

**MINUTES**  
**City of Alpena Planning Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**March 14, 2017**  
**Alpena, Michigan**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:59 p.m. by Randy Boboltz, Planning Commission Vice Chair.

**ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PRESENT: Mitchell, Gilmore, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Lewis, Wojda**

**ABSENT: Sabourin, Austin**

**STAFF: Adam Poll (Director of Planning & Development), Don Gilmet (Building Official) and Cassie Stone (Office Clerk).**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Poll stated that the first agenda that was received by the Planning Commission had the wrong date on it. It was not November 8, 2017 agenda rather January 10th and the February 23rd (CIP) agenda. The January 10, 2017 and February 23, 2017 (CIP) agenda was approved as presented.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mitchell arrived late at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. It was reflected later in the minutes. The January 10, 2017 and February 23, 2017 minutes were approved as printed.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION:**

None

**BUSINESS: Report on development costs and timeline beyond the Planning Commission - Don Gilmet, Building Official.**

Gilmet summarized that an interested party comes to the City Hall and presents a project. The plans are looked at as far as the zoning, use and site plan. If approved from the Planning Commission the plan then reaches the Building Department. Gilmet stated that the only difference that comes between visiting the Planning Commission and going to the Building Department for a permit is the twelve month variance meaning once the ball gets rolling a variance is only valid for twelve months to act on. Gilmet also added that many people get

ahead of themselves when going forward with a project and are very inexperienced in what does and does not have to happen to continue forward with their idea. There has to be a plan drawing to understand what the interested party plans on doing with their project. Gilmet stated that trying to work with people to better understand what their intentions are sometimes is very hard. People don't realize fees such as sewer and water tap fees that can be very expensive upwards of \$6000.00 just for the tap not including doing any work. When dealing in the City most lots are already developed using an example of 11<sup>th</sup> and Chisholm Street with a house being taken down prior to even considering putting up a structure. Water lines and sewer lines have to be taken into consideration. Is it possible to hook back into those facilities with their plan and the size of the lines that were already there? All that needs to be taken into consideration. Gilmet used an example of fire suppression. A bigger water line would have to be added to be able to release more water volume for the job that it needs to provide. That's how small business referenced as ma and pa business get shut down before they can even make a go with the unexpected expenses coming up that they never took into consideration and trying to utilize the little bit of money that they have set aside for the project. Once the City's new website is up and running Poll hopes the Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) section will provide people with a little bit easier step by step directions and tips on how to move forward with a project to get them better prepared when they go to present their intentions. VanWagoner questioned that people might not have enough time to get all the things that they need together especially when they don't know what they need to have and maybe it wouldn't hurt to have a template made up to better educate the public. Poll stated that the Fairfield was the only variance that has ever expired that he is aware of and that a variance can easily be reapplied for after the twelve month time if the site plans do not change drastically. Poll did state that rezones are permanent. They can't be reversed back. Mitchell added that it would be great if people had a check list to reference to and what plans of attack need to be conquered first. Poll stated that we do our best to work with people and offer an advice or assistance to the best of our ability.

**Business:        Review Sample Sign Ordinance**

Poll explained that Hillman contracted with Denise Cline from NEMCOG and is in the process of updated their sign ordinances. A lot of their original sign ordinance was based off of Alpena's. Cline recommends that the City of Alpena look at Hillman's to figure out how we want to go about updating our signs. Poll hopes that if he can get a few Planning Commission members to form a committee that could go over the process of updating the sign ordinances that we should be able to update without having to contract with NEMCOG. Signs can no longer be regulated by content. Wojda adds that there are very limited exceptions. VanWagoner asks who physically makes these changes on the sign ordinance? Poll answered that we have this in word form. Changes will be noted and whenever the committee agrees upon the language worded it will then get reviewed with the Planning Commission.

**Business: Update on South Bay Alpena – Larry Clark**

Clark stated that he is very happy with the concern of the Planning Commission in our town. Clark explained that the South Bay Project started off with minor changes and has such flourished into a huge northeast project involving recreational opportunities. Clark goes on to discuss the intentions to extend the bike path over a mile explaining the route of the bike path now and what the extension would prevail. The cost would be over a million dollars. \$475,000 would have to be raised with Clark believing that MDOT has some unique funds available for trails that are not motorized. Clark also mentioned the possibility of a 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel Park being constructed and the excitement that is occurring to spur new growth opportunities for US 23 South with the end result of City residents being able to extend their destination out towards Squaw Bay. Clark is ready to move forward on phase one of the project.

**COMMUNICATIONS: None**

**REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE:**

Poll mentioned that yesterday he had the first training session for the medical marijuana committee with a couple of the Planning Commission members learning about the new policies regarding medical marijuana. The fundraiser for the dog park will be held on Thursday, March 23, 2017. The kick off event will be held at the Nucleus in the Center Building. If \$6000.00 can be raised the MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) with match \$6000.00. Lesslee Dort from the downtown development director resigned as of last Friday and interviews began this week. Poll stated that he has had some good meetings with Jim Klarich on a couple different properties regarding other potential parties. Still early on but Poll does anticipate a request for a PUD (Planned Unit Development) coming up in May. Once applications are turned in, more information will be released. Poll also mentioned that the Redevelopment Ready Community Program with the DDA has approved the Downtown Plan as of Tuesday of last week. It will be distributed out to the Planning Commission for review. Poll is hoping to have the 2016 Annual Report also ready for review for the next scheduled meeting.

**CALL TO PUBLIC: None**

**MEMBERS COMMENTS:**

Poll introduced Matthew Wojda to the Planning Commission. Blake Austin is also a new member but wasn't able to attend today's scheduled meeting. Bryan Dort has resigned, leaving one person short and we are currently looking for one qualified member for the Commission. Clark also added that he would like to see a Planning Commission that could work jointly between the cities and the township and elements of the county to really move our whole area forward.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. by Vice-Chair Boboltz.

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Wayne Lewis, Secretary