

# City of Alpena

## Community Engagement Statement

September 25, 2017

### **Objectives:**

The City of Alpena will continue to involve the entire community as “key stakeholders” in the future development of our City.

- The City of Alpena evaluates each project on an individual basis to determine project scope, stakeholders, project limitations, approving body, points of community impact during the decision making process, internal and external resources, and level of appropriate community involvement.
- The City of Alpena makes information available in a timely manner to enable interested parties to be involved in decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.
- The City of Alpena engages citizens in a transparent manner, making information easy to access for all interested members of the community.
- The City of Alpena seeks public participation for matters involving future development of the City, such as the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance update process.
- The City of Alpena seeks creative ways to involve a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions.
- The City of Alpena uses comments and information received from interested members of the community to make decisions regarding planning, land use, and future development.
- The City of Alpena tracks and analyzes the results of all public participation to the extent feasible and provide summaries back to the public.

### **State and Local Regulations:**

- Alpena City Charter
- Alpena City Code of Ordinances
- Alpena City Zoning Ordinance
- Michigan Open meets Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)
- Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)
- Other applicable local, state, and federal regulation

## **Key Stakeholders in the City of Alpena**

In the City of Alpena, each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to ensure inclusion for all stakeholders in the community. Each will vary according to the project being reviewed. Possible key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Alpena City Council
- Local residents
- Neighboring jurisdictions and neighborhood groups
- Emergency personnel
- Downtown Development Authority
- Target Alpena Development Corporation
- Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Commercial business owners and their employees
- Mid-Michigan Medical Center
- Industrial facilities located in the City
- Neighborhood groups
- Real Estate Professionals
- City Boards and Commissions
- Churches
- Schools
- Municipal Employees
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Senior groups
- Community visitors and tourists
- Utility providers

## **Process of Development**

There are various times in the planning process when the City Council, Planning Commission, and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals request public input. These processes include public hearings for rezoning of land, development of the Zoning Ordinance, the Comprehensive Plan, requested variances, and Special Land Uses. The flow chart in Appendix 1 outlines the various steps for these processes.

## **Development Review Bodies**

The City of Alpena encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions. Vacant positions are advertised on the City's Website at <http://www.alpena.mi.us/human%20resource/board%20app%20form%202010.pdf>.

## **City Council**

Alpena's City Council is composed of 5 members. The mayor, and 4 at-large Council members. All City Council positions are voted on by the citizens of Alpena. For many processes (excluding site plan review and variances) Council is the final approving body.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is a nine member body. All members are appointed by the Mayor and Council for 3 year terms. Planning Commissioners deal with development issue in the City such as rezoning, special land uses, and site plans. Often times, they are the recommending body to City Council. They are responsible for writing the Zoning Ordinance and updating the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

The Zoning Board of Appeals has 7 members. Each member is appointed by the mayor for a 3 year term. When a resident of the City cannot meet the zoning ordinance requirements, an application for a variance is filed with this body.

There are many other boards and committee's throughout the City. Agendas and dates/times of the meetings and meeting minutes can be found in the government tab of the City's website at [www.alpena.mi.us](http://www.alpena.mi.us).

### **Open Meetings**

All meetings of the City Council, and its various boards and commissions, shall be open to the public in accordance with the "Open Meetings Act," PA 267 of 1976 as amended, except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act. Public notices for these meetings are printed in the paper and posted at City Hall (as required by the Act). The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property are personally notified:

- Rezoning of property
- Special Land Use
- Variance requests

Statutes require these processes be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the City (The Alpena News) as well as mailed to neighbors within 300 feet at least 15 days prior to the meeting. All meetings are held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and the City will provide reasonable accommodations or services if a request is made to the City Manager's Office.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact the City Clerk or to check the City's website at: [www.alpena.mi.us](http://www.alpena.mi.us) in order to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, agendas, variations, or location changes. Meeting agendas and/or packets are available on the City's website in advance of the meeting.

### **Methods of Community Participation**

Each project's initial evaluation will determine the necessary level of involvement for the project. The following are methods that may be used to reach appropriate level of public participation when taking action on land use or development applications or projects. The City of Alpena will always attempt to use more than one tool or method, depending on the specific project and target audience. This list is flexible and can change based on each project's needs and circumstance.

### **Inform- Provide information and assist public understanding**

- **Website:** [www.alpena.mi.us](http://www.alpena.mi.us) announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
- **YouTube:** City Council meeting are recorded and placed for worldwide viewing on Youtube.
- **Announcements:** Announcements during meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions.
- **Printed Postings:** Available for viewing at the City Hall lobby board.
- **Press Releases and media:** At various times, the City will issue press releases and information for articles to various media outlets. (Including WBKB TV, TrueNorth Radio, WATZ Radio, and The Alpena News.)
- **Email or Postal Mail:** Interested parties may request to the City Clerk that they be notified personally of meetings/topics for discussion and postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet, according to statute.

### **Consult- Obtain public feedback**

- **Surveys:** Utilizing online and paper surveys allows for the collection of large amounts of data and opinions from the public.
- **Public Hearings:** Public attendance at meetings is strongly supported and allows for an appropriate venue for public input.

### **Involve- Work directly with public throughout the process**

- **Open houses:** In order to create two-way communication, the City will hold open house events for projects and initiatives as needed.
- **Community Workshops:** Issues that require community feedback can benefit from a noticed workshop.
- **Charrettes:** Multiple day design charrettes and information gathering sessions allow a larger group of people to participate in the community engagement activity.

### **Collaborate- partner with public in each aspect of decision making**

- **Advisory Committees:** The City uses advisory committees for specialized aspects of our community to enhance collaboration between City staff and the public.
- **Focus Groups:** Bringing together stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm decision making options.

### **Communicating Results**

The City of Alpena will publicly communicate all results of community input on planning and development issues. The City will utilize one or more of the “Inform” methods to relay results back to the public.

### **Updating the Community Engagement Plan**

Like all documents, the City of Alpena understands that the Community Engagement Plan will need to be reviewed and updated on a routine basis. This plan will be updated as needed, at a minimum of every 5 years, in conjunction with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Updates to this plan will be drafted by staff, reviewed and recommended by Planning Commission, and approved by City Council. At least one public input session will be held during the process to gather input to generate new ideas.