

City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday, September 3, 2019

In Council Chambers at City Hall

Present: Mayor Barnes; Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck, Council Member Fitzsimmons; City Manager Gorman; City Clerk Miller; Police Chief Thomas; Police Officer Kaufman; DDA Director ConnerWellman

Absent: Council Members Baldyga and Johnston

Guests: Judy Fryover; Julie Dumas, President of the Portland Area Service Group; Tom Simmons, Julie Ridenour and several members of the Portland Area Service Group

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor Barnes with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve the Proposed Agenda as presented.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Barnes

Nays: None

Absent: Baldyga, Johnston

Adopted

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to excuse the absence of Council Members Baldyga and Johnston.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes

Nays: None

Absent: Baldyga, Johnston

Adopted

Under Public Comment, Julie Dumas, President of the Portland Area Service Group (PASG) located at 144 Kent St., stated that they are disappointed that they were not approached before the resolution reinstating 2-hour parking in the Downtown was passed by City Council as they have many members who regularly visit the Senior Center and stay for periods of time longer than 2 hours and/or have difficulty walking long distances. She presented a petition signed by many active members of the PASG. She further suggested that handicap parking spaces be added in front of the building and that cars marked handicap not be ticketed.

Tom Simmons, resident at 103 East St. and PASG member, also noted his disappointment with the implementation of 2-hour parking in the downtown. He noted that there has been no attempt on the part of the City to address the issues of the PASG. He inquired as to how the 2-hour parking will be enforced as it hasn't been over the past several years. He further stated that he

agrees with the purpose of 2-hour parking in the downtown but more handicap spaces should be added.

Judy Fryover, resident at 427 W. Grand River Ave., stated her concern with the proposed sidewalk adjacent to her property as part of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Grant from Grand River Ave. down W. Bridge St. She stated her disappointment at not having been involved with the planning process for this project. She suggested the intersection at Grand River Ave. and W. Bridge St. be moved to align with Quarterline St. She is further concerned with the speed of traffic on Grand River Ave. at the intersection of Grand River Ave. and West St. near St. Patricks.

Julie Ridenour, member of the PASG, suggested that Scout Park should have been made into parking for the downtown. She further stated that established businesses shouldn't be punished as new businesses come to Portland. She also suggested that parking meters be installed instead of the implementation of 2-hour parking. She inquired how the 2-hour parking will be patrolled and asked what will happen if an individual leaves and comes back.

Mayor Barnes thanked everyone for attending and sharing their thoughts. He stated that the Council does not want to disrespect anyone. The goal of the City is to be proactive and anticipate upcoming changes to Downtown Portland.

Under City Manager Report, City Manager Gorman stated that a shooting took place last night, September 2, 2019, at approximately 7:15 P.M. at the Bogue Flats Recreation Area. This was an isolated event that stemmed from individuals meeting for a fight. The alleged shooter is a juvenile and according to the Ionia County Prosecutor will be charged as an adult. The Portland Police Department did an excellent job. This was a collaborative effort between multiple departments including the Ionia County Sheriff Department, the Michigan State Police, and the Portland Area Fire Authority.

Police Chief Thomas provided an overview of the event. It is believed that the shooting was premeditated. A group of seven individuals came to Portland to meet individuals to fight; one of the individuals brought a gun. Four were arrested and are being charged with multiple charges.

Mayor Barnes stated it is frustrating, with all the City of Portland tries to do to keep the community safe, that people would come to Portland to harm its residents. He stated how thankful he is for the staff and the community that Portland has.

Police Chief Thomas stated that Portland is a safe community, the Police Department relies on Portland residents for their assistance. There is a certain level of trust in Portland. This shooting event was not a typical occurrence; this was a premeditated event.

