

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 10, 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 (remotely), 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 Manager/ Recording Secretary Mike Carroll.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all religions and personal beliefs.

Following the moment of silence, the City Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance, as directed by members of Boy Scout Troop 287. At the request of the Mayor, troop members informed the Council of their activities towards becoming Eagle Scouts.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Randall issued a proclamation recognizing the 18th Annual March for Meals Month. Mayor Randall invited Abbie Finn of Meals on Wheels to read the proclamation. After reading the proclamation, Ms. Finn shared details about Meals on Wheels in general, and the two delivery routes contained in Portage in particular. Ms. Finn shared a story wherein their volunteers discovered a client who had fallen in his home the evening before and needed medical assistance that might not have been summoned but for their volunteers' alertness.

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 requested Item A.7, Final Condominium for Pennridge Trail #1, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Meeting Summary of the Regular Meeting of February 25, 2020, and Pre-Council Meeting of March 9, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of March 10, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

RAMONA PARK PARKING LOT PAVING – BID TABULATION: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to accept the low bid in the amount of \$123,900 from Wyoming Asphalt to provide repairs to the Ramona Park parking lots and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city_[mT1]. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PARKING LOT ASPHALT OVERLAYS - BID TABULATION: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to award a contract in the amount of \$76,725 to Michigan Paving & Materials Company for the Department of Public Works parking lot asphalt overlay and parking lot expansion, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action on behalf of the city_[mT2]. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

FARR ASSOCIATES AMENDED CONTRACT: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve an amended contract with Farr Associates in an amount not to exceed \$51,500 for the Lake Center District Area Placemaking and Connectivity Study and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city^[mT3]. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC STREET VACATION - GLADYS STREET (WEST PORTION) AND NORTH/SOUTH SERVICE DRIVE: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to accept the Resolution No. 20-2 for the city^[mT4] to vacate its interest in the west approximate 416-feet of the former Gladys Street public right of way subject to retention of a permanent utility easement; and the service drive that extends north/south from the former Gladys Street to the new or realigned Gladys Street. The vacation and discontinuance of property shall not take effect until the property subject to the purchase and sale agreement between the city and 6405 SW, LLC is transferred by an executed deed. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF ORDINANCES - PERSONNEL RULES: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to accept for first reading the proposed City of Portage Ordinance amending Article 3, Officers and Employees, of Chapter 2, Administration, Section 2-87 Personnel Rules and consider final adoption on March 24, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to receive the minutes of the Historic District Commission of November 6, 2019; Senior Citizen Advisory Board of January 15, 2020; Planning Commission of February 20, 2020; and, Human Services Board of February 20, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

ADDITION OF RESOLUTION: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Urban, to add the Resolution for a Temporary Moratorium for Certain Development Activities within the Lake Center District, contained in the Materials Transmitted, to the Agenda as Item E.1. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

GREENSPIRE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (3413 WEST CENTRE AVENUE AND 8546 SHIRLEY COURT): Mayor Randall opened the Public Hearing for Greenspire Planned Development. Interim Director Forth advised that AVB & Hinman were seeking an amendment to: reclassify 8.5 acres of commercial to mixed-use (residential & commercial), and to add approximately 316 apartment units from the currently approved 704 units to 1020. Interim Director Forth noted density would increase from 8.45 units per acre to just over 11 units per acre. Interim Director Forth advised LandUse USA and Tracy Cross & Associates both feel that this location would be favorable for such a mixed-use development. Interim Director Forth stated the Planning Commission unanimously approved the amendment and staff recommends it as well.

Mayor Randall and Councilmembers Reid and Knapp asked questions of Interim Director Forth. Greg Dobson of AVB fielded questions from Mayor Randall and Councilmembers Reid and Burns and spoke of the 50-year history of Greenspire and the relationship they have built with their neighbors.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to close the public hearing. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Pearson^[mT5], seconded Burns to approve 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.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

PENNRIDGE TRAIL #1 FINAL CONDOMINIUM SUBDIVISION: Councilmember Reid indicated her concern about the amount of ingress/egress (one exit) for the project. Interim Director Forth explained the first phase and the potential second phase, along with the history of the discussions on access. The current plan is for an emergency access easement on and through the parcel to the north. Mayor Randall and Councilmember Urban inquired further about the easement being a locked gated driveway and their concerns about its maintenance. Interim Director Forth indicated that the limit for one exit is 30 units. The agreement in place is that prior to the 31st building permit being issued, the emergency access driveway would have to be constructed. Brian Wood of Allen Edwin fielded further questions from the Council about the access easement. He indicated that he spent several months with the property owner to the north, and with the City, to draft the easement to allow the emergency access. Interim Director Forth did mention there are other emergency access drives in the City, but none that he can recall that would be maintained by an association.

