

City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855



Meeting Minutes City Commission

Monday, September 13, 2021
6:00 PM
Commission Chambers

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Bonsall, Davis, Hanley, Hill, Mayer, Smith, Stonehouse

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to Approve the agenda, with Item 3 moved to the very end of the meeting, following comments from the public and the commission, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jenn Hill and Carried Unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Smith had no announcements.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Heather Holdwick spoke about issues in her neighborhood, which has changed significantly since she moved there. She said the location of services nearby, specifically the homeless shelter, have led to unwelcome interactions and to her feeling unsafe while walking in her neighborhood.

Bob Frak spoke in opposition to the rezoning proposal on tonight's agenda.

John Fee, Communications Director for the Catholic Diocese of Marquette, spoke about the rezoning proposal, which he said would simply change the zoning to a designation that will match the current use of the space.

Jim Dowling spoke in opposition to the rezoning, saying that he thinks this was a bad proposal by the church and that the public opinion has been clear.

1. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Evan Bonsall moved to Approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jessica Hanley and Carried Unanimously.

1.a. Approve the minutes of the September 8, 2021 special Commission meeting

1.b. Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$4,916,304.00

1.c. Founders Landing Pile Reuse Design and Construction Oversight Contract Change Order

1.d. Noquemanon Trails Network - Office and Storage Lease Agreement

1.e. Proclamation - Constitution Week

1.f. Schedule a Public Hearing for the FY 2022 Budget

Unfinished Business

2. Rezoning of 301 W. Baraga Avenue - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to suspend the rules for discussion, seconded by Commissioner Jessica Hanley and Carried Unanimously.

City Manager Karen Kovacs provided a brief overview of this rezoning proposal, and Commission discussion ensued.

Commissioners discussed the impact of a property remaining in nonconforming status and asked questions of Community Development Director Dennis Stachewicz. Deliberation focused largely on whether it was more appropriate to rezone the land into a designation that met with its current use or to deny the rezoning recommendation, allowing the current activity to continue as a nonconforming use.

Commissioner Evan Bonsall moved to Approve the adoption of Ordinance 701, rezoning 301 W. Baraga Avenue as recommended by the Planning Commission, and direct the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Cody Mayer and Carried by Roll Call Vote .

The motion carried 5-2, with Commissioners Stonehouse and Davis voting against it.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Heather Holdwick continued her previous comments, regarding her neighborhood. She said the police and other agencies are doing their best, but that neighborhoods are important and something should be done.

Comments from the Commission

Mayor Pro Tem Hill spoke about the importance of providing community support for recovery programs and especially for youth-centered programs. She said Covid has impacted the funding for these programs and made a call for regional approaches. She commended the Art Awards recipients and urged residents to get vaccinated if they are not.

Commissioner Mayer had no comments.

Commissioner Stonehouse said he was shocked to hear someone say they felt unsafe in their own neighborhood and that the City must do everything it can to correct issues like this.

Commissioner Bonsall thanked the resident for sharing her concerns about her neighborhood and said he was troubled. He said homelessness is a serious national problem and that there is a need for a long-term solution, though there are no easy fixes. Commissioner Bonsall said the story illustrates the fact that the Room at the Inn shelter is the first step in a much more comprehensive solution.

Commissioner Davis thanked Ms. Holdwick for her comments.

Commissioner Hanley had no comments.

Mayor Smith also thanked Ms. Holdwick and said it was impactful to hear her story. She said the administration is attempting to work toward a solution on issues like these.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs said staff is working with Room at the Inn to encourage support on these issues. She said the Police Department is attending RATI meetings and that she will keep the Commission up-to-date. Ms. Kovacs also congratulated the Art Award winners.

3. Pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) for strategy session with regard to the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements.

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Authorize entering closed session, pursuant to MCL 15.268(c), in order to discuss strategy for the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, seconded by Commissioner Cody Mayer and Carried Unanimously.

The City Commission entered closed session at 7:05 p.m. and re-entered open session at 7:27 p.m.

Adjournment

Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

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