



# City of Negaunee Municipal News

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## City welcomes new police chief

Sergeant Pat Ketola was recently appointed as the City of Negaunee's interim police chief.

Ketola has worked for the City of Negaunee's police department for the past 20 years, thirteen of which he served as a sergeant. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Northern Michigan University in 1999.

"I want to welcome Chief Ketola in his new role as interim chief of police and wish him all the best as he settles in," Heffron said.

Ketola will be replacing longtime police chief Jay Frusti, who reached his retirement eligibility in 2019. Frusti served the Negaunee Police Department for 25 years, acting as

police chief for the last 15.

"I thank the City of Negaunee for the opportunity to serve this community," Frusti said. "My experience here has been very rewarding."

Frusti's last day was January 3.

"Chief Frusti has served this community with great dignity and will be deeply missed," Heffron said. "I wish him well on his retirement."

According to Heffron, he intends on having the interim position in place for one year before he decides to fill the position permanently.

"Everyone needs time to transition into an administrative role," he said. "I believe that Chief Ketola's previous experience as sergeant will aid him during this process."

## Residents asked to adopt a hydrant

The City of Negaunee is asking residents and business owners to pitch in and help clear the city's fire hydrants of snow and ice buildup and to claim the responsibility of shoveling out a fire hydrant after it snows.

Heavy snowfall can partially bury or block fire hydrants, and clearing out a hydrant is something that shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes.

The City has about 280 fire hydrants, and is asking for citizens' cooperation in helping keep them clear of debris and snow. Cleaning a three-foot circle around hydrants is recommended so firefighters can quickly locate and use hydrants in an emergency situation.

In the midst of winter snowstorms, buried hydrants cause dangerous delays in the ability of fire fighters to respond to fire emergencies.

We also remind residents and businesses that while you've got that shovel out, check all the doors around your own home or business and make sure they're all clear to open, to not only ensure that medical responders would not be hampered in their ability to treat a patient, but in removing a patient and transporting to a medical facility.

## Library holds Valentines tea, sale on February 11

The Friends of the Library will hold its annual Valentine's Tea and Book Sale from noon to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11 in the library. The public is invited to attend, enjoy refreshments and shop.

For the latest information on events and programs at the library, stop by or visit its Facebook page.

## Developer eyes old Mather B site

The City of Negaunee is negotiating with a developer to draft a development agreement for the constitution of a sports complex at the Mather B site.

After an RFP was put out for proposals of use for this site, only one was received and qualified to be presented to the city council. It had conditions on the property, including: a development primarily focused on recreation and tourism; a mix of uses to create vibrancy and year-round activity; a creative design process respecting the historic character of downtown Negaunee, its legacy buildings, and the on-site building(s); preservation of the existing on-site building(s); incorporation of a City accessible utility corridor and access; some form of public access to the on-site building(s); and the incorporation of a public right-of-way through the parcel.

DM Builders is proposing to reuse the Mather B property by converting it into a multiuse year-round complex. The

site will include rehab of the hoist building into short-term rentals, indoor sport activities like basketball and a cafeteria. In addition, they propose building an indoor soccer stadium, four outdoor soccer fields, the construction of short-term cabin rentals, RV sites and ziplines.

If they reach an agreement, steps will need to take place before shovels can break ground. Council will first hold a public hearing to gather input from residents. If the land is to be sold, authority would be granted to auction the property. Terms of the auction would be based on the development agreement. The City will work in coming months to reach a deal with the developers.

"We are taking care to safeguard interests of the property; we will be holding the property in escrow until the development is complete," City Manager Nate Heffron said. "This is the catalyst for more development to come."

# City considers becoming Tree USA community

Early last year, council member Jason Wallner inquired about the City of Negaunee becoming a Tree USA community.

“Being a Tree USA community is more than just planting trees, it helps set good policy for those that are in maintaining our public trees in our parks and along our streets,” Wallner said. The City Council took action in November in enacting the Tree USA and Forestry Management Ordinance.

According to the Tree USA website, Tree USA is “a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees.” A public tree is defined as a tree found in parks and along the streets (public right-of-way).

In order to become a Tree USA community and to maintain that status, Negaunee will have to institute the following four standards:

- **STANDARD 1** —Creation of a Tree Board: Under the City’s new ordinance, the responsibility of matters concerning the Tree USA program will fall under the Parks & Recreation Commission. The commission will

advise and recommend action to the City Council on various issues pertaining to public trees.

- **STANDARD 2**—Creation of a Tree Care Ordinance, which covers public trees, we are not creating rules or regulations on the trees people plant on private property. According to the Tree USA website, “A public tree care ordinance encourages beautification, air cooling and purification, noise abatement, property value enhancement and all the other attributes of trees in cities of all sizes. It also enables city government to prevent and control destructive insects and diseases, avoid unnecessary costs and liability from hazardous trees and tree-related accidents, and protect residents from unscrupulous or careless operators.”

- **STANDARD 3**—Creation of a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita: “Currently the City is in compliance with this standard and well above the \$2 per capita,” according to Heffron. Investments that qualify for this standard include: tree planting, removal, pruning, programming, some meetings,

and educational publications.

“This standard also takes in consideration the forestry management section of the newly adopted ordinance. Soon the Parks and Recreation Commission will call for the development a comprehensive forestry management report that assists in modern-day forestry management techniques, which could include, but not limited to select cutting, thinning and replanting,” Heffron said. Currently the city has nearly 1,000 acres of forestland property.

- **STANDARD 4**—An Arbor Day proclamation and observance: This last standard calls for the official celebration of Arbor Day, in whatever format the community decides to celebrate. Heffron said the Parks and Recreation Commission is looking into ways to celebrate Arbor Day in a meaningful way. One idea is creating a Tree Memorial, that will honor a member of the community that embodies citizenship among other positive attributes.” Heffron said.

Details will be available in Spring 2020 any planned Arbor Day activities.

## Ordinance adopted limits marijuana facility possibilities

Recently the Negaunee City Council adopted a marijuana ordinance ending the process that began when voters of the State of Michigan passed the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act in November 2018. This act allowed for several initiatives related directly to adult use of recreational marijuana and the taxation thereof.

“One of the sections of the new law allows municipalities the option to completely prohibit or limit the number of marijuana establishments within its boundaries,” City Manager Nate Heffron said. Not only did the City then need to determine the fate of recreational marijuana within city limits, the new law also gave a deadline to make that decision.

A motion was made in March to opt out of allowing recreational sales within city limits, but failed in a 3-3 vote; one council member was not in attendance.

“The purpose of opting out at that time was to create a wait-and-see approach

from the administration side of things,” Heffron said. “We wanted to see what emergency rules the State would put in place first, giving the city more time to approach this issue afterwards.”

Under the new recreational marijuana law, provisioning centers, also known as dispensaries, could now be established. According to David Nelson, Planning and Zoning Administrator for the City, zoning allows for certain land uses within certain districts.

“For example, most communities decided that they would not want to have a meat processing plant or industry facility next to housing units,” he said. “This helps prevent issues that may arise under health, safety and the welfare of all residents. We were tasked with deciding where these could be located.”

Several meetings were held from May 2019 until September 2019, when the planning commission held a public hearing on this matter. The proposed ordi-

nance allowed for marijuana establishments within city limits for both medical and recreational uses. However, this limited the number of such retail facilities to one per 2,500 residents. In addition, the ordinance allowed for grow operations, transport services, processing facilities and safety compliance operations.

Where these facilities should be located was determined as well. It was recommended such facilities be located in areas zoned “industrial”; however, one area zoned industrial would not be included due to their proximity to housing units.

“We wanted to give the City complete control on how these facilities could impact the community. Since we had no real way of determining this, we tried to play it safe,” Heffron said.

The ordinance went into effect on November 25, and applications for various activities can be accepted as of January 2020. For details on the ordinance, visit [www.cityofnegaunee.com](http://www.cityofnegaunee.com)