

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MARQUETTE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 03, 2026

A regular meeting of the Marquette City Planning Commission was duly called and held at 6:00p.m. on Tuesday, February 03, 2026, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission (PC) members present (7): M. Rayner, J. Guter, N. Vermaat, D. Fetter, Chair Kevin Clegg, J. Fitkin, S. Lawry

PC Members absent: Vice-Chair A. Wilkinson

Staff present: City Planner and Zoning Administrator D. Stensaas; Zoning Official A. Landers; Assistant City Engineer Kellen Wessels

AGENDA

It was moved by M. Rayner, seconded by J. Guter, and carried 7-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES

It was moved by J. Guter, seconded by M. Rayner, and carried 7-0 to approve the minutes with two corrections as noted by Commission members.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Ron Mattson, of 912 Horizons Dr., stated that he is here to support the application for the Wilson St. Multi-Use Path project. He related some background information that he understood as the reasons the path was not built many years earlier, as proposed in the site plans that were approved, and that the path is needed for the safety of residents in the adjacent developments who must walk, run, bike, and use wheelchairs on Wilson Street due to the lack of sidewalks or a path. He also said he appreciates the work of the City Staff in preparing the application materials and thanked the Planning Commission for its ongoing support of the project.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Nobody wished to comment.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Wilson Street Multi-Use Path Proposal

Assistant City Engineer K. Wessels stated that City Staff are proposing the construction of a 10' wide asphalt path with 2' wide gravel shoulders, with the edge of path 5' behind the back of curb. He said the path will be on the north and east side of Wilson St., and that the path will extend between the Iron Ore Heritage crossing on Wilson St., and the McClellan Avenue terminus of the street. He said that the design includes ADA-compliant sidewalk ramp crossings at cross-streets, and that this pathway will create a safer corridor than the existing design. He also said his office has prepared an application for a grant through the Michigan DOT's Transportation Alternatives Program, and noted that there is a 20% city match requirement. He then explained the design and layout information provided in the agenda packet, which is the "preliminary design" for the grant application.

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K. Wessels continued, saying that the project was introduced to the capital improvement plan in 2017, but has not been funded. He related that letters of support have been garnered from the Iron Ore Heritage Trail Authority, Harlow Farms Homeowners Association, and the Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP), which owns much of the adjacent land. He mentioned that the path will be built in the right-of-way, but there are areas where a grading easement will be required, and the SWP is open to granting one. He also said the path would serve the immediate area and provide a non-motorized connection to downtown, and that it would benefit those using the McCellan Avenue path by offering an alternative route across US41 using the Soo Line Bridge.

Commission members asked a wide variety of questions and discussed the proposed application.

It was suggested that a shorter route from McCellan Avenue to the bridge over US41 through the Superior Watershed Partnership's property be considered in the future.

S. Lawry said that the movement of fire hydrants that are within the path corridor are not listed in the cost estimate.

K. Wessels said that no hydrants will be moved, and that the path alignment avoids them. He also said that this will be confirmed when a survey is conducted, the design is finalized, and the alignment is drawn to avoid the existing electric transformers. He said that one streetlight may need to be moved, and staff intend to remove it once the project is approved for funding.

Concerns regarding snow storage and plowing were expressed, and pursuing snow storage easements was suggested.

K. Wessels said that Public Works is being consulted on the project and snow storage easements will be considered.

S. Lawry questioned the wording of the Draft Resolution, particularly the statement that the path would be maintained in perpetuity. He asked if there is an alternative statement that is acceptable.

K. Wessels said it is a requirement of the federal grant funding to use that term, but if the path somehow becomes unusable, the City may be required to provide an acceptable alternative.

D. Fetter said that she is excited that this is happening and likes the designed buffer, and asked if the fence would be temporary.

K. Wessels said no, the fence included in the estimate is for areas where a safe slope cannot be achieved adjacent to the path, and the grant requires that we follow specific design standards.

D. Fetter asked about motorized use, such as snowmobiles and e-bikes.

K. Wessels said that his understanding is that e-bikes are not classified as motorized, and that this path would be treated the same as the rest of the City's multi-use paths. He said that snowmobiles would not be allowed on the path, per a City policy.

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K. Clegg asked about the treatment for erosion in an area with a steep slope near the edge of the right-of-way on the western end of the project limits.

K. Wessels said that erosion control will be included in the contract and included in the estimates, and that all disturbed areas will be topsoiled, seeded, and mulched as a part of the contract, which is included in the estimate.

K. Clegg asked if the Commission needed vote on anything.

D. Stensaas said that it wasn't necessary, as this item was put on the agenda mainly to facilitate public input and to help evaluate the proposal before the application is submitted.

