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Subject: Iron River Township 5-11-10 No To Ordinance Amendments - please reply when you get

~~Iron River Twp 5-11-10~~ Iron River Township Says No To Ordinance Amendments

Its back to the drawing board for the Iron River Township Planning Commission after the board, along with the townships legal counsel dismissed their ordinance recommendations regarding blight and outdoor wood burners.

A group of nearly 100 people gathered for the planning commission meeting, which was held immediately preceding the regular township board meeting, some under the impression that the drafts to amend the current ordinances were a done deal, after copies of the drafts showed up in residents mailboxes. The drafts, according to public comment, pertained to strict new blight laws which would not allow unlicensed snowmobiles, vehicles, and heavy equipment, among other things, within the township and banned the use of outdoor wood burners, even for those already in use.

That the changes were a done deal was not the case, township trustee Ken Piwarski explained. Planning Commission member Bob Battye added that they were just looking for input from a legal standpoint and that they had, despite several comments to the contrary, followed the proper procedure when amending an ordinance.

Piwarski said that there had not been a public hearing scheduled on the issue, nor had any legal action been taken, both of which would be necessary before any changes would be able to be made.

Not that the board plans to accept the amendments, as recommended by the planning commission.

"(The recommendations) are not before the board." Attorney Steve Polich told the large audience in attendance. "They are not being considered, they are not going to happen. I have recommended against them. The planning commission is back to square one."

Another ordinance issue was also on the agenda- the ordinance regarding the townships sewer availability charge, which took affect shortly after the state department of corrections pulled the Camp Ottawa prison camp from Iron County, taking with it much needed sewer revenues- some \$60,000 per year, according to township supervisor Mark Polley.

Several residents complained about the availability charge, among them, Pat Turner, who said that the ordinance, which now has her paying a \$20 per month sewer charge for a vacant piece of property, should be reconsidered.

"We lost over \$60,000 to our sewer budget and the \$12,000 decrease in charges from the sewer authority doesn't cover it." Polley explained.

"We had a \$60,000 to \$65,000 deficit." Piwarski said, "How do we straighten that out? One choice was the added fee."

Polich expressed his legal opinion on the issue, stating that it is legal for the township to enforce such an ordinance.

"There is some rationale for people paying to have sewer available - its an enhancement to the property." he said.

But, he added, the matter will be addressed as the township updates the water ordinance.

Polley made it clear to his constituents that he had not given up on the issue and was continuing to work on getting the states cooperation with the prison camps sewer bill, which so far, remains unpaid.

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The townships water ordinance will be looked into and most likely amended, as ongoing improvements to the water system take place. AECOM engineer Craig Richardson discussed the tank painting bids, which were

received earlier in the month. After review of the three bids, AECOM recommended the tank painting portion of the MEDC water improvement project be awarded to St. Germain Sandblasting out of Negaunee, at a cost of \$153,700. Changes to that project ended up saving the township nearly \$200,000, which will be put towards the pipe replacement portion of the project, Richardson said. With \$666,000 left in the construction budget, he said, the new lines could now be extended further- from Gibbs City Road to Kallio Road, possibly down Michaels and Old Beechwood Roads.

"We'll get a lot more done than anticipated," he said. He plans to advertise for bids for July or August construction on the project and added that bid prices have been coming in good on other projects.