

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 22, 2018

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Randall at 7:00 p.m. At the request of Mayor Randall, the City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford, Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid, Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Patricia Randall. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk Adam Herringa.

At the request of Mayor Randall, Pastor Kyle Tade of the Portage United Church of Christ provided the invocation and, following the invocation, boy scouts from Troop 205 led the City Council and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any Councilmember or anyone in the audience would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid asked that Item A.4 (Rezoning Application 17/18-3) be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the minutes of the Board and Commission Interview Session and Regular Meeting of May 8 and Pre-Council Meeting of May 21, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF MAY 22, 2018: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of May 22, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

AMENDMENT TO PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to adopt an amendment to Section 7.4(A) of the Personnel Rules and Regulations to provide for consistent sick leave accrual for department heads and non-union employees of all tenure. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

FY 2016-17 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to accept the FY 2016-17 Downtown Development Authority Financial Annual Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPOINTMENTS TO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to confirm the City Manager appointments to the Downtown Development Authority of the City of Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APRIL 2018 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the April 2018 Environmental Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the Departmental Monthly Reports. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive minutes of the Zoning Board of Appeals of April 9, Youth Advisory Committee of April 11, Environmental Board of April 11 and Planning Commission of May 3, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS: At the request of Mayor Randall, City Clerk Herringa read the meeting schedule for the record. Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Calendar of Meetings. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 PROPOSED BUDGET WITH REVISIONS: Mayor Randall invited City Manager Shaffer to review the proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget. Mr. Shaffer acknowledged City Council and city staff for their hard work in putting together the proposed budget. Mr. Shaffer reviewed the amount of the proposed budget, how it compares to the previous year and where increases and reductions are being proposed. Mr. Shaffer pointed out that water and sewer utility rates are decreasing along with the overall millage of the city. He continued by sharing that over the past year the bond rating for the city was increased to AA+, the overall debt of the city was reduced by \$9.4 million and construction permits have increased 44%. Finally, he shared that ACT 51 dollars have increased along with Personal Property Tax reimbursement and the overall tax base for the city. Mr. Shaffer stated that he is very proud to recommend approval of this budget.

Mayor Randall complimented the City Manager and staff on the proposed budget especially with the inclusion of decreases in water and sewer rates and a millage reduction. Mayor Randall expressed a desire that private business take more interest in the budget process and pointed out that the budget includes funding for double the number of neighborhood roads to be repaved, on-going debt reduction and utilization of cash to pay for projects. She concluded by stating her full support of the proposed budget. Councilmember Reid commented that even though there is a millage decrease, property values may increase and residents may not see a decrease in their tax bill. She stated her support for the focus and effort on paying for projects and items with cash rather than taking on additional debt. She explained that the goal of the City Council is to continue to work to be debt free in the future. Low debt, she stated, affords the city flexibility to be able to sufficiently fund the government and limit service reductions during economic downturns. Councilmember Ford thanked staff for their hard work and, like Councilmember Reid, pointed out that a reduction in the millage rate will not necessarily translate into a lower tax bill. He pointed out that the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index exceeds the percentage decrease in the millage.

There being no other comments, motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Proposed Budget with revisions. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolutions recorded on pages 43 and 45 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 47.

REZONING APPLICATION #17/18-3, PENNRIDGE TRAIL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT: At the invitation of Mayor Randall, Councilmember Reid pointed out that City Council is being asked to set a public hearing on this matter but, since the developer was present in the audience, she thought it appropriate to take advantage of the opportunity to ask a few questions. She stated that the development is for 137 housing units with a single access point on Osterhout Avenue. She speculated as to whether a single access point would be adequate. Councilmember Reid then shared that the average housing unit in this development will range between \$220,000 to over \$300,000. She pointed out that these prices are significantly higher than most home values in Portage and wondered if some affordable housing would be included in the development.

City Manager Shaffer explained that the developer initially requested two access points to Osterhout Avenue but the presence of the train tracks and rail crossing raised serious safety concerns about the second entrance. Mr. Shaffer stated that city staff had reviewed the matter thoroughly and

settled on a recommendation that an emergency access drive connect the development to a nearby private parking lot that could be used in the event of an emergency. He pointed out the emergency access would be gated and locked unless needed by the Fire Department.

Mr. Brian Wood of Allen Edwin Homes, 2186 East Centre Avenue, explained the nature of the development and planned housing types. He likened this proposed development to another Allen Edwin development in the city and shared that there is high demand for this type and value of housing in the community. He pointed out that the development will include many amenities that are attractive to families and will also incorporate significant open space. Mr. Wood also pointed out that this type of housing is attractive to retirees due to the low to no maintenance.