In response to a question by Councilmember Burns, Interim Director Forth indicated that Greenspire had one entry/exit for many more units than being proposed here, up until the light at Cooley was installed. Forth further explained the difficulty of this particular parcel, with the Eliason Preserve to one side and railroad tracks to the other side of this property. Mayor Randall explained that since this project initially came before the Council, there has been a new fire marshal, new interim director of Community Development, and new City Administration. City Manager La Margo also expressed concerns about emergency access and offered to sit down with his team to see if there would be a better alternative. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired of Mr. Wood if he could bring back to staff the figures regarding how much maintenance of the emergency access would cost each homeowner in the development.

After conferring with the City Attorney, it was determined that rather than vote to approve or reject this plan, an adjournment of the issue would be appropriate. Motion by Reid, seconded by Pearson to adjourn the matter until April 14, 2020, and refer to the Administration for further report. Councilmember Ford stated he felt these issues had already been addressed by Council and that homeowners' associations are commonly called upon to maintain infrastructure such as this access road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 1 (Ford).

LAKE CENTER DISTRICT TEMPORARY MORATORIUM: City Manager La Margo described how the City had engaged a consultant to conduct visioning/strategic planning exercises, with the involvement of area stakeholders, for the Lake Center District. Allowing unrestricted development prior to the conclusion of this process could be problematic. Deputy City Manager Carroll further explained there was a provision for relief, should this moratorium cause legal difficulties for developers/property owners. Motion^[mT6] by Urban, seconded by Pearson, to adopt Resolution 20-3

to establish a temporary moratorium for certain development activities within the Lake Center District area. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns advised that he and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson attended a Central County Transportation Authority meeting wherein they learned the committee had received a clean financial audit. They also had the first reading of a remote attendance policy, which was modeled after the City of Portage's policy. The Executive Director also spoke to the authority about the sanitation procedures in place on the buses due to the coronavirus.

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

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Gary Drill of Larkspur Lane addressed the Council, requesting how the improvements being discussed in the Lake Center District were going to be paid for, and whether that was an appropriate function of government. Mr. La Margo explained that this was a budgeted part of the Capital Improvement Plan and the governmental rationale for developing the area. Mayor Randall also indicating that this area was long overdue for improvement, as other areas of the City had received attention in recent years. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson also explained that this area had been identified as needing attention 24 years ago.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban stated that the action the City Council took (and that the Council encouraged the County to take) to inform the President that Portage^[mT7] would accept refugee families into the city has helped. An Afghan refugee family^{[mT8][EE9]} arrived a couple of weeks ago, supported by Bethany Christian Services and Portage Chapel Hill United Methodist Church. They were attending multiple cultural and educational activities. Residents were encouraged to welcome the family into our community. Mayor Randall thanked Councilmember Burns for his efforts on this front as well.

Councilmember Reid recognized Senior Deputy Fire Chief^[mT10] Podgorski, who is retiring as of March 27th, after 18 years of service to the City, and Barb Janicke, who retired from the City Clerk's office February 28th after 38 years of service. She also advised that a lot of events are being canceled (conferences, etc.) to reduce contact because of the coronavirus, and asked everyone to take proper precautions.

Councilmember Burns reminded everyone it is Election Day. He congratulated the City Clerk for running a good election. Also, a reminder that the Portage Public School Board was considering the construction of school(s) and was seeking community input on their website.

Councilmember Ford thanked the City Clerk and the Deputy City Managers for exhibiting great teamwork on this election season. Congratulations to Michigan State Spartans for third straight Big 10 championship in men's basketball.

City Manager La Margo noted that the City staff has increased its efforts to sanitize all commonly touched surfaces in city buildings. He also advised Standard & Poor's confirmed our credit rating of AA+ and indicated the city's financial position^[mT11] improved from "Strong" to "Very Strong". He gave thanks to the Council for reducing debt without increasing millages. Kudos to the City Clerk and both Deputy City Managers for pitching in this week, over the weekend and late at night, working through this election season.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson eulogized Dr. Russell Mohny, a longtime pillar of the community.

Mayor Randall also mentioned that Dr. Mohny was a special friend of hers and a great steward of the City. The School District website will have a public survey available on their website,

beginning March 20th. Hard copies will also be available at the School Administration Building. The Senior Center Cabinet had a meeting today. \$4.2 million has been raised so far. Byce was chosen as the Architects, and AVB was chosen to construct the Center. A target of an additional \$1.3 million is hoped to be raised. Groundbreaking should be late summer, and construction completed by Thanksgiving 2021. Mayor Randall further commented on the Pennridge Trail action taken tonight. She explained the difficulty of coming in midstream on a project, especially in light of the tremendous amount of change at City Hall. She felt it best to take a step back, to make sure the Council “gets it right”.

The Mayor thanked all of those who worked so hard to make the [mT12] election season run smoothly and all staff for wearing many hats.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Michael F. Carroll, Deputy City Manager