

SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
“EXCERPTS”
December 2, 2008

NEW BUSINESS

1. Interviews – North Shore Redevelopment Master Plan

Vice Chairperson Stephen Buckbee said the Escanaba Planning Commission will be conducting interviews with three (3) professional landscape architecture, planning and engineering firms that have submitted proposals for the creation of the North Shore Redevelopment Master Plan. The plan once created and adopted will establish appropriate zoning mechanisms and land use models that will encourage innovative redevelopment activities and should move the community forward in becoming more unified, economically savvy and regionally competitive.

The following interview format will be used:

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| Opening Comments | Planning Commission | 5 Minutes |
| Consultant Presentation | Consultant | 20 Minutes |
| Questions and Answers | Planning Commission/Public/Consultant | 25 Minutes |
| Closing Comments | Consultant | <u>5 Minutes</u> 55 Minutes |

City Manager Jim O’Toole said the City of Escanaba is in the process of creating a North Shore Redevelopment Master Plan. This Plan is needed to formulate the appropriate zoning mechanisms and land-use models for the community and into the future. Mr. O’Toole said the hope is for a plan that builds consensus versus plan conflict, and will involve waterfront property owners and other community stakeholders in the pre-development process. It is a land-use plan that, if followed, will move the community forward. In 2006, the Community Master Plan was completed. Within the Master Plan, several implementation strategies were identified outlining specific projects and programs that should result in the City becoming more unified, economically viable and competitive. The implementation of the outline of the North Shore Redevelopment Master Plan should accomplish many of the objectives expressed throughout the planning process concerning this area of the community by empowering community participants, stakeholders, Planning Commissioners and City Council Members to get involved. In the Master Plan, the area in question was described as a potential dynamic mixed-use redevelopment area. Before that can occur, in order to facilitate redevelopment, we need to establish the appropriate zoning mechanisms and land-use models. The interviews tonight will be the first step towards that process. Jim O’Toole said the City plans to build consensus, and will need to involve the waterfront property owners and other community stakeholders in the process so that we are creating a doable environment for public/private partnerships. Mr. O’Toole said this sub-plan must promote public interest in providing a guide for development of the City. There are approximately 429 acres along the North Shore, and of that acreage, approximately 76 acres belong to the City of Escanaba. As part of the planning process, interviews have been scheduled to discuss the existing and future status of the property plans for redevelopment, environmental issues and concerns, occupancy changes, developmental roadblocks and other issues germane to the land. Jim O’Toole said in

order to make this happen, the City does need assistance from the vendor in developing objectives that are specific, realistic and measurable. The North Shore Redevelopment Master Plan is not a study; it is a public land-use policy document once adopted that will assist both private developers and the City in moving the community forward in local land-use planning. Part of the plan will address environmental issues and recommend strategies to minimize or eliminate environmental issues. This sub-plan looks out into the future, up to 20 years. The plan, if moved forward, will become a zoning plan for the North Shore, and will serve as a legal basis for any zoning amendments that will be needed. Once completed, the plan will provide a description of the relationship between the zoning ordinance and the proposed zoning future land uses as depicted in what will be delivered as a future land-use map.

Jim O'Toole said the three firms being interviewed have submitted proposals to do business with the City of Escanaba. A North Shore Steering Committee comprised of City Council Members, Planning Commissioners, DDA Members and staff had been formed and individually rated each proposal and came up with an overall proposal evaluation and performance score. Each vendor was scored on professional qualifications, experience, methodology, local knowledge, community outreach, schedule and reference checks.

1. Beckett & Raeder Landscape Architecture, Planning and Engineering, Ann Arbor.

John Iacoangeli, Certified Planner/Partner, Beckett & Raeder Landscape Architecture, Planning and Engineering, said it was a pleasure to be back in Escanaba to present their qualifications, scope and approach to the North Shore Redevelopment. Mr. Iacoangeli complimented the City of Escanaba on the process used in the Request for Proposal, and said it was pretty comprehensive in terms of how the City asked for the information, scoring as well as the follow-up information that has been provided by the City Manager in order to make the interview as productive as possible.

Mr. Iacoangeli said that Beckett & Raeder, Inc., was founded in 1966. Beckett & Raeder prepared the City of Escanaba's Community Master Plan in 2005 and was adopted in 2006. Beckett & Raeder employs Landscape Architects, Planners, Engineers and as of October 1, 2008, acquired a company in Traverse City that has ecologists and environmental scientists. The Team that has been assembled for the North Shore Redevelopment Project includes Mr. Iacoangeli and Deborah Cooper, Registered Landscape Architect. Mr. Iacoangeli said due to the complexity of the north shore area, if selected, John Beckett would be brought in to help on some aspects of the design and framework of the waterfront. Dr. Chris Grobbel, Ecologist, has experience with distressed properties, Kate Roebuck, Landscape Architect and Rob Pulcifer, Planner, will all be part of the team. Mr. Iacoangeli said the City of Escanaba would be getting some seasoned professionals to work on this project.