City Manager Gorman thanked everyone for their thoughts and comments. He stated that parking in Downtown Portland has not been an issue for several years as there has been little to no growth. Recent economic activity is bringing awareness to the issue that there are individuals who park all day long in the downtown. The City has to enforce some type of reasonable restrictions. The question is how to regulate what businesses get how many spaces as the City can not

arbitrarily “give away” parking spaces. City Manager Gorman stated his appreciation for the Portland Area Service Group and the Senior Center and that the City is not trying to harm them. The resolution passed by City Council was unanimously approved by the two DDA subcommittees, and the DDA board before being presented to the City Council. He stated that the suggestions made by the PASG will be taken into consideration.

City Manager Gorman provided an overview of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and an overview of the proposed project that will bring almost \$1 million in improvements to the City of Portland. The City has worked with both Portland Public Schools, St. Patrick School and City Engineers to complete walking audits of the community. The proposed plan was not made arbitrarily. He further stated that Portland is a walkable community, connectivity is important and part of the City’s Master Plan. This is an enormous opportunity to move further toward those goals. The City is looking at the safety of the intersection at Grand River Ave. and W. Bridge St. The City makes decisions that are in the best interest of Portland as a whole.

Sparrow continues to work on the planning phase of their development on Cutler Rd. Their plan includes a 10,000 sq. ft. facility that will contemplate a possible 10,000 sq. ft. addition in the future. They plan to present their site plan at the October Planning Commission. If their proposed plan meets all requirements of the zoning in that area, they will bypass the Planning Commission.

City Manager Gorman confirmed that he has been working with representatives of Taco Bell on a potential design for development. He stated that he can not confirm whether a purchase transaction for property has taken place. They are considering potential construction in Spring or Summer 2020.

The City is still in a holding pattern on its Request for Reconsideration to the Michigan State Police and Governor Whitmer for funding of the Section 19 State of Emergency funding. The Michigan Municipal League has stepped in to partner with the City on this issue as there is a strong legal argument based on current law. The request is currently at the Governor’s office.

Under Presentations, DDA Director ConnerWellman provided her report on downtown activities. Director ConnerWellman provided updates on business and property in the DDA District along with other projects, recent activities, and community events. The DDA is working closely with the City on 2-hour parking enforcement, a central location for trash and recycle bins, and awareness and enforcement of the International Property Maintenance Code. The DDA is requesting bids for painting of the boardwalk railings and electrical work for synchronized lighting of the Opera Block during specific hours.

Under New Business, the Council considered Resolution 19-54 to authorize the City Manager to sign a Biosolids Management Services Agreement with Nutrigro Environmental Solutions, Inc. for the proper removal, transportation, and application of biosolids generated at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve Resolution 19-54 approving, authorizing, and directing the City Manager to sign a Biosolids Management Services Agreement with Nutrigro Environmental Solutions, Inc.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Barnes
Nays: None
Absent: Baldyga, Johnston
Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 19-55 to approve an energy purchase for the Board of Light and Power through the Michigan Public Power Agency in an amount not to exceed \$13,831.20 to meet a portion of its future load requirements for October and November 2019. City Manager Gorman and Electric Superintendent Hyland recommend approval of the purchase.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 19-55 approving an energy purchase for the Board of Light and Power through the Michigan Public Power Agency.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes
Nays: None
Absent: Baldyga, Johnston
Adopted

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve the Consent Agenda which includes the Minutes and Synopsis from the Regular City Council Meeting held on August 19, 2019, payment of invoices in the amount of \$84,061.94 and payroll in the amount of \$112,932.33 for a total of \$196,994.27. There were no purchase orders over \$5,000.00.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Barnes
Nays: None
Absent: Baldyga, Johnston
Adopted

Under City Manager Comments, City Manager Gorman noted the comments from Roger Manning, resident at 459 W. Grand River Ave., regarding the Safe Routes to School Program distributed to Council.

Under Council Member Comments, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck stated that it is great to see individuals participating in local government.

Council Member Fitzsimmons noted that the principal issue of the 2-hour parking issue is all about creating traffic flow.

There was discussion of the parking issue.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to adjourn the regular meeting.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Barnes
Nays: None
Absent: Baldyga, Johnston
Adopted

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk