

**Marquette Township Planning Commission – Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, February 12, 2020 – 7 p.m.  
Marquette Township Community Center**

Mike Springer called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Springer, Dave Wiegand, Steve Heikkinen, Jim Johnson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jason McCarthy – Planning & Zoning Administrator

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lyn Durant

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

***MOTION:*** *To APPROVE agenda, as presented.*

*Johnson, Moved*

*Heikkinen, Supported*

**Carried: Unanimously**

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

***MOTION:*** *To approve the January 22, 2020, as amended.*

*Wiegand, Moved*

*Heikkinen, Supported*

**Carried: Unanimously**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Sugarloaf Mountain Parking Lot Project Concept – Discussion**

McCarthy indicated that staff was recently contacted with an invitation so serve on an advisory committee that was recently formed to assist Marquette County in developing a new parking area to serve the Sugarloaf Mountain recreation area. The advisory committee was formed to review and provide comment on the proposed parking master plan (attached).

Committee members include:

- John DePetro, Marquette County Board of Commissioners
- Lucy Wilcox, Powell Township
- Jason McCarthy, Marquette Township
- Jim Iwanicki, Marquette County Road Commission
- Bill Sanders, Project Architect
- Marquette County Planning Staff

An increase in visitors to Sugarloaf Mountain in recent years has created a high-hazard parking and pedestrian traffic concern along County Road 550. In the past few years, it has become common practice for overflow parking to occur along the CR 550 shoulder. On multiple occasions, more than two dozen vehicles have been observed along the road, with usually some parked partially within the travel lanes. A combination of factors including vehicular traffic, commercial trucks, curvature of the road, speed, site distance, and unaware tourists contribute to this high-priority safety concern.

To address this safety concern, Marquette County has moved forward with creating a plan to develop additional parking at Sugarloaf Mountain Natural Area. Funds have been allocated to construct approximately 100 additional spaces including 4 bus/RV spaces in 2020.

Additional funds for the development of a northbound right turn deceleration lane and a southbound blow by lane are also being sought through grants. These additional items will increase the safety and traffic flow along CR 550. The additional work along CR 550 will benefit all traffic, including Lundin mining trucks, by negating the need to stop or slow down for turning movements into the new parking lot.

The top priority of this project is to prevent serious injury from occurring by creating additional off-street parking for the Sugarloaf Mountain Natural Area.

The growth in the recreation-based tourism industry has been rapid and is expected to continue. With over 60,000 visitors in 2019, the goal for the right turn deceleration and pass-through lanes is to accommodate projected growth allowing tourism, recreation, and natural resource economies to function together now, and into the future.

A draft concept of the proposed parking area was presented to the Planning Commission for their information.

McCarthy recommended that the Planning Commission support the project and advance the recommendation to the Township Board so that a letter of support could be drafted in support of the project.

Heikkinen asked if it is Marquette County-owned property.

McCarthy responded, yes.

Springer asked if the existing parking lot would be closed.

McCarthy responded, no, and that the existing parking lot would be expanded as well.

***MOTION: To recommend that the Township Board support the proposed project and a letter of support be drafted.***

***Wiegand, Moved  
Springer, Supported***

**Carried: Unanimously**

**2021 Michigan Department of Transportation US-41 Project: Access Management Recommendations (Tentative) – Discussion**

McCarthy detailed various locations that may benefit from access management enhancements, as part of the upcoming 2021 US-41 highway project MDOT. MDOT will be replacing a significant amount of

curb as part of the project and as such, access management recommendations from the transportation consulting firm, WSP USA, MDOT, and staff, have been analyzed in an effort to determine the feasibility of the recommended work. As this discussion was preliminary, staff presented the proposed recommendations to the Planning Commission at the meeting with corresponding maps.

*\*The presentation was informational at this time and staff will keep the Planning Commission informed as discussions with the property owners occur.*

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Draft Marihuana Zoning Text Amendment – Discussion**

The Planning Commission updated a draft of *Article 15 – Principal Uses Permitted in Districts*, by inserting state-defined, marijuana-related land uses into the land use nomograph. This also included designating a land use intensity for each land use, determining which zoning district were appropriate for those land uses, and whether or not the land uses would be permitted by right or would require a special land use permit.

The February 26, 2020 Planning Commission meeting will involve discussion of *Article 16 – Detailed Use Regulations*. This discussion will involve establishing buffers from other land uses, determining densities, and other parameters, such as the number of available licenses in each category.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

The following minutes and information items were distributed for review:

- a. **US-41 Corridor Advisory Group Meeting Minutes – January 14, 2019**
- b. **Approved Road Committee Meeting Minutes – December 3, 2019**
- c. **Draft Road Committee Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2020**
- d. **Winter Farm Market Flier for February 20, 2020**
- e. **Asset Management 101 Training for Local Officials Flier – February 20, 2020**
- f. **Proposed Senate Bill 431: Sand & Gravel Mining Preemption – Memo**

## **REPORTS:**

### **Township Board Report**

Wiegand reported the Township Board had been working on a policy waiver for the Fire Fighters Association meeting. He also discussed the Headlee rollback for the year and the Township Manager position vacancy.

### **Road Committee Report**

Wiegand explained the bids for the 2020 road maintenance were reviewed and that they were all over budget. Some work will need to be done to lower the cost of the proposed repairs and maintenance.

### **Recreation Committee Report**

Springer indicated that Todd Carruth was elected as the new chairperson for the committee. Springer is the vice chairperson and Dave Wiegand was elected as the new secretary. Springer also indicated that the committee would be reviewing their bylaws at the next meeting, and that the Iron Range Roll (which always falls on National Trails Day) will be June 6, 2020.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Heikkinen indicated that he would be absent for the second meeting in April of 2020.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS PLANNING COMMISSIONERS WISH TO MAKE:**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM

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Dave Wiegand – Planning Commission Secretary