Councilmember Reid inquired if the developer had concerns with the single access point especially since additional development along Osterhout Avenue is likely. Mr. Wood deferred to Chris Forth, Acting Director of the Department of Community Development, for a response. Mr. Forth stated that staff had discussed the number of access points at length and that the Department of Transportation and Utilities had done modeling based on the single access point. Mr. Forth then reviewed the emergency access and pointed out that the location of the access drive may provide an opportunity to install a larger water main which would better serve the former Charles River business location. Mr. Forth concluded by stating that the Department of Transportation and Utilities, Fire Marshal and Department of Community Development were supportive of the project provided the emergency access is included. Councilmember Reid inquired if any consideration had been given to allowing a free flow of traffic on the emergency access and Mr. Forth responded in the negative. Mr. Forth stated that the access would be maintained year round.

Mayor Randall pointed out the 4-way stop at Oakland and Osterhout and questioned, with additional development in close proximity to Pennridge Trail, if traffic will be a problem. Mr. Forth stated that the Department of Transportation and Utilities is comfortable with anticipated traffic in this area but will monitor and adjust as necessary.

Mayor Randall inquired if these types of development projects are experiencing high demand in other areas of the region and state or if it was unique to Portage. Mr. Wood shared that this type of housing development is in high demand across the region and other parts of the State of Michigan. In response to a question from Mayor Randall, Mr. Wood stated that residents are willing to put up with such issues as nearby trains or freeways for the ability to live in Portage and for their children to attend Portage Schools. Councilmember Knapp inquired if this type of site condo development is a new trend and Mr. Wood commented that it is becoming popular for younger families.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to accept Rezoning Application #17/18-3, Pennridge Trail Planned Development, 1722 and 1800 West Osterhout Avenue and 10099, 10117 and 10121 Oakland Drive, for first reading and set a public hearing for June 26, 2018 and, subsequent to the public hearing, consider approving Rezoning Application #17/18-3, changing the zoning from I-1, light industry to PD, planned development. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns reported that he attended a meeting of the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) Board of Directors at which a contract with the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan was renewed. Mr. Burns stated that the Disability Network offers training for those interested in utilizing CCTA transit services.

Councilmember Knapp reported that she attended a meeting of the Kalamazoo County Public Arts Commission. She stated that updating by-laws and agreements were the primary topic of discussion.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the Council Committee Reports as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Knapp shared details about the upcoming Memorial Day parade and encouraged residents to come to the Farmer's Market. Ms. Knapp next shared that the Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC) is looking at a long-term plan for the Portage Road/I-94 Interchange and public meetings in this regard may be held later this year. Finally she shared that the KCRC is repaving R Avenue in Texas Township utilizing recycled tires. She complimented the KCRC on trying innovative and eco-friendly projects and complimented staff on their work preparing the FY 2018-2019 City Budget.

Councilmember Burns congratulated the Kalamazoo Stryke Force Robotics Team on their world championship. Mr. Burns next thanked the donor and volunteers for supporting the recent Letter Carrier Food Drive and shared that the donations go to Loaves and Fishes. He continued by sharing that he recently attended a fundraiser for the First Day Shoe Fund which provides shoes for school age children in Kalamazoo County. He expressed appreciation for their work and what they will be doing for children in Portage. Mr. Burns then recognized prior City Councilmembers, City Administration and staff for their work on the budget and highlighted many positive attributes of the FY 2018-2019 City Budget. Finally, he recognized service members and their families and shared that he is looking forward to the Memorial Day parade.

Councilmember Ford shared that he recently had a birthday.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson wished everyone a Happy Memorial Day and thanked the Portage Rotary Club and city staff for their effort in placing flags on the graves of veterans in honor of Memorial Day.

Mayor Randall thanked the Portage Public Safety Department for leading the recent Ride of Silence event and ensuring the safety of participants. She shared that the event recognizes cyclists who have died while biking on roadways. Mayor Randall next shared that she participated in the annual Mayor City to City ride despite the weather and that she, Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell, event organizers and a Kalamazoo resident also participated in the event. She stated that the event is important symbolically and encourages safe bicycle commuter routes between Portage and Kalamazoo. Finally, Mayor Randall thanked city staff and shared her belief that review and passage of the annual budget is the most important activity of the City Council and that it is going to be a great year in Portage and a great year to be on City Council.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk