

**CITY OF IRON RIVER  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, December 9, 2025  
9 AM  
Minutes**

Chairman Bob Byczek called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Adrienne Baker, Benjamin Garcia, Jacob Pietrzak, Mike Hoinowski, Michael Poindexter and Byczek.

Absent: John Kolbas.

Also present: City Manager Rachel Andreski and City Clerk Tyana Elenbaas.

Public in attendance: Timm Ballinger, Erik Ballinger, and Interim City Attorney Hannah Goodman.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Garcia asked to entertain the motion to move New Business Item D to the first order of business. Byczek stated that he does not see a reason for that. Garcia stated it is so the Commission can get it taken care of.

Byczek stated that the appointment could be taken care of in January and asked why order somebody in as a vice chair today? Garcia stated that he merely made a statement. If there's a second, otherwise we'll move on. Byczek added that he will not be asking for a second and he will not reiterate what Garcia motioned and will not call it to the floor for vote. He continued that because it's in the agenda properly the Planning Commission will run it that way. He stated that he doesn't know why Garcia wants to change it. He asked Garcia to give me an excuse why he wants to change it. A real reason.

Attorney Goodman stated that there's been a motion and a second. You need to follow up with something procedurally on how to deal with the motion. Byczek stated that he did not call for a second, so the motion failed.

Byczek asked the Commissioners if there was anything else, then stated that he has some other stuff. He claimed that October 9th agenda showed that he had contacted the clerk. He also stated he had six emails from September 30 and October 1 showing he had reached out to ask what the agenda was, whether one existed, or whether there was any business, and that he received no response.

Poindexter asked Byczek to tell the Commissioners what he is referring to and on what page so that the Commissioners may follow along? Byczek stated that it's on the agenda, October 9th. Fourth paragraph. Poindexter asked if Byczek meant the minutes? Byczek confirmed, "Yeah, my bad."

Byczek continued to say that these (the minutes) are really written bad because these minutes in here are underneath the agenda. He stated that they are just not right and that he is getting accused of doing things wrong when he doesn't do things wrong. He alleged that he was being

misinterpreted and his words were being put on the negative side. He stated that he will not tolerate it and that it is not right.

Attorney Goodman asked Byczek if he is bringing a motion to change how the minutes are drafted? Byczek stated that he made a motion to have that deleted and the minutes from October 9<sup>th</sup> need to be rewritten. He added that he has second-by-second video and audio of that meeting. Byczek stated that there was never a conversation with the Chief as to whom Byczek spoke with and the was included in the minutes. Poindexter asked for clarification on what exactly Byczek is challenging. Byczek demanded that the minutes be rewritten. Poindexter asked if Byczek wanted the entire minutes to be rewritten or just a paragraph. Byczek stated that the entire minutes need to be rewritten appropriately.

The discussion focused on clarifying the difference between the current agenda and the approval of prior meeting minutes. Andreski questioned whether an issue belonged on the agenda or in the minutes. It was explained that challenges to the minutes should occur during the agenda item for approving minutes, while the current discussion was limited to additions or changes to today's agenda.

No additions or changes to the agenda were proposed. A motion was made by Garcia and seconded by Hoinowski to approve the agenda. During the vote, it was noted that, per the bylaws, votes must be recorded as yes or no rather than "aye." A roll call vote was requested and conducted.

Roll Call: Ayes: 6 – Baker, Pietrzak, Poindexter, Hoinowski, Garcia and Byczek. Nays – 0. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 - Kolbas.

#### **APPROVE MINUTES**

Garcia motioned with support from Hoinowski to approve:

- September 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Roll Call: Ayes: 6 – Baker, Pietrzak, Poindexter, Hoinowski, Garcia and Byczek. Nays – 0. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

The discussion centered on objections to the October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Byczek argued the minutes were inaccurate and improperly approved by City Council without Planning Commission approval, stating this violated procedure. He requested that the minutes be rewritten, particularly objecting to statements suggesting he made no attempt to contact city officials prior to the meeting. The attorney and other members explained that minutes can only be amended based on what occurred and was stated during the meeting, not by adding emails or documents that were not presented at that time. They emphasized that any requested changes must be specific, clearly worded, and tied to exact language in the minutes so a vote could occur.

