

## **JANUARY 7, 2019**

The Common Council of the City of LaPorte met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

### **Pledge**

Councilwoman Scherer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Scherer, Feikes, Cutler, Cowgill, Stabosz and Mrozinske

Absent: Fettinger

### **Minutes**

Mayor Krentz stated each Council member received an advance copy of the minutes from the December 17<sup>th</sup> and special meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup>. He asked if there were any corrections or additions. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Scherer and unanimously carried.

### **Petitions & Comments**

Robert Cichon, 3516 W. Small Court, stated he spoke against the proposed annexation on McClung Road at the special meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup> on the basis that it would ruin Fish Trap Lake. Mr. Cichon stated City Code, Section 02.05 Annexed Land, states 'where land within the County is annexed to one of the cities it shall retain its existing zoning until such time as the City takes action to re-zone the land to another district'. He stated it sounds like a two-step process, so how was this land allowed to be annexed under a different zoning than what the County zoned it as. Mayor Krentz stated typically during the Petitions & Comments portion of the agenda, the public is allowed to make comments. Councilman Stabosz asked the City Attorney if he could answer Mr. Cichon's question. Nick Otis, Attorney for the City, reported it was part of the petition and Ordinance. He stated it could have been considered after the annexation, however, it was done all at the same time, the same way the annexation for the Airport was handled. Councilman Stabosz inquired if there is anything that would preclude it from being a one-step process. Mr. Otis stated there is not. Mr. Cichon stated under Code 05.01 Intent of the R2A Zoning District – Townhouse Resident District 'in cities, development within this district should be of a form and character consistent with the established historic character of the community'. He stated these townhouses are not consistent with the existing community at Fish Trap Lake.

Bert Cook, Executive Director of the Greater LaPorte Economic Development Corporation, introduced Angela Rose as the new City Downtown Coordinator. He stated Ms. Rose graduated from LaPorte High School in 2009 and graduated from Ball State University with a degree in Urban Planning and Development with a Master's Degree in Historic Preservation. Mr. Cook stated Ms. Rose started today and we are very excited to have her join our team. He advised she will stay after the meeting to personally introduce herself to each Council member.

Pastor Ricky Bray, Christ Gospel Church of LaPorte, addressed the Council requesting the Church be annexed into the City so that they could hook into the City's sewer and water utilities. He advised the

City extended sewer and water recently to the Airport which is very close to their property. Pastor Bray reported the church's well is about 40 years old and they are looking at making some major repairs, if it fails they will have a major financial burden. He advised the church is contemplating on expanding the sanctuary outwards. Pastor Bray stated the Church Board of Directors would like to make their plea to the Council and City to help them with their request.

Chris Throgmorton, 1607 J Street, inquired what constituted the meeting held on December 27<sup>th</sup> to be an emergency. He stated he can't seem to find proof of publication for the meeting even though he asked for it. Mr. Throgmorton thanked Mr. Stabosz for doing what is respectable instead of respected here at the LaPorte City Council. Councilman Stabosz stated for the record, the City did properly give notice of the special meeting. The Deputy Clerk-Treasurer replied yes.

Roger Galloway, 608 Tecumseh Street, stated the annexation for Fish Trap Lake was brought up in September. The City Attorney stated it was at the first meeting in October. Mr. Galloway stated even in October it wasn't a last minute thing and the special meeting was provided to the newspaper which is all that is required. He stated the petitioners asked to be annexed into the City and how many people do that. He stated the City needs to expand our tax base and the only way to do that is to annex.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**School Board Liaison:** Councilman Mrozinske reported the School Board will be meeting on Monday, January 14, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Educational Services Center.

**Redevelopment Commission:** Councilman Stabosz advised the Council has two appointments to fill on the Redevelopment Commission which will be addressed tonight under item #8 on the agenda.

**Traffic Commission:** Councilwoman Feikes reported the Traffic Commission will be meeting tomorrow, January 8, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at the Police Department.

**Park & Recreation:** Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on December 19, 2018. She advised a website for Fort LaPlay Porte launched this past Wednesday. Reconstruction is scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup> through June 15<sup>th</sup> this year. Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board approved the quote from BuyCool Promotions for t-shirts for 2019. She reported 'Big Comedy of LaPorte' will be hosting a trivia night on January 25<sup>th</sup> with 10% of the net bar sales will be used towards the rent of the Civic Auditorium for the night. The youth baseball affiliation will change from Babe Ruth Cal Ripken to Baseball Players Association. She advised the structure will stay the same but there will be more flexibility with the new program. Winterfest will be held January 25<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>. Horses will again be allowed in the Park from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on the 27<sup>th</sup> for horse drawn wagon rides. Weather permitting, weekend activities will include an ice sculpture demonstration, snowball softball, breakfast with the birds, a community snow angel gathering and a corn hole tournament. Councilwoman Feikes reported the fees were waived for the rental of Cummings Lodge for the North American Ice Fishing Competition that will be held February 8<sup>th</sup> through February 10<sup>th</sup>. She reported Mark Schreiber, Director of Parks & Recreation, will be attending the National Softball Association Conference in Lexington, Kentucky. Councilwoman Feikes advised the Park Board approved encumbering 2018 appropriations to fix the fences at t-ball fields three and four that were damaged by fallen trees.

