

City of Mackinac Island Caps Percentage of Bike Rental Business Each Owner Can Have

Bicycles: From page 1

Commercial bicycle licenses are issued each April, and the city holds a public hearing if new licenses are requested. Council bases its decision on whether the number of commercial licenses meet the needs of the public, local traffic conditions, and the catch-all term, "health, safety, and welfare of the general public."

Ryba Bicycle Rental, which holds 395 licenses, just under 30% of the total, is exempt from the cap.

Sandra and Debra Orr, owners of Orr Kids Bicycle Shop, suggested the ordinance stipulate rental bicycle trailers "should not exceed manufacturer's recommended weight load," instead of limiting it to not more than two young children.

The Orrs also would like Council

to provide more than 10 days notice of bicycle license distribution.

City attorney Tom Evashevski was directed by Council after the meeting to add the weight limit recommendation to the amendment, but was not told to extend the notice time frame.

Language in the amendment about the limitations on a bicycle trailer will include both manufacturer's weight limitations and a limit on the number of children allowed in one cart, which was already in the amendment.

Mayor Margaret Doud assured Tom Pfeiffelmann, co-owner with Gwen Baker of Island Bicycle Rental, that his company's request to transfer 100 licenses to Arnold Transit's Lakeside Bike Rental and

100 to Ira Green will be addressed at Council's next meeting Monday, December 29, which was changed from its usual Wednesday meeting because of New Year's Eve.

Council will work with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Coast Guard to certify Mackinac Island as compliant with the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Code. This will allow the Island port to continue to welcome cruise ships in for the 2009 season, part of a new Homeland Security requirement by the U.S. government, Mayor Doud explained.

A firm named Travel Dynamics is expected to operate a cruise ship between Duluth, Minnesota, and Toronto, Ontario, making several stops in between, including Houghton and Mackinac Island.

Council filed a letter asking local ports to meet the new standards, and will send the information to Bob Brown of Arnold Transit Company, which moors incoming cruise ships at its Island dock.

Council, at the suggestion of City Treasurer Rick Linn, agreed to pay off the remaining debt for the 1996 construction of the fire hall on Market Street, with the last payment being \$75,000.

The payment is due this June and would have required an interest payment of \$1,856 that Council now can avoid. Mr. Linn explained the city could pay it off now, considering collection of summer taxes is completed.

Council's last monthly interest payment for December will be \$309.38.

Brian and Joe Murray, property owners on Main Street next to St. Anne's rectory, asked Council in a letter to change the way the city plows the area to avoid damaging their fence.

Mayor Doud said there are only so many places snow can be piled up away from the street.

"Sometimes fences do get damaged, but snow piles up and it comes

down to the people's health and welfare" of maintaining safe and clean streets, said Mayor Doud.

The letter was placed on file.

Council directed its Streets and Sidewalks Committee to review Jack and Terri Armstrong's request for a temporary motor vehicle permit to use a lawn tractor to plow snow at their British Landing home. He received a permit to use the tractor to mow the lawn, but the permit expired in November and must be renewed for use in the winter.

Council questioned why the Armstrongs need a motorized vehicle to remove the snow, but agreed a committee could more thoroughly review the request.

Robin Dorman, a member of the audience, asked the city to consider having Santa Claus arrive at the annual Christmas Bazaar on a horse and sleigh, which he feels is more suitable to the Island than a fire truck.

Motor vehicles have been banned from the Island since 1898, however, emergency vehicles are allowed year-around, as are utility and construction vehicles, and snowmobiles during the winter.

"It's just a small suggestion, but to promote the Island's horse culture, it would seem better to bring Santa on horse and sleigh instead of a fire engine," said Mr. Dorman.

Aldermen Jason St. Onge, a fire-

fighter, and Armand "Smi" Horn, a former fire chief, believe using the fire truck honors the firefighters, who began the tradition years ago.

Council agreed to allow Santa's motorized mode of transportation to continue.

Richard Coates was given a temporary motor vehicle permit for use of a backhoe at his Sandalwood home to remove a tree that blew down during a recent storm.

Council scheduled a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting for 4:30 p.m. January 28, to review Craig and Paula Starkweather's request for alterations to their Spring Street home, as the project calls for reassessment of lot coverage.

Plan Will Allow Grants To Be Sought for Airport Project



Men gather around a single-engine plane, which was the first to land at the newly opened Mackinac Island airstrip June 29, 1934. The grass runway was paved in the early 1960s. It was repaved in 1978 and then again in 1988. (Photograph courtesy of Mackinac State Historic Parks)

Airport: From page 1 million.

Three major improvements include removing a hump in the middle of the paved runway and building up each end of the airport to improve pilots' line of sight, moving the runway 65 feet from the west side of a fence to comply with federal aviation safety standards, and repairing sinkholes from the runway.

A sinkhole was repaired Wednesday, December 10. It was the second one discovered in the past five years.

The last time the runway was repaved was in 1988.

"The runway is deteriorating badly," said Phil Porter, director at Mackinac State Historic Parks.

The Commission's layout plan, which is supposed to be updated

every five years but hasn't been updated since 1988, allows the Commission to comply with Federal Aviation Administration standards and be eligible for federal grants.

The Park Commission initially thought the cost would be around \$2 million to resurface the runway, but safety issues escalated that to \$6 million, which put the project on hold until all of the funding can be secured.

A December 18 public hearing at the Island airport terminal was attended by about a dozen people, whose main concerns were safety issues regarding the runway that the proposed repairs would resolve and the closing of the airport while construction is underway.

Mr. Porter said that a September and October closing will be the qui-

etest time of the year and the boats will still be running then.

People flying to Mackinac Island will have to land in St. Ignace or Mackinaw City during the time Island facility is closed.

Great Lakes Air, which operates from the Mackinac County Airport in St. Ignace, attributes more than 90% of its business to serving Mackinac Island, with between 8,500 to 10,000 trips taken between St. Ignace and Mackinac Island each year.

Great Lakes Air operator Paul Fullerton said his business will do its best to accommodate Island travelers and offer shuttle service between the airport and boat docks in St. Ignace.

"It's still going to be a loss of business, but how else are you supposed to do it?" asked Mr. Fullerton. "It'll be a better airport when it's done, and safer for everybody."

Plans for emergency medical evacuation via helicopter or by escort using the services of the U.S. Coast Guard are underway.

URS Corporation, an engineering and planning company based in Grand Rapids, will be overseeing the engineering plans, said Mr. Porter.

The Commission's airport layout plan is not a blueprint for construction but merely suggestions proposed by the Commission as to how to improve the runway, said Mr. Porter. Actual construction plans will be drawn once funding is secured.

Plans for construction in 2010 may be altered, depending whether the Commission can secure enough funding in time, a feat that may prove challenging, considering the national recession.

"There's a lot of ifs out there about the availability of federal money," said Mr. Porter, "but we need to proceed this way with the expectation that the money will be there, as it has been in the past."

It's the Season to be Thankful!

The Community Health Access Coalition (CHAC) would like to take this opportunity to thank Mackinac Straits Hospital, Mackinac Straits Naubinway Clinic and the volunteer health care providers, staff and partners for all of their kindness and support. It is through their generosity we are one step closer to a healthier community.

Cynthia Butcher, CFNP
 Carl Hawkins, MD
 Alice Lindsey, MD
 Jesus Neri, MD
 Carol Norman, CFNP
 Richard Hodgeman, MD
 Kathy Rollinger, DO
 Jonathon Schumaker, MD

We would also like to send a special thank you to Mackinac Straits Hospital Board of Directors and all the others who have been instrumental in maintaining the program in Mackinac County.

Together we can get our community covered!

Happy New Year

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