

**CITY OF HOUGHTON PLANNING COMMISSION  
2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

**DRAFT**

- 1. Membership**
- |                                   | <b><u>Segment Represented</u></b>    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. Tom Merz, Chairperson          | Educational                          |
| b. Mike Needham, Vice Chairperson | Governmental/Municipal/Housing       |
| c. Gary Lubinski, Secretary       | Recreational/Tourism                 |
| d. Eric Waara, City Manager       |                                      |
| e. Robert Backon, Mayor           |                                      |
| f. Kristine Bradof                | Environmental                        |
| g. Jay Green                      | Transportation/Utility/Communication |
| h. Dan Liebau                     | At-Large                             |
| i. Travis Pierce                  | Industrial/Economic                  |
- 2. Meetings**
- a. January 23, 2018
  - b. February 27, 2018
  - c. March 27, 2018
  - d. April 24, 2018
  - e. May 22, 2018
  - f. The June meeting was cancelled due to the severe storm event on Father’s Day.
  - g. July 24, 2018
  - h. August 28, 2018
  - i. September 11, 2018
  - j. October 23, 2018
  - k. November 27, 2018
  - l. December 18, 2018
- 3. Master Plan Review**
- a. The commission continued the process of revising the current master plan.
    - i. The survey results were presented by intern Olivia Burek on March 27, 2018. The response rate was 32% for the paper surveys and 88% for the on-line survey. Results showed residents feel the city has improved since the last survey. The results also showed areas where residents would like to see improvement.
    - ii. Open house events were held on April 9, April 17, and May 15<sup>th</sup>. The commission and council received comments from many members of the public on ways to improve neighborhoods, transportation, sustainability, zoning and future land use.
    - iii. Subcommittees were formed to create drafts of the following chapters:
      - 1. Neighborhoods, Zoning and Land Use– Tom Merz, Eric Waara, Gary Lubinski and Mike Needham.
      - 2. Recreation Plan – Eric Waara, Dan Liebau, Kristine Bradof and Jay Green.

- iv. The Recreation Plan, Neighborhood and Zoning and Land Use chapters were presented to the entire commission on October 23<sup>rd</sup> to review and comment. The deadline for the Recreation Plan to be filed with the DNR is January 31, 2019.
- v. The draft Recreation Plan chapter was approved by the commission on November 27<sup>th</sup>. The draft was made available to the public for a 30-day comment period with a public hearing to be held on January 9, 2019 at a joint meeting of the council and commission.
- vi. The commission continues to work on the other chapters of the master plan.

#### **4. Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

- a. May 22, 2018 – the commission held a public hearing to take comment regarding Ordinance 2018-289 to revise the zoning ordinance to allow another principal use in the B-3 zoning district – Technology, research, and light manufacturing facilities whose operations are wholly contained indoors and do not produce noise, dust, fumes, or other environmental or safety hazards. Following the public hearing, the commission recommended the proposed ordinance to the council.
- b. September 11, 2018 – the commission held a public hearing to take comment regarding proposed Ordinance 2018-291 to make changes to the zoning ordinance to comply with the new medical marihuana law. Following the public hearing, the commission recommended the proposed ordinance to the council.

#### **5. Site Plan Reviews**

- a. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for a new maintenance garage at St. Albert the Great parish on MacInnes Drive.
- b. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for exterior renovations to the Houghton National Bank building downtown.
- c. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for a garage addition on the UPS building on Carlos Street.
- d. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for a new building on the Superior Equipment and Events property on the corner of Sandpiper Drive and Carlos Street.
- e. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for a storage shed for the Fastenal store on Sharon Avenue.
- f. The commission reviewed and approved a site plan for a remodel of the McDonald's building on M-26.
- g. the commission reviewed and approved a site plan for the addition of two residential apartments in the Rukkila building downtown.

#### **6. Plans**

- a. The commission approved the revised Capital Improvement Plan in April.
- b. The commission approved the draft Recreation Plan.

## **7. Zoning Map Changes**

- a. November 27, 2018 – the commission held a public hearing regarding proposed ordinance 2018-292 to rezone two parcels of property on West Sharon Avenue from R-1 to B-3 for the development of a Meijer store. Following the public hearing, the commission recommended the proposed ordinance to the council.

## **8. Actions taken per Planning Commission Recommendations**

- a. The Council held a public hearing and adopted the Capital Improvement Plan.
- b. The Council held a public hearing and adopted Ordinance 2018-289.
- c. The Council held a public hearing and adopted Ordinance 2018-291.
- d. The Council held a public hearing and adopted Ordinance 2018-292.

## **9. Other Business**

- a. The commission reviewed plans for the extension of Schoolhouse Road to connect the elementary school to Sharon Avenue allowing additional ingress and egress to the school grounds.
- b. The commission was presented preliminary plans for a proposed jail extension at the courthouse to be built on the present parking deck.
- c. A resident requested the commission consider an ordinance amendment allowing short-term, owner occupied rentals in the R-1 zoning district.
- d. The commission created a Rental Housing Subcommittee in response to a request from the Council to consider changes to Chapter 14 of the code of ordinances regarding rental properties in the R-1 zoning district. The subcommittee comprised of Chairperson Merz, Secretary Lubinski and members Needham and Waara created a report that was presented to the commission at the July meeting. Suggestions were made by other commission members and members of the public that were present at the meeting. The subcommittee revised the report. On August 28<sup>th</sup> the commission sent the report to the Council.
- e. The commission discussed a possible ordinance regarding the use of food trucks in the city. The commission asked the city manager to prepare the basis of an ordinance for the commission to review.
- f. The commission discussed the new recreational marihuana law and the effect of the new law on Houghton. The commission will discuss this matter further in 2019.
- g. The commission received updates from the city manager regarding the development of a Meijer store in Houghton.
- h. The commission received updates from the city manager regarding a possible project to construct a pier on the waterfront between the Portage Lake District Library and the Michigan Tech Lakeshore Center as a public gathering space. The city manager is working with MEDC to partially fund the project.
- i. The City issued zoning permits for a total of \$3,500,000 in value.