

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2021

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 07:01 PM. The regular meeting was held virtually as permitted by PA 228. Mayor Patricia M. Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Vic Ledbetter, Claudette Reid, and Terry Urban were present. All members participated virtually from Portage, Michigan. Also in attendance were City Manager Joe La Margo, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence in appreciation of the many volunteers that make the Meals on Wheels program possible and for their efforts in addressing senior hunger and isolation. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS: At the request of Mayor Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson read the proclamation for the 19th Annual March for Meals Month. Abby Finn, Operations Manager for Senior Services Southwest Michigan, thanked City Council for the acknowledgment and encouraged the Council to participate in the upcoming virtual Meals on Wheels event. Ms. Finn shared a story of a Portage resident who participates in the program and whose volunteering for the organization helped him to make it through the pandemic. Councilmember Knapp read the proclamation for Girl Scouting Week.

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 removed Items A.3 and A.6. Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 23, 2021, and Pre-Council Meeting of March 8, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Approval of Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of March 9, 2021, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Special Meeting for Board and Commission Applicants: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to set a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, beginning at 5:15 p.m., to interview Board and Commission applicants. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Lume Cannabis Co. Appeal of Marihuana Denial: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to grant the request for an appeal of an Adult-Use Retail application from Attitude Wellness, LLC (dba "Lume Cannabis Co.") for 5324 Meredith Street. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Minutes of Boards and Commissions: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to receive the meeting minutes of the Planning Commission of February 4, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Calendar of Meetings: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to receive the Calendar of Meetings as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

Adoption of Notice of Intent Resolution: Mayor Randall asked Councilmember Reid to provide further explanation for the removal of the two items from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid requested that City Council first consider Item A.6, Notice of Intent for Capital Improvements, noting that Item A.3, Establishing City Council Budget Review Sessions, was dependent upon the outcome of the discussion. Upon a verbal inquiry by Mayor Randall, Councilmembers agreed to switch consideration of the items.

Councilmember Reid stated that the Notice of Intent Resolution to fund construction of various capital improvements was being presented to City Council because of actions by the prior City Administration and noted many of the projects had been previously approved by City Council without proper funding support by the former Administration. Councilmember Reid suggested that City Council review these various prior capital improvements as part of the upcoming fiscal year's capital improvement proposals, which would now include Councilmember Ledbetter. Councilmember Reid proposed tabling the Notice of Intent Resolution for a future City Council meeting following further Council review and discussion. Ms. Reid further inquired about one particular project noted in the Resolution regarding the intersection of Zylman Avenue and Portage Road within the Lake Center District. She expressed concern about pursuing a construction project in the Lake Center District before the Lake Center District Area Plan is finalized and presented to City Council. Councilmember Reid stated that the entire agenda item entailed \$15 million in projects and expressed concern that some of these projects may no longer align with city goals.

City Manager La Margo responded that the \$15 million was not to be expended all at once time and some projects had already been completed, while others were in progress or pending. Mr. La Margo stated that all of the noted projects had already been previously reviewed and approved by City Council, including the \$9 million for the new Portage Community Senior Center. City Manager La Margo noted that the Zylman Avenue intersection improvement project aligned with the City Council goals and any further postponement of the noted projects would create additional construction and funding timing issues. Finance Director Lauren VanderVeen stated that the item currently before the City Council is solely the initial Notice of Intent, which starts the process to ensure bonding by May and the process completed before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th.

Councilmember Burns provided clarification regarding the timing and the bonding steps for April 13, 2021, noting City Council would have another opportunity to remove line items at a later date if desired. He expressed support for approving the Notice of Intent Resolution. Councilmember Knapp also expressed support for the item alongside Councilmember Burns, highlighting that many of the noted improvements were small

projects and some were already completed. Councilmember Urban provided clarification regarding the meeting format for the following week's CIP Review Meetings, which would only entail small sub-groups of Council. Mr. Urban agreed with Councilmember Burns to start the process and adjust projects later if City Council desired. Councilmember Reid expressed appreciation for the clarification on the item before Council and agreed to support beginning the bonding process in light of the additional information.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to adopt the Notice of Intent Resolution to fund construction of various capital improvements. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Proposed Budget Review Schedule: Following the prior City Council discussion regarding the Notice of Intent Resolution to fund construction of various capital improvements, Councilmember Reid stated she was comfortable to proceed.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to establish Tuesday, April 20 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday, May 11, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. as the dates for review of the proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ordinance Amendment-Storm Water Illicit Discharges & Connections: Mayor Randall introduced the item and City Manager La Margo provided a summary of the item. Councilmember Reid expressed support for the proposed amendments but questioned the City Administration regarding the plans for public notification concerning the amendments, particularly riparians.

Transportation and Utilities Director Kendra Gwin responded that the ordinance amendments would only affect stormwater locations that discharged or overflowed into waters owned by the State of Michigan. She relayed that the ordinance amendments were mandated by the State, requiring locations that discharged or overflowed into waters owned by the State of Michigan follow State procedures.

Councilmember Reid inquired what prior notifications had been performed by the City. Director Gwin responded that nothing had been conveyed yet due to continuous revisions by the State, but noted staff planned to utilize the Portager newsletter and other city outlets to convey the changes. Councilmember Reid suggested creating a video to educate the public.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted the Woodbridge Condominium location, including a storage tank for stormwater run-off near the Hampton Bog, and inquired whether the proposed amendments would affect the location. Director Gwin responded that the amendments would require additional review to determine whether the size of the tank would contain all run-off or if the developer planned for additional stormwater overflow to route into the Bog. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson further inquired about existing locations in the City that utilized underground storage tanks. Director Gwin confirmed the McDonalds restaurant located on South Westnedge Avenue utilized a storage tank. Deputy City Manager Carroll highlighted that the amendments were not a change in statute but a change in verbiage to match the State of Michigan.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to adopt the proposed amendments to the City of Portage Code of Ordinances Chapter 64 Storm Water, Illicit Discharges and Connections. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Knapp provided an update regarding the Portage Community Center Board. She stated the food pantry continued curbside pickup and the clothing bar remained appointment only. Ms. Knapp noted the building and site renovations would be complete by April at which point the lower suite would be listed for rent. She highlighted the May 10th Golf Outing event in support of the Community Center and closed by noting the Community Center's upcoming 45th anniversary in April.

Councilmember Burns provided an update regarding the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA). He relayed that State Senator Sean McCann, as well as State Representatives Julie Rogers and Christine Morse, had attended the recent virtual meeting of the CCTA, pledging advocacy efforts at the state level. Councilmember Burns also stated that the CCTA had approved the Title 6 policies at the recent meeting, noting eight percent of Kalamazoo County residents do not speak English at home.

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

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Carolyn Peshak (6745 Shoreham), provided information regarding a City of Kalamazoo anti-discrimination workshop in follow-up to her comments from the February 9, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:

Councilmember Reid relayed that she had received her second COVID-19 vaccine but planned to continue safety protocols and expressed disappointment with those states that had begun removing pandemic restrictions and safety measures. She highlighted a recent WKZO news article that stated the recent Portage Public Schools COVID-19 outbreak was the worst school outbreak in the state. Councilmember Reid closed by urging Portage residents to do better and continue the virus safety measures.

Councilmember Burns highlighted the federal government's American Rescue Plan that included funding for state and local governments and asked the City Manager to relay what funding the City of Portage could expect and when. City Manager La Margo responded that the city would receive approximately \$5.4 million with the first of two payments in the next few months and the second payment the following year. Finance Director VanderVeen confirmed the first payment would occur during the current fiscal year and the second payment would be received during the following fiscal year. Councilmember Burns thanked the staff for the information.

Councilmember Ledbetter highlighted March as Women's History Month and honored Betty Lee Ongley as the first woman Mayor in the State of Michigan. He spoke in support of fellow female colleagues on City Council and city staff, thanking them for their

continued good work.

Councilmember Knapp relayed that the fourth annual Portage Art Award was open to applicants, noting the prior three years had experienced both great applicants, as well as winners. Ms. Knapp then noted Governor Whitmer's call for Michigan residents to turn on their porch lights on March 10th in honor of the one-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 case in Michigan and those lost to the pandemic.

Councilmember Urban stated he had been able to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for the upcoming week and relayed various options for citizens to sign up for a vaccine in the area. He confirmed that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, as well as the Moderna vaccine, were both available in Kalamazoo County, with the newly approved Johnson & Johnson vaccine expected shortly. He stressed that with a bit of effort and research, citizens could sign up for a list as the next statewide vaccine phase opened.

City Manager La Margo stated the city publishes Kalamazoo County vaccination updates on the city websites for residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted the updates provided by the Councilmembers and City Manager were all good Public Service Announcements.

Mayor Randall highlighted the upcoming Board of Review meetings scheduled for March, as well as the Board and Commission Interviews scheduled for May. She then noted the Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation planned for the month of April. Mayor Randall closed by congratulating city staff that had recently received their COVID-19 vaccines and advised the public that the City Council would continue to meet virtually until more of the public had been vaccinated.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 08:08 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk