

# MINUTES

City of Alpena Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
August 12, 2014  
Alpena, Michigan

## CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7 p.m. by Paul Sabourin, Planning Commission Chair.

## ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

Present: Hunter, Gilmore, Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin

Absent: Lewis, Heraghty

Staff: Adam Poll (Director of Planning & Development), Don Gilmet (Building Official), Vickie Roznowski (Recording Secretary)

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The August 12, 2014, agenda was approved as printed.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the July 8, 2014, regular meeting were approved as printed with one correction; page 9, "Motion passed by a vote of 7-2" should be "Motion passed by a vote of 7-0".

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Motion made by Boboltz, seconded by VanWagoner to nominate Sabourin as Planning Commission Chairman.

Ayes: Gilmore, Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin

Nays: Hunter

Absent: Lewis, Heraghty

Motion passed 5-1.

Motion made by Dort, seconded by Gilmore to nominate Boboltz as Planning Commission Vice-Chair.

Ayes: Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Hunter, Gilmore

Nays: None.

Absent: Lewis, Heraghty

Motion passed 6-0.

Motion made by Dort, seconded by Boboltz to nominate Lewis as Planning Commission Secretary.

Ayes: VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Hunter, Gilmore, Dort  
Nays: None.  
Absent: Lewis, Heraghty

Motion passed 6-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION:**

1. **P.C. Case #14-SU-05** Sunrise Mission has filed a petition requesting a Special Land Use Permit to allow for the construction of a 40' x 60' (2,400 SF) activity center located in the rear portion of the lot at 608 W Chisholm Street. **(PETITIONER WITHDREW REQUEST)**

2. **P.C. Case #14-SP-02** Alpena Lodging LLC/Asad Milik is proposing to construct a 4 story, 90 room Holiday Inn Express located at 225 River Street and requested a site plan review by the Planning Commission.

The proposed downtown Holiday Inn Express Hotel is located within the Waterfront Development District (WD) and within the Downtown Overlay District (DOD). Due to the projects location in these districts a number of additional design standards are present. These standards are flexible, and the Planning Commission may approve modifications of the design standards, while maintaining the intent of the district regulations.

1. Setbacks - Due to the need for a permanent awning needed by modern hotels, staff considers it essential to the character of the building and would note that the edge of the awning is located 8' from the front property line, within the required front yard setback range. A side yard setback variance is required, as the building is located more than 20' from Third Avenue. (The frontage on Third Avenue is considered a front yard to the lot being a corner lot.) This is due to the need for parking and the unique shape of the lot. This variance must be obtained for this from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
2. Height - The proposed structure is 4 stories, which is allowed by right in this area.
3. Building Scale - This building will be larger in scale than many downtown buildings, but it is located on a large vacant lot, and would appear to be far enough from adjacent buildings as to not look out of character with the downtown.
4. Roof - The proposed Roof will be flat, a feature of the new prototype design being utilized for this building. The proposed roof would appear to have a three dimensional cornice treatment and includes parapets.

5. Building Materials - The developers have agreed to utilize a brick façade in order to meet design criteria. The upper stories also are distinctly separated by a change of color and texture as required.
6. Primary Façade - The primary entrance is located on the front of the building, but does not appear to be inset. The front façade is however covered by a permanent awning prominent in modern hotel design. There are no blank walls on the building and the entry is framed by piers, however the windows are not.
7. Windows and Doors Transparency - The windows and doors will be transparent. The door is transparent and allows a view of the lobby. The windows do appear to be in proportion to the buildings use and size.
8. Parking and Loading - In the WD, parking is allowed in the front, and shown parking is 5' from the public walkway. Staff would note that 80 onsite parking spaces are provided, 16 fewer than required. City Council has approved the use of up to 20 overflow spaces located in the City lot between the Cellar and the site in question. Additional parking requirements present for meeting rooms can be provided by other public parking areas.
9. Outdoor Display - NA
10. Sidewalk Encroachment - NA
11. Waterfront- Currently developers have included a small staircase and a public entrance to the waterfront as required. They have also included a sidewalk connecting to the Riverwalk.

Chain hotels such as the one proposed have certain standards of design that they feel necessary for their hotels to be successful. This is the newest design offered by Holiday Inn Express and meets nearly all of our design standards. However, certain elements of the design are required in order to be a Holiday Inn Express. Developers have worked with staff on many design elements, have been very responsive to requests, and have made a number of changes that staff has asked for. Because of this prototype design and the willingness of the developers to work with the City, staff would recommend approval of the presented design to the Planning Commission.

Poll further stated that there are a set of stairs that they have included to connect to the riverwalk and they are maintaining a 5 foot separation from the proposed new location of the bikepath.

Toufik Bentahar, Hotel Architect, stated that they are really excited to be in Alpena and building this project in the City. We are also excited with the fact that this a brand new type of hotel for Holiday Inn Express. This is one of the first type of this hotel that is being built in Michigan. Holiday Inn develops prototypes and we try to work with the municipalities to make sure that all aspects of the new design are acceptable to the

communities that we bring the hotels too. For the most part it is, but for some other aspects we got some feedback. Originally the exterior was to be EIFS. In talking with Adam and City staff there is a preference to move away from EIFS. Staff would like us to match the character of the downtown area which is brick and masonry. We took this feedback to Holiday Inn and we have been approved with changes to the façade to match the downtown. Another aspect is the color scheme. Holiday Inn was using tones like greys and reds. After going back and forth with discussions we are going to use earth tones closer to what is in the downtown area. These are some of the features, changes, and improvements that have been made to meet the needs of the City.

#### FAVOR:

Jim Klarich, Target Alpena, stated that Adam talked about the site plan and Bentahar spoke a little bit about the hotel and architecture. One of the things I would like to talk about is the economic impact potential for our downtown. In similar locations down state where they have constructed hotels on this scale the economic impact is measureable. In our community where people will be parking at that facility they will be able to park and not have to get back in their car until the time that they leave. Everything is walkable from there; restaurants, shops, NOAA. Everything people want to see in our downtown is available from that site. Similar developments, when I've asked what the economic impact has been, has seen an economic impact in excess of \$1,000,000 a year to walkable locations downtown. So, effectively, what we are doing from an economic impact standpoint is injecting about \$1,000,000 a year into our downtown. I wanted to share that with you and I hope you take that into consideration tonight.

Tarra Stone stated that she has recently moved up here from downstate and being an outsider she feels that this is going to really complement the town. Really excited and I want to be involved in a part of this community and being a part of this is amazing. Being an outsider and having family visit and being able to have them come and stay in the downtown area is really exciting for me. I live on Second Avenue and to have family visit and stay close by isn't feasible right now and having a location like this in the downtown area for conventions or family and being on the riverfront is just really awesome to see.

Angie Skiba, 635 River Street, stated I am in favor of Alpena growing and I look forward to the changes. I do have a couple of questions and I didn't know if I understood it correctly and I wanted to clarify. The bikepath will remain as is and open just the way it is? Poll stated the City will retain the easement and the bikepath will be open. The bikepath will be slightly reconfigured, but it will still be there and open. Gilmet stated it may be closed during construction for safety reasons. Skiba asked what kind of barrier is going to be between the building and the apartment building. Also, was hoping that the discussion of that possible plaza with the parking that has now been changed to no night time parking behind the Owl that it would be reconsidered and that we would keep it a parking lot and not change it to the proposed plaza.

#### OPPOSITION:

None.

#### COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSION AND ACTION:

Dort asked if the colors on the pictures that were in the packets for tonight's meeting are the final colors. Bentahar stated that those colors are not final. It will be earth tone colors and will be discussed with City staff to make sure the colors are acceptable. Hunter asked if there is anything specific in the City ordinance that talk colors. Poll stated that it mentions colors but doesn't mention anything specific. Basically, the only reference in the Ordinance is that they have a break up of different colors between the first and second level and then it also does mention breaking up vertically as well. Hunter stated if the developer wanted a blue building then there isn't anything in there that says he can't have a blue building. Poll stated that is correct. There is language that does say it has to be designed to fit in with the downtown, so if he wanted to utilize blue brick or something along those lines he could. There's no specific language that says you can't use blue but there is specific language that says it needs to fit with the downtown. Hunter stated he is just concerned that we might be pushing and taking too much and telling them how to design their building. To me it seems like it is too much control. I'd like to see as much flexibility with the design because some of that is corporate image as well. When people see their building they want them to have certain feeling that it's their brand and everything that goes with it. Bentahar stated we would seek approval from Holiday Inn and the City and that it doesn't compromise the brand, but we don't want to stick out like a sore thumb in the City either. Hunter stated that Alpena has always been about variety and letting people be themselves and not too much restriction. Hunter stated that Angie Skiba had a question regarding screening between the hotel and the apartment building. Is there some screening or is there lawn left. Poll stated that the development will pretty much take up the entire lot and will go to the apartment building. The development is commercial and the apartment building is residential so there will be screening required. How they choose to utilize that the City has left it open as far as what we required. They are going to want to utilize something that looks nice. Obviously they aren't going to be able to completely screen at the bikepath. That needs to be left open to the public. Gilmore stated that the apartments have balconies and if they are so close and I am staying at the Holiday Inn Express am I going to see someone grilling their hamburgers on their balcony? Poll stated that whatever screening we would require it will have to be past the first story. VanWagoner stated he has heard varying things about EIFS and brick and the drawings indicate EIFS. Are these preliminary and are these going to be changed to indicate brick? Bentahar stated that yes, these will be changed. I had to get these drawings to them quickly and they were before we made the changes to brick.

Motion made by Boboltz, seconded by Gilmore, to approve the site plan submitted to the Planning Commission.

Ayes: Gilmore, Dort, VanWagoner, Boboltz, Sabourin, Hunter  
Nays: None.  
Absent: Lewis, Heraghty

Motion passed: 6-0

**BUSINESS:**

None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Poll stated he did receive a communication in regards the Sunrise Mission. I have talked to individual since and I informed them that the request has been withdrawn. I indicated to the individual that I will keep the letter on file so I will have it if the Sunrise Mission ever refiles their application.

**REPORTS:**

1. Freedom Motors Update

Poll stated that Freedom Motors is making quite a bit of progress. We are meeting our standards at the moment.

2. Update on Planning and Development Projects

Fairfield Hotel

Poll stated that there has been a design submitted for a second hotel to be located on US-23 North just north of the Ford dealership. They have not provided me with a site plan yet. It will be a 4 story hotel with 78 rooms. They are asking for a height variance at that location because that location is limited to 35 feet in height. They will need a little over 10 foot variance granted. They are in a hurry to get underway with the construction. Would like to break ground in the fall. This area does not require a site plan review as hotels are allowed by right. The Zoning Board of Appeals request is all they will need as far as for official approval.

**CALL TO PUBLIC:**

None.

**MEMBERS' COMMENTS:**

Boboltz stated that a couple of months ago he mentioned the fact that there is a rumor going around town that the huge house that is being built at White and Second was reportedly being built with the intention of becoming the Hospitality House. Gilmet stated that the City has no knowledge of this information.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m. by Chair Sabourin.

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Wayne Lewis, Secretary