

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION
OF APRIL 26, 2016**

Mayor Strazdas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Also present were Heather Baker of Southwest Michigan First, City Manager Larry Shaffer, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis, Director of Technology Services Devin Mackinder, Community Development Director Vicki Georgeau, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk James Hudson.

Mayor Strazdas introduced the topic “Branding” and deferred to Larry Shaffer, who outlined the agenda for City Council. He turned it over to Devin Mackinder, who reviewed the history of branding in Portage, including the catch phrases and logo revisions since the 1960’s. He focused on the planning process involved with “A Natural Place to Move,” a phrase that was developed concurrent with the 50th Anniversary of the City.

Vicki Georgeau discussed the details involved in the implementation of “A Natural Place to Move” which focused on funding, resources and events that encouraged a variety of Portage citizen movement. She listed some of the marketing and promotional efforts, infrastructure and strategies used during the Vision 2025 Renewal Event.

Heather Baker indicated that Branding has to do with people, people who identify with other like people, either for protection or because they just want to be with other people, so Portage needs to consider this when deciding who to target with their Branding. She asked some questions for consideration, “Is it education; is it everyone; is it people from specific places? Does the Branding represent the past of Portage, or the future of Portage? She discussed the things not to do when considering a Brand and referred to segments of her Southwest Michigan First handout, *Branding a Community: What’s the importance of the “mark?”* She reviewed why Brands matter and why our Brand is important. Discussion followed.

Ms. Baker defined Brand Rebuild, Brand Refresh and Brand Retool and the estimated time and cost associated with each. She cited Raleigh, North Carolina, Dayton, Ohio and Columbus, Indiana as examples of places that are doing Branding well. Discussion followed.

There were no statements of citizens.

ADJOURN: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

James Hudson, City Clerk