The Marquette County Board of Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, October 12, 1999 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 231 of the Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, Michigan.


It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Arsenault, and unanimously carried by voice vote that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 28, 1999 be approved.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment. None was forthcoming.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Rapport and unanimously carried by voice vote that the agenda be approved with the following late addition: Item 12) Renaissance Zone Applications.

It was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Rapport and unanimously carried by voice vote that Claims and Accounts for the period September 23, 1999, through October 7, 1999 in the amount of $1,787,723.17 be approved.

Dave Gillis, CUPPADD, presented the report on a Dimension Stone Feasibility Study. Mr. Gillis reported that a consultant, H. James Bourque of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan approached the Michigan Jobs Commission about the potential quarrying of dimensional stone in the Upper Peninsula. A study was commissioned to explore the development potential in the Upper Peninsula by evaluating stone resources and market demand which included the most promising sites, startup costs, equipment recommendations, etc.

Mr. Gillis noted that at the turn of the century approximately 60 stone quarries were operating in the Upper Peninsula, a total of 97 former sites have been identified of which 30 were in Marquette County. These sites were "whittled down" to eleven sites with promise, four are located in Marquette County. One complete copy of the Dimension Stone Feasibility Study will be provided to Marquette County and others will be kept in other counties and libraries around the Upper Peninsula. There seems to be a growing demand for dimension stone, not just for construction but also for repair and maintenance of many of the stone buildings in the Upper Peninsula.

Mr. Gillis further reported that an ongoing evaluation of stone resources by State geologists and the Michigan Jobs Commission are being conducted. Presently core drilling is being done which will result in an addendum to this report. Hopefully the demand for dimension stone will result in reviving quarry operations. At present only one stone quarry is operating in the whole State of Michigan and that is near Cooks, Michigan in the Upper Peninsula.

Chairperson Corkin noted that Dave Gillis gave a similar report at a recent CUPPADD meeting and thought the study had potential economic interest for Marquette County. He thanked Dave Gillis for the presentation.

It was moved by Comm. Tuominen, seconded by Comm. Joseph and unanimously carried by voice vote to place the Dimension Stone Feasibility Study on file.

The Committee a recommendation from George Wright, Facility Manager, for the Courthouse Sidewalk, Step, and Curbing Replacement Project. The project consists of replacing the deteriorated concrete sidewalk sections, steps, and curb to Third Street from the East Courthouse main entrance and sawtooth parking curbing on the north side of the Annex Building. The Capital Improvement Project Budget is $39,118. The Project was advertised for bids and two companies responded by the due date of Friday, October 1, 1999. The low bidder was Menze Construction Company, Inc. for $37,954. Menze Construction Company, Inc. did a previous portion of the Courthouse Sidewalk and Step Project in the fall of 1996 and did a good job.

It was moved by Comm. Arsenault, seconded by Comm. Seppanen, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve the Courthouse Sidewalk, Step, and Curbing Replacement Project Bid of Menze Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of $37,954.

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The Committee considered a resolution for the closing of the sale of the Marquette County Airport parcel. Steve Powers, County Administrator, explained that the resolution was drafted by Attorney Dennis Girard and a copy forwarded to both O'Dovero Properties and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community for review and comment. No problems with the resolution have been reported.
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It was moved by Comm. Roberts, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the resolution to close the sale of the Marquette County Airport authorizing Chairperson Corkin to sign all closing documents prior to the actual closing taking place.

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The Committee considered a resolution for the County’s Release Application to the Federal Aviation Agency from federal requirements for the property known as the Marquette County Airport located in Negaunee Township. Jim Kippola, Manager of Planning, was present and explained that the release from federal requirements from the old Marquette County Airport is necessary so that the requirements can be transferred to Sawyer International Airport. The FAA has already forwarded a draft release letter for Marquette County Staff to review.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Rapport, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the Resolution to submit the Application for Release from Federal Requirements to the Federal Aviation Administration from the former Marquette County Airport at Negaunee Township.

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The Committee considered a Financial Assistance Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, in an amount not to exceed $2,892,000 for assistance for infrastructure and building improvements at the former KI Sawyer Air Force Base. The grant provides for the rehabilitation of three hangars and a general aviation terminal, and construction of a new public safety building to assist in the conversion of the base to civilian use.

Total project cost is $3,112,450 of which the County’s share will be $220,450, local funds to come from the Airport Fund.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board approve of the Financial Assistance Award from the Economic Development Administration for an amount not to exceed $2,892,000 in accordance with the Federal Government’s regulations and requirements and authorize the Chairperson to sign the necessary documents.

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The Committee considered a previous Committee of the Whole Recommendation to dissolve the County Airport Commission by the appropriate resolution to be presented at the Committee of the Whole on October 12, 1999. The resolution would take affect upon the County Board’s adoption at the October 19, 1999 Regular Meeting.

Commissioners asked questions and discussed the language with Administrator Steve Powers and Civil Counsel Harley Andrews in the resolution. None of the language presented was amended, however Commissioners noted that they will again review the need for an Airport Commission next year, and directed that letters of appreciation be sent to the current members of the Airport Commission for their service to Marquette County.

It was moved by Comm. Wallace, seconded by Comm. Joseph, and unanimously carried by voice vote, that the Committee of the Whole recommend the County Board adopt the Resolution abolishing the Marquette County Airport Board which was established January 1, 1994, and further that the powers to manage and operate the Sawyer International Airport shall be vested in the Marquette County Board of Commissioners.

