

Proceedings of the Ironwood City Commission

A Regular Meeting of the Ironwood City Commission was held in person and via Zoom at 5:30 P.M., along with a Public Hearing at 5:25 P.M. on Monday, July 11, 2022.

1. Mayor Corcoran called the public hearing to order at 5:25 P.M.
2. Recording of the Roll.

PRESENT: Commissioner Andresen, Korpela, Mildren, Semo, and Mayor Corcoran.
ABSENT: None.

3. Public Hearing: To receive public comment relative to Resolution 022-017

City Assessor and Blight Officer Jason Alonen gave a history on the properties, dating back to the first notice in 2016. There are now at least six (6) unlicensed vehicles in the yards and unmaintained lawns. A Powerpoint slideshow of pictures taken today of the current blight situation was presented to Commissioners. It was confirmed there is one owner for the two properties.

William Leppala *spoke via Zoom* as the property owner. He noted he has been trying to clean out the property since this spring. He reaffirmed it has been his fault for not following up. He needs time to get it moved.

No additional comments were received.

4. Mayor Corcoran closed the public hearing at 5:30 P.M.
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- A. Mayor Corcoran called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

- B. Recording of the Roll.

PRESENT: Commissioner Andresen, Korpela, Mildren, Semo, and Mayor Corcoran
ABSENT: None.

- C. Approval of the Consent Agenda. *

*1) Approval of Minutes - Regular City Commission Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2022

*2) Review and Place on File:

- a. Economic Development Corporation Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2022.
- b. Economic Development Corporation Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2022.
- c. Economic Development Corporation Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2022.

Motion was made by Korpela, seconded by Andresen, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

D. Approval of the Agenda.

Motion was made by Mildren, seconded by Korpela, and carried to approve the Agenda as presented.

E. Citizens wishing to address the Commission on Items on the Agenda. (Three Minute Limit)

Bill Martell, 420 W. Francis Street, spoke regarding the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meetings and listing agenda packets for their meetings. Mayor Corcoran noted the staff can get that information to Mr. Martell.

Stash Wasick, 722 Horizons Drive, Marquette, Michigan, who is the CEO and founder of the Fire Station, showed support of amending of the proposed Ordinance 535. He stated this is a great opportunity. The tax revenue alone will make massive strides for the city. He was honored to be able to be here and show his support.

Chris Detray, 315 W. Francis Street, voiced his support for the amended ordinance for the marijuana issues. Again, it will be good for community. This would cut down on traffic at current store. He stated it is ridiculous to keep waiting for second store that could not open. It will take them months before they are ready.

John Ames of Cultivatd, LLC thanked the city for the time and effort put in. He noted his company has commercial funding and \$8 million set up for the full plan, cultivation, and processing. Cultivatad has applied for all 3 licenses. They have raised about a million dollars which has been deployed in all their properties. In the time since, they have identified experienced operators and what they can offer the community. The amount of jobs and community development is immense. Manufacturing and cultivation will provide for locals, by locals. He stated the proposed ordinance will help to move forward with these changes and allow additional cultivation.

Scott Dianda, Vice President of Tranquility Fields, who resides in Calumet, Michigan, addressed the Commission. His company is out of Ann Arbor, Michigan with a grow facility in Warren. Background information noted the company was started by a 72-year-old veteran from Vietnam. Mr. Dianda joined the company four years ago. He left information regarding what their company can offer to the City of Ironwood. They are looking at multiple areas across the state. They are looking at expanding more in the UP. He thanked the Commission for their time.

Derick Johnson of 1305 Superior Street, Wakefield, Michigan asked to update the originally-passed microbusiness license. He spoke regarding the limits to businesses. The new Class A allows for business to grow 300 / flower 300 plants at a time. It would then be easier to keep products on the shelves. He asked to consider updating the microbusiness license to a Class A microbusiness in the city.

Bill Martell of 420 W. Francis had a question with regard to a \$5,000 license to grow, a \$5,000 license to process, and \$5,000 license to transport. Class A has all 3. Do they pay \$15,000 or \$5,000 for 3 services.

Jacie Daronso, 74 Midway Drive in Negaunee, MI *commented via Zoom*. She voiced support to increase the number from two (2) to four (4) retail licenses.

Tyler Varnadore of Ramsay, MI *commented via Zoom*, to also show support to open up the opportunity to have more retail stores. So many companies are throwing in millions of dollars. It's a golden opportunity to cash in, and good for the people in our community.

Dr. Lee Caperton, *commented via Zoom*, to address the marihuana- related changes in the Code. Over the last month, he has been a consult to Cultivatd, LLC and John Ames. He gave a vast background of the multiple businesses he is involved in and noted he does work consulting. He spoke regarding the traditional western medicine used for psychiatric medicine versus the integrated plant-based techniques for patients.