The discussion became contentious, with disagreements over whether the minutes reflected the truth, whether emails could be used as proof, and whether the secretary's record was accurate. Members repeatedly asked the objecting party to provide exact replacement wording, which he resisted, instead insisting the paragraph be removed or broadly corrected.

Ultimately, no amendment was finalized because there was no clear, agreed-upon language proposed for revision. The chair stated that the minutes would stand as written unless specific, concrete changes were submitted, noting the issue should have been raised earlier and with prepared wording.

The discussion continued over whether the October 9th minutes should be approved, amended, or rejected. Members debated whether a specific statement near the end of the minutes should be stricken, with disagreement over whether it occurred after the meeting was adjourned and therefore should not be included. The secretary stated the minutes were taken directly from the recording and stood by their accuracy.

A motion was made to approve the minutes as written by Poindexter, but disagreement followed, including requests to review the recording before voting. The discussion broadened into whether the meeting itself was properly called to order, raising questions about procedural validity, including the absence of formal opening steps.

Some members argued that if the meeting was not legally convened, the minutes should be discarded entirely; others emphasized the need to proceed with a clear motion and follow procedure. The conversation ended without resolution, as no consensus was reached on approving, amending, or voiding the minutes, and the group struggled to settle on a clear motion to vote on.

Poindexter motioned with the support of Baker to accept the October 9, 2025, Regular meeting minutes as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes: 5 – Garcia, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Baker, and Poindexter. Nays – 1 – Byczek. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Byczek called for public comment, adding that he did not want to enforce the time restrictions of three (3) minutes. Andreski stated that we must follow the agenda regarding the way that public comment is written. Interim City Attorney Goodman agreed.

Timothy Ballinger detailed the fact that he has submitted letters, which as far as he knows has not reached Council. He noted he has spoke with Chairman Byczek and gave him a copy of the complaint that he had filed regarding administrative interference with correspondence from an individual to the Planning Commission. He stated that he is trying to participate with the Planning Commission, send letters, and is not here to beat anyone up. He stated that he wants to be a active member in the community and feels he is actively being denied that. He detailed more communication he had given Byczek, stating that he is unsure where they go when he gives them to Clerk Elenbaas.

Ballinger then put in a request to be a “Citizen’s Representative.” He asked that the Planning Commission vote and create a committee, where Ballinger will be the sole member. This position would not grant him any voting powers; this position would allow him to sit in the meetings and participate with the Commission. He stated then he would not have to file FOIAs, and requests to look at documentation he’d like access to. He stated that he is struggling with how long it takes to gain access to public documents. He wants them to be readily available. He noted that he is trying to become more involved and doesn’t feel like public comment is getting through. He stated that he doesn’t want to be a Planning Commissioner, he doesn't want to vote, and he appreciates everything the Commission does. He suggested that he become like an “in between” between the public and the commission. He added that he has spoken with hundreds of residents regarding zoning, and ordinances and he feels that he could share the concerns freely with the Commission and see how it goes.

Clerk Elenbaas stopped Ballinger, as his three (3) minutes had expired. Mr. Ballinger stated that the Chair had allowed him unlimited time. Clerk Elenbaas stated that she is just following the agenda. Mr. Ballinger stated that he is sorry that she felt the need to cut him off.

Byczek stated that he has the option to start or stop commenting, saying that he doesn't have to run a time. Interim City Attorney Goodman stated that the agenda states that public comment is limited to three (3) minutes, she asked if Mr. Byczek was making a motion to amend the agenda to take out the limit. Byczek said, "Yeah." Interim City Attorney Goodman stated that we have missed that option. Byczek said, "Fine, then we will do it at the next meeting."

No other public comment was made.

