

**CITY OF CHARLEVOIX**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, September 14, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.**  
210 State Street, City Hall, Council Chambers, Charlevoix, MI

**A. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Hess.

**B. Roll Call**

Chair: John Hess  
Vice Chair: Sherm Chamberlain  
Members Present: Judy Clock, John Elzinga, Toni Felter, RJ Waddell  
Members Absent: Don Heise, Dave Novotny, Julee Roth  
Interim City Planner: Zach Panoff  
Former City Planner: Mike Spencer

**C. Inquiry Into Potential Conflicts of Interest**

None.

**D. Approval of Agenda**

No changes.

**E. Approval of August 10, 2015 Minutes**

Motion by Member Elzinga, second by Member Felter to approve the August 10, 2015 minutes as presented. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**F. Call for Public Comment not Related to Agenda Items**

No public comment.

**G. New Business**

1. Review of Donation Review Acceptance Committee Responsibilities.

a. Staff Update.

Mike Spencer, Donation Acceptance Committee member, reviewed the history of the City's Donation Policy adopted in September 2013 which established the public review process and criteria to evaluate a proposed donation. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, City Council re-established the Donation Acceptance Review Committee. He stated that Council wanted the Committee to look at how many memorials should be allowed in public parks, and specifically should the memorial bench program continue.

Mr. Spencer stated the memorial bench program started five (5) years ago and there are approximately 40 benches in East Park now. The Committee was charged with developing a list of donation items, what the City should allow in terms of plaques, and what should be done about memorial benches or bike racks. He stated that the Committee met six (6) times and their recommendations were outlined in the agenda item. Mr. Spencer advised that the Committee felt that there were plenty of benches in East Park and that having a small memorial plaque on each bench was not considered offensive or out of place. The Committee felt that the memorial bench program should continue, but in other parks throughout the City with Staff and Council making the final determination of where benches should be placed. Mr. Spencer stated that the Committee also felt that tables in East Park could be donated with a small plaque similar to the benches. He said benches cost approximately \$2,500 and tables cost approximately \$4,000 each.

Mr. Spencer reported that the Committee did not want to extend the memorial donation program beyond benches and tables in the parks. They recommended that Council consider interior or exterior "donor walls" in one central location with different funding amounts, the lowest level being \$2,500.

Mr. Spencer indicated that the next step in the process was for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to City Council.

b. Planning Commission Discussion.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Committee believed that the Council should not be averse to allowing naming rights for City amenities, i.e., replacement of the tennis courts. Discussion followed regarding the proposed skating rink downtown.

Chair Hess would prefer a list of donors without including monetary values for each. Mr. Spencer said that the Committee was looking at levels of donations that would be recognized.

Member Clock questioned if veteran's plaques would be limited to Veteran's Park. Mr. Spencer replied that the Committee felt that veteran/military memorials or improvements to existing memorials should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

c. Call for Public Comments.

None.

d. Motion.

Motion by Member Clock, second by Member Elzinga to recommend approval of the policy with the exception that names on donor walls should not be separated out by different funding levels. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Committee looked at a potential minimum donation level of \$2,500 which was equal to the cost of a memorial bench.

2. Discussion on Retaining Wall Research.

At the request of Member Waddell, Interim Planner Panoff reported that there were no retaining walls in the area except for some on corner lots that were 3-4 feet tall. The only regulation he found was in Harbor Springs. Member Waddell stated that a neighbor built a 6 foot railroad tie retaining wall and referenced two other examples of retaining walls. He expressed concern that the City did not have regulations pertaining to retaining walls and said the walls that are used as a property line definition could be more problematic. Chair Hess suggested requiring any retaining wall in excess of 2-3 feet be engineered. Member Waddell also talked about examples of retaining walls that were built right up to the edge of an alley or along a City street. Member Clock suggested that a standard wall should meet the requirements of the fence code, but a retaining wall should be engineered. The Commission concurred to add this issue to the list of potential zoning ordinance changes.

**H. Old Business**

1. Discussion on Joint Charlevoix Township Planning Commission Meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

Interim Planner Panoff stated that he spoke to the Planning Commission Chair for Charlevoix Township and he is expecting some Charlevoix Planning Commission members to attend their meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. The City Manager will attend the meeting and he suggested beginning the discussion with the Industrial Park and a proposal for an overlay district to unify zoning. Vice Chair Chamberlain advised that he had a copy of the Township's Master Plan which he would give to Interim Planner Panoff to review.

2. Discussion on Land Use Master Plan updates.

Interim Planner Panoff stated that the City's Land Use Master Plan was approved in January 2011 and it needed to be updated by January 2016. He has a list of items to be addressed that former City Planner Spencer presented to the Commission at the last meeting. Chair Hess suggested that Interim Planner Panoff draft a list of what needs to be changed.

Vice Chair Chamberlain commented about the number of rented seasonal homes which have absentee owners. Chair Hess suggested investigating Traverse City, Harbor Springs, and Torch Lake who are having serious problems with rentals and see what they were doing about such areas.

Interim Planner Panoff stated that the City may want to sell some properties including Coast Guard Park, the City's Street Department property, and the land behind American House which can all be outlined in the Master Plan. He stated that there was new housing data that can be integrated into the Plan and also an Economic Development Study that would be presented to City Council in the near future. Interim Planner Panoff reported that the trailer at 406 W. Upright is being removed.

Vice Chair Chamberlain questioned when the Recreation Master Plan was scheduled to be updated. Interim Planner Panoff replied that the City has over a year to complete the update, and was looking for grant funding to hire a consultant to update the Plan. Interim Planner Panoff asked the Commission members to submit ideas for the Master Plan to him and stated that he will begin drafting sections for the next meeting. Discussion followed regarding the property behind American House and potential opportunities for development.

**I. Staff Updates**

Chair Hess believed that someone from the Commission should be involved in the interview/selection process for the new City Planner. Chair Hess indicated that he would like to serve on the Hiring Committee.

**J. Request for Next Month's Agenda or Research Items**

None.

**K. Adjournment**

Members concurred to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

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Joyce M. Golding/fgm

City Clerk

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John Hess

Chair