

MINUTES OF MEETING
CITY OF HOUGHTON PLANNING COMMISSION
PARKING DECK COMMITTEE
CITY CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, JULY 13, 2021 – 1:00 pm

PRESENT: Tom Merz, Eric Waara, Mike Needham, and Dan Liebau.

Also present: Clerk Ann Vollrath, Robert Megowen, Alan Kiley, Grant Dossetto, Craig Waddell, Bill Leder, Sharon Levine, Derek Bradway, Garrett Neese, John McRae, and Darrell Guitar.

APPROVAL OF
PREVIOUS
MINUTES:

A motion was made by Liebau and seconded by Waara to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried

OPPORTUNITY
FOR PUBLIC:

No one addressed the committee.

BUSINESS:

The committee discussed the updated matrix showing Dan's changes that provide additional evaluations of the criteria.

Tom Merz said he would like the committee to consider recommending to the planning commission to recommend to the council that they work with the city manager on removal of the parking deck. While that is going on, the commission can use the evaluation criteria the committee prepared to obtain public input. He suggested perhaps hiring a facilitator to start the public engagement process.

Dan Liebau said he agrees as the cost of trying to maintain the present deck is outrageous.

Eric Waara said the city has a binary choice to make. Either keep the deck or take it down. While the city is working on the process to take it down, they can also work on the process of deciding what comes after removal.

Mike Needham said the feasibility of continuing to maintain the deck is an administrative responsibility. He would like to make an official recommendation to start exploring the removal of the deck while working on what is next for the property so that what comes next can happen as quickly as possible following removal.

Derek Bradway agrees with the committee that the deck needs to come down. He uses it every day, but its life is over. The city should concentrate on what comes after the deck.

A motion was made by Needham and seconded by Liebau to recommend to the planning commission that it recommend to the city council that they begin planning to remove the deck and begin the process for determining what the city wants to do when the deck is removed.

Eric Waara said the city can begin facilitated public engagement soon so that by the time the deck comes down there will be a plan for what comes next.

The clerk polled the committee:

Yes: Needham, Liebau, Waara, Merz

No: None

Motion carried

A motion to adjourn was made by Needham and seconded by Liebau. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Mike Needham, Secretary