John Iacoangeli said his understanding of the project was that the City is looking for a detailed land-use program, that the area in question is an underutilized resource and has the potential to generate year-round activity and a linkage to neighborhoods and the downtown. This will also be an incubator for new job creation and economic development for the City of Escanaba, per Mr. Iacoangeli. One of the things that is really important is to develop a long-term plan that is doable so the people will see results. Mr. Iacoangeli stressed the importance of consensus building, a balance between private and public interests (See Attached Power Point Presentation).

Mr. Iacoangeli thought it was very important for the community to see what is going on nationally with waterfronts. One of the best resources is the Waterfront Center which is a non-profit agency in Washington, D.C. that has consulted with a variety of communities all over the country on waterfront development projects. They could bring their level of expertise here and share examples of how other urban waterfronts are being developed.

Planning Commissioner Tom Warstler asked Mr. Iacoangeli to elaborate on what the nature of that visit would be by the Waterfront Center. John Iacoangeli said it would be one and one-half intensive days of site assessment. The Waterfront Center would come and look at the site, and they would provide some strategies on what they think are appropriate courses of action that communities take. They would cap off their stay here with a public presentation.

John Iacoangeli said Beckett & Raeder has put together a comprehensive, citizen and property owner-driven process. The citizens and property owners will need to be involved in the process, which includes meetings with Planning Commissioners, interviews with key land stakeholders, property owner workshops, development community interviews, the Charette Process, community presentation from the Waterfront Center, and a wrap-up presentation with the Planning Commission. Beckett & Raeder will also provide information in [pdf](#) to the City to post on the City website for informational purposes.

Vice Chairperson Stephen Buckbee asked for any questions from the Planning Commission.

City Manager Jim O'Toole asked John Iacoangeli for his definition of a zoning plan, and does the zoning plan serve as a basis for zoning amendments. Mr. Iacoangeli said zoning plans have regained a new importance with the position on the Enabling Act last year. They have always been the Municipal Planning Act, but rarely incorporated into a master plan. Mr. Iacoangeli said the Zoning Plan is the linkage between the future land-use plan and the current zoning ordinance. An evaluation of this is where you would want to go, and these are the regulations that currently exist, and the zoning plan is how we would get from what we currently have to where we need to go. The zoning plan is part of the implementation process. It would be an analysis of what is currently on the books and what zoning modifications need to be made in order to get there.

Jim O'Toole asked for examples of potential zoning districts that may be created that don't currently exist in Escanaba today. John Iacoangeli talked about Essexville, a community near Bay City, where Beckett & Raeder developed waterfront industrial. It allows them to have a combination of industrial uses, plus it allows them to have public recreational areas. Beckett & Raeder analyzed the setbacks and didn't impede their industrial operations but at the same time provided protection to adjacent properties. Mr. Iacoangeli said ordinances today try to provide more opportunities for landowners to maximize the value of the property by being more flexible.

Vice Chairperson Stephen Buckbee asked what the most difficult part of consensus planning in land-use development. Mr. Iacoangeli said when getting involved with a sub-area plan like this, we need to take a look at community issues and integrating the private property owners into the discussion and decision-making. Mr. Iacoangeli said this is where consensus building comes in.

Planning Commissioner Jon Liss asked if John Iacoangeli, in working in the Marquette area, ever ran into any property owners who said they were not interested, and how did he deal with that. Mr. Iacoangeli stated that scenario did not occur with the property owners as much as it came from the environmental groups. The property owners within the Marquette area were fairly flexible. Once the plan started to develop for the idea of commercial mixed-use, offices and residential, then they had some property owners who had competing type of developments that were not happy with the direction that was being proposed for the waterfront because of the competition.

Planning Commissioner Rick Kell asked about the timing of the Charette, thus, preventing one group having a different set of knowledge than another. John Iacoangeli said they have done it both ways. Mr. Iacoangeli said the word, Charette, is where individuals actually sit down with markers and colored pens and actually try to visualize their ideas on paper. When Mr. Iacoangeli does a community Charette process, they tend to do it upfront and early because they really want to find out where the community is coming from. It also gets the community involved early in the process so they believe their ideas were heard up front rather than at the end of the process.

Commissioner Rick Kell asked if the Waterfront Center would evaluate limitations of the waterfront and provide recommendations. John Iacoangeli said they would provide as much information as possible regarding those limitations so the Waterfront Center would not spend the time they have here in the community looking at those type of concerns. Mr. Iacoangeli said he would like to see the Waterfront Center focus on land and water interface and give an honest assessment of where the potentials are for the waterfront based on the current users and future usage.

Jim O'Toole said if the City provided office space within a City facility, would Beckett & Raeder take advantage of that. John Iacoangeli said Beckett & Raeder would take advantage of that opportunity.

Jim O'Toole had a question sent in from a citizen: "You have been hired by the City, and during the planning-formulation process, an ordinary citizen approaches you with a municipal development idea for the North Shore corridor. What methodology would you use to evaluate the merits of the proposed development?"

Mr. Iacoangeli said the first thing they would do is to make that question available to everyone, whether it be an email, letter, etc. Beckett & Raeder would encourage openness and access throughout the process, both from the leadership team and the consultants. It is a very transparent process.

Vice Chairperson Stephen Buckbee asked for any questions from the public. Hearing none, Vice Chairperson Buckbee closed that portion of the meeting.

John Iacoangeli thanked everyone for the interview, and complimented everyone on a very well run process.