

**MINUTES FROM THE PRE-MEETING  
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL  
OF APRIL 27, 2020**

Mayor Patricia Randall, via the WebEx meeting platform, called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Councilmembers Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson also joined via the WebEx meeting platform. Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford, and Terry Urban were absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Joseph La Margo, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll (via WebEx meeting platform), Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa (via WebEx meeting platform), Communications Manager Mary Beth Block, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

Mayor Randall began by reviewing the agenda. With regard to Item A.3, Councilmember Knapp inquired whether the 5G wireless providers permit application has previously been used by other jurisdictions and all avenues vetted. City Manager La Margo deferred to Deputy City Manager Carroll. Mr. Carroll responded that he has been working with Technology Services Director Mackinder on this topic from the beginning of the process and confirmed that the permit application has been reviewed by several organizations, including the Michigan Municipal League. Councilmember Knapp further inquired how the city planned to introduce the small cell network and equipment to city residents. City Manager La Margo responded that initial notification is posted and only one resident has approached the city with questions about cell towers that were addressed.

Councilmember Reid provided additional background to Councilmember Knapp, noting the city has been proactive with cellular guidelines and protections until the state implemented statewide 5G legislation that usurped local jurisdictions. Councilmember Reid then warned about potential pushback from residents noting a recently published newspaper article claiming 5G causes COVID-19, as well as similar social media postings from the actor Woody Harrelson. City Manager La Margo relayed that the city has a page devoted to Small Cell Wireless Facilities currently posted to the city website. He further noted that he was pleased with the design standards Portage had when he began with the city, citing prior his experiences in Orland Park, Illinois.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired on the proximity of the small cell facilities to each other. City Manager La Margo stated he would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.5, Councilmember Reid inquired as to the meeting procedure planned for Tuesday should the Adult Use Marihuana item generate public questions during the first reading. Mayor Randall responded that should a member of the public call in, they will be able to voice a question or concern during the two public comment periods. City Manager La Margo noted that the city had received very few adult-use marihuana inquiries to date and confirmed that the May 26<sup>th</sup> public hearing would also be fully noticed to the public. Mayor Randall then asked the City Administration to reach out to a citizen who spoke at the recent Planning Commission meeting regarding clarification on HVAC systems for marihuana facilities. City Manager La Margo confirmed that staff would reach out and respond.

With regard to Item A.8, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked for the upcoming Austin Lake Governmental Lake Board meeting to be added to the Calendar of Meetings. City Clerk Eklov confirmed she would add the item.

With regard to Item D.1, Mayor Randall asked who from staff would be presenting the item. City Manager La Margo responded that Transportation and Utilities Director Kendra Gwin would be presenting and ensured she would have a strong virtual connection for the meeting. Mayor Randall relayed that any Utility Rate Study Committee members who want to add to the discussion during the regular meeting let her know beforehand. Councilmember Knapp advised the Mayor to look to Councilmember Ford as he is the committee chair.

With regard to Item F.1, Mayor Randall asked the City Manager how he planned to introduce the item. City Manager La Margo responded that he plans to defer to Deputy City Manager Carroll, who has been working on the matter and also highlighted the April 24<sup>th</sup> opinion from City Attorney Brown to City Council on the topic. Deputy City Manager Carroll confirmed his plan to speak and summarized the City Attorney's opinion. Councilmember Reid asked for clarification regarding the recommended action before the Council. Discussion regarding the application of the April 24<sup>th</sup> City Attorney opinion followed. Mayor Randall relayed drainage concerns with the property slated for development, noting its proximity to the city park property. Deputy City Manager Carroll relayed Community Development Department staff would review the issue. Mayor Randall and Councilmember Reid expressed frustration with the current review process for developments. City Manager La Margo relayed that situations such as this are the reason the City Administration is reviewing current codes and guidelines to ensure a clear process and quality developments going forward.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Following a summary of the meeting, Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:53 a.m.

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Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk