

# FOR MONDAY'S CITY COUNCIL MEETING – A COLLECTIVE SUGGESTION FROM THE COMMUNITY

## Evaluating City Planning Services

### Purpose

To request that the City Council place an item on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss issuing an RFP for zoning planning services.

### TIMING: Why Bring This Up Now

Harbor Springs is entering an important transition period and an opportunity to move into the next phase of planning with a fresh start.

Key factors include:

- The city is searching for a new city manager
- The Planning Commission will soon begin work on the next Master Plan
- The city has decided not to pursue Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)

Together, these changes create a natural moment for the City Council to take a **fresh look at zoning planning services** before beginning the Master Plan process in 2026.

It is common for municipalities to periodically review professional services to ensure the city is receiving the best expertise and value.

Residents in the community have suggested that this could help the city turn the page and move forward with less conflict and greater community confidence.

### What Is Being Suggested

City Council should discuss whether to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for planning services.

This would allow the city to:

- Understand what planning firms and approaches are available in this region and in Michigan
- Evaluate experience with resort communities like Harbor Springs
- Ensure the city is positioned well for the next phase of planning

Importantly, Beckett & Raeder would be encouraged to respond to the RFP and may ultimately remain the best fit for the city.

Their comparison to other planning services could be properly vetted.

### **Why This Could Be Helpful**

The upcoming Master Plan will guide Harbor Springs for the next 10–20 years.

Taking a moment now to evaluate planning services could help:

- Set up the incoming city manager for success
- Bring fresh perspective to the Master Plan process
- Ensure the process has broad community confidence
- Help the city move forward constructively and reduce future conflict

This could be an opportunity for Harbor Springs to begin its next phase of planning in a way that brings people together and positions the city well for the future.

### **Suggested Agenda Item to Place on March 16<sup>th</sup> Agenda**

**Discussion: Evaluating Planning Services Prior to the Master Plan Update**