

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2019**

Mayor Patricia Randall called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. The following were present Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford, Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Patricia Randall. Councilmember Terry Urban was absent with excuse. Also present were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis, City Attorney Randy Brown, Assistant City Attorney Matt Quardokus and Deputy City Clerk Erica Eklov.

Mayor Randall summarized the purpose of the meeting and noted the packet of information before Council, including the resolution requiring adoption. She provided the history on the donation from Charles and Lynn Zhang and stated that \$3.55 million has been raised to date. Mayor Randall reminded Councilmembers of the kick-off event scheduled for the next day, September 17th, to celebrate the public fundraising campaign for the new Community Senior Center, as well as the announcement of the Zhang donation. She expressed hope that the \$2 million Zhang donation and media attention will spur further donors.

Councilmember Burns questioned available options to the city when bestowing naming rights to city property in the event a future donor experiences legal issues. City Attorney Brown responded that the formal agreement with the Zhangs designates naming in perpetuity.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to adopt the Resolution (#9-16-19) Accepting the Gift from Charles and Lynn Zhang - Portage Community Senior Center.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson expressed his gratitude to Mayor Randall for her efforts on the new Community Senior Center fundraising campaign and the campaign's success.

Councilmember Reid expressed appreciation of the Zhang's donation and welcomes the new funds. She inquired whether the city had a process or procedure in place for naming rights when it came to donations. She expressed concerns with the fundraising campaign process and how it has evolved, stating she had been contacted by a citizen who relayed concern with naming the new Community Senior Center after a specific person. Councilmember Reid noted that she expects some resistance from the public with the designation.

Mayor Randall stated that the fundraising consultant provided the donation tiers based on his prior projects and fundraising expertise, and that the fundraising process with naming designations had been discussed at prior City Council meetings. She noted other locations in the city with naming designations relating to both land donations and monetary donations. Councilmember Reid responded citing her concern with an absence of a city policy.

Mayor Randall inquired with City Attorney Brown whether the city had a policy or procedure at the time of the Eliason Nature Preserve land donation. City Attorney Brown responded that he had inquired on that matter with City Manager Shaffer and there was not a policy. Mayor Randall then inquired whether the city had a policy or procedure in place when Councilmember Reid and her husband donated the property on Woodmont Drive for the Betty Lee Ongley Preserve. City Attorney Brown responded that there was not a policy and deferred to the City Manager.

City Manager Shaffer noted that the fundraising consultant had provided guidance on the fundraising process. Mr. Shaffer stated that the fundraising campaign had been hoping that a particular local industrial stakeholder or stakeholders would come forward with a donation, which did not happen, but expressed appreciation that alternatively the Zhangs came forward with a donation. He relayed that voters have historically declined millage proposals to fund a new center, explaining the need for the current fundraising campaign. Mr. Shaffer stated that

the Zhangs have the naming designation as a stipulation on the donation. He expressed that he feels the benefit to the citizens with this donation is greater than the designation.

Attorney Brown stated that in absence of a policy, the agreement signed between the Zhangs and the city serves as a guide with conditions to follow going forward.

Councilmember Knapp stated that she feels donations to the city should be handled on a case-by-case basis owing to variables with each situation.

City Manager Shaffer highlighted several city provisions included in the agreement, such as the donation being non-refundable and the Zhang estate being responsible for handling any future payments in the event of a catastrophe, to which the Zhangs agreed.

Mayor Randall noted that the Zhangs had provided several other donation agreements they had previously executed as examples for the city to utilize for the Community Senior Center donation. She highlighted that this wasn't the first large-scale donation for the Zhangs and she expressed her appreciation for their generosity.

Attorney Brown expressed that the current agreement was created with similar concerns and considerations as those expressed by Councilmember Burns and Reid. He also noted that he and the City Manager had maintained that the \$2 million was a gift when discussing the various conditions within the agreement.

Councilmember Reid stated that she wanted to express concern for potential public push back with designation, as well as a more open process with the naming. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson responded noting that most city projects will experience some level of resistance.

Mayor Randall stated that the Zhang involvement with the fundraising campaign was not public knowledge, pending the kick-off announcement and was unsure how a citizen would have known. Councilmember Reid commented that the citizen didn't mention the Zhangs by name, only expressing concern with the Community Senior Center identifying with a benefactor's name.

Jim Hudson, 9001 West End Drive, questioned whether the benefactor's name would extend to any future annexes or additions to the new Community Senior Center. Discussion on the provisions of the agreement with the Zhangs ensued. City Manager Shaffer explained that the motion at hand was specifically for the resolution regarding the Zhang donation.

Mayor Randall asked Deputy City Clerk Eklov to call the vote. Motion passed six to zero.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Erica L. Eklov
Deputy City Clerk