Lauren Spore of 1117 Second Street in Marquette, MI *commented via Zoom* in support to increase the number of retail licenses and allow for them to be distributed to the next qualified applicants. She noted the great economic benefit, voiced support, and thanked the City Commission for their time.

Brent Olson *commented via Zoom* and thanked the Commissioners for their consideration on the issue. He stated he is a founding member of Cultivatd LLC. He is the manager. He voiced support for expanding retail licenses. He believed people awarded licenses in town should have first right of refusal to apply so they can continue to bolster businesses. He noted this will create sustainable jobs for citizens.

F. Citizens wishing to address the Commission on Items not on the Agenda. (Three Minute Limit)

Jonathan Soderman, 201 Bonnie Road, addressed the fence on the public sidewalk at the White Rabbit. He inquired if there is an ordinance that supports or goes against it. He noticed the Cold Iron has it's seating on the side of the building, as well as the coffee shop. They are not in the way of a public sidewalk. They will be allowing outdoor seating soon. If a handicapped individual goes off the curb a little bit, would the city be responsible, or the business be responsible. Mayor Corcoran noted they would check into this and thanked Mr. Soderman.

Larry Holcombe, 1145 LaBlonde Lane, in Hurley, Wisconsin stated the previous City Manager Scott Erickson and City Staff did a great thing by adding a block and half of sidewalk on McLeod Avenue between Ironwood Public Safety and down west toward Hurley. He noted he drives back and forth on that street every day. If someone is going west into sun and someone is walking on the street, it was dangerous. It is so much safer now than it was prior. It is a great thing, and he extended a thank you to the City Commission.

G. City Engineer Project Updates.

City Engineer Scott Erickson gave an update regarding ongoing projects for the City of Ironwood. Active right now, Nasi Construction is re-siding a part of the DPW building. Angelo Luppino is currently doing the paving and repatching downtown, which will be ongoing this

summer. The Francis Street Water and Sewer Project is underway. Xcel Energy has put in a new gas line. Jake's Excavating will start underground construction of water and sewer next week. The Water Treatment Plant Project bid opening is this Thursday at 2:00 p.m. There will be an update later this week on that. Jake's Excavating also has the water service line investigation project. The Small Urban Project South of US2 on Hemlock Street is currently being designed for MDOT bidding. Three (3) large trees have been removed for this process. Five locations of the watermain intersection were bid. Ruotsala Construction was the low bidder; it was very competitive, with the two bids received within dollars of each other. Awarding of the bid is on the agenda for tonite. Flowtrack has about 4 miles of the 10 miles completed on the Miners Memorial Park Mountain Bike Trail. The Project is going well. He invited Commissioners to look at it and walk it. It is a nice addition to community. Work will be going into September. The Jessieville booster station, variable speed drive is out for bid now. Also, the City of Ironwood has coordinated with Gogebic County with regard to the four (4) city streets north of US 2 that will be chip sealed. Those 4 streets will start this week. The sanitary sewer re-lining project design has been completed. Bids should be back in a week or so. The city is receiving funding through MSHDA for a new play structure at the Little League field. It is out for bid now. This structure will need to be constructed this year.

Commissioner Semo noted the perception is that more is getting done with City Projects with the Engineer position separate from the City Manager position. Scott Erickson, City Engineer noted with more staff hours, you will get more done. Ultimately you have more staff time to tackle more things.

OLD BUSINESS

- H. Discuss and consider adopting Resolution #022-017, for abatement of property at 524 & 528 E. Tamarack Street (52-26-105-050 & 52-26-105-060).

City Assessor and Blight Officer Jason Alonen noted he is looking at direction for timelines of abatement. There are plenty of vehicles which makes it more difficult. He stated he was happy to hear the owner was on-line with intentions of taking care of it. Commissioner Mildren noted past practice is if the owner communicated, they would try to resolve this. In the past, the Commission has adopted a resolution, but given the owner extra time to take care of it. Mayor Corcoran confirmed they have done it in the past. She noted there have been multiple warnings. She stated she has driven by property with no progress seen. Commissioner Semo stated in past they have given the owner some time, in show of good faith. Commissioners discussed recommending adoption of the resolution and set it to go into effect 2 (two) weeks from tomorrow.

***Motion** was made by Semo, seconded by Mildren, to adopt Resolution #022-017, for abatement of property at 524 & 528 E. Tamarack Street (52-26-105-050 & 52-26-105-060, set to take effect July 26, 2022. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

- I. Discuss and consider adoption of Ordinance 536, an Ordinance to Amend Section 17-69 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Ironwood, Michigan, entitled "Notice to remove or eliminate causes", subsection (d), "repeat offenders".

City Assessor and Blight Officer Jason Alonen noted changes in the timeline for repeat offenders under the proposed ordinance. Mayor Corcoran noted she liked it.

***Motion** was made by Andresen, seconded by Korpela, to adopt Ordinance 536, an Ordinance to Amend Section 17-69 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Ironwood, Michigan, entitled “Notice to remove or eliminate causes”, subsection (d), “repeat offenders”. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

J. Discuss and consider adoption of Ordinance No. 535, an Ordinance to Amend Ordinance No. 523, Book 5, City of Ironwood, Chapter 37 “Marihuana Establishments”.

Community Development Director Tom Bergman noted over the past few months the Planning Commission and the City Commission have been discussing changes to the current ordinance. It does include the change for microbusiness to include the Class A Microbusiness as discussed. It also includes the two additional retail marihuana establishments, as well as a few additional small changes as noted in his memo. All items are highlighted in the proposed ordinance, so they are easy to find. Commission can approve or deny the changes. It allows for Commissioners to approve parts or all of it. Discussion took place regarding the expiration of the scoring rubric and what to do with licenses if adopted. This can be done at a future meeting. There is a question on the timeline if adopted. Community Development Director Tom Bergman noted the options again; where they could just wait or choose to open up the whole application process again. This would then prompt a move onto the permitting portion to work with building permits, meet requirements of a site plan, and get a state license if they go with those who scored highest on the rubric. It would depend on how soon the buildings are developed. Commissioner Semo noted marihuana is already here, additional licenses would create more competition, drive prices down, and drive more license fees and tax payments which would be a nice source of revenue for the city. The incoming people are a nice boom for our economy. No negative impacts on law enforcement have been indicated. It is easy to support this. Mayor Corcoran agreed and thanked Commissioner Semo for his comments. Commissioner Mildren agreed and stated he appreciated the audience’s thoughtful comments on this. He noted the problem when the Commission granted the two (2) marihuana licenses, and they talked about waiting a year. The thought was that both retail businesses would be open by now. With one, there is too many people, not enough parking. He has seen the benefits with jobs, increased traffic, and business. He questioned will they be sitting here another year trying to grant licenses. There should come a time when we say wait, we should wait. He is not sure if the time to take to implement it would give them time to see the impact. At the public hearing, they had three Ironwood families who wished us to wait. He would like to error on the side of waiting, stating if we give two (2) more licenses, we should sit back and see how good this is for Ironwood. He appreciates the business. He is slightly worried moving forward fast.

***Motion** was made by Semo, seconded by Korpela to adopt Ordinance 535, an Ordinance to Amend Ordinance No. 523, Book 5, City of Ironwood, Chapter 37 “Marihuana Establishments”.
ROLL CALL:*

Yes (4): Commissioner Semo, Andresen, Korpela, and Mayor Corcoran

No (1): Commissioner Mildren

***Motion** carried on a 4 to 1 vote.*

- K Discuss and consider awarding bid to Ruotsala Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$239,675.00 for the 2022 Watermain Intersection Project.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio noted the recommendation to award the bid was discussed in the Engineer's Report. The technical issue has been resolved and confirmed with Ruotsala Construction, Inc. Recommendation is to award the bid to Ruotsala Construction, Inc.

Motion was made by Semo, seconded by Mildren, to award a bid to Ruotsala Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$239,675.00 for the 2022 Watermain Intersection Project. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

- L. Discuss and consider authorizing Payment #3 to Flowtrack Mountain Bike Trails, LLC in the amount of \$26,502.66 for the MDNR Trust Fund Mountain Bike Trail Project in Miners Memorial Park.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio noted this is the third in a series of payments to FlowTrack Mountain Bike Trails, LLC. Progress is being made on the bike trail. Payments will be made consistently until completion in September. Commissioner Semo requested staff comments on progress of trails. Community Development Director Tom Bergman noted it is a tight timeline, and they are on track to complete the 10 miles this year. Flowtrack is doing a great job keeping up with that timetable. The trail rides very well. He has taken 40 kids out into the trails every Wednesday night. They are excited to experience a new section every week. It is great to see their smiles and excitement. It is a great project, and it is exciting to see it keep progressing. Commissioner Mildren noted he is pleased with the company. They are a great company to work with.

Motion was made by Mildren, seconded by Korpela, to authorize payment to Flowtrack Mountain Bike Trails, LLC in the amount of \$26,502.66 for the MDNR Trust Fund Mountain Bike Trail Project in Miners Memorial Park. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

- M Discuss and consider adopting Resolution #022-018, a resolution to rescind Resolution #022-016, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Waiver of Right to Purchase Foreclosed Property.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio presented the background on the previously adopted Resolution #022-016 and the decision to rescind. If another lien holder made a claim on the properties, we would need to rescind. This is the next step. Both properties have a claim.

Motion was made by Semo, seconded by Mildren, to adopt Resolution #022-018, a resolution to rescind Resolution #022-016, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the Waiver of Right to Purchase Foreclosed Property. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

- N. Discuss and consider adopting Resolution #022-019, a Community Development Block Grant Authorizing Resolution.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio noted this Resolution is being put in place to affirm he is authorized to sign all documents related to the Community Development Block Grant as the previous City Manager Scott Erickson has stepped down from the position.

***Motion** was made by Semo, seconded by Andresen to adopt Resolution #022-019, a Community Development Block Grant Authorizing Resolution. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

O. Discuss and consider donation of 71 surplus chairs to the Festival of Ironwood Committee.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio noted through the process of purchasing the nice white chairs and tables, the City is disposing of surplus chairs. Rather than the bid process for surplus chairs, for the good of the community, the donation to Festival Ironwood benefits everyone. Commissioner Semo noted that not only will Festival Ironwood have use of the chairs, but it will go out through the Festival of Ironwood Committee to others to utilize. It will be an excellent use of resources.

***Motion** was made by Mildren, seconded by Korpela, and carried to donate 71 surplus chairs to the Festival of Ironwood Committee. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

P. Manager's Report.

Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio verbally gave the Manager's report noting the following items:

- * Festival Ironwood starts Wednesday and runs through this week, noting how vibrant it makes downtown. For young and old, it is a great event. He also stated the Emberlight Festival is running now through August and features music, art, and cultural events.
- * CodeRed is the new notification system that staff will work through in the next few months and test the system before putting it out to the public. A Commissioner group and other groups are being set up so we can see how user friendly it is. It will be a great tool to have moving forward.
- * MDOT will be here in the next few weeks to look at the intersection of Douglas and Cloverland regarding Commissioner Mildren's request related to the traffic on Lowell Street. Public Safety has also put out the speed trailer on Lowell Street, and they have more of a presence due to the increased traffic.
- * Blight is a top goal of the Commission. As of today, 115 blight notices have been sent. Many have been resolved. The notices make people aware they need to do something to remediate their property. It has been a collaborative effort for the City as a whole to address the issue.
- * The Interim City Manager will be reaching out to the Commissioners to have those marijuana discussions. It will then be brought back to a meeting as we expand the licenses and see how individually everyone feels. He would like to hear concerns and formulate a plan to bring back for a more formal discussion.

Q. Other Matters.

Commissioner Semo commented regarding the fence at the White Rabbit. Interim City Manager

Andrew DiGiorgio stated they did get approval through the State process. Community Development Director Tom Bergman said we do have the ability to let people set up on the right-of-way on the sidewalk. They are required to have an enclosure for their liquor license, with 48 inches of clearance space for people to get by. It has been confirmed it is 48 inches, and now they have even moved it in more. Staff will continue to monitor.

Commissioner Mildren liked that someone in the audience talked about the safety going into Hurley. There is more traffic downtown and on our city sidewalks. It is a walkable community. There has been an extra effort to have more sidewalks available to walk on. He noted he is looking forward to the opening of the White Rabbit, to see the improvement to the building, and what they have to offer to Ironwood.

Commissioner Andresen inquired regarding the Depot bathrooms. Currently the bathrooms are closing at 5:30 p.m., and the volleyball adult rec league has time on Wednesdays and would like them open for playing time if possible. Interim City Manager Andrew DiGiorgio stated the bathrooms will remain open until 8:30 or 9:00 p.m. Bathrooms will be open extended hours during Festival Ironwood as well. He is cognizant of times it needs to be open. Groups can reach out if they need it. They are encouraged to keep open if there are large groups present.

R. Consider Closed Session to discuss labor negotiations and tentative agreement with Ironwood Professional Police Association (IPPA).

Motion was made by Semo, seconded by Mildren, to enter closed session at 6:41 p.m. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

S. Return to Open Session.

Motion was made by Semo, seconded by Andresen, and carried to return to open session at 7:00 p.m.

T. Consider ratification of the Ironwood Professional Police Association (IPPA) collective bargaining agreement effective August 1, 2022 and expiring July 31, 2025.

Commissioner Mildren thanked all parties involved in the bargaining process.

Motion was made by Mildren, seconded by Korpela, to ratify the Ironwood Professional Police Association (IPPA) collective bargaining agreement effective August 1, 2022 and expiring July 31, 2025. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

U. Adjournment.

Motion was made by Semo, seconded by Korpela, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 P.M.

Kim S. Corcoran, Mayor

Wendy L. Hagstrom, City Clerk