

REGULAR MEETING - HOUGHTON CITY COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2006 - 5:30 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Mayor Eric Peterson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Backon, Councilmen Robert Megowen, Craig Kurtz, Gernot Joachim and Michael Butvilas, and Councilwoman Rachel Lankton.

ABSENT: None

Also present for the City were City Manager Scott MacInnes, Clerk-Treasurer Kurt Kuure, Director of Public Works Mark Zenner, and Police Chief Ralph Raffaelli.

ALSO PRESENT: Representatives of Daily Mining Gazette, WMPL, Mike Drewyor, Howard Greenley, Richard Dunnebacke, John Haro.

REGULAR MEETING: Mayor Peterson called to order a Regular Meeting of the Houghton City Council and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Joachim to approve the Minutes of September 13, 2006 as written.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: City Manager MacInnes added under New Business - Item C - Clark Street Trees, Item D - College Avenue Apartment Proposal, Item E - Loader Blade Purchase, under Reports - Item C - Planning Commission Report.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COUNCIL: Richard Dunnebacke of Portage Township spoke in favor of the Resolution the Council will consider regarding use of the old library building. He considers it a real asset to the community and would like it to remain a public building.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS Clerk Kuure read a letter from Jim Bogan, CEO and President of Portage Health, addressed to John Donnelly of the Houghton Police Department. He commended Officer Donnelly for saving a life on August 4, 2006 by using the automatic external defibrillator. Officer Donnelly received the first "Caring Community Award."

REPORTS: Director of Public Works Mark Zenner reported that most of the landscaping is done at the East Houghton Waterfront Pavilion and the repaving of the trail will be done as soon as possible. The paving

contractor started some of the paving work and will be using and testing a new mix. Crews are working on the Huron Creek Leachate Collection System and will soon be installing the lift station. There is already an improvement in the water quality. Mr. Zenner took the authors of the book *Gentle Hikes* on a tour of the Nara Trails. Mark Zenner felt they were very impressed. Honeywell should be done with the heating and lighting improvements by mid October. Mr. Zenner expects to have loader bids by the next meeting.

City Manager MacInnes said he is looking at replacing the City Centre sign as it is falling apart. He will bring the Council some proposals to review. He asked for their input both with the lettering and the lights around the sign.

City Manager MacInnes reported that the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing concerning changes to the sign ordinance regarding abandoned signs.

OLD BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Joachim and supported by Kurtz to change the name of Century Way (south) to Brickyard Lane.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Joachim, Kurtz, Megowen, Backon, Peterson, Lankton, Butvilas.

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Lankton and supported by Backon to approve the September Accounts Payable as presented.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Backon, Kurtz, Megowen, Peterson, Joachim, Butvilas.

No: None

Motion carried.

John Haro of Portage Township presented a proposal for use of the Carnegie Building (old Library building). He would like to see it house the Raffaelli Historical Photo Collection and other local history exhibits. He said it could also be used for traveling exhibits and a cultural center. The building is in excellent condition. He asked for time to look for funding.

A discussion was held about the heating/air-conditioning unit and the possible need for a dehumidifier.

City Manager MacInnes said the proposed use of the building fits the definition of a library. He is involved with a local group that is looking for funding and grant opportunities. He asked the Council to back the proposal using the TV Franchise Fund. He estimates it will take about \$10,000. They may charge admission to the facility to help with costs.

Councilman Joachim said he feels public sentiment is in favor of using the Carnegie Building for use as a library type building.

City Manager MacInnes said the City will still be liable for the utility costs if the project does not go. The City will then ask that the building be disposed of as soon as possible.

A motion was made by Joachim and supported by Kurtz to adopt **Resolution 2006-1173** regarding use of the Carnegie Building with the exclusion of the words “but one way or another at some future date the Houghton Portage School District will receive compensation for the building.”

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Joachim, Kurtz, Megowen, Backon, Peterson, Lankton, Butvilas.

No: None

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Lankton and supported by Backon to support the new Carnegie Library Museum and Cultural Center with \$10,000 from the TV Franchise Fund.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Backon, Kurtz, Megowen, Peterson, Joachim, Butvilas.

No: None

Motion carried.

City Manager MacInnes reported that the Clark Street Association purchased some trees for the right-of-way and asked the City to help with the cost. A motion was made by Lankton and seconded by Megowen to

reimburse the Clark Street Association through Howard Greenley for purchase of the trees. This will be paid by the General Fund.

Councilman Kurtz said this does not create a precedent that neighborhoods can purchase trees and expect the City to pay for them.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Lankton, Megowen, Kurtz, Backon, Peterson, Joachim, Butvilas.

No: None

Motion carried.

The Council reviewed a site plan for a proposed apartment building on the College Motel site. They discussed the need for a variance under the land density requirement in the Ordinance. The variance needed is to change the density requirement from: 6,000 sq. feet of land for the first unit, 2,500 sq. ft of land for each additional one bedroom unit, and 1,200 sq. ft of land for each additional bedroom; to 6,000 sq. ft of land for the first unit, 1,500 sq. ft of land for each additional one bedroom unit, and 500 sq. feet of land for each additional bedroom.

A discussion was held about the need for quality student housing in the City of Houghton. A Zoning Board of Appeals hearing will be scheduled for October 11, 2006 at 5:30 p.m.

The Director of Public Works requested authorization to purchase a 16-foot push plow to use in parking lots. A motion was made by Megowen and supported by Backon to approve the purchase of a 16' push plow for \$4,000 from the Equipment Fund.

The Clerk polled the Council:

Yes: Megowen, Backon, Kurtz, Peterson, Lankton, Joachim, Butvilas

No: None

Motion carried.

Councilman Joachim commended the Police Department on the work rounding up vandals in West Houghton and the Fire Department for hosing down the excess paint left by the vandals.

Councilman Megowen asked about the Skate park. City Manager MacInnes said they are open sporadically in the summer months, and he will meet with them to discuss their winter plans.

Councilman Kurtz said the Drake family volunteered to furnish another AED for the community.

A motion to adjourn was made by Backon and seconded by Megowen.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

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Kurt Kuure  
City Clerk