

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 24, 2021

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 07:01 PM. The regular meeting was held in a partial virtual format as permitted by PA 228, in accordance with the December 2020 Kalamazoo County Emergency Declaration. Mayor Patricia M. Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Vic Ledbetter, Claudette Reid, and Terry Urban were present. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson, Councilmember Ledbetter, and Councilmember Urban participated virtually from Portage, Michigan. Councilmember Knapp participated virtually from Cognashene, Georgian Bay, Canada. Also in attendance were Acting City Manager Adam Herringa, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to remember Kalamazoo County Sheriff Sergeant Ryan J. Proxmire. Following the moment of silence, Eagle Scout Sam Dunfield (Troop 244) led the City Council in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Troop leader Mike Dunfield acknowledged the five new Eagle Scouts from Troop 244 of the Pathfinder District, including his son, Sam Dunfield. Mayor Randall commended the Scouts on their achievement.

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. Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

City Council Meeting Minutes: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of August 24, 2021, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

IDD No. 90 for 6501 Portage Road (Kenco) - District Expansion: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to adopt Resolution #1 to set a hearing at Portage City Hall on September 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as may be heard, and provide the City Assessor and a representative of each of the taxing units which levies ad valorem taxes in the City of Portage an opportunity to be heard on the question of the expansion of the Stryker Corporation's Industrial Development District No. 90 at 6501 Portage Road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Minutes of Boards and Commissions: Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to accept the Environmental Board meeting minutes of June 9, 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.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Dr. Carrie Porco of Athletico Physical Therapy announced the newly opened location in Portage within the Carillon Centre at 6778 South Westnedge Avenue. She provided a summary of the physical therapy field and invited the City Council to the official ribbon-cutting event on September 3, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Presentation by Jane Ghosh, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo: Jane Ghosh, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo, gave a presentation regarding visitor trends for Portage and how Discover Kalamazoo tracks visitors and visitor spending. Ms. Ghosh noted July 2021 set a record high number of lodging stays in the area while illustrating that the 2020 lockdown period was a record low. She also stressed that the hospitality industry is experiencing increased instances of being short-staffed, both nationally and locally, as a result of the pandemic. Ms. Ghosh also highlighted the top ten visited locations in Portage, with the South Westnedge Avenue Meijer store and Chick-fil-a restaurant

as the top two locations. Councilmember Reid inquired whether Discover Kalamazoo had data regarding the number of visitors to Portage with personal connections, such as friends and family. Ms. Ghosh replied that approximately fifty percent of visitors to the area had a personal connection with someone local. Mayor Randall commended Ms. Ghosh on Discover Kalamazoo's regularly mailed dashboard update and asked how the organization distinguished between visitors attending more for food and drink as compared to lodging. Ms. Ghosh responded that Discover Kalamazoo contracted with a firm that measured cell phone "pings" that could track visitor behavior.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Reid, to receive the presentation by Jane Ghosh, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo, regarding recent visitor trends in Kalamazoo County and key places in Portage, upcoming events in the community, and Discover Kalamazoo's strategies for increasing visitors and visitor spending. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

FY 2020-21 Planning Commission Work Program Final Update and Proposed FY 2021-22 Planning Commission Work Program: Mayor Randall introduced Planning Commission Chair Dan Corradini to present the Commission's Work Programs. Mr. Corradini summarized the Planning Commission's report and noted several hurdles the Commission has encountered during the 2020 calendar year, including virtual meeting formats due to COVID-19, staff and commissioner turnover, as well as the need for continuing education for commissioners. Mr. Corradini relayed that the Planning Commission has begun reviewing more diverse types of development proposals as the city matures and looks forward to the Master Plan update in the coming year with the hope of including a youth perspective.

Mayor Randall noted the upcoming October interview session for Boards and Commissions and encouraged the Planning Commission to work on recruiting new members. The presentation concluded with a discussion on the implementation of electronic agendas to the Planning Commission, similar to the format utilized by the Council, in the fall of 2021.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to receive the FY 2020-21 Planning Commission Work Program Final Update and Proposed FY 2021-22 Planning Commission Work Program. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: None.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:

Councilmember Reid offered her condolences to the family of Sheriff's Sergeant Ryan Proxmire, noting she appreciated his work in the community. She then highlighted recent national and local debates regarding vaccines and face mask requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, urging everyone to remain engaged and informed. Councilmember Reid relayed the new FDA approval of Pfizer's vaccine and stated COVID-19 could only be addressed using a comprehensive community approach.

Councilmember Burns acknowledged the upcoming events of the annual PCOC Strut Run/Walk scheduled for September 11, 2021, as well as the "Open Doors" event in Bronson Park on August 29 with a focus on housing assistance.

Councilmember Knapp also highlighted the September 11th PCOC Strut event. She then thanked Jane Ghosh from Discover Kalamazoo for her presentation to the City Council and encouraged the public to seek out Discover Kalamazoo.

Councilmember Ledbetter also offered condolences to the family of Sergeant Proxmire, noting that his death highlighted the national epidemic of gun violence. He encouraged increased gun control and safety practices.

Councilmember Urban also extended condolences to the family of Sergeant Proxmire, as well

as the entire area law enforcement community as they deal with the tragedy. He then advised caution for the upcoming autumn season and avoiding potential car-deer collisions, citing his own recent accident.

Acting City Manager Herringa noted the magnitude of the recent community funeral for Sergeant Proxmire and commended the Portage Police and Fire Divisions for their demonstrations of support. He commended all Public Safety staff for their daily work in the field.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson echoed the statements of the other Councilmembers.

Mayor Randall stated she had never attended a public safety officer's funeral before Sergeant Proxmire's and noted the extent of the somber event. She then thanked the Portage Police Division for covering other area agencies to allow for others to attend Sergeant Proxmire's funeral. Mayor Randall noted her recent attendance at the Michigan Association of Mayors Conference in Sault Ste. Marie, as well as her work with the filming of a city anti-hate video. She highlighted another donation for bike lights by Bike Friendly Kalamazoo and thanked the organization. Mayor Randall closed with a mention of a "Welcome Back" event hosted by the Portage Public Schools on August 24 that highlighted the District's 100th anniversary.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 08:00 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk