

MINUTES

City of Alpena Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
December 8, 2015
Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7 p.m. by Paul Sabourin, Planning Commission Chair.

ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

Present: Mitchell, Hunter, Gilmore, Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Lewis, Heraghty

Absent: None.

Staff: Adam Poll (Director of Planning & Development), Rich Sullenger (City Engineer), Vickie Roznowski (Recording Secretary)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The December 8, 2015, agenda was approved as printed with one addition to Reports – Sewer & Water.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the October 13, 2015, regular meeting were approved as printed.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION:

None.

BUSINESS:

1. Proposed Long Lake Avenue – Johnson Street Truck Route Bypass

Sullenger stated this area of the community is problematic on two fronts. The area northeast from the project location has developed into a truck intensive industrial area over the past several years with new businesses developing and existing businesses expanding. The area is not served by a convenient truck route requiring these businesses to travel 14 miles round trip to access US-23 which is less than a mile from their location. The only other existing route is through an established residential area of the community and the streets within this area are not built or designated for truck traffic.

There also exists the need for a publicly owned street to service two new businesses currently in the development stage in this area. The two parcels are part of a larger vacant area with access via an extended driveway from Johnson Street that is entirely on private property. This private driveway services two existing businesses as well as the local soccer complex. This driveway is not under City jurisdiction and cannot be policed nor maintained by the municipality. To provide adequate public access for the development of these two businesses, the existing entities along the street, open up additional property for

development and assist the existing truck oriented businesses in the area by shortening access to US-23, the City is proposing the development of an access drive to meet the needs.

The adjoining property owners have tentatively agreed to donate the right-of-way needed for this new street. The proposed street will be routed adjacent to the two parcels under development and, with the remainder of the area zoned for industrial development, making it ideal to be included as part of the City's overall truck route system. This route will enable truck traffic to travel through non-residential neighborhoods while still staying within the City limits and shortening the round-trip routes to local clientele as well as those to the west and south. The new businesses in development as well as the existing ones will benefit greatly from the new road as they will now have access from the northeast as well as the southwest. This full street section will be monitored, maintained, plowed, and enforced under the City's jurisdiction in lieu of the private parcel owners.

Gilmore asked if this was approved do we have an idea of truck traffic that would be using the new route. Sullenger stated that Jackie Krawczak contacted a number of trucking related businesses to see what type of traffic that may be generated. The best estimate is that it will be about 20 trucks a day. During summer time and road construction you will probably see more coming out of the former Glawe pit then you will in the winter time. Hunter stated those are the number of trucks, but how many trips? Sullenger stated that it depends on the location of where they are going to. If they are hauling down state then it will probably be one trip a day and if hauling here in town it may be multiple trips per day. Right now if they are delivering to a project in town then they are allowed access down Long Lake Avenue if they are working in that area. Lewis stated that with the new route why would anybody use the north route anymore? Sullenger stated if they are going north than they he feels that they would still use the north route. Lewis stated any truck coming from the west or the south is going to want to go through the new truck route instead of going around. Sullenger stated he feels they will still take the north route because even though the north route is longer it will probably be a faster route by the time they do the stops, the turning movements, etc. through the area. Feels that the trucks going into Lafarge and the pulp trucks will continue to use the north route. Sabourin stated that he aware that the college is concerned with the trucks going through that portion of Johnson Street. Has heard that the ACC building on the South side of Johnson Street would no longer have students over there and that they would be at the facilities on the north side of the street. Don MacMasters, ACC President, stated the college does not have any plans to move everything over to the facilities on the north side of Johnson Street. In fact, plans are to move the nursing program into Van Lare Hall and chase some state money to renovate that space. The college remains against this new truck route. Students cross Johnson Street on a daily basis to attend classes at the other buildings. MacMaster further stated that if you create a shortcut people will take it, Johnson Street could become the new Hamilton Road.

