

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007 - 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY CENTER

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

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Robert Backon.

Also present for the City were City Manager Scott MacInnes, Clerk-Treasurer Kurt Kuure, Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, and Police Chief John Donnelly.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives from the Daily Mining Gazette, WOLV, WMPL, Euel and Cindy Cappel, Elaine Wirtanen, Steve Therrian of Superior Service, Dave Dow of Dave's Marathon, Chris Tapani of Big T Towing, other members of the community.

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 October 10, 2007 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: City Manager MacInnes added under New Business - Item E - Sign Ordinance and moved Old Business - Item A - Towing Bids to before Reports.

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

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: City Manager MacInnes explained that his biggest concern with the Towing Bids is the storing of vehicles. He suggested that they reject the bids and instead the police department will rotate the towing companies they call for accidents every month. Each company will get all of the

accident calls for one month and then the police department will change companies for the next month. A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Lankton to reject all of the towing bids.

Councilor Hauswirth said he would like to see all three companies receive some of the “winter towing calls” and not just accident calls.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Joachim, Lankton, Hauswirth, Peterson, Kurtz

No: Megowen

Motion carried.

REPORTS:

Director of Public Works Mark Zenner reported that crews are separating the storm sewer on Garnet Street and Clark Street to prevent the storm sewer from infiltrating the sanitary sewer. Crews will begin the storm sewer project on Brickyard Lane next week. U.P. Engineering is now checking the pond depth at the Woodhaven Pond to make sure it is done correctly. Paving is complete and was well done and within budget. They also patched some broken curbing. Crews are finishing pavers and installing sod on the Franklin Square Island. Next spring the sprinkler system will be installed. Mr. Zenner is still looking at different types of lights for the wall. U.P. Engineering performed an air quality test in the mechanic shop and did not find any environmental concerns from mold. Mr. Zenner is obtaining prices for work on the road in front of the building to prevent future flooding.

Councilor Jochim mentioned a problem on Ravine Side Drive where some brush was cut and put on private property. Mark Zenner said this will be taken care of.

Councilor Hauswirth thanked Public Works for the work done on the Portage Lake Water and Sewage Authority water main.

Mark Zenner said crews have blocked off the storm water infiltration into the City Center basement. He believes the water is coming from a cracked storm line.

The rubber roof on the Fire Hall separated due to heat this summer causing a leak. Superior Polymer will patch it this fall. Next summer they will put a new polymer white coating on it.

Police Chief John Donnelly said the Department had 12 misdemeanor arrests, 2 felony arrests, and 13 civil infractions. The Department is

advertising the night parking ordinance which takes effect on November 1st. The telephones are now set up so that at night a person can call 482-2121 and they are told to call 911 if it is an emergency and call 487-5912 for non-emergency calls. This provides the public with a way to reach an officer after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends without having to bog down 911 dispatchers. The Department received reimbursement from the State for Department training.

Councilor Megowen asked about parking problems downtown and areas where smokers congregate. Chief Donnelly said he is working on it and spoke to the owner of the business where the problem is occurring.

City Manager MacInnes reported that a representative from the State presented the City of Houghton with a check for \$1,000,000 for the Vibrant Small Cities Grant. The final application is due December 14th. Mr. MacInnes is working with the State on how to best fit the City's needs and follow their many rules and regulations. A public hearing is needed before December 14th and cannot be on a night when there is a regularly scheduled Council meeting. Mr. MacInnes plans to apply 50% of the grant to the Downtown Streetscape Project.

Presently the \$4,500,000 Downtown Streetscape Project includes new water, sewer, storm sewer, brick streets, new sidewalks, and new lighting. Mr. MacInnes plans to pay for this project with:

- \$2,700,000 from MDOT with three different grants
- \$500,000 from the Vibrant Small Cities Grant
- \$1,200,000 loan from Rural Development

City Manager MacInnes explained that facades will be part of the Vibrant Small Cities Grant. The building owners will provide the match for this portion of the grant. He hopes to use \$300,000 of the Vibrant Cities money for facades.

The remaining \$200,000 of Vibrant Cities money may be used to remove the skywalks and marketing.

Painting on the present facades will be delayed until next year because of weather. Mr. MacInnes asked for a grant extension based on the record rainfall. The loans will now start in July when the projects are done. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Hauswirth to move the Revolving Loan Fund payments to July 1, 2008.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

The Biking Task Force completed the City of Houghton Bike Plan. Some of the items in the plan have been implemented. The Council was asked to review this prior to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Megowen to approve the Accounts Payable October 15-31, 2007.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes reviewed the MDOT Access Management procedures with the Council. The Access Management Team acts in an advisory capacity regarding development along State trunklines. In the future, development on the trunkline will start with the Access Management Team and then go to the Planning Commission for site plan review. The final decision will be made by the City of Houghton.

A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Hauswirth to adopt **Resolution 2007-1214** regarding MDOT Access Management procedures.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

A motion was made by Kurtz and seconded by Megowen to adopt **Resolution 2007-1213** establishing a Receiving Board for elections.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried

City Manager MacInnes explained that for the G.S. Engineering project, Paul Trautman will give the City of Houghton an easement for a road. He will also give the City another easement for water/sewer running to the Pilgrim River. Mr. Trautman asked that in exchange for the easement he will not have to pay a water/sewer hook-up charge for his hook-ups. A motion was made by Joachim and seconded by Hauswirth to approve the Trautman Easement. In exchange for the easement he will receive a maximum of five water/sewer hook-ups on property that is wholly owned by Mr. Trautman at no charge.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes explained an easement needed from David Hughes to cross his land in order to install the water/sewer pipe to the new subdivision on the Jukuri property. Mr. Hughes has agreed to grant the City an easement with the condition that if he wants to hook-up to the City water in the future, he will receive a free hook-up and be allowed to pay the same rate for water/sewer as City residents pay. He is also asking for a first right of refusal for five years on City property that is adjacent to his property.

A motion was made by Megowen and seconded by Kurtz to approve the one free water/sewer hook-up for Mr. Hughes in exchange for the easement he is granting the City.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes said Arby's, which is locating in the old Mancino's Restaurant building, asked for a sign variance to install an electronic reader board sign that they will only change once a week and will have no flashing bulbs. The City allows reader board signs with letters that must be manually put up and taken down. City Manager

MacInnes asked the Council to consider changing the sign ordinance to allow the following:

- Allow electronic reader board signs in the TIFA District only.
- The background has to be black or white with the letters the opposite color.
- No flashing lights.
- It can only change once a week.

The Council said they would like the ordinance reviewed. City Manager MacInnes said he will bring this issue to the Planning Commission.

Councilor Lankton said Franklin Square looks great. She said there are a lot of cracks in the parking deck behind Swift Hardware. Mark Zenner said some cracks are sealed with injections and some are calendered for next year.

Mayor Peterson thanked City Manager Scott MacInnes for the hard work he has put in with the Downtown Streetscape and grants.

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

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.
Adjourned 7:00 p.m.

Kurt Kuure
Clerk