

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 11, 2020

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Patricia Randall at 7:00 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 City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all religions and personal beliefs as well as to reflect on the critical support of Gryphon Place and the United Way.

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

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Randall issued a proclamation recognizing February 11th as National 2-1-1 Day. Mayor Randall invited Maricela Alcala, CEO of Gryphon Place and Ashlee Croy, Marketing Associate for United Way, to read the proclamation recognizing National 2-1-1 Day in the City of Portage. After reading the proclamation, Ms. Alcala shared details about Gryphon Place efforts related to Suicide Prevention and organizations such as United Way that can provide assistance to those in crisis. Councilmember Urban expressed appreciation of the demanding yet important work of a 2-1-1 volunteer based on personal experience. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted as a past member of Portage Rotary that the organization supports Gryphon Place. Mayor Randall thanked Ms. Alcala and Ms. Croy for their work and efforts with the organizations.

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. Citizen Carolyn Pesheck requested that Item A.4, Tentative Plan Amendment for Greenspire Planned Development, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Pearson, 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 Pearson, seconded by Burns, to approve the Regular Meeting of January 28, 2020, and the Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF FEBRUARY 11, 2020: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of February 11, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MDOT CONTRACT #19-5633 (SHAVER RD AND S. WESTNEDGE AVE RECONSTRUCTION – W. CENTRE AVE TO ROMENCE RD): Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to approve Contract #19-5633 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Portage for reconstruction of Shaver Road and South Westnedge Avenue from West Centre Avenue to Romence Road and adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign all documents related to the project on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC STREET VACATION – GLADYS STREET (WEST PORTION): Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to accept the Resolution for the city to vacate its interest in: the former Gladys Street public right-of way (west approximate 416 feet) located along the east side of South Westnedge Avenue, and, the service drive that extends north/south from the former Gladys Street to

the new or realigned Gladys Street, and place the Resolution on file for 28 days with the City Clerk. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 PROPOSED BUDGET REVIEW SCHEDULE: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to establish Tuesday, April 21 and Tuesday, May 5, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., with a tentative session Tuesday, May 12, 2020 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., as the dates for review of the proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to receive the minutes of the Planning Commission of January 9, 2020; and, Human Services Board of January 16, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Dr. Romeo Phillips, 1983 Brighton Lane, provided a reminder of the 5th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr./Black History Month event scheduled for February 21st at 7 p.m. He reviewed the plan for the evening's event, including a panel discussion featuring the presidents of Kalamazoo College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, among others.

Dr. Monifa Jumanne, 610 Mall Drive, thanked City Council for the Resolution on the meeting's agenda regarding hosting an annual event to commemorate Black History Month and recognize the many contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Jumanne stated that the Resolution was a good start for Portage and she wants to see more change from the city, including hiring and staffing. She asked the city to aim for equality.

Mayor Randall thanked both Dr. Phillips and Dr. Jumanne for their comments as well as their efforts with the City of Portage.

COMMUNICATIONS:

PRESENTATION FROM CCTA/KCTA BOARD CHAIR GREG ROSINE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEAN MCBRIDE: Mayor Randall introduced Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) & Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) Executive Director Sean McBride. Mr. McBride recognized Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and Councilmember Burns for their appointments on the CCTA Board. Mr. McBride provided an update on the status of the KCTA & CCTA. He highlighted the millage proposal slated for the March 10, 2020 ballot, stating that the current millage of 0.75 mills expires in 2020. He noted the proposed millage is asking for 0.9 mills to maintain the current level of service.

Mayor Randall inquired about routes versus demand in light of the influx of jobs with recent developments such as FedEx. Mr. McBride noted that routes exist in the affected areas, but that he appreciates when project engineers reach out to Metro Transit early in planning to work on incorporating public transit.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson emphasized the future influx of jobs for the city and the expected increase of traffic in the Portage Road corridor. He noted there is a countywide need for public transit and relayed that he will continue to lobby for KCTA and CCTA to serve the area. Mayor Randall then relayed a citizen from the recent Lake Center workshops who requested a bus route for south Portage.

Motion by Reid seconded by Ford, to receive the presentation from CCTA/KCTA Board Chair Greg Rosine and Executive Director Sean McBride. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR: Mayor Randall asked Mayor Pro Tem Pearson to deliver the resolution. After his motion, Mayor Randall noted the city's support of the resolution and commitment to equality, as well as with hiring.

Councilmember Urban requested and read the Resolution in its entirety into the record.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ford, to adopt a resolution committing the City of Portage to hosting an annual event to commemorate Black History Month and recognize the many contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

TENTATIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR GREENSPIRE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT: Mayor Randall asked the citizen who requested the item be removed from the Consent Agenda to come forward and speak on the matter.

Carolyn Pesheck, 6745 Shoreham, explained that she is a former resident of Greenspire and has no objections to the proposed development, but did inquire whether the proposal includes any low income housing options. She stated that she is a member of Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community (ISAAC), which is working to increase low income housing in the community.

Mayor Randall responded that low income housing is not part of the Greenspire development proposal, but highlighted the recent Selinon Park development as an option. City Manager La Margo also responded to Ms. Pesheck, noting that the city has been working with the Michigan Governor's Office to navigate hurdles with the state's criteria for funding assistance towards increasing low income housing in Portage. Ms. Pescheck noted that ISAAC plans to visit state representatives in Lansing soon and offered to assist in lobbying efforts.

Councilmember Urban stated he was not aware of the city's issues with meeting state funding criteria and requested additional background from the City Administration on the matter. Mayor Randall stated that the funding formula from the state included walkability factors that Portage did not meet. Councilmember Urban highlighted the earlier presentation from KCTA/CCTA noting the potential for public transit to be used in the funding equation.

Councilmember Reid noted the city's long-standing Community Development Block Grant low income housing buyer and repair programs, suggesting those as alternative options to Ms. Pesheck as well.

City Manager La Margo noted he would continue to work with the state on funding options and assistance for Portage.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Burns, to accept the Tentative Plan Amendment for Greenspire Planned Development, 3413 West Centre Avenue and 8546 Shirley Court, and set a public hearing for March 10, 2020; and subsequent to the public hearing, consider approving the Tentative Plan Amendment for Greenspire Planned Development, 3413 West Centre Avenue and 8546 Shirley Court, subject to the four conditions contained in the January 17, 2020 Department of Community Development staff report. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Knapp provided an update on the City Council Communications Committee, noting it had welcomed new member Graham Holley from the Youth Advisory Committee to provide feedback on communication tools for the youth demographic. She further noted two new staff additions, Sam Bower and Mary Ruple, to the Communications

Department with Mary Beth Block, highlighting the increased importance of communication to the community. Councilmember Knapp also stated that the city Facebook pages, with the exception of the Public Safety, Senior Center and Farmers Market pages, have been merged into the overall City of Portage Facebook page. She noted the Committee is also reviewing the Twitter and Instagram platforms with the hopes of using one comprehensive program to simultaneously publish announcements to all city pages and platforms. Councilmember Burns noted that social media was a campaign pledge and he has been pleased to see this improve under the new City Administration. Councilmember Ford highlighted the analytics review also planned for social media implementation.

Councilmember Burns provided an update on a recent meeting of the Central County Transportation Authority that hosted Sheriff Fuller. Councilmember Burns provided background on a previous agreement between the Transit Authority and the City of Kalamazoo for a public safety presence at the transit hub in downtown Kalamazoo. He noted that the Sheriff's Office will now be assuming that duty, pending additional hiring efforts. Councilmember Burns also noted that union negotiations with Transit Authority personnel have culminated in Board approval of the first agreement, yet wage discussions continue.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ford, 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 Burns thanked the public, City Council and the City Administration for participating in the Lake Center Area Workshops earlier in the week. He stated that he looks forward to including the availability of public transit in that area as well.

Councilmember Urban thanked the attendees of the Lake Center Area Workshops, highlighting the historic attendance numbers and importance of the citizen input events.

Councilmember Reid thanked everyone for attending the Lake Center Area Workshops and reminded citizens of the February 13th town hall session on groundwater and PFAS. She further highlighted the upcoming City Council Budget Review sessions that were scheduled for April and May as part of the Consent Agenda, noting one meeting date had been modified from the preliminary published agenda.

Councilmember Knapp stated the Lake Center Area Workshops were great for communication, transparency and feedback. She noted that many of the citizen comments received echoed her own as she is also a resident of that area.

City Manager La Margo noted that the City Administration continues to seek citizen input regarding the Lake Center Area. He highlighted the upcoming PFAS meeting and provided an update on the recent efforts to address PFAS by the city, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and the Kalamazoo County health department. He stated the city continues to test the area's groundwater, yet noted there is no safety concern to residents and stated information regarding the PFAS matter has been posted on the city website.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted the recent Lake Center Area Workshops and asked the public to attend pending additional meetings on the matter expected for March and April.

Mayor Randall highlighted the staff outreach effort and media coverage with the Lake Center Area Workshops. She noted that not all who wanted to attend the sessions were able to, but relayed that the City Administration is continuing to gather input on the matter. Mayor Randall also noted the Black History month event planned for February 21st at the Air Zoo. The Mayor closed by relaying that assessment notices had recently been mailed which included the new school millage and property owners have ample time to meet with the city's assessing team to review property concerns prior to the upcoming March Board of Review.

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

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk