

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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, Clerk-Treasurer Kurt Kuure, Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, and Police Chief John Donnelly.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives from the Daily Mining Gazette, WMPL, Ann West, Dan Dalquist, Lori Hauswirth, Mike Abbott, Gina Paulson, Lynette Levanen.

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 Hauswirth to approve the minutes of October 24, 2007 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: City Manager MacInnes added under Reports - Item G - PLWSA Project and under New Business - Item B - Public Hearing for Vibrant Cities Grant Application. Item A under New Business was moved to before Reports.

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

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: Ann West presented the revised Bike Plan and a map of proposed biking routes to the Council. The Plan was prepared to make Houghton a safe and bike-friendly community. Recommendations of the bike committee include:

- Designating a safe and secure bike route through Houghton
- Improving the safety of bicyclists through education, promotion and law enforcement (signs, maps, education at the schools)

The Committee asked the Council to adopt the plan. The Committee will continue to work on implementation and looking for funding sources. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Joachim to adopt the City of Houghton Bicycle Plan as presented.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

REPORTS:

Director of Public Works Mark Zenner reported that crews installed the storm sewer in Brickyard Lane. They will install the sidewalks and curb and gutter in the spring. The water line is installed at the G.S. Engineering site. The next phase is to do the road construction, sidewalks, and lighting. The pole barn at Nara Park has been disassembled and will be reassembled at public works to use for cold storage. The Woodhaven Pond is larger than initially designed which means it will be able to handle more water. There will be three backups. Crews are working on water leaks and pressure pit problems. The storm line at the Mechanic Garage was expanded. There are now two, 12 inch pipes to handle any necessary drainage problems. The road will be lowered this fall. Hydrants will be marked by next week.

Mayor Peterson asked that Mark Zenner look into a long-term solution to the problem on M 26 where the sno-go excavates the dirt on the hillside every year and leaves the area unsightly.

Police Chief John Donnelly reported that the department has had 8 misdemeanor arrests, 2 felony arrests, 20 civil infractions, and 6 city infractions since the last meeting. The office is working on automation. Jack Swift is donating his time and ideas to come up with a new blotter system.

City Manager MacInnes reported that the message board sign would have amber lights instead of white lights. He asked the Council to look at the new bank building sign in Calumet as this sign uses amber lights. The Council is considering message board signs in the TIFA District only and it will be a single message that will not flash. This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

City Manager MacInnes provided a proposed budget for the Vibrant Cities Grant. This is a \$1,000,000 grant with a \$1,000,000 match. The projects were prioritized as follows:

Façade Improvements – max	\$335,250
Match: Building Owners	\$335,250
Skywalk Removal	\$ 58,500
Match: DDA	\$ 58,500
Streetscape	\$500,000
Match: Rural Development Loan	\$500,000
Downtown Marketing Plan	\$ 10,000
Match: DDA	10,000
Administration	\$ 20,000
Match: DDA	\$ 20,000
Carnegie Building Purchase	\$ 76,250
Match: Land Contract – School	\$ 76,250

City Manager MacInnes said that there will be no General Fund money used for matching. All matching will come from the DDA Fund.

City Manager MacInnes will submit the MDOT Enhancement Grant for the Downtown Streetscape. The Streetscape budget is proposed as follows:

Vibrant Cities	\$ 500,000
MDOT TSC	600,000
MDOT Enhancement	1,800,000
MDOT Storm Sewer	<u>243,000</u>
Total	\$ 3,143,000

City’s Share:

Rural Development Loan – Water	\$ 565,000
Rural Development Loan – Sewer	<u>792,000</u>
Total	\$ 1,357,000

The Streetscape project will cover Franklin Square to the Bridge and includes a brick street, new sidewalks, lighting, and water and sewer lines.

He expects to know by the middle of December if the City is successful. Construction would take place in 2009.

City Manager MacInnes is reviewing a MERS retirement plan for employees again. He understands that the City will never fund over 15% of an employee's wages and the unfunded liability cannot exceed 10 years.

City Manager MacInnes provided the Council with a proposed budget for the PLWSA to add Franklin Township to the authority. Construction will take place in 2008. The total cost of the project is approximately \$1,800,000 which includes Franklin Township's share of \$225,000 and a \$110,000 grant from the DEQ for engineering. The Authority will apply for a DEQ loan in the amount of \$1,700,000 at 2.5% for 20 years. The Cities of Houghton and Hancock will have to pass resolutions by December 31, 2007 if they would like to go ahead with this project.

Mr. MacInnes will provide a proposed revenue stream for this project. He anticipates a sewer rate increase of about 2-3% for this project and the same amount for the downtown project so the total sewer increase may need to be 5%.

OLD BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Megowen and seconded by Backon to allow the Mayor and Clerk to sign a First Right of Refusal with Shafi on the Powerhouse building. This will give him 15 days after an offer is made on the building to match that offer and will be in effect until October 10, 2022. This is only in effect if the LDFA or City wants to sell the building.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried

City Manager MacInnes will have documents prepared to enter into a first right of refusal for the City's property next to Dave Hughes' property on Houghton Canal. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Joachim to approve the Accounts Payable for November 1-16, 2007 as presented.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

The public hearing for the Vibrant Cities Grant will be held on Tuesday, December 4, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

The Finance Committee will meet with the Fire Department to work out a budget for the tournament next summer.

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

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.
Adjourned 6:37 p.m.

Kurt Kuure
Clerk