**BID Board:** Councilwoman Cutler reported the Business Improvement District Board meets next Monday, January 14, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**Historic Preservation Commission:** Councilwoman Cutler reported the Historic Preservation Commission will meet Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

**Urban Enterprise Association:** Councilwoman Cutler advised the UEA will be meeting on Wednesday, January 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. at the GLEDC Offices.

Mayor Krentz welcomed Councilman Cowgill to the Council.

### **President Pro-Tem**

Mayor Krentz stated every year the Council is required to appoint a Council member to be the President Pro-Tem who would serve as the chair at Council meetings when the Mayor is unable to attend.

### **Motion/Vote – 2019 President Pro-Tem**

Councilwoman Cutler moved to nominate Councilman Fettinger as the Council's appointment for the 2019 President Pro-Tem; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes. Councilwoman Cutler advised she spoke to Councilman Fettinger and he agreed to serve as President Pro-Tem. The motion to appoint Councilman Fettinger as the 2019 President Pro-Tem was unanimously carried.

### **Council Appointments to the Redevelopment Commission**

Mayor Krentz reported the Council has two appointments to the Redevelopment Commission for a term of one year each. He advised the Council's appointments to the Board for 2018, Brian Chalik and Tim Larson, are both present at tonight's meeting.

### **Motion/Vote – Appointments to the Redevelopment Commission**

Councilwoman Feikes moved to re-appoint Brian Chalik and Tim Larson to the Redevelopment Commission; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler.

Councilman Stabosz stated he would like to read a brief statement which was part of an e-mail he sent to the Council:

*Fellow Councilmen:*

*There are two Council appointments to the RDC that expired the end of last year. They are Brian Chalik and Tim Larson. I have concerns about putting Tim Larson back on that Board. Contractors who get Redevelopment Commission work, who sit on that board, create an appearance of a conflict of interest for both the City and the contractor. I don't question Tim's integrity and desire to serve the City in good faith, but this is our appointment, and I think the RDC members need to be at arm's length from having any economic interest in what the RDC does. To me, that is a no brainer. I am also uncomfortable with those who say Tim can Recuse himself from decisions involving RDC contracts Larson-Danielson may be bidding on, because you may still have the effect of members of the RDC close association with him on*

*the board coloring their thoughts to favor, or possibly even disfavor, unfairly Larson-Danielson. It is just bad policy. I hasten to remind the Council that Larson-Danielson built Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks and the golf course clubhouse remodel, all exceptionally well executed projects.*

Councilwoman Cutler stated as a reminder when the Council appoints people to boards and commissions, they are citizens who are volunteering, they are not looking for a job nor do they get paid to sit on these boards and commissions. Councilwoman Cutler stated this past year, the Council honored Tom Larson for 38 years of serving on the City of LaPorte Civic Auditorium Board, which was built by Larson-Danielson in 1929. She stated Tom Larson served this City for 38 years and she sees no reason why someone from Larson-Danielson can't fairly serve and continue to serve on a committee.

Councilwoman Scherer asked Bert Cook if he could explain the procedures for someone who wants to come to the City of LaPorte, who would greet them. Mr. Cook advised that would have nothing to do with the Redevelopment Commission. He stated when a business is looking to locate in the City they would contact the GLEDC Office not the Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Cook reported the Redevelopment Commission is involved in infrastructure projects such as NewPorte Landing, Thomas Rose Industrial Park, large scale infrastructure projects. He stated they would very rarely intersect with the type of work that Larson-Danielson does. Councilwoman Scherer stated she understands someone from a bank also sits on the Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Cook reported the Redevelopment Commission consists of Gene Dollberg, Tim Larson, Brian Chalik, Laura Konieczny and an appointment to be made by the Mayor. He stated the current members work well together and each bring a different perspective to the Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Cook advised both Mr. Larson and Mr. Chalik are probably two of the more active members of the commission, they ask a lot of questions and are very involved.

Councilman Mrozinske stated instead of looking at one of the potential weaknesses he would look at one of the strengths. He stated the fact that Mr. Larson has an expertise in construction and infrastructure and that he is willing to take the time to make that commitment to Redevelopment Commission is a huge asset.

Mr. Cook stated we sometimes take for granted, himself included, the fact that as a community we have one of the best construction companies in this area.

Councilman Mrozinske stated businesses get to choose who is going to do the work and it speaks very highly of Larson-Danielson and their end product that they do get a contracts, not only in the City but in Northwest Indiana as well. Councilman Mrozinske stated he first met Mr. Larson when he joined Kiwanis way back when and Mr. Larson has treated him very professional from that very first meeting. Councilman Mrozinske stated Mr. Larson is an outstanding individual in this community and he welcomes him to serve on the board.

Councilman Stabosz stated for the record, the statement Mr. Cook made that the work of the RDC rarely intersects with the work Larson-Danielson does is not correct. The golf course building addition was funded by the Redevelopment Commission Bond and Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts were projects that were done in Redevelopment Commission territory.

The motion to re-appoint Mr. Larson and Mr. Chalik to the Redevelopment Commission was carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Scherer, Feikes, Cutler, Cowgill and Mrozinske

Nays: Stabosz

**Other Business**

Councilman Stabosz welcomed Councilman Cowgill to the Council and appreciates his willingness to serve.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, Councilwoman Feikes moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Scherer and unanimously carried.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark A. Krentz, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Roger A. Galloway, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: February 4, 2019