

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 7, 2021

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 07:01 PM. The regular meeting was held in a partially 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 Lisa Brayton, Chris Burns, Lori Knapp (virtual - Estero, FL), Vic Ledbetter, and Terry Urban were present. 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 as the city enters the darkest month of the calendar year and for each person to act as a guiding light. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to formally add the Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment No 21-22: Veterinary Hospitals/Clinics as Item D.1 to the December 7, 2021, Regular Meeting agenda per Section 4.6(m) of the City Charter. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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 Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

City Council Minutes: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve the City Council Minutes for the Regular Meeting of November 16, 2021, and Pre-Council Meeting of December 6, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of December 7, 2021, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

2022 Fee Schedules: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to adopt the: 2022 Freedom of Information Act fees; 2022 Proposed Recreation and Park Facility fees; 2022 Proposed Senior Center Facility fees; 2022 Proposed Community Development and Building Permit fees; 2022 Special Assessment Rates, and 2022 Cemetery Fee Schedule. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Utility Management and Operation Services - Contract Extension: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve a contract extension with Suez Environmental Services, Incorporated, for the provision of utility management and operation services for the period of March 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, and authorize the Acting City Manager to execute all documents related to the action on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Angling Road Storm Drainage Improvements - Bid Tabulation: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to award a construction contract to Lounsbury Excavating, Incorporated, Paw Paw, Michigan, for the Angling Road Storm Drainage Improvement project in an amount not-to-exceed \$789,861.35, and an engineering services contract to Abonmarche Consultants, Incorporated, in the amount of \$71,020 to provide construction engineering services for the Angling Road Storm Drainage Improvements project, and authorize the Acting City Manager to execute all documents related to the contracts on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Eliason Nature Reserve North Entrance - Tabulation of Proposals: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to award a construction services contract in the amount of \$262,690.25 to Peters Construction Company for the Eliason Nature Reserve North Entrance and authorize the City Manager

to execute all documents related to these actions on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Tree Removal and Pruning - Bid Tabulation: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to award a contract to Tree Tech, LLC, in the amount of \$80,050 for street tree removal and pruning, and authorize the Acting City Manager to execute all documents related to these actions on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Designation of 5185 Meredith Street as Blighted Property: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to designate the property located at 5185 Meredith Street as blighted property in accordance with the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Portage Culinary Academy - Special License Liquor Permit: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve a Special License Liquor Permit in the form of a Certified Council Resolution for the Portage Culinary Academy event. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Cemetery Marker Height Waiver Request: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to approve a cemetery marker height restriction waiver for Ms. Janeen Bertolina within Portage South Cemetery. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Minutes of Boards & Commission: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to receive the minutes of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board of October 27, 2021, and Historic District Commission of November 3, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:

At the invitation of Acting City Manager Herringa, Mr. Harold Thomas (7755 Chippewa), President of Kotobuki Seating International, spoke on behalf of the project at 5187 Meredith Street. Mr. Thomas provided the company's history, noting its Japanese and family-based origins, and explained the plans to expand the business locally. Mr. Thomas also acknowledged Byce and Associates, as well as Envirollogic for their assistance with the development project. Mayor Randall thanked Mr. Thomas for choosing Portage and inquired about the number of new jobs. Mr. Thomas replied there would be a minimum of 50 new jobs and noted Kotobuki Seating does not outsource. Councilmember Ledbetter asked whether the new jobs would have prerequisites for the positions. Mr. Thomas stated new staff would be trained, including an apprenticeship program, and that the company was seeking applicants interested in long-term positions.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Ordinance Amendment No 21-22: Veterinary Hospitals/Clinics: Acting City Manager Herringa summarized the proposed amendment, noting the nature of the economy in the City of Portage is changing and stated this project is a chance to revitalize the former Gander Mountain store and site. Community Development Director Kelly Peterson further explained the proposed ordinance amendment, noting this was an opportunity to update the Commercial Planned Development District (CPD) and launch a great project with Meyer C. Weiner Company. The property owner and project applicant Josh Weiner, Chief Executive Officer for Meyer C. Weiner Company, recalled the site's original designation as CPD and how such zoning was novel to offer such a variety and flexibility of use options. However, Mr. Weiner noted that a veterinary hospital was not one of those options and explained his desire to renew the former Gander Mountain site in light of the nationwide trend of

increased retail space vacancies. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired about potential limitations with CPD zoning for veterinary use, citing a veterinary clinic on Portage Road. Mr. Weiner highlighted his intention to use the site for a veterinary hospital as opposed to a clinic and did not expect to be limited under the current plan. Acting City Manager Herringa noted the revision to the CPD will broaden the uses covered under the "medical" definition. Mayor Randall inquired about the number of new jobs expected. Mr. Weiner responded that exact numbers were pending but he estimated that 30 to 50 jobs would result from the project. Councilmember Urban asked whether the new vet hospital site would replace another in the area. Mr. Weiner responded that it would not.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to close the public hearing. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Urban, to adopt Ordinance Amendment No. 21-22-A (Veterinary hospitals or clinics in the CPD, Commercial Planned Development District). 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 Urban noted the recent Oxford, Michigan high school shooting incident and expressed concern with firearm access. He offered his condolences and prayers to those affected, as well as those forced into difficult conversations with their own school-aged children. He closed by urging increased responsibility regarding firearm safety.

Councilmember Ledbetter echoed Councilmember Urban's disappointment at the negative news for Michigan with the Oxford event overshadowing the earlier positive news of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. He also stressed the need for firearms safety, including a focus on individuals in crisis or mentally ill. Councilmember Ledbetter closed by wishing everyone peace, good health, and prosperity with the holiday season.

Councilmember Knapp complimented the city's Holiday Tree Lighting event, highlighting the large community turnout, and thanked the Parks and Public Works departments for their efforts.

Councilmember Brayton echoed Councilmember Knapp's comments regarding the Tree Lighting event, and urged firearm safety and responsibility.

Councilmember Burns noted the November 27th active shooter incident with the Central County Transit Authority (CCTA). He stated the CCTA would be hosting its next meeting in person at the downtown Kalamazoo Transit Center to focus on citizen input and safety improvements.

Acting City Manager Herringa recognized the Senior Center staff for receiving national accreditation again and being one of only two senior centers in Michigan to do so. He then commended the Community Development Department for efforts on the two unique projects featured on the meeting agenda. Mr. Herringa closed by complimenting both the Parks and Public Works departments on their work with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson expressed appreciation for the two development projects on the evening's agenda and congratulated Community Development Department staff for working to update and innovate city standards. He echoed Councilmember Burns' comments regarding the CCTA incident and continued efforts at transit safety as part of the upcoming December 13th meeting.

Mayor Randall congratulated city staff, as well as the Portage Northern High School choir for their work on the well-attended Tree Lighting event. She also congratulated Portage Senior Center Manager Kim Phillips for the re-accreditation of the Center and expressed anticipation of opening the

new Center soon. Mayor Randall also acknowledged the Finance Department for receiving a Certificate of Accomplishment in Financial Reporting award. She closed by issuing a reminder about the upcoming city Holiday Market on December 11th that would include the Kalamazoo County ID Program visit.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 07:46 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk