenaw Brewing Company.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Kurtz, Hauswirth, Peterson, Backon, Megowen

No: Joachim, Lankton

Motion carried.

Stanton Township made some changes to the PA-425 Agreement which was recently passed by the Council under Article III Sharing of Revenues. The Council reviewed the changes. A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Kurtz to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the amended PA-425 with Stanton Township.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Megowen to approve the Accounts Payable from October 1-15, 2007 as presented.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Backon to adopt **Resolution 2007-1210a** authorizing the grant application to the MEDC for an Economic Development Infrastructure grant.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes presented the Council with a design for a new Nara Nature Park sign to replace the present one on the highway. A discussion was held about a theme for all signs in the park. Mr. MacInnes said he does not need money for the sign at this time as he is looking at another source of funding. A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Joachim to approve the concept of the Nara Nature Park sign with a rock base.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Kurtz to adopt **Resolution 2007-1212** authorizing Jodi Reynolds to sign the FY 2007 Specialized Services Operating Assistance Program agreement.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried

A motion was made by Backon and seconded by Megowen to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign Transit Contract 2007-0226/Z3.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes explained that it is time to execute another cost sharing maintenance agreement with MDOT for the traffic signal at Sharon Avenue and M 26. This agreement does not include an upgrade to the signal. There was a discussion about making changes to the signal and operating it 24 hours a day. Any changes to the signal need to be made through MDOT. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by

Hauswirth to adopt **Resolution 2007-1211** to participate in operating costs.

The Deputy Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

A discussion was held about a letter from Jodi Hoffman regarding possible rental code violations. City Manager MacInnes said there were three reports of possible overcrowding in rentals in Houghton that he and Don O'Donnell investigated. In all three instances, the tenants let the City representatives into the house to inspect it. All three houses contain the legal amount of tenants.

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

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

Adjourned 6:25 p.m.

Ann Vollrath
Deputy Clerk