J. Guter asked if the Commission will see this project again, to approve it?

D. Stensaas said that it doesn't require further approval, as this proposed pathway was approved in the Community Master Plan's map for bike routes and multi-use paths.

K. Wessels said there will be more thought put into this project through the final design, and if there are any additional comments from the commission or public, we would love to hear them.

D. Stensaas said that he will relay any additional comments or questions to the engineers.

WORK SESSION ON REPORTS/PLANS/ORDINANCES

A. Land Development Code Amendments

A. Landers showed the draft amendments on the monitors in the room and said that Dave would begin the review.

D. Stensaas said that the proposed changes to section 54.638 are mainly for improved formatting, breaking the content into a more user-friendly layout of information. He also said that the substantive changes concern the permit requirements for the long-term or overnight, day-to-day use of food trucks, or mobile vending units, on private property. He explained that food trucks have become a 24/7 feature at a few places and on properties with limited parking, which can have an impact that should probably require them to be treated as an accessory use with a parking space requirement, rather than the waiver of required parking that comes with their approval through a business license. He said that the City Code does not account for this overnight or "long-term temporary" use of the property by a food truck, and so changes to the new sections (A)(1) and (B) are intended to address this and allow for it, with the recommended parking space requirements, for mobile vending units that are motor vehicles, shown in Figure 53 of section 54.903.

There was extensive discussion about the scenarios that D. Stensaas had mentioned, including site-specific questions and information, as well as the existing process for approval of various land uses that establish temporary sales areas, via business permits issued by the City Clerk and reviewed by other staff, including the Zoning Administrator and the Fire Marshal.

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The Planning Commission was generally amenable to the proposed amendments to section 54.638 and Figure 53 for the overnight and longer use of a private property by a food truck.

D. Stensaas said that the proposed amendment to section of 54.905 is intended to address an issue that Mr. Lawry raised sometime after the last round of amendments were approved, to allow for snow storage on paved areas of a commercial property.

There was a discussion about the wording, the use of "may" versus "shall", and the use of landscaped and paved areas for storing snow. It was determined that there is a need for further clarity regarding the allowable amount of a paved parking area that should be permitted for snow storage. The discussion resulted in the consensus that staff should refine the text to state that "up to ten percent" of a parking lot may be used for snow storage.

Staff and the Planning Commission then discussed the proposed changes to section 54.705, which would add clarifying language to state that accessory structures may be built on a vacant lot only if there is a documented, demonstrated intent to build a principal structure as well. There was a discussion of the item and the Planning Commission found it to be acceptable.

S. Lawry said that he thinks some exception should be made to allow for smaller structures to be allowed on vacant lots.

D. Stensaas said that the proposed changes to section 54.642 are specifically to address the fact that the property owners of through-lots are unintentionally excluded from being able to get a permit to have an animal enclosure or beehive because those lots do not technically have rear yards. The Planning Commission discussed the proposal and found it to be acceptable.

A. Landers said that she did some research and put together an informational presentation about the development of data centers, as requested by the Planning Commission at their last meeting. The Planning Commission and staff discussed the information, and the following motion was made:

It was moved by J. Guter, seconded by D. Fetter, and approved 7-0 to draft a memo to the City Manager requesting that she oversee the coordination of a project to gather essential information about the potential location of data center facilities within the City of Marquette, as a proactive step regarding such a development proposal.

COMMISSION and STAFF COMMENTS

The Planning Commission members each thanked A. Landers for preparing and delivering her presentation on data centers.

S. Lawry said he wanted to reiterate the point he made in the last meeting that possible changes to the zoning of the former hospital site may be warranted to ensure that the property's development achieves an appropriate density and good use of the space. He said the former Hospital Overlay zone allowed for substantial density and the neighborhood was accepting of it. He said that it is a rare opportunity that a project site like this becomes available, and we should consider any changes would be appropriate.

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D. Stensaas said, in reply to S. Lawry's comment, that there are some conceptual and preliminary plans for the redevelopment of the former hospital site that were presented for staff feedback fairly recently, and that he did let the Project Engineer know that if there are elements of the zoning district standards that may be tweaked to produce a better development, without negative changes for the community, to let me know and we could at least discuss it and possibly bring it to the Planning Commission. He said that he did get acknowledgement that the development team will consider the suggestion, and that he will let the Commission know any specific requests that come from the offer.

A. Landers said that there will be a rezoning case at the next meeting, and she and D. Stensaas provided summary information about the rezoning request.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair K. Clegg adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm

David Stensaas

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