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The Committee considered a Renaissance Zone application prepared by the Lake Superior Community Partnership. Herb Parsons, LSCP, was present and explained the County Board at their September 21st meeting, directed the Lake Superior Community Partnership to prepare a Renaissance Zone Application for any municipality interested within Marquette County. In conjunction with applications from Baraga and Iron County, the City of Ishpeming is submitting an application for a proposed Renaissance Zone for 40 acres within its city limits and Negaunee Township is considering a proposed Renaissance Zone for 144 acres in the former Marquette County Airport.

Mr. Parsons further explained, the Negaunee Township proposal. An estimated $9,100 in property taxes would be lost by the County per year. The Renaissance Zone would have a 15 year time span, however in year 12 - 25% of the taxes would be levied, year 13 - 50%, year 14 - 75%, and in the 15th year - 100% tax liability would be levied.
Mr. Parsons further explained that October 22, 1999 is the application deadline. Both the City of Ishpeming and Negaunee Township have not taken formal action on the proposed Renaissance Zone but he expects their resolutions to be forthcoming.

Commission discussion centered more on the Negaunee Township proposal than on the City of Ishpeming proposal. A number of concerns were raised and Commissioners felt more time was needed to review the materials distributed and wait for the resolutions prepared by the units of government.

It was moved by Comm. Rapport, seconded by Comm. Tuominen and unanimously carried by voice vote that the Committee send the Renaissance Zone proposal to the regular County Board meeting of October 19th without a recommendation.

Comm. Curto arrived at 6:45 p.m.

The Committee considered a proposal for a Renaissance Zone to be established at KI Sawyer. Tom Rumora, Director, KI Sawyer Development Department, explained a complex application noting that two meetings were held between the Lake Superior Community Partnership, the three Townships located within KI Sawyer, the Equalization Director, Airport Staff, and County Administrative and Planning Staff. This Renaissance Zone Application is not related to the other multi-county renaissance zone application, but follows special legislation for closed military bases.

Chairperson Corkin declared a recess at 7:00 p.m. to conduct the Marquette County Board of Commissioners Annual Meeting.

RECESS FOR ANNUAL MEETING

The Committee of the Whole reconvened at 7:12 P.M. and continued its consideration of a Renaissance Zone proposal for KI Sawyer.

Mr. Rumora presented a map showing most of KI Sawyer in a colored area because 95% of the former Air Force Base falls within Sands Township. Sands Township would like to make this whole area a Renaissance Zone.

Commissioners noted at the September 21, 1999 County Board Meeting they directed County Staff to investigate a potential application for a Renaissance Zone for several sites at KI Sawyer; specifically the Command Center and the Hospital. These remain unoccupied and appear to be difficult to market for future development. It is possible a Renaissance Zone could assist in their marketing. Commissioners questioned the application process.

Michael Gokey, the Governor’s Upper Peninsula Representative, noted that the Renaissance Zone Application must come through Marquette County. It appears that Sands Township won’t support anything less than all of the Township land within KI Sawyer. If the County does not agree then the Renaissance Zone Application is dead. Should the County apply for a Renaissance Zone for several specific sites and the Township disagrees, the Michigan Economic Development Commission will have to review the matter, however, Mr. Gokey believes this application also would be rejected.

After a lengthy discussion it was moved by Comm. Seppanen, seconded by Comm. Bergdahl, and carried by voice vote 8 Ayes (Comm. Seppanen, Arschnau, Bergdahl, Curto, Joseph, Tuominen, Wallace, and Corkin) to 2 Nays (Comm. Rapport and Roberts) that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the County Board direct Staff to apply for a Renaissance Zone for three specific sites at the former KI Sawyer Air Force Base which include: The Hospital, the Command Center, and some open space along Avenue B.

Chairperson Corkin opened the meeting for public comment.

Michael Gokey, the Governor’s Northern Michigan Office Representative, has been overseeing the Renaissance Zone Application process. He thanked the County Board for their consideration and noted he will continue to work with the Sands Township Supervisor regarding the Sawyer application. Mr. Gokey further noted that unfortunately the Renaissance Zone timeline for the application and review process is on fast track and urged the County Board to consider the multi-county/Ishpeming City - Negaunee Township Renaissance Zone Application before October 19th. Commissioners considered a special meeting to review the matter but did not come to a consensus.
Chairperson Corkin contended that the County Board took specific action at their regular meeting on September 21 and perhaps the minutes and recommendation from that meeting could be used in the application and then be further clarified later if necessary. Meanwhile, the County Board will review the matter at its regular meeting on October 19th.

There being no further public comment, Chairperson Corkin closed this portion of the meeting.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENT, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comm. Tuominen updated the Committee on the Road Commission office and garage remodeling project. The garage roof is now completed. The Road Commission has submitted an application to be considered a historical building which could help in future funding for building maintenance.

Comm. Rapport noted several items that were in the Commissioners’ mailboxes. She expressed concern about the loss of a federal funding waiver which will create a gap in Friend of the Court services.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

David J. Roberts
Marquette County Clerk
MARQUETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, October 12, 1999, 6:00 P.M.
Room 231, Henry A. Skewis Annex, Marquette, MI 49855

1. ROLL CALL.
3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.
5. Review of Claims and Accounts.
6. Report by David Gillis, CUPPAD, on Dimension Stone Feasibility Study.
8. Resolution for the Closing of the Sale of the Marquette County Airport.
9. Resolution for Release from Federal Requirements to the Federal Aviation Administration from the Marquette County Airport.
10. EDA Grant for Assistance for Infrastructure and Building Improvements at Ki Sawyer.
11. Resolution to Dissolve the Marquette County Airport Commission.
12. PUBLIC COMMENT.
13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS, STAFF COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
14. ADJOURNMENT (If necessary meeting must be temporarily recessed for Annual Meeting at 7:00 P.M.)