

**CITY OF HANCOCK
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
OF JANUARY 23, 2012**

The regular Planning Commission meeting of Monday, January 23, 2012 was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Terry Monson at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall with the following members present: Bill Baxandall, Bob Wenc, Terry Monson, Dave Lucchesi, and Glenn Anderson.

Absent: Bill Laitila, Lisa McKenzie, Dan Lorenzetti, Tony Wilmers.

Guests: John Haeussler and Roland Burgan

It was moved by Baxandall and seconded by Lucchesi to approve the agenda:

AYES: All

NAYES: None

Motion Carried.

It was moved by Lucchesi and seconded by Wenc to approve the December 5, 2011 minutes.

AYES: All

NAYES: None

Motion Carried.

There were no public comments.

Vice-Chairperson Monson welcomed the reappointments of Dan Lorenzetti and Tony Wilmers to 3 year terms expiring on February 15, 2015.

Updates/Information

- Reviewed the December 8, 2011 and January 12, 2012 US41/M26 Corridor Advisory Team meeting notes.
- Looked at the December 7, 2011 PLLB Long Term Outage Group meeting notes.
- Heard that the City's PLWSA sewer flows have been reduced since the sewer project started in late April, 2011.
- Noted the DNR MNRTF has recommended approval to the State Legislature for a grant of \$262,500 for the Navy Street Park Boardwalk Project adjacent to the Coon Electric building.
- Reviewed some historical dates related to the 2013 sesquicentennial celebration.
- Reviewed the 2011 millage rates between the cities of Hancock & Houghton:

	<u>Hancock</u>	<u>Houghton</u>
Homestead	44.1067	44.4373
Non-homestead	61.8835	62.4373

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- Noted that Finlandia University had named the old Middle School lawn area “Quincy Green”, recognizing that it’s the biggest green space in the downtown area.
- Noted that the MTEC SmartZone had received a \$750,000 MEDC grant, to be used over a 3 year period, to further develop technology from MTU and the University of Michigan.
- Reviewed the 2012 Heikinpaiva schedule of activities.
- Learned that Hancock was again, for the 2nd year in a row, named the 3rd Snowiest city in America by the Weather Channel.
- Heard that the MERIT Network will be installing new fiber optic cable through the city this year. MERIT serves nonprofit, hospital education & government entities. Peninsula Fiber Network will be working with MERIT to connect new users.
- Noted that the Hancock Transit had a 4% increase in riders in 2011 over 2010. 18,005 riders used the bus in 2011.
- Learned that the Quincy Mine Hoist Assoc. is applying for a \$400,000 Federal National ByWay grant, to be matched with \$100,000 of QMHA funds, which if funded, would be used to repair the concrete walls of the 1918 Hoist House building.
- Heard that the occupancy of the 8 new Lahti apartments at 424 Hancock Street had 7 rented by the end of December, and that the Canal Crossings building by the bridge has 15 apartments rented out of a total of 21 units, with 2 new units being readied for rent.
- Noted that the November 2011 unemployment rate for Houghton County was 7.3%, down from a high of 12.8% 20 months ago. The December 2011 rate for Michigan was 9.3% and the US rate was 8.5%.
- Heard that water flow was down about 5% in the city with the 2011 distribution improvements.
- Heard that the new water transmission main had reduced water production by about 25% for Adams Twp. Wholesale water.
- Heard that the city fire department will be hosting the 2013 Copper Country Fireman’s Tournament as part of the sesquicentennial celebration.

The commission reviewed locations identified by MDOT staff along Portage Lake that could be used to erect an Improvised Ribbon Bridge (IBR) and a more permanent Bailey Bridge in the event of a lift bridge failure. The preferred site identified by MDOT, which is also the shortest section, is just east of the Quincy Smelter property. The distance is about 670 feet wide. MDOT is working with various parties to identify a contingency plan.

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners has asked the National Guard to hold a training exercise on Portage Lake using one of its IBR bridges; one is located in Sault Ste Marie.

The Commission reviewed the November 2011 report from the Michigan Association of School Boards indicating that the Hancock Middle School has met certain criteria and

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was one of only 20 schools out of 123 in the peer review group to be named “beating the odds.”

The commission was briefed on the MSHDA grant application for up to \$320,000 to help reconstruct the burned out building located at 116 Quincy St., now owned by Mike Lahti. MSHDA staff did a site inspection on January 6, 2012.

The city has also been working with MSHDA on a \$299,400 rental rehab grant application for the core downtown area. So far, the city has identified the WMPL building, the Kaleva Building, and the old crystal room building as candidates for the grant.

Commission members Bob Wenc presented the proposed update for the last 2 sections of the city’s 5 year strategic plan, the first is Tourism and Civic Design, and the second is Community Relations and Partnerships. Lisa McKenzie and Bob Wenc were appointed to address this section.

The commission reviewed a proposed city ordinance that would establish new rules to regulate feeding pigeons and seagulls in the city.

Dave Lucchesi pointed put the gap in the availability of snowmobile rentals in the area now that Evert’s Motor Sports closed in late October.

It was moved by Baxandall and seconded by Lucchesi to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

AYES: All

NAYES: None

Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Anderson
Secretary