

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 23, 2019

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

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all religions and personal beliefs and in recognition of the arrival of spring and warmer weather.

Following the moment of silence, City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Randall invited Councilmember Knapp to read a proclamation recognizing "Global Love Day." Next, at the invitation of Mayor Randall, Mr. Rod Russell, Director of the Department of Public Works, read a proclamation in recognition of Arbor Day.

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. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented but also include the "Calendar of Meetings" under the "Communications" section of the agenda. Councilmember Reid indicated that she believes the Calendar of Meetings should be read aloud for the benefit of the viewing audience. She indicated that she would not support the motion as currently stated. Discussion followed as to whether the Calendar of Meetings could or should be included as part of the Consent Agenda. Following the discussion, Councilmember Knapp amended her motion to be "to approve the Consent Agenda motion as presented." The motion was seconded by Ford. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 9, Budget Review Session of April 16 and Pre-Council of April 22, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF APRIL 23, 2019: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of April 23, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDGET HEARING: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to adopt the Resolution setting a public hearing on May 7, 2019 for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Proposed Budget and the proposed 2019 tax levy. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

SALE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to adopt the Bond Resolution authorizing the sale of Capital Improvement Bonds, Series 2019, in the amount of \$4,890,000; and Resolution approving the Undertaking to Provide Continuing Disclosure by the City of Portage for Capital Improvement Bonds, Series 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to receive the minutes of the Historic District Commission of February 6 and Youth Advisory Committee of March 18, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to receive the Materials Transmitted of April 9, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Joe Magalski, 10757 Biltmore, thanked the City Council for their efforts to create and maintain a great community that is a natural place to move. He shared that he has a concern with the shoulder of East Shore Drive as he believes it presents a hazard to non-motorized users such as walkers and bikers. He provided photographs to demonstrate the condition of the roadway shoulders. He asked that the city give consideration to widening the shoulder of the roadway. Mayor Randall asked that City Manager Shaffer and Mr. Magalski meet to review current conditions and potential solutions.

Ms. Elizabeth Mehta, 6736 Evergreen, spoke and expressed concern with the recycling program as it relates to styrofoam packaging. Ms. Mehta brought a visual that depicted how much styrofoam is involved in packaging for electronics such as televisions. She continued by explaining that she must drive to a destination in Cooper Township in order to recycle styrofoam and asked that the city explore possibilities related to recycling styrofoam. Mayor Randall asked that City Manager Shaffer and Ms. Mehta meet to review her concerns.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS: At the request of Mayor Randall, City Clerk Herringa read the Calendar of Meetings. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the Calendar of Meetings. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY THE PARK BOARD: At the invitation of Mayor Randall, Mr. Jonathan Peer, Chairperson of the Park Board, provided City Council with an overview of the activities and work of the Park Board over the past year along with their planned goals and objectives for the coming year. Mayor Randall complimented the Park Board on the Greenathon Earth Day event and Councilmember Reid inquired as to the status of the creation of the non-profit "Friends of the Parks" Board and how it might operate. Mr. Peer shared that the board is still in the process of forming and he is uncertain as to membership levels/requirements. He disclosed that former Mayor Peter Strazdas would be chairing the new board and Ms. Reid asked that Mr. Peer keep the City Council informed regarding this matter. Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive the presentation. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

REZONING OF 1700 EAST CENTRE: Mayor Randall invited City Manager Shaffer to begin discussion. Mr. Shaffer reviewed the project and introduced Community Development Director Vicki Georgeau who provided additional detail about the proposed rezoning and rationale for the recommendation of approval. The developer of the project, Mr. Walt Hansen of Hansen Building and Design Corporation and resident of 3027 Woodhams, spoke and shared some features of the planned orthodontic clinic that is being proposed. Mr. Hansen also explained why the proposed clinic will be of minimal impact to adjacent residential property and landscape features that will help to minimize impact even further. Councilmember Reid inquired as to the management of stormwater and Mr. Hansen explained how landscape and site design features would address this issue. Councilmember Urban thanked Mr. Hansen for coming to the meeting and commented that, since Mr. Hansen was involved, he knew that this would be a quality project.

Councilmember Burns inquired if there were any concerns expressed by residents within close proximity to this project. Mr. Hansen spoke in the affirmative and indicated that two residents expressed concerns but, following discussion relating to landscaping and noise levels, he believes those concerns had been addressed. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve Rezoning Application #18/19-5, 1700 East Centre Avenue. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

WATER AND SEWER RATES FOR FY 2019-2020: Mayor Randall opened the public hearing and invited City Manager Shaffer to begin discussion. Mr. Shaffer reviewed the composition and role of the City of Portage Utility Rate Committee. Mr. Shaffer next reviewed the strong financial health of the water and sewer funds along with efforts to pay for related capital improvements directly with dollars from these funds. He shared that the proposal is for a second consecutive rate reduction and explained the percentage decrease along with the savings a typical homeowner would realize. Related to the Senior Citizen Discount Program, Mr. Shaffer explained in response to an inquiry from Councilmember Reid that the cost associated with the senior discount program is borne by the general fund since it cannot legally be paid for via the water fund. Mayor Randall inquired how the discount program works and Mr. Furry explained the age requirements and how interested persons can apply.

Councilmember Ford shared his experience on the Utility Rate Committee and shared that in approximately 2008 the water and sewer funds were in rough shape. To improve the financial health of the water and sewer funds, Mr. Ford explained that measures such as annual double-digit percentage increases had to be implemented. He stated that he is pleased to see that the funds are in such healthy circumstances that debt can be paid off, cash can be used to pay for improvements and costs borne by residents reduced. Mayor Randall concurred and shared that she was on the committee during those rough years.

Councilmember Burns reviewed utility shut offs and why fees are applied directly to the resident involved. He encouraged residents that might be facing a water shutoff to reach out to the Portage Community Center as they might be able to offer assistance.

There were no questions or comments from the public. Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Motion by Ford, seconded by Burns, to adopt the recommendation that the sewer commodity rate remain at \$4.60 per 1,000 gallons of metered water; recommendation that the water commodity rate remain at \$3.14 per 1,000 gallons of metered water; recommendation that adjustments be made to the sewer and water base quarterly charges as noted in the 2019 Utility Rate Financial Study; recommendation that the new rates become effective on July 1, 2019; and recommended water and sewer franchise area fees and other service fees and charges as outlined in the 2019 Utility Rate Financial Study. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Reid shared an update regarding the Environmental Health Advisory Council (EHAC) at which the issue of PFAS and its presence in area communities and health impacts was a major discussion point. Ms. Reid also shared that tick monitoring and high water in the region was discussed.

Councilmember Ford shared that he attended a meeting of Discover Kalamazoo at the Air Zoo and noted that the Air Zoo is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Mr. Ford shared that he expressed gratitude to the Air Zoo for hosting the City of Portage Martin Luther King, Jr., event. Mr. Ford concluded by sharing that area hotels had a strong winter.

Councilmember Knapp commented that she attended a meeting of the Public Arts Commission at which a definition of “public art” was finalized. She shared that this definition would

be distributed across Kalamazoo County. She also commented that the Public Art Commission is working to increase their visibility and role in discussions surrounding public art.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the Council Committee Reports. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Knapp complimented the work of the Utility Rate Committee and shared that she is pleased to have successive years of rate reductions. She then shared that she, along with Mayor Randall, attended an event sponsored by the U.S. Global Leadership Commission Michigan Advisory Committee at which the impact of international diplomacy and development efforts on local communities was discussed.

Councilmember Burns complimented the Youth Advisory Committee on a successful “Greenathon” Earth Day event. He shared that he did have a table at the event and it was a great day. He encouraged residents to apply to serve on the various city boards and commissions, commented that he was pleased to be serving on the Utility Rate Committee and pointed out the City of Portage Farmer’s Market would be opening soon.

Councilmember Ford shared that he tuned into the new City of Portage Cable Access channel and that the programming is of great quality. He pointed out that he listened to a podcast at which the City Manager was reviewing items on the agenda and delved into, for example, large purchases that were listed on the Check Register. Mr. Ford continued by pointing out that the Calendar of Meetings is now being published on the city’s Facebook page. He concluded by commenting that he believes information about the business of the city is getting out into the community at record levels.

Mayor Randall shared that she appreciated the messages of the two proclamations and thanked the citizens who came to the meeting to speak. Regarding the concerns about bicycling on East Shore, Mayor Randall shared that she is a biking advocate and relayed details regarding the upcoming Bicycle Week and related events such as the annual Mayor’s Ride in cooperation with the City of Kalamazoo. Finally, she reminded and invited the audience to attend the next budget review session and thanked Councilmember Burns and his wife for participating in the Greenathon.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk