CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 5, 2019

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Patricia Randall at 7:02 p.m. The following members were 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 Joe La Margo, City Attorney Randy Brown and Deputy City Clerk Erica Eklov.

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 right to vote.

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

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Randall issued a proclamation recognizing “Small Business Saturday.” Ms. Polly Kragt, owner of ChocolaTea and The Pantry On Tap was present to receive the proclamation. Ms. Kragt thanked City Council and the Mayor for their support of locally owned businesses.

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. No items were removed. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 15 and Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF NOVEMBER 5, 2019: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of November 5, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

AMENDMENT OF GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FY ENDING JUNE 30, 2020: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to amend the General Appropriations Act (budget) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REZONING OF 1730 EAST CENTRE AVENUE FIRST READING: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to accept Rezoning Application #19/20-2, 1730 East Centre Avenue, for first reading and set a public hearing for December 3, 2019; and subsequent to the public hearing, consider approving Rezoning Application #19/20-2, changing the zoning designation of 1730 East Centre Avenue from R-1B, one-family residential, to OS-1, office service. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to receive the minutes of the Youth Advisory Committee of August 19, Senior Citizen Advisory Board of September 18, Portage Public Schools Board of Education Meeting of September 23 and Planning Commission of October 3, 2019.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to receive the Materials Transmitted of October 1 and 15, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Larry Provancher, 7414 Starbrook, provided an update on the Kalamazoo County ID Program, noting that he continues to spread the word about the ID program and its benefits.

Mr. Ed Haines, 7745 St. Andrews Circle, stated he had three concerns he wanted to address to Council. First, he noted the city's efforts managing the Hampton Bog water levels had been successful short-term, but he inquired on the status of the permit renewal with EGLE. Mr. Haines also asked about the status of a long-term solution for the Hampton Bog water levels. Finally, Mr. Haines inquired who the city's new point of contact for Hampton Bog area residents with water level concerns would be in light of former City Manager Shaffer's retirement.

Mayor Randall responded that the renewal of the permit with EGLE for the short-term was pending review by the State. She further offered that the long-term solution was the previously-assigned area study with Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber to be coming shortly.

City Manager La Margo responded that Deputy City Manager I / City Clerk Adam Herringa would be the new point of contact for the Hampton Bog area residents going forward.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns, to receive the Calendar of Meetings. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

WEST LAKE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RESOLUTION NO. 5: Mayor Randall opened the public hearing and invited City Manager La Margo to speak regarding the weed management program. Mr. La Margo explained that this is a renewal of a long-term program for managing weeds in West Lake and the last step in the special assessment process. Mayor Randall asked if anyone from the audience desired to speak.

Mark Yassay, 1404 Lakeview, President of the West Lake Improvement Association, commented on the Association's support of the project and introduced Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones of Restorative Lake Sciences, the firm that will be administering the treatments.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones whether West Lake has improved over the last 20 years of weed treatments. Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones responded that the presence of invasive species varies annually. Further, Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones noted that the approach is only to kill a portion of the weeds per the EGLE permit.

Mayor Randall inquired with Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones as to what has caused the invasive species in recent years. Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones noted that increased development and boat access tend to be the main sources.

Motion by Ford, seconded by Burns, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Burns to adopt Resolution No. 5 confirming the Special Assessment Roll for the West Lake Management Program #020-Q. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SALE OF EXCESS CITY PROPERTY: Mayor Randall deferred to City Manager Joe La Margo who invited Acting Director of Community Development, Chris Forth, to discuss the rationale for the sale of the city property.

Councilmember Ford asked for clarification regarding the continuation of the right-in/right-out from Westnedge Avenue. Acting Director Forth responded that the plan is to vacate the right-of-way and evenly divide the resulting property between the adjacent PlazaCorp and Burger King property owners. Councilmember Ford expressed concern in keeping the dead-end roadway from Gladys Street to Burger King open, citing the city's snow plowing policy. Acting Director Forth responded that further review and discussion on property access will occur during the road vacation process to occur later.

Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to adopt the Resolution to Sell the Excess City Property in the amount of $314,500 located along the south side of Gladys Street, east of 6405 South Westnedge Avenue and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to the real estate transaction on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Knapp offered an update on the October 22nd meeting of the Kalamazoo County Public Arts Commission. She stated that the Commission is planning for a new logo that will be chosen through a call for artists and design competition.

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

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban welcomed incoming City Manager Joe La Margo.

Councilmember Reid also welcomed new City Manager La Margo and congratulated fellow unopposed Councilmembers pending re-election in the day's election. She expressed appreciation for the voting process and efforts of the poll workers. Councilmember Reid further expressed confidence in the election process with the Office of the City Clerk and encouraged residents to bring forward any potential concerns with the election process and exercise the right to vote.

Councilmember Knapp welcomed City Manager La Margo and reviewed the recent Art in the Park event, recognizing the contest's winners.

Councilmember Burns thanked Larry Provancher for his efforts on the Kalamazoo County ID Program, noting his support of the program. Councilmember Burns highlighted the Portage Community Center's holiday assistance programs and upcoming participation deadlines. He also mentioned the city election and his anticipation to continue work with fellow Councilmembers pending re-election.

Councilmember Ford also welcomed City Manager La Margo. He announced the arrival of his newborn daughter on October 28th. He further expressed congratulations to fellow Councilmembers pending re-election.

City Manager La Margo thanked City Council for the welcome and opportunity to work for the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson expressed welcome to City Manager La Margo and congratulations to the fellow Councilmembers who also ran for re-election. He relayed that he had attended an event on November 1st in honor of citizen Frank Woodhams' 100th birthday and thanked the Office of the City Clerk staff for their research efforts on Mr. Woodhams' background.

Mayor Randall concluded by thanking Larry Provancher for his efforts and creation of the County ID Program. Mayor Randall then congratulated Councilmember Ford on the new baby. She stated it was an honor to serve as Mayor and congratulated the other three Councilmembers slated for re-election. Mayor Randall relayed her attendance at a recent swearing-in ceremony for three new city Police Officers, relaying that these were positions made possible by Council approval earlier in the year. Mayor Randall also made note of the upcoming I Love Portage Essay Contest in conjunction with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony scheduled for December 7th. She reminded residents that the Fall Leaf Collection is still ongoing and working to finish before snowfall. Mayor Randall closed by welcoming new City Manager La Margo.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

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Erica L. Eklov, Deputy City Clerk