

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
Wednesday, January 13, 2021
10:15 AM
Minutes**

Call to Order – Mayor Dennis Powell called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. The meeting was held via Zoom Video Conferencing and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call – Rodney Dood, Anthony Clements, Benjamin Garcia (10:19a.m.), Ronjo Leonoff and Powell.

Absent – None.

Also Present – City Manager Rachel Andreski, Attorney Mark Tousignant, Treasurer Amanda Tukesbrey, Chief Curtis Bristol and Deputy Treasurer Bernadette Coates.

Public in Attendance

Tyana Elenbaas, Dennis Tousignant and Vicky Powell.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tyana Elenbaas said she was curious to what the City’s position on marihuana was.

RECREATIONAL MARIHUANA ESTABLISHMENTS:

Andreski stated Tousignant supplied sample ordinances from other municipalities and asked if Members had a chance to look them over. She said at this point, if Council is in favor of allowing, Members need to decide how they would like to move forward.

Tousignant said there are some issues that stand out. One issue is what type of businesses is the City interested in licensing. The second is the number of licenses to be issued and the third is, who will be getting the licenses. He referred to the City of Crystal Falls’ ordinance and theirs does not indicate who gets the license and who does not. It is limited to two, but is it first come, first serve. He stated Iron Mountain ordinance has a matrix set up to make that decision. He stated Dennis Tousignant was involved with Iron Mountain’s process and is more familiar with those details. He said the most important question should be who will getting the licenses and how to make sure you are providing equal protection of the law.

Dennis Tousignant said regarding Iron Mountain’s ordinance, there was both good and bad within their matrix. Good being they use the matrix and application to push the commercial zones, specifically letting them fix up dilapidated buildings and how much money will they be putting into improving the grounds and façade. Bad being, in his personal opinion, they pushed out any local control because the matrix is heavy on money and an amount that would be lower than a company from down state.

After a lengthy discussion, a committee was formed with Garcia, Dood, Chief, Andreski, M. Tousignant and D. Tousignant. Dood will serve as Chair. Tousignant will draft an ordinance and suggested if anyone had any other comments to contact him. A meeting date would be scheduled soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT -

Elenbaas asked if anyone had researched the biodynamic farming for hemp products and if that would be allowed under the ordinance. She said research suggests when crops such as hemp and corn are rotated, the corn grows better, and the soil gets nutrients added by way of the hemp plant. She also asked if local people would be given the first opportunity to start a business within the City and she would be following up soon.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Clements said he would encourage the committee to focus on the business aspect of the ordinance versus any moral issues since marihuana has already been legalized through the State of Michigan. He then asked if the City would be able to dictate where the State generated funds go. M. Tousignant said they would be put into the general fund to be used as the City sees fit, but could be earmarked for special projects.

D. Tousignant said he did not feel moral issues would be a problem after listening to the discussion. He said it is all on how the ordinance will be written.

Mayor Powell adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.



Bernadette Coates, Deputy Treasurer