



**City of Marquette, MI**  
300 West Baraga Ave  
Marquette, Michigan 49855  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City Commission**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, May 16, 2022**

---

**Special Meeting**

**Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

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

**Approval of the Agenda**

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to Approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer 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.**

Barb Owdziej said there is an issue with people driving too fast on Fair. She said she is interested in tonight's meeting and thinks it is great that the hospital property will be developed. She said had questions about how Veridea Group has been selected for this project.

Tony Boyle shared concerns that the contractor selection process was not fair and feels that affordable housing is not guaranteed in this project.

Paul Schloegel thanked the NMU Foundation for facilitating a project of this scope, which he said seems too good to be true.

Antonio Adan discussed transparency and said it's important to continue the conversation about affordable, workforce housing. He said everyone must work together to get the most out of this development.

**1. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer and Carried Unanimously.

**1.a.** Approve the minutes of the May 9, 2022 special Commission meeting

**1.b.** Approve the minutes of the May 9, 2022 regular Commission meeting

## **Presentation(s)**

### **2. Presentation and Discussion- Former Hospital Redevelopment**

Mayor Smith asked her fellow Commissioners to please wait until after all portions of the presentation before asking questions.

NMU Foundation CEO Brad Canale provided an overview of the project history and then turned the floor over to Dave Nyberg, the Foundation's Executive Director of Business Engagement and Economic Development.

Mr. Nyberg said the NMUF's goals include aligning resources and relationships to advance the university; he said that in that regard, a mostly vacant, 23-acre former hospital site adjacent to campus is not a viable option. After giving some insight into the future of the project, Mr. Nyberg introduced Jesse Bell, the president of the NMUF Board of Trustees.

Mr. Bell shared the history of the RFQ process, and discussed similar projects around the country that tied campuses together with the neighboring community. He then introduced Veridea Group CEO Bob Mahaney.

Mr. Mahaney said Veridea Group has been involved with this site for years and praised the NMUF for coming up with a novel approach that allowed them to leverage various resources to bring this project to fruition. The brownfield plan, he said, is a vital component to the project.

Following these presentations, City Assistant City Manager Sean Hobbins offered a brief presentation about the proposed tax-increment financing impacts of this project.

Commission discussion followed the presentations, with a focus on details of the proposed project, the public benefit to be realized, the timeline for the proposed brownfield plan, the prospective of workforce housing options into this development, and the idea that the City may have only one opportunity in the foreseeable future to spur a large redevelopment on this central site.

## **New Business**

### **3. Schedule Public Hearing- Former Hospital Redevelopment Brownfield Plan**

Mayor Pro Tem Cody Mayer moved to Approve the scheduling of a public hearing for the Former Hospital Redevelopment Brownfield Plan for the May 31, 2022 City Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis and Carried Unanimously.

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

Tony Boyle expressed concern that the housing proposed as a part of this development would serve only to drive housing prices up across the city.

Margaret Brumm expressed concern that the plan discussed tonight was not as beneficial as it could be for the city.

Karen Schmidt said she would like to see this redevelopment follow climate-friendly, green best practices.

Dave Campana said he is excited about this project and pleased that Veridea is the developer. He said the people that make up Veridea live and work in this community and have done good work here in the past. He said people want the old hospital gone and

they want a redevelopment that improves the tax base.

Geraldine Nault said she liked the presentations, and praised the idea of a senior living component.

Paul Schloegel spoke about housing prices and the allure of Marquette as a retirement community, and he said that tonight's proposal looked like it was the best-case scenario for the old hospital site.

Ellen Symons said she lives near the old hospital site and has been concerned about the future of the property ever since the hospital moved. She said she is excited by this plan.

Barb Owdziej said she is very much in support of the plan. She said she would like to see some planning and support for childcare options as that is a key to making this attractive to young, working families.

### **Comments from the Commission**

**Mayor Pro Tem Mayer** said he has heard from numerous residents with questions about whether the developer selection process was handled appropriately by the NMU Foundation and he said he believes it was. He said Veridea does good work in the community. He said he is hopeful we can have some level of workforce housing in this specific development, but it may not be possible. He said that rising interest rates and an uncertain economy mean that timing is critical and that waiting could mean the project doesn't happen, and that's not an option for the City or the Commission.

**Commissioner Hill** said Marquette is going to grow and we must keep these high-level planning conversations active while we grow. She said the city needs to remain focused on community benefit and she suggested people read a newly released book, "Fixer Upper: How to Fix America's Broken Housing System".

**Commissioner Stonehouse** said the plans discussed tonight are exciting, but that they will take time. He talked about the city's relationship with the university and said that NMU housing issues are city housing issues and that the two entities need to work together to solve them. He said he has the fullest confidence in NMU, the NMU Foundation and Veridea, and said this could be a centennial, transformational project.

**Commissioner Bonsall** said this discussion is about more than just funding mechanisms; it's about creating a community we want to live in. He said he enjoyed hearing the thoughts of the City Commission and the public tonight, and said it is important that the May 31 public hearing includes input from the public.

**Commissioner Davis** thanked commenters from tonight and said she agreed on the childcare front – she said it was included in the RFQ response and it is a real need.

**Commissioner Hanley** said she was impressed with the RFQ response and said there could be several reasons that Veridea was the only response to the RFQ. She said that had they not responded, though, there would have been no developer and no plan provided tonight.

**Mayor Smith** said childcare is a real need, that it has been a part of this discussion and that she wants to partner with the community to expand childcare options.

## **Comments from the City Manager**

**City Manager Karen Kovacs** thanked the City Commission for their discussion and input tonight.

## **Adjournment**

Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

---

**Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor**

---

**Kyle Whitney, City Clerk**

*If you require assistance to participate in any meeting, program or activity offered by the City of Marquette, please provide advanced notice to City of Marquette ADA Coordinator Eric Stemen at 906-225-8978 or via email at [estemen@marquettemi.gov](mailto:estemen@marquettemi.gov).*