

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 23, 2016

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Barry Petrucci of Chapel Hill United Methodist Church provided an invocation. The City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Deputy City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia Randall, Terry Urban and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari and Councilmember Claudette Reid were absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ford, seconded by Randall, to approve Regular Meeting Minutes of August 9, 2016, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Pearson, to approve the Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2016, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 3 to 0 with Councilmembers Urban and Ford abstaining.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Councilmember Pearson to read the Consent Agenda. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to approve the Consent Agenda Motions as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF AUGUST 23, 2016:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of August 23, 2016, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

INDUSTRIAL TAX ABATEMENT APPLICATION: PFIZER, INCORPORATED (7171 PORTAGE ROAD): At the request of Mayor Strazdas, City Manager Larry Shaffer provided introductory remarks and details regarding the proposed tax abatement. Mr. Shaffer informed City Council that the planned development by Pfizer would provide the biggest increase in the tax base in twenty years, even with the abatement. He continued by sharing that Pfizer is a key component of the Portage community and that this development provides both the company and the community stability and growth. He concluded by stating his gratitude and his encouragement in the fact that Pfizer is making a commitment to current and future operations in Portage.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Pearson, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried. Motion by Randall, seconded by Urban to adopt Resolution No. 4-16, approving the Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificates for Pfizer, Incorporated (Pharmacia & Upjohn Company, LLC) and approve the tax abatement agreement and affidavit between the City of Portage and Pfizer, Incorporated (Pharmacia & Upjohn Company, LLC).

Mayor Strazdas thanked the representatives of Pfizer in the audience for their commitment and expressed hope that Pfizer found working with the City on this matter to be professional, thoughtful and expeditious. He continued by sharing that both Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and Councilmember Reid, though absent from the meeting, were supportive of the abatement. Mayor Strazdas also shared that Councilmember Reid would like City Council to conduct a review of the P.A. 198 process. Mayor Strazdas expressed his own support for such a review and provided his rationale.

Councilmember Pearson reviewed the \$145 million project and shared his belief that if the expansion involved the creation of 1,000 jobs, it probably wouldn't happen in this country. He continued by reviewing the history of the relationship between Pfizer and the community and expressed his full support for the proposed abatement. Councilmember Pearson also reviewed the hundreds of millions of dollars in development by Pfizer in recent years and the fact that, while Pfizer could have

asked for abatements, chose not to. Councilmember Pearson concluded by stating that he is pleased that City Administration is working so well with members of the community, complimented City Manager Shaffer and City Staff for their efforts and expressed his pleasure that Pfizer will be in Portage for years to come.

Councilmember Randall expressed support for City Administration, the work that it is doing and cited the Pfizer development as one example. She then shared some of the history of Pfizer, Portage, and the opportunities it presented to her family. Councilmember Randall thanked the Director of Community Development Vicki Georgeau, and the City Assessor Ed VanderVries, for their work on this project. She concluded by reviewing the importance of Pfizer to the City tax base and that she is pleased Pfizer considers the Portage community to be a place of success.

Councilmember Ford shared that Pfizer has not asked for a tax abatement in a decade, despite hundreds of millions of dollars in investments that would have qualified. He pointed out that Pfizer is not asking for everything in this abatement request nor is the City giving away everything.

Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 209 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

* **JULY 2016 ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY REPORT:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding the July 2016 Environmental Summary Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COMMUNICATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD REGARDING THE DEER POPULATION: At the request of Mayor Strazdas, City Manager Shaffer began discussion and commended the work of the Environmental Board and commented on the commitment of the City to ecological and environmental issues.

Environmental Board Chairperson Ruth Caputo spoke and reviewed her communication to City Council, the history of the deer population discussion topic and the proposed plan to survey/study the deer population and its impact on the community. Ms. Caputo shared a presentation which highlighted the rationale of the Environmental Board in putting together this proposal, steps that have already been taken, collaborative relationships that have been established, the details of the requested funding, how it would be spent and the need to gather information before making a recommendation.

Mayor Strazdas thanked Chairperson Caputo for her presentation and shared that any decision surrounding the deer population is likely to be controversial. He continued by expressing his desire for additional data and to give the broader community the opportunity to weigh in and prioritize the topic through a tool such as the community survey.

Councilmember Randall shared that she is neither for nor against taking action on this topic at this time. She stated that car/deer incidents have been declining and inquired if the Environmental Board had any indication as to why this might be happening. Ms. Caputo stated that the Board is aware of the decline but does not have an explanation at this time. Discussion followed on the topic of public safety and public health as it pertains to the deer population.

Councilmember Ford inquired as to how high of a priority the Environmental Board places on addressing the deer population and if the cities of Jackson and Ann Arbor had been contacted to review their deer population control efforts. Chairperson Caputo shared that data has been gathered from those two cities. She also shared that the creation of a priority list has not been done by the Environmental Board for some time. However, she stated that the Environmental Board made a commitment to City Council to make a recommendation and made the same pledge to those who participated in the public hearing that was held on this topic.

Councilmember Pearson thanked the Environmental Board for their efforts and inquired if the Environmental Board had any plans to request funding for other efforts in the near future. Ms. Caputo

replied that there are no additional funding requests planned at this time. Councilmember Pearson stated that he is neutral on the issue of taking action, especially since car/deer accidents are down. He questioned the need for immediate action and concluded by stating that he would like to know the other priorities of the Environmental Board.

Chairperson Caputo reviewed the details and timing of some of the proposals such as an aerial survey in January or February and the need to get deer exclosures in place this fall. Environmental Board member Tim Winslow, 6416 Village Green Circle, shared that there is an Eagle Scout candidate who is currently available and willing to put the deer exclosures together as part of his Eagle Scout project and would be reluctant to lose this opportunity.

Mayor Strazdas summarized that there is time for City Council to consider an aerial survey, a need to get questions prepared and action taken with regard to the Community Survey and that the possible implementation of deer exclosures is the most urgent matter. The Mayor stated that the deer exclosures can likely be handled by working directly with City Administration and not require City Council involvement.

City Manager Shaffer concurred with regard to the deer exclosures and shared his desire to review and better formalize the relationship with the City, efforts of the Environmental Board and the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

Ryan Koziatek, 1185 Woodlure Drive, Kalamazoo, representing the Kalamazoo Nature Center, spoke about the annual aerial survey conducted by the Nature Center and of the ways in which deer exclosures and transects can be used to monitor and gain information about the deer population. Mr. Koziatek also reviewed changing habitats and deer control methods, including culling, used by the Nature Center. Discussion followed and Mr. Koziatek responded to a series of questions posed by City Council.

Mayor Strazdas summarized that an aerial survey could be used to collect data and that the survey would occur in January/February, that the City Manager can work with the Environmental Board and Kalamazoo Nature Center on the deer exclosures, data on car/deer crashes will continue to be tracked and that the Community Survey will be able to incorporate questions related to the deer population.

Environmental Board member, Jerry Kroehn, 7701 Wendy Lane, spoke and shared information on deer culls and how they have been implemented in other communities. Councilmember Urban questioned the safety of culling deer in urban and suburban settings such as Portage.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to receive the Environmental Board report and request that City Administration work with the Portage Environmental Board and Kalamazoo Nature Center to better define the proposed deer management study and associated funding request. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

*** MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** City Council received the minutes of the following Boards and Commissions:

Portage Public Schools Retreat, Regular and Special of July 18 and Special of July 27, 2016.
Zoning Board of Appeals of July 25, 2016.
Planning Commission of August 4, 2016.

NEW BUSINESS: Mayor Strazdas shared that he has asked that the topic of the Community Survey be added to the agenda for the September 6th Regular Meeting.

BID TABULATIONS:

*** TRAFFIC SIGNAL INSTALLATION AT SOUTH WESTNEDGE AVENUE/KILGORE ROAD AND WEST CENTRE AVENUE/OLD CENTRE ROAD:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to award a construction contract to the low bidder, Severance Electric, Incorporated, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$611,272.53 for the installation of

new traffic signals at the intersections of South Westnedge Avenue / Kilgore Road and West Centre Avenue / Old Centre Road, and approve a contract amendment with Abonmarche Consultants, Incorporated, in an amount not to exceed \$21,000 for traffic signal construction administration and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the projects on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

* **TRAFFIC SIGNAL INSTALLATION AT WEST CENTRE AVENUE/COOLEY DRIVE/TOZER COURT:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to award a construction contract to the low bidder, Severance Electric, Incorporated, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$446,967.58 for the installation of new traffic signals at the intersection of West Centre Avenue / Cooley Drive / Tozer Court and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS:

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Ford shared that it is great to hear that Pfizer is expanding and his desire for additional data as it pertains to questions surrounding the deer population.

Councilmember Pearson expressed gratitude for having Pfizer as a partner in the community. He also complimented the employees of Pfizer in this era where price-gouging in the medical and pharmaceutical industries is occurring.

Councilmember Urban provided an update on the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA). He shared that services and routes have been, or will be, altered or expanded and complimented former City of Portage employee and current Director of the CCTA, Sean McBride, on his work.

Councilmember Randall expressed gratitude to Pfizer for their expansion efforts in Portage and shared that the City, as tax revenue grows, needs to monitor expenses and look at lowering taxes.

City Manager Shaffer shared that the Department of Parks, Recreation and Senior Citizen Services is being relocated to City Hall and provided the rationale for the move. Mr. Shaffer then shared that City offices would be closed on August 29th for employee training on the topic of “active shooters.”

Mayor Strazdas pointed out that schools would be back in session soon and that busses would return to the roadways. He continued by stating that the many road projects implemented by the City would be wrapping up soon. Mayor Strazdas concluded by stating, while the Pfizer expansion is great for the community, there are many small projects and small businesses growing in Portage as well.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED:

* **DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to receive the Departmental Monthly Reports. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

* **MATERIALS TRANSMITTED OF AUGUST 9, 2016:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to receive the Materials Transmitted of Tuesday, August 9, 2016. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk

*Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.