

ISHPEMING DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Meeting of April 26, 2010

A meeting of the Ishpeming Downtown Development Authority was held on Monday, April 26, 2010, at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room. Chairman Brad Argall called the meeting to order.

Present: Brad Argall, Jered Ottenwess, Charlie Anderson, David Aeh, Diane Gauthier, Gary Nelson, Cheryl Kellow, Josefa Adnriacchi, and Rosemarie Strom.

Also present were Treasurer Anita Keto, Carr Baldwin and Greg Gaffney of ECI, Council Members Claudia Demarest and Pat Bureau, John Jackson, Paul Bonetti, Johanna Boyle of the Mining Journal, and Mike Hoey of ABC 5 & 10.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion was made by Mrs. Gauthier and seconded by Mrs. Strom to approve the minutes of March 22, 2010, as amended. Motion carried.

Financial Report

A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mrs. Gauthier to accept the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

Update on Penney Building Demolition

Mr. Gaffney has a set of specs developed for demolition of the building, and questioned whether it was desired to have gravel or grass on the site. General consensus was to have gravel. Per Cathi Cole, the grant application must be submitted and then the project could be bid out. Mr. Gaffney said the estimate has been increased from Dan Mitchell's figure of \$60,000 to about \$77,000. Wages have increased, and the original estimate did not include backfill or sidewalk replacement. Local match would increase from \$15,000 to \$20,000. The purchase price of the building cannot be included in the grant.

A motion was made by Mr. Argall and seconded by Mr. Aeh to proceed with the demolition grant application process. Motion carried.

Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library Request

Library Director Cindy Mack is requesting \$4,038.31 to make improvements for a community meeting room. Mrs. Mack presented her request to the Finance Committee, with the Finance Committee not making a recommendation to the DDA Board. The question was raised whether the meeting room would be utilized. It will help with in-house programs, and businesses and other groups would have the opportunity to use it free of charge. It was noted that Mrs. Mack has raised funds, over \$20,000 so far, to make other improvements, and she plans to continue to raise money.

A motion was made by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Ms. Kellow to allocate \$4,038.41 for the Library meeting room improvements and to include this expenditure in the 2010 budget. Motion carried.

Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Anderson said there has not been a formal Chamber of Commerce for a number of years. The Lake Superior Community Partnership has staff at the court building a couple days a week, but this does not provide adequate service to the Ishpeming area. The Ski Hall of Fame is probably the best building to house a Chamber of Commerce. The projected start date is May 1, before the tourist season starts. A temporary office could be at City Hall, and an interim director and board could be appointed. The project cannot proceed without funding, and it is requested that the DDA fund the Chamber of Commerce through the end of the year.

Carr Baldwin voiced his support for a Chamber of Commerce. He indicated he was on the board of the Chamber many years ago. When the Ishpeming Chamber consolidated with Negaunee, Mr. Baldwin feels that was a good move. When it was merged with Marquette, he expressed his opposition strongly and did not serve on the board. The interests of Marquette and the west end are different, and with the present Partnership, the interests of Marquette override the interests of the west end of the County.

Mr. Aeh said the Chamber would focus on the City of Ishpeming originally, and the goal is to expand to include Negaunee and the townships. The Chamber should be sustained by its members through dues, and the DDA involvement would decrease.

Pat Bureau feels Ishpeming needs a Chamber to focus on this community's needs exclusively. A local Chamber will work, and she endorses a joint venture with Negaunee and the townships.

John Jackson supports the concept of having our own chamber, whether an extension of the DDA or an independent body.

Mr. Nelson said the formal structure must be established before financial assistance can be approved. The plan must show how the Chamber will ultimately be self-supported. DDA should not be held responsible to keep funding a chamber long-term.

Mr. Argall said Gwinn has their own Chamber run 100% by volunteers. He feels the dues schedule is too low. The Chamber could start by being DDA funded, but in year two the community must support the endeavor. The Finance Committee seems to be in support of a chamber, but is skeptical on how far the DDA should be involved.

Ms. Andriacchi indicated that, before a commitment of money is made, a business plan must be in place. She does not feel the Chamber should have any political affiliation, and the Business Association should be separate from the Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Kellow said the IBA would plan events under the Chamber, and the Chamber Board would direct how it would be done.

Mr. Aeh said work would continue with the Lake Superior Community Partnership for economic development, and the Chamber would not be in a competitive position with them.

A motion was made by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mr. Aeh to authorize \$20,000 of DDA funds to help fund a Chamber of Commerce upon receipt of specific details of how the Chamber will operate. Motion carried.

Ishpeming Business Association Report

Mr. Anderson said the finances are good. The fund raising for the volunteer fire departments will end on August 1, and \$2,187 has been raised. A spring cleanup in the downtown will be held on May 15. There will be some new activities at the Festival of Treasures. Rack cards will be going to the printers. Kurt Gronvall is finalizing the concert series, which will be held at 7:00 p.m. this year.

Development of a Three to Five Year Project Priority List

Should develop a priority project list for each of the three areas; downtown area, Hematite Heights, and U. S. 41. Each committee could develop a list of about three items and prioritize their list for projects over the next three to five years. When the DDA plan was amended, 23 projects were included. This list should be reviewed to determine what is possible. Mr. Nelson indicated there could possibly be a bond issue to accomplish as much as possible.

Old Business

Mr. Baldwin commented on the Partridge Creek diversion and plans to best resolve the problem.

Mr. Aeh inquired what information should be provided for the web site on behalf of the DDA.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Carol Holmgren
Recording Secretary