



Meeting Minutes City Commission

Monday, December 11, 2023
6:00 PM
Commission Chambers

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Davis, Hanley, Larson, Mayer, Ottaway, Schloegel, Smith

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Michael Larson moved to Approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jermey Ottaway and Carried Unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Davis acknowledged the recent passing of Robert Niemi. Among the many roles Niemi filled in the community, he served as an administrator and director of the Marquette County Transit Authority for three decades; was elected to two terms on the City Commission, where he served as Mayor; and served two terms on the Marquette Board of Light and Power.

Mayor Davis also shared information about an upcoming public hearing to be heard by the Planning Commission.

Boards and Committees

1. Reappointment(s)

Cary Gottlieb, Planning Commission for a term ending 2-15-27

Allison Clark, Downtown Development Authority for a term ending 1-1-28

Sean Hobbins, Marquette Area Wastewater Treatment Advisory Board, 12-31-26

Commissioner Jermey Ottaway moved to Approve the re-appointments as listed, seconded by Commissioner Paul Schloegel and Carried Unanimously.

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

Travel Marquette's Susan Estler offered updates on her organization's recent activities and talked about a handful of new accolades related to local attractions.

Matt Luttenberger spoke about fair representation on local boards.

Margaret Brumm spoke about recent guest speakers that joined her NMU class.

Presentation(s)

2. Downtown Development Authority, by Executive Director Tara Laase-McKinney

Marquette Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Tara Laase-McKinney offered an update on DDA activities for the previous year.

Following the presentation, Commissioners praised the positive impact the DDA has on the local community and asked follow-up questions related to future plans, the state of the growing farmers market, and the importance of diversifying DDA revenue.

3. Consent Agenda - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Jennifer Smith moved to Approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Paul Schloegel and Carried Unanimously.

3.a. Approve the minutes of the November 27, 2023 regular Commission meeting

3.b. Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$1,014,495.32

3.c. Ordinance 726 - Repeal City Code Chapter 18

3.d. Purchase of a Hot Water Trailer Mounted High Pressure Jetting Unit

3.e. State Right-of-Way Permit - Roll Call Vote

Unfinished Business

4. Sale of City Property - 600 W. Spring Street - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Pro Tem Jessica Hanley moved to Approve the Resolution of Sale of Parcel 0240012, authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the purchase agreement, and authorize the City Manager to complete the sale according to the terms of the purchase agreement. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Jennifer Smith and discussion ensued.

Richard Graybill, representing Habitat for Humanity, fielded Commission questions about the project, indicating that the final build-out would likely include single-story homes of 1,000-1,200 square feet, with the possible inclusion of a two-story building. He said this project would be the organization's main project for the foreseeable future, and would take roughly eight years to complete. He also explained that there is a feature of the mortgage requiring residents to live in the property for a set amount of years in order to benefit from any equity in the homes.

Commissioner Schloegel said he supports Habitat for Humanity, but said that if the goal is to create as much affordable housing as possible, he is wondering if it might be better to try to find a higher-density plan for this site.

Commissioner Smith said the Commission went through the RFP process and had no other viable options and while she understands that concern, she thinks it would be better to do something now, rather than wait.

Commissioner Ottaway discussed future tax revenue that would be generated on the site. He said he hears constant concern from residents that the City isn't doing enough to bring in revenue and that taxes are rising. This is a way to take a step in that direction, he said.

The Commission then voted on the motion, which carried 6-1, with Commissioner Schloegel voting against it.

New Business

5. BLP Board Member Appointment

Commissioner Paul Schloegel moved to Approve the appointment of Gerald Irby to fill the vacancy on the Marquette Board of Light and Power, effective immediately, seconded by Commissioner Jermei Ottaway and Carried Unanimously.

6. Resolution to Establish Polling Locations - Roll Call Vote

Mayor Pro Tem Jessica Hanley moved to Approve the resolution establishing polling locations for the City of Marquette's election precincts, seconded by Commissioner Michael Larson and Carried Unanimously.

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

Matt Luttenberger asked if residents can use the Cliffs-Dow property as a park in the near-term.

Margaret Brumm welcomed Jerry Irby to the BLP board, and thanked the City Commission for appointing him.

Orville Dishno thanked the Commission for selling the property tonight and said tax base is important. He said his daughter and granddaughter visit and the first thing they want to do is go downtown and to the Farmers Market.

Comments from the Commission

Commissioner Mayer said it's good to see the Habitat for Humanity project get closer to the finish line and he praised the work done by the group.

Commissioner Ottaway asked people to be careful during the holidays, and to be healthy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hanley congratulated Jerry Irby on his appointment.

Commissioner Schloegel said he supports Habitat, and that he only wishes the project were higher-density. Asked people to shop local this season and he welcomed Jerry Irby to the BLP.

Commissioner Smith said she stopped at the LSCP Business After Hours on her way to this meeting, and said the events are great. She told people the City Commission would be meeting next week, due to the holidays, and she said snow is a huge part of the local economy, and we could use some.

Commissioner Larson talked about a listening session with EGLE that he attended this week.

Mayor Davis congratulated Jerry Irby, and said there are some big things coming for the BLP.

Comments from the City Manager

City Commissioner Karen Kovacs said the City is in negotiations with the State of Michigan regarding the Cliffs-Dow site, and it is being actively monitored, so should not be opened to the public, at least in the near future. She said she has office hours scheduled in the Peter White Public Library this week.

Adjournment

Mayor Davis adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Sally Davis, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

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