

Annual Report of Houghton County Planning Commission 2016

Members

Allan Aho, Chair
Robert Loukus, Vice Chair
Tim Sears, Secretary
Matt Huuki
Evan McDonald
Gene Londo
Jack Dueweke
Barbara LaFex Lewis
Kevin McClellan

INTRODUCTION

Houghton County established the Houghton County Planning Commission in 2001, and confirmed its commitment to a planning process through the adoption of Houghton County Planning Commission Ordinance of 2008, as authorized by P.A. 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, M.C.L. 125.3801 *et. seq.*

This report is a summary of the activities and operations of the Houghton County Planning Commission for calendar year 2016.

Allan Aho
Chair
Houghton County Planning Commission

MEETINGS

The Planning Commission was generally scheduled to meet each month on the third Tuesday. At the April meeting it was agreed to begin a bi-monthly schedule for the balance of the year. Business was conducted on:

January 19th
February 16th
March 15th
April 19th
June 21st
August 16th
October 18th
December 20th

OPERATIONS

Highlights of Planning Commission work for the year are listed below in chronological order.

January 19, 2016

Public Comment: No public in Attendance

Correspondence: None

Nominations were solicited for the position of Chairman of the Planning Commission:

Allan Aho was nominated by Mr. Loukus for the Chairman position. Mr. Aho cautiously accepted that nomination. No other nominations were tendered.

Motion to appoint Mr. Aho Chairman of the Planning Commission made by Loukus, Second by Londo. All approved.

Nominations were solicited for the position of Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission:

Bob Loukus was nominated by Mr. Londo for the position of Vice Chairman. No other nominations were tendered.

Motion made by Londo, second by Dueweke to appoint Bob Loukus as Vice Chairman. All approved.

Nominations were solicited for the position of Secretary of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Loukus nominated Dr. Sears for the position of Secretary. Sears enthusiastically accepted that nomination. No other nominations were tendered

Motion made by Loukus, supported by Londo to appoint Tim Sears as Secretary. All approved.

Old Business

There was discussion of what areas the Planning Commission were wanting to continue their involvement in, including but not necessarily limited to Food Hub, Recycling, Governance and Trails. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

Sound recording of the meeting was discussed. The Commission has a recorder which will be the official complete minutes of any of the Planning Commission's meetings. Those recordings will be saved on the County "X" Drive and can be electronically sent (e-mailed) to members as requested in the event the printed version of the meetings does not satisfy that members needs. A copy of the printed version of the meeting minutes will be provided to members and the Houghton County Clerk.

New Business

The first draft of the 2015 Annual Report of the Planning Commission to the Houghton County Board of Commissioners was presented to the PC Board by Chairman McDonald. Mr. McDonald asked that members look over the report and get back with him by February 3rd in the event they have suggestions regarding the content. All thanked Evan for his work as Chair and for his efforts in making this timely report.

New members were encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunities to attend planning training, some of which is put on by the MSU extension service. The Commission has traditionally paid for the costs of that training.

Announcements: None.

February 16, 2016

Public comments: No public in attendance.

Correspondence: Michigan planner mailer available for all to review. Lefex Lewis was taking with her to review further.

Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald reports positive feedback. Cardboard recycling project ongoing. Copper Country recycling initiative: Community education and story in the newspaper occurred. Initial response favorable.

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis requests pursuing educational meeting regarding Agenda 21. Speaker regarding this topic may be available to coordinate an educational session with the planning commission. McDonald suggested finding somebody who could discuss a pro-position, possibly somebody from the MSU extension.

New business: Second draft: 2015 annual report of the planning commission. Motion to except by Londo, second McClellan. All improved.

Planning commission training: Available to members and encouraged. McClellan to reports on educational opportunities.

Announcements: McClellan suggested evaluating feasibility and utility of local use of geothermal energy.

Public comments: None.

March 15, 2016

Public comments: No public in attendance.

Correspondence: 1. Jennifer Lorenz; clerk will be receiving a copy of monthly minutes for records.
2. McClellan reported information regarding geothermal energy including communication with Murray Gilles the director of mine safety and Jay Meldrum of KRC who would be willing to present information to the Planning Committee. Motion by Aho and second from McClellan to pursue informational presentation. All approved. Postpone decision to add to working groups until more information obtained discussed.
3. Received information from Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development regarding Hancock City recreation plan.

Unfinished Business: McDonald reported he received information on presentation from September 2015 by Bruce Peterson regarding Portage Township Zoning Plan update and will provide information to the committee.

Planning commission governance: Lefex Lewis will continue with this work group. Role clarified to include bylaw issues and governance within the Planning committee.

Local food system: Discussed dropping as an active work group.

Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald to continue as liaison for Planning Committee to this group which is functioning independently.

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis will work on contact for educational seminar regarding Agenda 21/ Agenda 2030.

New business: Planning commission training: McClellan nothing to report. MSU has available numerous training opportunities regarding planning and zoning.
Aho requests Londo as representative of the County Commissioners provide regular update to committee from the County commissioners regarding activity and meetings.

Announcements: McDonald provided update on the Pilgrim River Watershed Project and the involvement of the Forest Legacy Group regarding private forest land involved in project and discussed the State and DNR interactions as partners in forest plan management. He will be providing further updates.

Public comments: None.

April 19, 2016

Public comments: No public in attendance.

Correspondence: 1. Jennifer Lorenz clerk will be receiving a copy of monthly minutes for records. Future meeting dates and times to county website done via Jeff@opusWeb.com.

Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald reported Houghton/Hancock contracts for waste disposal up for renewal and joint meeting will occur evening of April 19. Interest from Eagle waste of Eagle River WI for possible curbside recycling program to be presented. May ask for possible site at Houghton County transfer station for such possible future activities. McDonald and commission Londo will try to attend meeting.

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis discussed Agenda 21/ 2030 with Tom Deweese and her recommendation is that individuals of the Planning Commission should independently pursue education regarding this. Huuki discussed state organizations involved. Aho discussed terminology used and implementation related to Agenda 21.

April Commissioners Meeting: Londo gave report regarding meeting.

Geothermal Energy: McClellan reported several individuals would like to speak to the Planning Commission regarding issues and opportunities, will work to schedule for next meeting date.

Hancock City Recreation Plan: Lafex Lewis reported on and suggested communication with area townships and cities regarding these types of plans in the future.

New business: Member contact information updated.

Proposed Dates for Planning Commission Meetings 2016: Aho proposed bimonthly meeting. Discussed and calendar for meetings as follows: June 21st, August 16th, October 18th, and December 20th. Motion to accept dates by Loukus and second by Londo. All approved.

Public comments: None.

May 2016:

No meeting was held.

June 21, 2016

Public comments: No public in attendance.

Correspondence: 1. Email from Anton Pintar 5-5-16: Re: City of Hancock Planning Commission – we will solicit input when plan is complete and available.

2. Jennifer Lorenz clerk will be receiving a copy of monthly minutes for records. Future meeting dates and times to county website done via Jeff@opusWeb.com, done and confirmed.

3. Tracy Smith has requested budget request for fiscal year 16-17 from Planning Commission.

Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald reported on the Houghton/Hancock joint meeting regarding contracts for waste disposal up for renewal and joint meeting. McDonald and commission Londo did attend meeting. Waste Management was awarded contract and is looking into possible weekly curbside recycling.

- Houghton County cardboard recycling project – nothing new
- Copper Country Recycling Initiative – education of public regarding recycling opportunities being started via taskforce

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis – absent. Aho purchased Stop Agenda 21 action kit from American Policy Website for \$100 and shared materials with group. Motion from Loukus for reimbursement for Aho \$100 for purchase, second from Londo, all approved.

Unfinished Business: Website meeting schedule and minutes on County Website – done and confirmed.

April Commissioners Meeting: Londo gave report regarding meeting and is requesting any issues from Commissioners be forwarded for Planning Commission review, no requests to date.

Geothermal Energy: McClellan - absent. Presentation will be rescheduled for the August meeting. Motion to accept from Sears, second Loukus, all approved.

New business: Budget request. Will keep request same as previous years at \$5000. If unused funds they will be returned to County. Motion from Loukus, second from Londo, all approved.

Public comments: None.

July 2016

No meeting was held.

August 16, 2016

Public comments: None. In attendance from KRC Jay Meldrum and Chris Green.

Correspondence: 1. Email from Diane Gasparich from Keweenaw County regarding request to address the planning commission about Keweenaw County plan "Blueprint for Tomorrow". Aho will forward to members and will seek response regarding possible attendance at October meeting for presentation, to date no reply.

2. Barbara Lafex Lewis email 7/11 "...Processing Feasibility study"

Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald: curbside recycling program in Houghton/Hancock starting educational outreach.

- Houghton County cardboard recycling project – Lafex Lewis reported possible problems with maintaining parttime employees.
- Copper Country Recycling Initiative – nothing new

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis –some discussion regarding possible education program with Tom Deweese.

Unfinished Business: Website meeting schedule and minutes on County Website – done and confirmed.

April Commissioners Meeting: Londo absent: no report.

Geothermal Energy: McClellan - Presentation Sam Locklear and Craig Marley did not show for presentation as planned. KRC guests J Meldrum and Chris Green reported on Geothermal heating and cooling system in use at their facility at airport location and reviewed some of their research and a discussion of electricity needs and demands as well as limitations and costs associated with the areas high electrical costs.

New business: Motion from McDonald to form task group to address area concerns and limitations of electrical supply and costs going forward as a vital issue in Houghton County. Second by McClellan. All approved.

Public comments: None.

September 2016

No meeting was held

October 18, 2016

Public comments: None.

Correspondence: 1. Ann Gasparich from Keweenaw County addressed the planning commission about Keweenaw County plan "Blueprint for Tomorrow". She is the zoning administrator for Keweenaw County and presented and answered questions. For further details see plan.

Unfinished Business: Work groups i: Planning Commission Governance . Lafex Lewis/ Aho - nothing new.

ii: Electrical Power: Evan McDonald discussed his discussions with Dr. Winkler regarding focus of energy efficiency. See web site NEWPOWERTOUR.com. Discussion regarding direction and involvement of planning commission regarding this ensued. Londo will seek direction from County Commissioners.

iii: **Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program:** McDonald.

- Houghton County cardboard recycling project – Ongoing – report pending.
- Copper Country Recycling Initiative – discussion of electronic waste recycling and DEQ involvement – list Houghton County as "interested" possible involvement and expansion of existing availability via Ed's Used Parts business.

Education/outreach: Barbara Lafex Lewis –Nothing new to report.

Reports: October Commissioner's Meeting recap – Gene Londo: Chris VanAnsdel replacing Jack Deuweke as new Emergency Manager for Houghton County.

Reported upcoming vacancies on the HO Co road commission and HoCo Medical Care boards

Geothermal Energy: No new report, see discussion regarding electrical power above.

New business: See report regarding the Keweenaw County land use plan above. Lafex Lewis suggested addressing meeting schedule and agenda for 2017 at December meeting.

Announcements: None.

Public comments: None.

November, 2016

No meeting was held.

December 20, 2016

Public comments: None.

Correspondence: 1. Call from Tim Palossari regarding the 4 H presentation by the MSU extension. Palossari presented and also discussed this presentation at the most recent County Commissioners meeting. Very open admission of Agenda 21 program. County Commissioners task planning commission with addressing and working to provide clear stance on Agenda 21/2030 and guidance for the County Commissioners. Discussed the resolution put forth by Aho that was not approved last year. This may need to be readdressed by the County Commissioners.

Unfinished Business:

- a. Work groups i: Planning Commission Governance . Lafex Lewis/ Aho - nothing new.
 - ii: Houghton County solid waste reduction/recycling program: McDonald. Ongoing education program for public and schools. See handout provided CCRI – MDEQ Houghton County Recycling Project.
 - Houghton County cardboard recycling project – Ongoing
 - Copper Country Recycling Initiative **Education/outreach:**
- b. Education/Outreach.
- c. **Reports:** October Commissioner’s Meeting recap – Tim Palossari: See report above regarding 4 H Agenda 21 presentation.

New business: 1: Master Plan Discussion. Will need attention in the upcoming year. Discussion regarding resuming monthly meeting schedule. Motion by Loukus, second by Sears to resume monthly meetings in January. All approved.

2: Update “Planning Commissioner Members “ list. To be updated within the next 1-2 months.

3: McClellan addressed House Bill 4209 regarding need for Township and possibly county input regarding medical marijuana growing and impacts this could have on local government revenue. This is felt to be an agricultural issue that the Planning Commission should address.

4: Motion made the recognize Barabara Lefex Lewis and her service to the Planning Commission as this will be her last meeting.

Public comments: None.