

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 22, 2024

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 06:01 PM in the Council Chambers at Portage City Hall.

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers Chris Burns, Victor Ledbetter, Nicole Miller, Terry Urban, Jihan Young, 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, Assistant City Attorney Roxanne Seeber, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to reflect on making this world a better place for our children. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS:

Red Ribbon Month: Local students read, alongside Human Services Board member Ashley Vosburgh.

Lights On After School Day 2024: Brynn Rhode of KYD Network read.

Family Court Awareness Month: Lisa M., a family court survivor, in support of Domestic Violence Awareness and Family Court Awareness with Protective Parents Michigan, read.

Rotary International 2024: Randy Orwig of Portage Rotary read the proclamation and provided a summary of Rotary efforts.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson then introduced a Resolution of Respect recognizing Rotarian and former city board member Art Roberts for his community contributions.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:

1. Alan Loveridge (23965 88th Avenue, Marcellus) provided recommendations regarding environmentally and cost-conscious restroom options.
2. Kristi Potts (6845 Oakland Drive) noted her write-in campaign for Kalamazoo Valley Community College Trustee in the November election.
3. Fred Welch (1724 Forest Drive) noted his church, Westminster Presbyterian at 1515 Helen Avenue, would be operating as a warming center for the 2024-2025 winter season.
4. Ed Sackley (10314 Archwood Drive), former Mayor Pro Tem, shared he would be meeting with Chief Operating Officer Herringa about concerns over the new Department of Public Works location on Portage Industrial Drive.
5. Carolyn Pescheck (6745 Shoreham Street) relayed compliments for the Stanwood Crossings development.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Burns removed Item B.4 (Kalamazoo Valley Intergovernmental Ambulance Agreement). Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to approve the City Council Minutes of the Board & Commission Interviews, as well as the Regular Meeting of October 8, 2024. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of October 22, 2024, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

BS&A Software Renewal: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to approve the annual BS&A software renewal in the amount of \$76,197 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

KCCDA Lease Agreement: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to approve a lease agreement with the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority for the use of space located within the city-owned building located at 9246 Portage Industrial Drive and authorize the City Manager to execute all related documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Set Annual City Council Goal Setting Session (Retreat): Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to set a special meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at Fire Station No. 1 (7830 Shaver Road) to conduct the annual City Council Goal Setting Session (Retreat). Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

2024 Tax Abatement and Job Summary Reports: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to receive the Annual 2024 Tax Abatement and Job Summary Reports - Information Only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Minutes of Boards & Commissions: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Young, to receive the minutes of the Human Services Board of September 5, 2024; and the Historic District Commission of September 4, 2024. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

Annual Planning Commission Update: Planning Commission Vice Chair Becky Baldwin presented. Following Commissioner Baldwin's update, Councilmember Burns expressed his appreciation for the work of the Planning Commission, noting it was a volunteer position and the Commission had undergone a busy year.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Pearson, to receive the annual update by the Planning Commission as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Stanwood Crossings Rezoning, Tentative Plan Application and Preliminary Condominium Plan: At the request of the Mayor, City Manager McGinnis summarized the City Administration's efforts to date and requested Chief Development Officer (CDO), Pete Dame, to explain the proposal. CDO Dame presented background for the project, including the changes that had been negotiated since the development was first brought forward.

Jack Gesmundo of American Village Builders spoke regarding the project offerings as the city's contracted builder. He noted the current national housing needs, providing comparative statistics on market trends, and incorporation of the Kalamazoo County Housing Millage funds. He closed by explaining the beginning steps of the project's plan. Councilmember Miller thanked Mr. Gesmundo for providing the housing cost comparison and highlighted the project's proximity to her residence.

Councilmember Urban asked Mr. Gesmundo if housing prices had increased again in the last twelve months. Mr. Gesmundo confirmed that the price of labor and materials have continued to raise construction costs and highlighted the limited availability of housing stock as many people are unwilling to move and lose to prior low interest rates. Councilmember Miller asked Mr. Gesmundo whether the group had recently re-evaluated the price point. Mr. Gesmundo responded that city staff and his staff had recently reviewed. Councilmember Miller then asked about the proposal's grouped mailbox design. Mr. Gesmundo replied that it was a current requirement of the U.S. Postal Service for any new developments and the neighborhood would be required to maintain them. Councilmember

Ledbetter asked Mr. Gesmundo regarding an HOA. Mayor Randall noted the condominium aspect.

