

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2023**

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 07:00 PM in the Council Chambers at Portage City Hall.

**ROLL CALL:** Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Victor Ledbetter, Mike Quinn, Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Mayor Patricia Randall were present.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Pat McGinnis, Chief Operating Officer Adam Herringa, Chief Development Officer Peter Dame, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, and Deputy City Clerk Tammy Durian.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to recognize organizations that educate and promote health and child safety in our community. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance

### **PROCLAMATIONS:**

At the request of Mayor Randall, City Manager McGinnis presented the three winners of the second annual Tricked Out Home contest.

**Lung Cancer Awareness 2023:** City Manager McGinnis read the proclamation.

**Family Court Awareness Month:** Lisa, a Family Court advocate, read the proclamation.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2023. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Accounts Payable Register:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of November 1, 2023 as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**2024 City Council Meeting Schedule:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to approve the 2024 schedule of regular City Council meetings. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Health Insurance Contract Renewals:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to approve: a one-year contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan at a cost of \$223,309, and a one-year contract with Blue Care Network at a cost of \$1,980,908, for employee health insurance; and maintain current employer/employee cost-sharing practices by taking action to exempt the city from requirements of P.A. 152 for the 2024 medical benefits plan year; and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Tentative Plan Amendment for River Caddis:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to accept the Tentative Plan Amendment of the River Caddis proposed mixed-use development at 412 W. Centre Avenue and 7860 Shaver Road and set the public hearing for November 14, 2023 subject to the proposed live/work units shall be consistent with the requirements of Building Code Section 419 Live/Work Units and Zoning Code Sec. 42-137 Work/Live Accommodations; and, the utility and engineering review comments should be addressed in detail in the PD Final Plan. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Ordinance Amendment #23/24-2:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to accept Ordinance Amendment #23/24-2 to amend the Zoning Code to establish an Accessory Dwelling Unit regulation and permitting process and set a Public Hearing for December 5, 2023. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Amend the General Appropriations Act (budget):** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to amend the General Appropriations Act (budget) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Materials Transmitted:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Materials Transmitted of October 20, 2023. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Minutes of Boards & Commissions:** Motion by Quinn, seconded by Knapp, to receive the minutes of the Environmental Board of August 9 and September 13, 2023. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Calendar of Meetings:** Motion by Quinn, 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:**

Jihan Young, Vice Chair of the Human Services Board, provided a closeout update to Red Ribbon Week. She also read a pledge taken by Portage Public School students about the importance of being healthy and drug-free and shared that the Human Services Board had the opportunity to meet with the student-led Red Ribbon Week Committee.

Mark McKeon (6825 Cromwell Street) expressed his concern about the lack of playground equipment at Lexington Green Park. City Manager McGinnis replied that the playground equipment has been ordered and is set for delivery this spring.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Farmer's Market Site Selection:** City Manager McGinnis provided a brief background of the Farmer's Market and the goal set by the City Council to find a permanent home for the market. He then invited Director of Parks and Recreation, Kathleen Hoyle, and Recreation Program Manager, Annie Pryor, to the podium for questions. City Manager McGinnis noted that several potential locations have been discussed and the recommendation is to focus on the property that is owned by the City of Portage located in direct proximity to the Charles and Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center. At Mayor Randall's direction, Director Hoyle provided highlights and the next steps of the proposed location. The next steps include hiring an architectural engineering firm while staying within budget, noting the grant received by the State of Michigan.

Councilmember Urban expressed concerns with the proposed location due to the size, potential future growth of the market, and lack of parking. He suggested the city consider an alternate site at the city-owned property located at the corner of Romence Road and Lovers Lane and provided a brief history of the suggested property, highlighting the size of the property, its undeveloped location providing a blank slate, and parking possibilities.

Discussion regarding the alternate location on the corner of Lovers Lane and Romence Road followed, with topics including startup costs, time frame, and preservation of trees. There was further discussion regarding the advantages of the City Center property in direct proximity to the Senior Center which included existing bathrooms, walkability, visibility, meeting the needs of the community, as well as fiscal responsibility. Councilmember Burns asked for clarification of the next steps, the costs for an engineering firm to design an undeveloped site, as well as growth and accommodation of the market. City Manager McGinnis replied with an explanation of costs, professional services from construction to completion, and the process of gathering information and research. Director Hoyle addressed the question regarding the size of the market and the estimated growth. Additional comments from council included proximity of the proposed location to sites identified in the survey, repurposing, expansion, and grant monies versus costs to the taxpayers.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to direct the City Administration to pursue a new Portage Farmers Market facility to be located in direct proximity to the Charles and Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center. Councilmember Urban reiterated his reservations regarding the proposed location and asked for an amendment. Councilmember Ledbetter expressed favor of researching the alternate property, and Councilmember Knapp and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked for clarification on the amendment. City Manager McGinnis shared the process and the next steps, which would include a consultant to present a cursory evaluation of both sites providing a physical and fiscal feasibility. He noted asking staff to reach out to the vendors as well.

At the Mayor's request, Deputy City Clerk Durian restated Councilmember Urban's earlier amendment to the motion with assistance from City Manager McGinnis. Motion by Urban, seconded by Ledbetter, to amend the motion and add a cursory review of the City owned property located on the corner of Romence Road and Lovers Lane. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 4 to 3, with Councilmember Quinn, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson, and Mayor Randall voting no.

At the Mayor's request, Deputy City Clerk Durian restated the amended motion with assistance from City Manager McGinnis. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to direct the City Administration to pursue a new Portage Farmers Market facility to be located in direct proximity to the Charles and Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center; with the amendment to request a cursory review of the property owned by the City of Portage located at the corner of Romence Road and Lovers Lane. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Mayor Randall asked City Manager McGinnis for a list of all vacant property located in the City of Portage and thanked Councilmember Urban.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

**STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:**

Robert Williams (10930 S. Westnedge Avenue) shared alternative options for the Farmer's Market and concern with the amount of open space in Portage.

Arlene Lancaster (614 LaSalle Street) expressed concerns with hunting and speed limits near her residence. Councilmember Urban asked for clarification on hunting and firearms, and Mayor Randall confirmed that the City Manager would reach out to Ms. Lancaster.

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:**

Councilmember Urban extended his apologies for not bringing his suggested alternate site to the Council sooner.

Councilmember Ledbetter shared that November 1<sup>st</sup> is the first day of Indigenous Heritage Month, and recognized the Day of the Dead and explained that Día de los Muertos is a celebration, paying respects to loved ones who have passed. He then expressed his appreciation for the Family Court Awareness Month proclamation.

Councilmember Knapp had no comment.

Councilmember Quinn thanked City Manager McGinnis for his presentation to visitors from South and Central America. In honor of All Saints Day, November 1<sup>st</sup>, a day to remember those who passed away, Councilmember Quinn remembered a fellow Marine who took his own life. He commented on the effects of traumatic brain injury and the veterans who suffer from it. In addition, Councilmember Quinn noted that Marine Corps Birthday is celebrated on November 10<sup>th</sup> and Veterans Day, honoring military veterans, is observed on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Burns shared his excitement for the future improvement of the farmers market, and thanked our State Representative for the additional financial resources.

City Manager McGinnis recognized Deputy Director of Revenue and Treasury, Grant Taylor, for his appointment to serve as Membership Director on the Michigan Municipal Treasurers Association (MMTA) Board. He then introduced Finance Director Lauren VanderVeen who shared that the City of Portage had been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, noting this is the 36<sup>th</sup> year that the City of Portage has received this award. Additionally, the City of Portage, one of three municipalities in Michigan, was recognized as a Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) Triple Crown recipient. City Manager McGinnis then explained a request presented by Councilmember Knapp to receive an update of goals throughout the year versus once a year was implemented and presented a Fiscal Year City Council Priorities update to the Council, and noted this will be available on the website. He also discussed he and Councilmember Quinn's meeting with Central and South American visitors. Lastly, City Manager McGinnis shared the importance of resolutions, they are worth passing and can make a difference in the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson also commented on the proposed farmers market facility adding that it's not common to have a 3-4 vote, but ultimately council has conversation and delivers for the citizens.

Mayor Randall reported on upcoming events at the Senior Center. She then shared that a resident from another community learned about Portage's request for transparency from trash removal services and indicated they plan to contact their local municipality and County about requiring the same standards and posting rates for services. Next, Mayor Randall said that she, Councilmember Quinn, and City Manager McGinnis visited with U.S. Representative Bill Huizenga, noting his office is located in the City of Portage. This visit was one day prior to receiving information regarding possible service and distribution changes to the Post Office located in the City of Portage and is concerned this could affect services, therefore she asked that a letter is sent to U.S. Representative Bill Huizenga's office on behalf of the City Council.

Councilmembers reminded everyone that there is an election on November 7th and encouraged everyone to vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:51PM.

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Tammy Durian, Deputy City Clerk