### **Manager's Report**

- New Members – Andreski welcomed Adrienne and Jacob to the Planning Commission and thanked them for their service.
- Zoning Ordinance – Andreski expressed concern that the current ordinance doesn't have language regarding residential driveways. She noted that there had been a request from a resident who wanted to put in a new driveway and that's when she realized it had been omitted. She stated that she had reached out to John Lacoangeli, and he confirmed that there had not been any provisions for driveways. He noted that every community handles it differently and added that he could draft up something that can be addressed at the next meeting.
- MDNR Conversion – Glenn Dobson, who represents the Corporate Insurance and Real Estate Management Coordinator, contacted Andreski on November 18th, to state that the Aspirus Board has approved the transfer of property to the City. Their legal team will be working on drafting up the agreements with the city. Andreski noted that this will satisfy the Conversion issue that was discovered in 2015. She reiterated that their legal team is working on the transfer title and Andreski and WICKWIRE are already working with the conversion specialist, regarding what needs to be done next. She stated that in January, at the City Councils next meeting, there will be a public hearing, so the public may comment on the transfer of the property. She added that this is a big win for the City. She noted that this will open doors to allow for some improvements to the parks.
- MDOT Category B – Andreski stated that we were successful in obtaining the MDOT Category B grant. The maximum grant award is \$250,000 and is a 50% match. The City will utilize the 2026 Street Improvements project, which was on the Capital Improvements Plan as that scope of work. Andreski had updated the Capital Improvement's Plan.
- Hazard Mitigation Grant – Andreski stated that FEMA officials have reaffirmed the denial of the public assistance Category F funding for the State of Michigan. This would have supported permanent repairs to damaged utilities and individual systems, which help residents. The State of Michigan did appeal the decision as this had to do with the flooding that happened when the Apple Blossom Trail was destroyed. The Federal government has denied that. The City did put in for the Hazard Mitigation Grant, what it does is reduce future risk of the areas that were damaged such as putting in larger culverts and those kinds of improvements. This is still under review, which is good because we haven't been denied.
- Apple Blossom Trail – Andreski updated the Commissioners stating that the ICECA and her were trying to plan a ribbon cutting, but unfortunately, the weather has changed. Andreski stated that a ribbon cutting will take place in the spring, once the snow melts. She added that the DDA Parking Lots will be included in the ribbon cuttings, this spring.
- Community Facilities Grant USDA Rural Development – Andreski stated that the City has been successful in the past in obtaining this grant and had purchased necessary equipment in the DPW and the Police Department, like plow trucks and police cars. Andreski had finally got in touch with someone from the program and unfortunately, it looks like the program is

over subscribed. This means that they have more requests than they do funding. It is uncertain if/when the money will be available from the Federal government. The representative stated that the City should investigate their low interest loans, currently the rates at 5.25% Andreski reiterated that the DPW is in desperate need of a plow truck. She added that she did put this on the Capital Improvements Plan.

- New Business - Andreski stated that she has been speaking with a lot of people about possible new businesses. She spoke with an entity that is looking to do some upgrades to existing buildings. There have been talks of potential housing, although these are preliminary.

Hoinowski asked what kind of housing has been discussed. Andreski informed him that possible town houses or duplexes.

Garcia moved with support from Byczek to accept the Manager's Report as presented. Roll Call: Ayes: 6 – Baker, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Poindexter, Garcia and Byczek. Nays – 0. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

### **CY2026 CIP**

Andreski stated that she included 2025 CIP in the packet to show the commissioner's what projects were completed and which projects were still pending. She stated that she believes we did great. There were a few things that were added to the CIP which were indicated on the handout.

She detailed the updates on CY2026, stating that she was waiting on the engineers for some final numbers which were received. She reiterated that the CIP is a working document, it just helps guide us. She included a new truck for the DPW in the plan, whether that is funded through grants or a loan. She noted how expensive plow trucks are.

Andreski explained to the Commissioners that she had broken up the streets projects to show which is part of the CWSRF and which are part of the Category B Grant. The sheet showed what the city will cover and what the loan will cover. Andreski added that as part of the SRF project there will be around \$68,000 that will be allocated to sidewalks.

Andreski reported that City Council has decided to explore expanding the cemetery. WICKWIRE will conduct a plat survey and mapping for the cemetery and provide cost estimates, with multiple expansion options under consideration. Byczek asked about the direction of expansion. Andreski also noted that cemetery mapping was included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

WICKWIRE will also assist in compiling all city utility information into a single, consolidated map, and Hoinowski offered support with this effort based on his experience. Additionally, Andreski explained that the SRF project was placed under general administrative costs in the miscellaneous section. She highlighted that a contingency fund of over \$300,000 is available to address any potential issues.

Baker asked what the acronym DWSRF meant, and Andreski explained it stands for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. She stated the funding request is still pending and, if awarded, would be a low-interest loan to support improvements to the city's water system.

Baker asked whether water system improvements would result in higher taxes. Andreski responded that a utility rate analysis would be conducted, similar to the process used for the SRF grant, to

determine whether the city could repay the loan. She noted that the previous SRF project did result in rate increases to ensure loan repayment and added that another rate analysis would be completed if the DWSRF funding is approved. Baker expressed opposition to any sort of rate increase.

Baker asked for clarification on general administration costs. Andreski explained that these costs include professional services required as part of the grant process. She stated the city worked with the bonding attorney firm Miller Canfield, which handled the necessary legal requirements, and with Benzinski and Sons, a financial consulting firm. Benzinski and Sons conducted the utility rate analysis, reviewed financing terms, and assisted with easement-related matters.

Garcia asked about the Parks and Recreation budget. Andreski stated that they do have a \$50,000 budget. Garcia asked about making recommendations to the Planning Commission to the Parks and Recreation committee. Andreski stated that one could make recommendations. Garcia recommended putting under miscellaneous signage. He stressed that the businesses on top of Stambaugh Hill need advertising. He added that Genesee could be advertised on the same sign. He suggested the city owned lot next to McDonald's, stating it is a centralized location.

Byczek stated that Garcia may speak about this under Commissioner Comments, as he didn't feel this was the correct time to discuss this. Garcia disagreed, stating that this would be a good idea and would show business support from not only the Planning Commission, but also the city in general. Byczek stated that he tried to bring this issue up eight years ago, and nothing has happened. Garcia reiterated putting it on the CIP. Byczek stated that this is a comment that could be considered.

Byczek motioned to send the Capital Improvements plan as written to the City Council, due to no support, Byczek rescinded his motion.

Garcia motioned with support Baker to send the Capital Improvements Plan with the addition of signage to miscellaneous. Roll Call: Ayes: 5 – Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Poindexter, Baker and Garcia. Nays: 1 – Byczek. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

### **Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance / Food Truck Ordinance**

Byczek stated that he believes that the Iron River Housing Commission should be working on the inspection. He noted that they are already doing inspections on their property, so he would expect them to do the same for city rentals. Garcia stated that they do not have any vested interest in the City parcels. Interim City Attorney Goodman stated that there is a restructuring for HUD. There is less funding as well.

Garcia suggested going line by line through the ordinance and setting up a work session. He noted that it may take more than one session. Byczek suggested setting up a work session in January. Garcia suggested a sooner timeline. There was discussion on when a work session could be set up and debated on whether it could be put off to the New Year.

Byczek stated that this is not a pressing issue and can wait. He noted that there is already an ordinance in existence.

Byczek motioned with support from Pietrzak to put this off until January, where they will establish a subcommittee. Roll Call: Ayes: 2 - Pietrzak and Byczek. Nays: 4 – Baker, Hoinowski, Poindexter and Garcia. Motion failed due to lack of support.

Baker motioned with support from Hoinowski start on this line-by-line review of the proposal for the Rental Registration and Inspection and Food Truck Ordinance next week on December 15, 2025, at 9 a.m. Roll Call: Ayes: 5 – Garcia, Pietrzak, Poindexter, Hoinowski, and Baker. Nays: 1 – Byczek. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Update Bylaws**

Byczek stated that the Bylaws were created in 2018, he felt that the only updating needed it for all those to become familiar with them. Baker expressed that she received an outdated copy of the bylaws. Byczek stated that the only bylaws that matter are from 2018.

Interim City Attorney Goodman asked who drafted the bylaws. Andreski informed her that prior City Manager, David Thayer, drafted the bylaws. Interim City Attorney Goodman stated that she and the other attorney at her office had examined the current bylaws and does see places where the language could be cleaned up.

Byczek stated that the State of Michigan indicated the commission could write its own bylaws and that they were considered acceptable. Interim City Attorney Goodman responded that while the commission can write its own bylaws, that does not necessarily mean they are adequate or effective. Garcia added that the city attorney believes the bylaws need to be revised to better protect the city from potential litigation.

Byczek suggested Interim City Attorney Goodman draft up new bylaws for the next meeting, where the commission may examine them further. Poindexter asked Goodman what she sees that needs to be addressed. Byczek stated that the commission may go over her drafted bylaws at the next meeting.

Byczek stated that City Council accepted minutes that stated that the Bylaws will not be addressed until an investigation concluded. He stated that we will not be fixing the bylaws. Poindexter stated that we are not fixing we are trying to hear clarification on errors. Byczek stated that we are ending the topic. Byczek questioned who put the bylaws on the agenda, he said it shouldn't be coming from the office.

Byczek moved with support from Garcia to have Interim City Attorney draft out revisions to the bylaws to present at then next regular meeting and to table the Bylaws until that meeting. Roll Call: Ayes: 5 – Baker, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Garcia, and Byczek. Nays: 1 – Poindexter. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

### **Annual Report**

Byczek stated that he had issue with the Annual Report, because there is an approved home occupation permit listed, that was not approved by this commission. He indicated that the vote was 3 to 1, which means it did not pass.

Byczek motioned to remove the Home Occupation Permit and change from approved to denied. He would like the homeowner to be notified and let them know it was denied. Baker asked for clarification on why he is denying the annual report? He stated because the quorum was not reached. Garcia clarified that at the time of the meeting, the motion had passed. He noted that this is an area of concern in the current bylaws and this is why it was on the agenda for review. The definition of a quorum is not clearly defined. Byczek argued his interpretation of what a quorum is.

Poindexter asked whether the bylaws issue was one of Interim City Attorney Goodman's areas of concern, and Goodman confirmed that it was. Baker reviewed how a roll call vote works, stating that a quorum is a majority of the board, which Byczek disputed.

The discussion then shifted to a previously approved home occupation. Baker asked whether the commission intended to penalize the resident who had been granted approval. Byczek responded that he wanted the situation remedied, prompting Garcia to ask what he meant by that.

Byczek stated that the business in question is a mobile business, not a home occupation, and said he was not willing to bend the rules. Baker asked about the status of the business, and it was confirmed that it is operating. Byczek noted that the approval was issued by the City, not the Planning Commission, and requested that the administration address and correct the issue. Finally, Baker asked whether home occupations require annual renewal, and Andreski clarified that home occupation approvals are granted for the life of the business.

Conversation continued on whether or not the permit was issued correctly or incorrectly. Byczek stated that he will not approve the annual report and will not ask for a motion on it. He said he tried to fix this earlier, but Andreski was not willing. Byczek said this is when it all started. He did not clarify what "it" was. He iterated that the Home Occupation should be revoked and corrected. Baker argued about closing a resident's business, citing the planning commissions mistake. Byczek moved to hold this until the January meeting.

Andreski stated that this report is so the Council may see what the Planning Commission has been doing. She added that all of the other members were under the impression that the Home Occupation request had passed, adding that nothing was issued in ill will. She said that she has tried to fix this with Byczek and he was not willing. She expressed distaste for revoking the permit. Byczek stated that Andreski had the time to fix it and questioned what she had done to fix this mistake.

Discussion took place regarding turmoil within the Planning Commission and cancellation of meetings. Byczek stated that all these issues could be resolved in January.

Byczek moved with support from Baker to table the annual report until January.

Byczek stated that he will commit to meeting with Andreski and Interim City Attorney Goodman to help resolve the issue created by the Home Occupation.

Byczek moved with support from Baker to table the annual report until January. Roll Call: Ayes: – 6 Garcia, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Poindexter, Baker and Byczek. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.

### **Accept Letter of Resignation**

Garcia moved with support from Poindexter to accept John Kolbas letter of resignation as presented. Roll Call: Ayes: 6 – Baker, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Poindexter, Garcia and Byczek. Nays: 0. Motion Carried.

### **Appoint Vice Chair**

Garcia moved with support from Byczek to nominate Michael Poindexter to vice chair of the Planning Commission. Roll Call: Ayes: 5 – Baker, Pietrzak, Hoinowski, Garcia, and Byczek. Nays: 0. Abstained: 1 – Poindexter. Motion Carried. Absent: 1 – Kolbas.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**


None.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Byczek adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

  
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Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk