

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall. A video of this meeting is available on the City's website.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission (PC) members present (7): W. Premeau, Vice Chair K. Clegg, M. Rayner, J. Fitkin, Chair S. Mittlefehldt, D. Fetter, A. Wilkinson
PC Members absent (2): K. Hunter, S. Lawry (excused)
Staff present: City Planner and Zoning Administrator Dave Stensaas, Zoning Official Andrea Landers

AGENDA

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by J. Fitkin, and carried 7-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES

The minutes of the May 06, 2025, meeting were approved by consent, with the correction of the text for the motion on the Bylaws, as noted by K. Clegg.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. 01-ZOA-05-25 Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments

D. Stensaas stated that these draft LDC amendments are the culmination of approximately six months of work, during which the Planning Commission (PC) conducted nine work sessions on this matter, and that the PC held a work session with the City Commission to discuss the staff and PC's intentions for these amendments at the beginning of the effort. He also said that the draft amendments are comprehensive, in that they address portions of nearly every Article in the LDC, and that there is a lot more material that was addressed than initially contemplated. He related that this is something that we've been doing for several years and it has worked out pretty well, that when development applications tail off in the fall, to then turn to working on the LDC to address the annotations we've made through the year and then to set to fixing problems and trying to make the code better for everybody. He also said that the Commissioners have seen everything in here at least once, except for a correction Andrea found and made, so besides that one portion of the LDC, we were just planning to address any questions about the contents tonight and not go through the specifics.

W. Premeau asked for clarification on the vehicle parking standards, concerning the overall concept of requiring a minimum amount of parking for certain land uses. He said that he thought we were going to do away with that and allow the property owner to decide how much parking they need.

S. Mittlefehldt asked what specific section of the code Mr. Premeau was referring to.

D. Stensaas related that parking is in Article 9, and that in the past the Planning Commission did draft changes to the standards that were adopted that allow for retail and office uses to choose how much parking they need above a minimum of 2 spaces, and some other uses have had the minimum parking amount lowered, and parking maximums were set, but that was not discussed in any of the ten meetings that we had this year.

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025

W. Premeau said that he misunderstood, because he thought he brought that up, and that if you need more parking, you should be able to have it.

D. Stensaas said that it sounds like you would like to change the parking maximum standard.

W. Premeau said yes. W. Premeau said that for apartments, they should be allowed to have two parking spaces per unit, and then some extra spaces for visitors or a recreational vehicle.

S. Mittlefehldt said that there's always next year, and we can address that next time. She asked Mr. Premeau if there were any specific issues that he wanted to discuss in these amendments. She asked if anyone else had any thoughts to offer, and asked the Staff if there was any correspondence.

A. Landers stated that there wasn't any correspondence, but there is one clerical error that was found and one new item to consider in a section that we were already working in. She stated that when updating the LDC for the changes considered for this year, she discovered an error in the *Residential Limited Animal Keeping* section (Article 54.643), which is that somehow an important paragraph was removed and needs to be reinserted. She showed the proposed changes on the monitor, and the resulting changes to the enumeration of sections that followed this section, after the changes were made.

A. Landers also said that there is another change, to section 54.1401(D), that we'd like to have you consider, and it's due to the volume of permits we've been receiving this spring. She said it has been difficult to meet the deadline of 10 business days when we're so swamped, and that it usually takes about 5 days to process a permit, and so we'd like to see the code changed to allow 15 business days so that our hands are not tied as they are – because if we can't get the permit approved in 10 days it is automatically approved. She said staff has had to work overtime and to drop other things that need attention, and so we would like you to consider this proposal.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if there were any thoughts on this, or if people were okay with it. There were no comments made, but several members nodded in agreement.

S. Mittlefehldt opened the public comment period. Nobody approached the podium to comment.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if there was any further Commission discussion, and she then asked if anyone wanted to make a motion.

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by M. Rayner, and carried 7-0 that after review of the draft Land Development Code (LDC) amendments presented as case 01-ZOA-05-2025, and after conducting a public hearing and careful consideration of the contents of the draft LDC amendments, the Planning Commission finds that the draft LDC amendments are consistent with the recommendations, goals, and policy objectives of the Community Master Plan, comply with section 54.1405 of the Land Development Code, represent an improvement to regulation that affects property owners in the city, and therefore are justified, appropriate and should be approved by the City Commission.

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Tyler Peterson, of 718 Homestead Ave., said that he has been talking with Andrea about building an ADU and asked some questions about what was approved in the draft amendments. S. Mittlefehldt and staff answered the questions, including when the changes would go into effect. Mr. Peterson thanked everyone.

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025

NEW BUSINESS

A. 04-SPR-05-25 – Site Plan Review for new GMC Vehicles Sales Site at 1101 W US-41

A. Landers stated that the staff has reviewed a proposed site plan for the construction of a new commercial building, new parking lot, dumpster enclosure, landscaping, and site improvements - for 1101 W. US-41 - and has provided comments for the plan. Those comments and narrative responses are in your packet. She showed the staff report on the wall monitors and said that in the staff report staff has provided the applicable zoning and development standards, the proposed uses, dimensional regulations, and the applicant's request to exceed the maximum parking space requirements for their vehicle inventory parking. She also said that [in the staff report] are the site plan review standards, the relationship to the Community Master Plan, and attachments include the Site Plan Review application, staff comments from all departments, the area map, block map, photos of the site, and the site plan set. She asked if there were any comments for the staff. There were none.

Brian Savolainen, Civil Engineer for the project and Wickwire Associates, said that the General Manager of the GMC dealer, Nicholle Remilong, is here to answer questions about operational and architectural issues. He said they did include detailed plans, but the architect wasn't available to be here today. He said that with most dealerships, including GM, the exterior look is driven by GM itself. He said that they are jumping from one side of the highway to the other, and that gives them a better view and an easier and safer approach to the business. He said that early in the project they brought the project to MDOT and it was reviewed by their corridor committee, and now the only thing we need from them is our stormwater permit.

He also said that we aren't changing the drive entrance, we're just lowering the grade a little bit and that is all we'll be doing in the right-of-way.

He said that there was a hotel on the site before, and there were storage units on the backside. He said we are cutting the first part where the hotel was by about three feet, and then leveling it with the back of the site and that creates a bit more space for mobility on the site. He said the parking was a bit confusing to us at first, but there isn't anything for a car dealer for what is needed for display, but there is what is called *hard surface display parking*. He said that isn't official [required] parking, but they'll work with staff to figure out details for what is needed for the body shop, service area, customer and employee parking, for the required parking calculations. He said that the LDC does work for what they need.

Mr. Savolainen said the in regards to the site, one of the biggest concerns is the stormwater in that area is tricky, as it does eventually go to the Whetstone [Creek] and there were some concerns about that. He said that there is enough property out to the east end of the site for a large stormwater basin, and the water has to build up quite a bit and backflow up the pipe to go into a small line that goes to McClellan, which is only a 6-inch storm [outlet]. He said that they are significantly reducing the stormwater that was generated there before, because the whole site was overflowing into the MDOT right-of-way. He said the now everything is graded away from the right-of-way and into the parking lot to capture everything internally and send it to the east, while all the roof drains will be collected and water sent to the south side of the property. He said there are some minor landscaping items to address, and that there is a nice buffer to the south already, which is a big hill. He related that to the east, there is a residential property, so they're doing both landscape items there, including a 4-ft. high privacy fence.

He said that regarding utilities, they're trying to use the same ones so that we don't have to go out into McClellan Ave. to do any major work there, with the size of the utilities for the hotel (inaudible). He said that is the basic overview of the site and we'll be glad to answer any questions.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if anyone had any questions.

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025**

K. Clegg asked how many employees are anticipated to be working in the building at the same time, and it says in the report that you will have 13 employee parking spaces.

Ms. Nicholle Remilong said that they have about 40 employees, a few of them are part-time, and I think it's more than 13 spaces. She also said that the front-facing areas will be for customers and employees will park in back.

Mr. Savolainen said that is not the total that will be worked out.

K. Clegg said that it sounds like there will be plenty of parking for employees then.

S. Mittlefehldt asked if anyone else had questions or thoughts.

J. Fitkin asked if the new landscaping standards that the Planning Commission recommended could be applied to this application?

A. Landers said that when an application is submitted it is subject to the standards at that time.

D. Fetter asked what the building might look like, color-wise, and said that she was curious if there was any thought about making it similar to buildings in Marquette.

Mr. Savolainen said that it will have a black metal exterior with quite a bit of glass, and there are breaks in the building and some details called out.

Ms. Remilong said that there will be a lot of glass in front and the look will be very modern.

D. Stensaas stated that the Site Plan Review checklist includes an item in the voluntary information section at the end that states, as a result of Planning Commission deliberation on making this a code standard, that the color of buildings should not be more than fifty percent black, white, or shades in between. So, that is just there as a sort of recommendation. He also said that the Planning Commission can recommend the landscaping be changed to all native plants, but the applicant doesn't have to change their plans that comply with the LDC.

J. Fitkin said she would like to ask that they use the native plant standard that was recently recommended for adoption in the LDC.

K. Clegg asked if the site plan review standards need to be discussed individually, item by item.

A. Landers said that it's best to cite them in your findings of fact.

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by J. Fitkin, and carried 7-0 that after review of the site plan and the supplemental documentation dated 4-22-25, and the Staff Report for 04-SPR-05-25, the Planning Commission finds substantial compliance with the City of Marquette Land Development Code, the Site Plan Review Standards in Section 54.1402(E), and hereby approves the site plan with the recommendation that the landscaping be changed to utilize native plants as possible, with and the following condition:

- *that an amended plan is submitted to meet staff comments.*

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025**

B. 2nd Site Plan Extension Request – 420 N. Third St. mixed-use building proposal

A. Landers read the correspondence from the applicant. D. Stensaas provided some history of the development proposal and the stated reasons for past delays.

It was moved by K. Clegg, seconded by D. Fetter, and carried 7-0 that the Planning Commission approves the request for an extension in case 02-SUP-06-23, with the expiration date to be 6-20-2026.

C. Letter of Support discussion

S. Mittlefehldt said she has a colleague who is trying to develop a Fullbright scholar program, which is an international exchange program, and she is seeking to get that position in the Earth, Environment, and Geographical Sciences department to host a scholar with expertise in community planning and development. She said that she was asked to write a letter of support either from me, or even better, with the support of the Planning Commission. She said this person wouldn't be involved with the Planning Commission, but might be able to provide training or a workshop or give a talk about community planning and development in other parts of the world. She said she thinks it's a great opportunity, and she thinks that the odds of getting the position are probably slim, but she wanted to ask if the members are in support of the effort and the letter.

M. Rayner said that she was at a school that had this type of exchange, and it was very interesting.

J. Fitkin said that she is in support.

A. Wilkinson said that in his Planning program at the University of Michigan he met people from all over the world and they shared a lot of cool ideas he hadn't heard before and different ways of dealing with things, and he learned a lot from them, so anytime you can bring other viewpoints in it's probably a good thing.

D. Stensaas said that he thinks our staff would fully supports it and that it could be a good opportunity for an exchange of perspectives.

S. Mittlefehldt said that she will move forward with this then, and thanked everyone.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMENTS

M. Rayner thanked everyone for their work on the voluminous LDC amendments.

K. Clegg said that it [the LDC amendments] has been a long process and he thanked staff and the Commission for their diligence and working on this for the past several months.

D. Fetter said that she liked that this has been added to their agendas and she that learned quite a bit and had some good discussions, and thanked staff for the hard work put into the

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025

project.

J. Fitkin said that she appreciates the work on the LDC and the level of detail put into it.

D. Stensaas said that they will add the maximum parking standards to the discussion for next year. He also said that in the vein of a discussion of exchange of ideas, even people from parts of lower Michigan don't quite get how the amount of snow we get here impacts our codes, especially with parking requirements. He related that he hears people say that we should eliminate residential parking requirements altogether, and cite different cities where that has been done, but it's pretty hard when you have a parking ban on the streets, and six months of snow some years. He also suggested that Commissioner Premeau let us know if he has specific ideas for the parking standards, sooner than later, and they will be happy to work on it.

A. Landers said thank you for the thanks, and thanked the members for their hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair S. Mittlefehldt adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

David Stensaas

Prepared by D. Stensaas, City Planner and Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission Staff Liaison.