

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 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 Clerk-Treasurer Kurt Kuure, Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, and Police Chief John Donnelly.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives from the Daily Mining Gazette, WMPL, Elaine Wirtanen, 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 Hauswirth to approve the minutes of November 14, 2007 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mayor Peterson asked Clerk Kuure to add the Right of First Refusal for Hughes to the next Agenda as it was mentioned at the last meeting.

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 worked on the Woodhaven Pond, Brickyard Lane, and the pond by the Nara Nature Trail. The Woodhaven Pond will have three backups to handle water. Crews are inspecting sewers to look for cross connections. Dead trees were removed on Dodge Street. The downtown Christmas lights will be completely up within the next two weeks. The Christmas party will be December 22.

Councilor Lankton noted that the sign on M 26 for the Carnegie Museum does not have the new winter hours. Mark Zenner will have this changed.

Mayor Peterson mentioned the cross country ski race at MTU in January. Public Works will be able to help provide snow if needed.

Police Chief John Donnelly reported that the department had 2 misdemeanor arrests, 1 felony arrest, and 17 civil infractions in the last two weeks. There were 13 accidents including a four-car pile up early in the morning on the day after Thanksgiving at the light on Sharon Avenue and M 26. Chief Donnelly will ask MDOT to change that light over earlier next year on that day. The light on MacInnes Drive runs later on nights with hockey games.

State funding for snowmobile patrol is on hold until they pass the budget. Chief Donnelly is optimistic that the City will be able to continue snowmobile patrol. The department lost some part-time police officers and are looking for replacements.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The Council discussed signage on M 26 and the TIFA District. City Manager MacInnes asked them to discuss the possibility of changing the Sign Ordinance in the TIFA District to allow electronic message board signs upon review with amber lights. He also asked them to consider eliminating single-pole signs in favor of a double stanchion sign, and lowering the height from 25 feet to 20 feet.

The Council was unable to come up with a consensus on signs. There is a concern that they do not want a proliferation of electronic message board signs. They would like the City Manager to provide them information regarding the total amount of square footage and an interpretation of the ordinance.

A suggestion was made that the City should find out from present business owners in the TIFA District what kinds of signs they would like to see. The Council could also use a subcommittee for this issue.

Councilor Kurtz felt the City should consider hiring a professional consultant to help them with ideas for signage.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Joachim to approve the Accounts Payable for November 16-30, 2007 as presented.

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

The Council needs to name the road at Pilgrim Terrace where the new G.S. Engineering building is located. A suggestion was made by the owner of the property to call it "Pumphouse Drive" as this was the location of the old pumphouse. A motion was made by Hauswirth and seconded by Megowen to name the road for the new G.S. Engineering site "Pumphouse Drive".

The Clerk polled the Council:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

A discussion was held about holding a subcommittee meeting for the Fire Department Tournament. This will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Councilor Kurtz said he would like the City Manager to talk to a planner regarding signage. He would like to see pictures of "best case scenarios" and not just pictures of "worst case scenarios."

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

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.  
Adjourned 6:23 p.m.

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Kurt Kuure  
Clerk