

MINUTES  
City of Alpena Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting (Council Chambers and Virtual)  
March 14, 2023  
Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Randy Boboltz, Planning Commission Chairman.

ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESENT: Boboltz, Gilmore, Vanwagoner, Wojda, Moses, Sundin

ABSENT: Kostelic, Peterson

STAFF: Montiel Birmingham (Planning, Development, and Zoning Director), Kathleen Sauve (Recording Secretary)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Agenda was approved as printed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Joint CIP Meeting February 13, 2023, minutes were approved as printed; Regular meeting February 14, 2023, minutes were approved as printed.

Boboltz explained the procedures for the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION: **Marihuana Ordinance Amendments 23-487** - Birmingham reviewed the changes to the Marihuana Ordinance. She said that growers, processors and micro businesses are now prohibited and have been removed from the Ordinance. Curbside and drive thru service is now allowed. She said that City Council was in favor of the 500 foot buffer in between [marihuana businesses] from property line to property line and it has been added to the Ordinance. She explained the map included in the Commission packet, showing the buffers where new marihuana businesses could possibly be located.

FAVOR: None.

OPPOSITION: None.

Boboltz closed the public hearing at 6:09 pm for deliberation.

Birmingham clarified that the separation distances would be in the Zoning Ordinance following Sundin's request.

Sundin ***motioned*** to approve the amendments to the Ordinance 23-487 as presented.

Wojda ***seconded*** the motion.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Zoning Ordinance Updates: Article 2 : Sign Definitions and Article 4: Signs – Birmingham explained the proposed changes to the Sign Ordinance.

Sundin asked if a definition is needed for the word 'durable' used in the Permanent Sign definition, to which Wojda said it could be contrasted to the definition of 'temporary sign'.

Page 4-12 - Birmingham explained that the Allowable Sign Size Increase was changed from twenty-five (25) to fifteen (15) percent and if the application is denied because it exceeds that, they could appeal their case to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Page 4-14 – Pylon Signs changed to thirteen feet because at only six feet, they would essentially be zoned out; Roof signs would be allowed below the deck line of a mansard roof and a gambrel roof; Opaque treatments would not be allowed – VanWagoner suggested that in special circumstances, an appeal could be made in a case such as privacy issues; Sundin suggested a certain percentage of opacity be called out; Wojda suggested adding 'Unless required by State law' such as with a Marihuana establishment where State law requires those windows to be opaque.

Page 4-15 – Verbiage added about vacant lots and time limit added from sixty days prior to an election until five days following an election with not more than one sign being larger than four square feet in residential areas; it was discussed that certain apartment complexes or duplexes do not allow signs; Birmingham asked if the City should allow unlimited signs to which Wojda said it could turn into blight; Wojda suggested forty total square footage with all signs combined to which all members of the Commission agreed; Non-Residential signs shall not exceed sixty-four feet in total, with the largest a sign size a maximum of thirty-two feet.

Page 4-16 – The only change was that a no-fee permit will be required for portable signs.

Page 4-18 – Placement limitation was changed to no more than three feet of a wall sign may project above the top of the wall to which it is attached.

Page 4-19 – Sundin asked why the Projecting Sign size was quadrupled. Birmingham explained that the current size allowance is far too small. Changing the size allows for more creativity and will decrease the need for so many variances. She said that in old pictures of Downtown, there were much larger signs that looked very nice that would not be allowed today.

NEW BUSINESS: CIP Updates: Fire Department Additions, T125 and E126 Replacements – Birmingham explained that there are potentially some opportunities to help fund the T125 replacement and so having it in the Capital Improvement Plan would help with support of receiving those funds. The E126 replacement was added as a long-range item, but if there was a funding opportunity that became available, having this line item in the CIP would show the need for it. VanWagoner asked what the T125 is. Birmingham said that the T125 is a twenty-three-year-old fire engine.

Wojda ***motioned*** to approve the CIP as amended.

VanWagoner ***seconded*** the motion.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

COMMUNICATIONS OR REPORTS: None.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: Article: Restrictions on Zoning Authority by MSU Extension provided to each member of Planning Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS: Boboltz said the article that Sundin brought in for everyone to read at their leisure, focusing on Murals, was interesting. Discussions took place about the article. Sundin said that he feels in the future, if any problems arise over murals, it will likely be a business saying that another business' mural is actually a sign. He felt that it would have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Gilmore said that it could slip into a content judgement.

Boboltz asked if action needed to be taken by the Commission for the changes in the language of the Sign Ordinance. Birmingham stated that it would have to go to Public Hearing the following month, so no action is necessary. Birmingham then gave examples of previous signs that required variances to be allowed.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m., by Boboltz, Planning Commission Chairman.

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Clayton C. VanWagoner, Secretary