

ESCANABA PLANNING COMMISSION
“EXCERPTS”
AUGUST 14, 2008

1. North Shore Redevelopment Strategic Plan – Request for Proposal – Discussion

Jim O’Toole said the Escanaba waterfront was identified throughout the master planning process as an underutilized resource which could be converted into a dynamic mixed-use redevelopment area. The Planning Commission will discuss a Request for Proposal in soliciting professional services to assist in creating a North Shore Redevelopment Plan. Mr. O’Toole provided a Request for Proposal (RFP) that was recommended by the Committee of Planning Commissioners, Downtown Development Authority, and Administration to move forward to the Planning Commission to release to various planning agencies, engineers, etc., to come up with a redevelopment plan. Mr. O’Toole said the plan must address zoning issues, zoning plans, implementation methods and action plan model, which will achieve continuous, measurable improvements in the City of Escanaba, with possible funding sources, i.e., general revenue bonding, private, state, federal foundations, Capital Improvement Funds, etc. This must also comply with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended. The Planning Commission in this RFP is seeking innovative recommendations, suggestions and ideas for the development of the targeted area as identified in the Master Plan.

Jim O’Toole said in this plan, the contractor will identify objectives that will be clearly stated, realistic and measurable. The proposed plan will include community input, which encourages community and stakeholder collaboration rather than conflict in development decisions. The proposed plan will strengthen and direct development towards the concepts and vision of the Escanaba Master Plan (See Attached Request for Proposal).

Mr. O’Toole said once all of the proposals come back in, the North Shore Redevelopment Committee will meet and begin a scoring process that will be referred to the Planning Commission, and public interviews of the top three will take place before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the group to retain.

Commissioner Dennis Renken asked if this included the other part of the park. People feel that Ludington Park is the sole and heart of the community, per Commissioner Renken.

Jim O’Toole said the area is as identified in the City’s Master Plan.

Mr. O’Toole said what is needed is a motion from the Planning Commission to release the RFP.

Vice Chairperson Todd Milkiewicz opened the discussion to the public.

Peter Strom stated that he had read the Master Plan, and it struck him how methodical and diligent the process is in adhering to the Master Plan. Mr. Strom said the Board for the Historical Society will be pleased to work in cooperation with the City. As one of the private landowners in that area, the museum property is City property, but the lighthouse property is actually owned by the Delta County Historical Society, which is a non-profit corporation. Peter Strom stated that as this process goes forward, is pleased to be one

of the partners in this process on a cooperative basis. The Master Plan states that residents have voiced interest in the enhancement of the natural resources, and the public-backed Master Plan indicated interest in implementing more parks and recreational facilities for the community. Preservation of open space in the Master Plan was seen as creating recreational opportunities, improving quality of life, increasing local property values and attracting tourism. Open space is critical to maintaining immense recreational opportunities. Mr. Strom said the municipal dock in Escanaba gives the City a deep water port, and mentioned the Shepler Line at Mackinac Island that does lighthouse tour cruises (west and east tours). Some of the natural resources in this community are the lighthouses. Mr. Strom said if there was any way to encourage the Shepler Line or Arnold Line to utilize our deep water port to provide lighthouse tours to Peninsula Point, St. Martin Island, etc., is an idea that deserves analysis. It is a way the municipal dock could be utilized consistent with adjoining uses, such as the historical theme that the museum and lighthouse have here already. Mr. Strom said the museum is in desperate need for storage space; one of the long-term planning committee concerns is setting ways to increase that space to serve as a perpetual receptacle for artifacts relative to the City and Delta County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bridgette Jaakola and seconded by Commissioner Jon Liss to solicit professional services in assisting in creating a North Shore Redevelopment Plan.

Ayes were unanimous.