Jackie Krawczak, Chamber of Commerce President, stated that this is a very difficult project for the chamber because ACC is a member of the chamber so we have got this tension between our members. We have done a tremendous amount of research on this. With two dozen or more businesses, that are members, asking us to support this it's very hard for us to turn our back on those several dozen businesses and only support what one of our members wants. However, when you put the facts together with that many businesses and members that are asking us for this because it is hurting their businesses this is a fairly easy solution that solves the truck traffic problem of going through residential

areas and works for the businesses. One question that was asked that I would like to address is “Why would people use the north route if this was a shortcut?” When I was asking businesses about the number of truck trips per day I had a couple of businesses, one in particular was Team Elmer’s that said that their policy is to use the existing route. Their policy is not to put their trucks where they’re going to be around more people and going to have to make more turns. There were other businesses that said the same thing. Depending on what they were going to do it would be their policy to use the north route and only use the new route when it makes sense to them. Something that has come up during this is a lot of emotion not only from the opposing side but also from the trucker side of it. I encourage you to look at the research and the facts, see what other communities have as far as truck routes, crossing areas, and trucks going through populated areas, dense areas, or even college campuses. I really encourage you not to accept emotion as fact when you make your decision.

Hunter stated one concern he has is the money being spent. The City has many other needs, in fact, streets that are in bad shape here and there and other projects that need to be done, so how can we justify \$400,000 to \$500,000 that needs to be found versus the other needs of the City. It is public money being used primarily to help private companies. Krawczak stated that if the businesses want this so badly that they would be willing to donate a large portion of it if it was acceptable for them to donate product. Hunter asked why? Gifts were made in-kind for the Northern Lights Arena. Sullenger stated that this cannot be done because this would be an MDOT project.

2. Approval of 2016 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Lewis, seconded by Dort, to approve the 2016 Planning Commission meeting schedule.

Yays. Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Lewis, Heraghty, Mitchell, Hunter, Gilmore

Nays: None.

Motion passed by a 9-0 vote.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

REPORTS:

1. Development Updates

CDBG Façade and Rental Rehab Grants

Did receive approval for the CDBG Façade Grants and Rental Rehab Grants for Alpena Furniture and the Owl Restaurant. Should see a draft of the Grant Agreement within a month of the approval and then construction should be begin shortly thereafter.

Holiday Day Inn Express

Limited progress has been made.

Former Alpena Power Company Building

Received the Phase I and have been informed that we need to have a Phase II done. Bids for the Phase II will be in by the end of this week.

2. Redevelopment Ready Communities Program

Will be meeting with representatives of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. Part of the benefit of this program is technical assistance. They are interested in helping the City with a Downtown Marketing Study. There has not been an update to the study since 2003-2004.

3. Sewer & Water

Hunter stated that he would have to agree with people in the township because if they are paying the same price that City residents pay then aren't they helping replace pipes and sewer lines in the City that have nothing to do with getting water to and from the township? Sullenger answered no. This issue has been addressed in a number of discussions and interrogatories. All the water mains are intermingled so if a water main breaks then the water can reroute around. All customers share in the cost and the Township is a customer of the City so basically as a customer they share those costs as everyone else does. Hunter stated that a big complaint was the lack of information from the City. Why do you think communication broke down? Sullenger stated that the City has been as transparent as we can with disseminating information out to the public and the Township on this whole process and how we developed our rates so anybody that says that they are lacking information has either stuck their head in the sand or don't want to because the City has gone above and beyond getting that information out to the public. Short of going door to door I don't know how much more information we can make available to the public.

CALL TO PUBLIC:

None.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS:

Hunter asked if Poll has been in contact with the MSU Extension regarding raising chickens in cities. Poll stated he has a meeting with them tomorrow and will discuss this issue with them at that time. Poll further stated after doing some research and receiving some paperwork from Dort, enforcement wise, it looks like it would be easier to do a standalone Code of Ordinance. It may be something that is not put directly into the Zoning Ordinance but simply referenced within the ordinance because it's easier to enforce with the police as opposed with himself or the Building Official.

Hunter also asked if there is anything new regarding AirBNB. Poll stated he has not been in contact with Terri Riopelle, but did talk to her niece. Her niece who indicated that Riopelle only rents her room as a supplemental income and that she has only rented out 4 times in the last 18 months. It definitely isn't a moneymaker. Did inform them that they would have to obtain a Special Use Permit to be able to continue to rent out a room.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m. by Chair Sabourin.

Wayne Lewis, Secretary