Councilmember Miller asked CDO Dame about the failing grade for turning onto Portage Road from Woodbine Avenue noted in the proposal's traffic study. CDO Dame responded, highlighting a city option to coordinate traffic signal timing gaps to improve access onto Portage Road.

Mayor Randall opened the hearing at 7:30 p.m. As there were no comments, motion by Urban, seconded by Young, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the Rezoning and Tentative Plan Application #24/25-2 from R-1B One Family Residential District to Planned Development (PD). Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to approve the Preliminary Condominium Plan for 'Stanwood Crossings' proposed single-family residential development at 9617 Portage Road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Ordinance Amendment - Miscellaneous Zoning Code Updates: At the invitation of the Mayor, City Manager McGinnis deferred to CDO Dame who explained the proposal. He highlighted the goal of restoration of the swimming pool site location standards. He then discussed the refining of the definition of duplexes, as well as live/work standards, all in an effort to modernize and tighten the current code.

Mayor Randall opened the hearing at 7:35 p.m. Seeing no comments, motion by Burns, seconded by Urban, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Urban, seconded by Young, to adopt Zoning Ordinance Amendment #24/25-1: Ordinance to amend various miscellaneous Zoning Code technical standards. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

Kalamazoo Valley Intergovernmental Ambulance Agreement: Councilmember Burns explained that he had removed the item from the Consent Agenda in order to ask additional questions, citing the city's prior ambulance contract award to LifeEMS and the importance of the service to Portage residents. City Manager McGinnis provided an initial explanation and introduced Public Safety Deputy Chief Jeff VanderWiere to provide further information.

Mayor Randall asked whether the city had noticed a change in pricing since the city's transition to contracting with LifeEMS and the loss of PrideCare ambulance. Deputy VanderWiere noted pricing had increased as a result of national inflation.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Urban, to approve participation in the Kalamazoo Valley Intergovernmental Ambulance Agreement, award a contract to LIFE EMS for Advanced Life Support (ALS) services, and authorize the City Manager to sign all necessary documents. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Young provided an update as a member of the Small Business Committee regarding a stakeholder meeting in the Lake Center District for the city's new facade improvement program. Councilmember Miller added information about the application process.

Councilmember Burns provided a Central County Transportation Authority Board of Directors update, making particular note of the MetroLink program.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the reports as presented. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban had no comment.

Councilmember Ledbetter noted the upcoming Daylight Savings Time change on November 3. He closed with a reminder regarding voting in the forthcoming election.

Councilmember Miller acknowledged the Stanwood Crossings project and the process it took to reach the evening's vote. She then acknowledged several recent business grand openings, the Halloween House Decorating Contest, and the Leaf-a-Legacy City program. She closed by noting her winning a wager with Councilmember Young regarding the Portage Central High School win over Portage Northern the weekend before.

Councilmember Young acknowledged the competition with Councilmember Miller, noting she received positive feedback about the friendly competition. She then highlighted the Senior Center Bazaar and the Human Services Board Open House on November 7. She offered a reminder regarding trick-or-treating safety for Halloween. She called for supporting local organizations helping those still dealing with the effects of the May 7 tornado heading into the holiday season. She closed by urging people to take their children along when going to vote in person as a means of education. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting, including the youth presenters.

Councilmember Burns thanked those involved with the Art Roberts recognition. He noted friends with kids complimented the Monster Mash event. He closed with a push to go vote.

City Manager McGinnis highlighted the recent updates to the City Hall property.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted the Stanwood Crossings' housing would only address 1/8th (12%) of the housing needs in the City of Portage, leaving more work to be done.

Mayor Randall began by highlighting the upcoming Leaf-a-Legacy event and noted the success of the recent Monster Mash event. She then provided a reminder of the Senior Center's upcoming Veterans Breakfast at the Air Zoo. Mayor Randall closed by noting the importance of voting and provided recent absent voter statistics for the city.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:08 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk