

PLANNING COMMISSION – CITY OF HOUGHTON
CITY CENTER – CONFERENCE ROOM
February 26, 2008

PRESENT: Chairman Mike Butvilas, Mike Needham, Jay Green, Kristine Bradof, Rachel Lankton, Mayor Eric Peterson.

Also Present: Deputy Clerk Ann Vollrath, Greg Kingstrom of UP Engineering, and Linda Kersten of Michigan Tech.

ABSENT: Bill Hodge, Gary Lubinski, and City Manager Scott MacInnes.

REGULAR MEETING: Chairman Mike Butvilas called to order a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Green to approve the minutes of January 22, 2008 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COMMISSION: No one addressed the Commission.

AGENDA: No changes were made to the Agenda.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None

BUSINESS: The site plan for St. Peter and Paul Church was reviewed again. Following the last meeting, City Manager MacInnes clarified that the City has an easement for the road and utilities on Evergreen Drive and will connect it to the Huron Creek Plat. The City will put in the road and utilities up to

the church parking lot entrance on Evergreen Drive when the church is constructed.

Jay Green reported that he talked to the drain commissioner and was told that the commissioner has no approval authority for commercial establishments. His authority is over subdivisions. Mr. Green said he would like the City to pass a drainage ordinance. Mr. Kingstrom from U.P. Engineering said that in the Marquette area all of the townships and cities have drainage ordinances and he suggested Houghton get examples from those places.

U.P. Engineering also provided a revised Plant List for the Church removing Norway Maples.

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Green to approve the St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church site plan as presented with corrections mentioned above.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

Mr. Green said he would also like to see firmer criteria for road, and water/sewer extensions in the city.

The proposed parking ordinance amendment was reviewed. The commission agreed to use Retail Option 2 which was provided by Mr. MacInnes. Jay Green said he would like the language to be clearer. He said that the City Manager's intent is that the first 9,000 square feet require one parking space per every 225 gross square feet and an additional parking space per 275 gross square feet per gross square footage over 9,000 feet.

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Needham to set a Public Hearing for the proposed Parking Ordinance for Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

The Site Plan Review Ordinance was discussed. The language regarding expiration of the site plan review has been changed. This language was reviewed and approved by attorney Dave Mechlin.

A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Needham to set a Public Hearing for the proposed changes to the Site Plan Review Ordinance for Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

The Recreation Plan was reviewed. Mayor Peterson requested the following additions per the Bike Plan:

- Paving Houghton Avenue
- Maintenance to the existing bike path
- Connecting the Waterfront Trail to campus along the hillside across from the Super 8 Motel
- Signage
- Paving the connection between the RV Park and Houghton Canal Road
- Work on Sharon Avenue

Kristine Bradof said she would like to see the Bike Plan, Walkability Plan and Huron Creek Watershed Plan appended to the Recreation Plan.

Mike Needham questioned the necessity of the lighting on the Nara Park sledding hill and trails because these are not used a lot and the money may be better spent in areas that people use more. Kristine Bradof said we should also look at the future cost of the electrical bills as this is now a concern at Michigan Tech where they put lights on an area of their trail. Mr. Needham also asked about spending money on the Nara Park parking lot. Rachel Lankton said she does not want this parking lot paved and would like it to look natural.

The commission also questioned spending money to fix up the proposed East Houghton Open Space. This area will

probably not be used by a lot of residents and there were concerns about spending money on new parks when present parks need maintenance. Mr. Needham said the beach is widely used and is in need of maintenance. The City should look at spending money there.

Linda Kersten, a student at Michigan Tech, talked about the Huron Creek Watershed Plan and proposed work needed on the Creek by the beach where the slope is eroding. The suggestion in the Watershed Plan is to use stabilizers like coir logs and gabions on the banks with vegetation. Mayor Peterson asked her to come up with a cost for the work. He also said the City needs to be concerned about any safety hazards these stabilizers might cause.

Rachel Lankton said the City has to fix the sidewalk/bridge over the Creek at the beach water's edge.

The Recreation Plan will be available to the public for comments for one month. The Planning Commission will look at the public comments and can make more of their own comments at the next meeting.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

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

Motion carried.

Gary Lubinski, Secretary