

**NOTES FROM THE SPECIAL PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF OCTOBER 17, 2016**

Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following were present: Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari and Councilmembers Reid and Pearson via the conference phone line. Councilmembers Richard Ford, Patricia M. Randall and Terry Urban and Mayor Peter Strazdas were absent with notice and excuse. Also in attendance were Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis and City Clerk James Hudson.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari asked if there were any questions for the Administration regarding items on the Agenda.

Under D.1, Public Hearings, Councilmember Reid asked why there was a switch from the Zoning Board of Appeals to the Planning Commission under Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations Section 42-520.h, which is the consideration for a parking exception. How many are involved? One or two per year or several times per month? She stated that because the section addresses exceptions, the Zoning Board of Appeals should be doing this. She also asked, if it continues to be addressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals, what would the fee be and is there a fee for Planning Commission review?

As a past member of both the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Commission, Councilmember Pearson indicated that consideration by the Zoning Board of Appeals is appropriate, so what is the justification for moving it from the Zoning Board of Appeals to the Planning Commission?

Councilmember Reid had a question about the proposed Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations Section 42-520.n.1 & 3 and the allowed number of parking spaces. She asked "Why is this being done?" and "What is the impact of it?" (Specifically the segment that addresses that the minimum parking is not to exceed 10% to the maximum parking at 25%) She indicated that this does not make sense to her and that it might have several impacts. She referred to the chart on page 17 of the Agenda Packet. Also, she asked, considering the Planning Commission notes, the Planning Commission wanted 50, the city staff was okay with 50, but their recommendation was 100, so why is there a difference and why did they end up with 100 instead of 50?

Councilmember Reid asked about the duration of the moratorium under Item F.1, and how does this new moratorium impact the two illegal facilities currently in Portage? She also had a question about the one that had closed and was it still closed.

Councilmember Pearson asked about Item F.2 regarding the five foot space requirement between a car and a bicycle on the roadway. He specifically wanted to know about the clause that allows a car to cross the center line if unobstructed, about enacting a law that is not enforced, and about a heavy traffic situation where a car might wait for a bicyclist and create a line of traffic. He also expressed a concern regarding streets that cannot accommodate the five feet requirement and the cost to increase the width of those streets. Mayor Pro Tem Ansari cited the Oakland Drive where there is no bike lane from West Kilgore Road to Vincent Avenue. Councilmember Reid asked

whether a bicyclist has to stay five feet from a car when the car is stopped at an intersection and the bicyclist comes up beside the car, or does the car have to try to move to another lane.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Ansari, and his question of whether the Administration has taken enough input from various groups, Deputy City Manager Boulis indicated that City Manager Larry Shaffer has had input from bicyclist associations in town and Councilmember Pearson indicated that the recommendation to the City of Kalamazoo was three feet, but the bicyclists wanted five feet.

Councilmember Reid asked for any tickets written to auto drivers because of spacing with bicyclists in Portage, and whether there were any tickets issued to bicyclists. Mr. Boulis interjected that he would inquire with the Chief of Police and ask how big of a problem has it been in the past.

Regarding the question of whether the 1920 schoolhouse on Coxs Drive would be demolished or not, Councilmember Pearson asked what are the options to the owner and can he appeal to the City Council; is the decision made by city staff or is the decision determined by the Historical District Commission recommendation; and, can it come before City Council. NOTE: This question was withdrawn by Councilmember Pearson via e-mail at 9:35 a.m. on October 17, 2016.

ADJOURN: Mayor Pro Tem Ansari adjourned the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

James Hudson, City Clerk