

**MINUTES FROM THE PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF MAY 11, 2020**

Mayor Patricia Randall, via the WebEx meeting platform, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson also joined via the WebEx meeting platform. Councilmembers 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 (via WebEx meeting platform).

Mayor Randall began by reviewing the agenda. With regard to Item A.2, Councilmember Burns inquired about Check #13091 regarding the three plow trucks. He asked at what prior meeting Council approved the purchase. City Manager La Margo stated he would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.3, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson requested clarification relating to Fire Station #2 and whether the plan for the proposed Station Alerting System included installation in the existing station then relocation to the new station under construction and cost. City Manager La Margo responded that his understanding was the system would only be installed in the newly constructed Fire Station #2. Mayor Randall asked if the \$64,500 installation cost included all three Fire Stations. City Manager La Margo confirmed that it did. Councilmember Knapp inquired whether this project was previously budgeted for as part of the new Fire Station #2. City Manager La Margo stated that the Station Alerting Systems are a separate undertaking. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that these Station Alerting Systems are likely a directive from the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority (KCCDA) but he is not aware when the KCCDA approved such a recommendation. He further asked whether the other jurisdictions in the KCCDA were also installing these systems and if so, should the KCCDA fund the expenditures. Councilmember Reid then asked if this purchase was a sole source and whether the existing systems are obsolete. City Manager La Margo confirmed that he would research further and respond.

With regard to Item A.4, Councilmember Knapp asked about the access points for the proposed Streamsong site plan in light of recent discussions relating to the Pennridge Trail subdivision. She noted two illustrated access points on Osterhout Avenue and asked when the second drive would be constructed based on the number of units. She further inquired about the purposed of the additional access drive to the east, which seems to lead nowhere. Councilmember Knapp also asked whether the city has had any discussions with the developer regarding tree cutting on the south side of the plat. Mayor Randall then noted that this particular subdivision plan had begun prior to Mr. La Margo's administration. Councilmember Reid echoed Councilmember Knapp's concerns regarding access points. Ms. Reid asked whether it was possible at this point in the development process to maintain the second access drive on Osterhout instead of building on the lot in the final stages. City Manager La Margo confirmed that staff would research each aspect and respond.

With regard to Item A.5, Councilmember Reid inquired as to the prudence in constructing a third hotel within the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) district in light of issues with lodging and hospitality in the current COVID-19 economic situation. City Manager La Margo responded, stating that initial funds will be invested to improve the area and noted that recent staff discussions with the developer indicate continued plans to proceed with the

hotel project. Deputy City Manager Carroll noted that any changes to the plan would require a revision of the Development Agreement and review by the DDA. Councilmember Knapp inquired whether any recent market studies have been completed to determine whether a third hotel in the noted area remains a viable plan. She further requested that any city investments going forward include data to illustrate the best course of action for the city. City Manager La Margo noted that the city has already contracted commercial/industrial market study to be completed soon, but not before the Council's next regular meeting. He further remarked on his recent experience during his interview process to unsuccessfully book lodging at the two existing hotels due to their consistent high demand.

Councilmember Knapp subsequently requested clarification on Item A. 6 regarding the dollar figures provided in the report to City Council. Deputy City Manager Carroll responded that he would provide further explanation on the calculations in the response to Council. Councilmember Knapp further requested that the City Administration also get assurance from the proposed hotel operator regarding the intent to continue with the hotel in the DDA.

With regard to Item A.6, Councilmember Reid inquired why City Council is being asked to accept the Fiscal Year 2018-19 DDA Annual Financial Report in 2020. City Manager La Margo responded that it is likely due to how the DDA meetings fall in the calendar, but he would further research and respond.

With regard to Item A.7, Councilmember Reid requested confirmation that there were no additional changes proposed to the Vicksburg Sanitary Sewer Transport Agreement other than a change to the dates. City Manager La Margo confirmed. There was additional discussion regarding the need for the revised agreement at this time due to outside funding requirements with the Vicksburg Mill project. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson questioned the map illustrating the proposed sewer line along the east side of Austin Lake and inquired whether the additional flow would increase odor and noise issues with the existing pump station in that area. Deputy City Manager Carroll responded that the proposal includes the construction of a new sewer line farther away from the lake, which should mitigate any issues.

With regard to Item D.1, Councilmember Reid asked if the proposed budget was currently posted to the city website. City Manager La Margo confirmed.

Mayor Randall closed the meeting, reminding everyone that the May 12th Council Meeting would be held virtually again as the Governor had extended her Executive Order through June 30. She further asked the City Manager to review the scheduled May 26th Board and Commission Interview Session for potential alternatives or virtual meeting capacity.

ADJOURNMENT: Following a summary of the meeting, Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk