**February 22, 2022**

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

**Pledge**

Councilwoman Cutler led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Present** Konieczny, Feikes, West, Galloway, Cutler, Franke, Vincent

**Absent** none

**Minutes**

Mayor Dermody stated each member received an advance copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman West and unanimously carried.

**Petitions and Comments of Citizens**

Mayor Dermody introduced La Porte High School Bowling team coaches Keith Gakle and Mr. John Thode. Mr. Thode introduce the La Porte High School Girls Bowling team who represented La Porte High School in the State Championship for the first time in school history. The girls did a phenomenal job finishing 8th out of 118 teams!

Brian Kajer addressed the Council about the potholes with the weather changes. He mentioned that the big potholes on Park Street had been filled recently. Mayor Dermody let Mr. Kajer know that if he sees anymore that need to be fixed, he could call Jeff Batchelor directly at 219-775-3610 and let him know.

**Standing Committee Reports**

**Park Board:** Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on February 16, 2022. The board welcomed new member Denise Bealor and the 2021 annual report was accepted as presented. Nolan Ryan, of Troop #871, was recognized for his Eagle Scout project in Soldiers Memorial Park. Nolan, along with several volunteers, refurbished the Veterans Walkway of Honor. Bricks were pulled, a new wood border was installed, tree roots were removed, sand was added, and the bricks were replaced. The walkway is now level and looks amazing.

The Park and Recreation Department will now be running Senior Programming, formally run by the Swanson Center. They will be applying for a grant with the Healthcare Foundation to help fund the project currently being run out of the old fire station west of the overpass. The Senior Center currently has a tenant, The Stitchers, who are part of the Purdue Extension Club. The Stitchers have been in the basement for about six years. Since the building is old, the basement doesn’t have the best accommodations for this group. It was recommended to let them move into the old Girl Scout building located at 1640 1st St. In lieu of rent, The Stitchers will volunteer to do park programs teaching sewing to anyone who is interested. Programs and dates are yet to be determined.

**Traffic Commission:** Councilwoman Feikes reported the traffic commission will be meeting next Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. at the Police Station.

**Redevelopment Commission:** Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission will meet March 2, 2022 at 5:15 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

**Diversity and Inclusion Commission:** Councilman Franke reported the Diversity and Inclusion Commission will meet Thursday at 5:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

**School Board:** Councilman Franke reported School Board met February 14, 2022 at the Educational Services Center. The big topic of discussion was masks will now be optional.

**Police Merit Commission:** Councilman Galloway reported Police Merit Commission will meet February 8, 2022 at the Police Station.

**Veterans Committee**: Councilman Galloway reported Friday night there will be a fish fry and Saturday they will be having an ice fishing derby.

**Business Improvement District Board:** Councilwoman Cutler reported at the February meeting, the 2022 downtown banner schedule was approved. Craig Phillips presented a parking study plan request to the board. This would involve partnering with the RDC and the UEA. The board approved $4000 toward the study. Snow removal claims for $13,000 were approved and quotes for the two planter repairs were discussed. The board requested quotes on removal of the planters as well, in keeping with the long-term planning initiative. The next meeting of the BID will be Monday March 14, 2022 at 5 P.M. at City Hall.

**Business Improvement District Long Term Planning Committee:** Councilwoman West reported the BID long term planning committee met on February 11 to discuss various projects and goals for the mid to long term in the district. The committee plans to meet quarterly and will include a representative from City staff, BID, Urban Enterprise Association, and the Redevelopment Commission. The main topic of discussion was planning for the replacement and/or repair of the streetscape elements in the district, including sidewalks, planters, lights, trees, etc. as needed when funds become available. In addition to this, discussion took place on the design and implementation of some of the Heart of La Porte Plan elements as it pertains to the BID District. As part of the implementation of this, the City is working with the RDC to design the first phases of this. The process will also include development and design of a test block that can be used as a template for redoing streetscape blocks throughout downtown and the district based on priority and as funding is identified and becomes available.

**Urban Enterprise Association:** Councilwoman Cutler reported at the UEA meeting for February was canceled due to lack of Business. The March meeting of the UEA will be Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 4:00 P.M. at City Hall.

**Fire Merit Commission:** Councilwoman West reported the Fire Merit Commission met on February 9, 2022. The fire department applications are available to print online on the City of La Porte website and for pick up at Station #1. There was discussion regarding advertising for hiring with the radio stations such as B100, WCOE, and Hometown News and/or other social media outlets. Union President Michael Mulcrone reported that things are going well regarding updates to the Rules and Procedures. Captain Doug Biernacki is heading the team with multiple members. Any possible changes will be shared with the Union before a final presentation is made to the board. Union President Mulcrone and Tom Lusco will be touring a paramedic school. Chief Andy Snyder requested the board do background checks for the top three applicants of the current hiring list. He is expecting a letter of retirement on or before March 2, 2022 from Battalion Chief Robert Sabie. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. at Fire Station #1.

**Historic Preservation Commission:** Councilwoman Konieczny reported the Historic Preservation Commission met February 15, 2022 at 5:30 PM at the Health Care Foundation of La Porte. We’d like to thank Maria Fruth and the Health Care Foundation of La Porte for allowing us to use their beautiful new facility. The HPC welcomed two new Commission Members this month. Cassie Holmquest and Barbara Krieg. The HPC unanimously elected the following commissioners into said positions for 2022; Robert Alt-President, Dr. Anna Weissman-Vice President, Kelsey Gushrowski-Treasurer. During this meeting the HPC tended to typical housekeeping items, but majority of the meeting was spent as a planning session for the upcoming year. Many exciting rollouts are planned for later in the year. The HPC will next meet on Tuesday March 15th in Council Chambers at 5:30 P.M.

**Airport Authority:** Councilwoman Konieczny reported the airport authority met via Zoom on February 9, 2022. The Airport is waiting for weather to break so the taxiway and apron project of 2021 can be closed out after the last items are to be addressed in the spring. More progress has been made with the master plan and runway re-orientation project; The FAA is in receipt of the airport’s aviation forecast and will have their review completed within a couple months. The Airport will be publishing a bid packet soon for tree trimming and potential tree removal. They hope to have this work done in late spring/early summer. Diane Schwarz, the recently retired Manager of Planning & Outreach for the airport was flown out to Arizona to be awarded “Host of the Year” by the Arizona Air Force. The Arizona Commemorative Air Force flew out the B-25 and were one of the main exhibits at the Airports “Maid in the Shade” event that transpired August 9-15, 2021. Councilwoman Konieczny mentioned the Arizona Commemorative Air Force was so impressed by the Airport event, with Diane leading the charge, that they created this award specifically for Diane. She is the first recipient to ever receive this great honor. 2022 is off to a great star for fuel sales; jet fuel sales almost doubled last January’s sales. The Airport Authority will meet Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 5:15 P.M. via zoom.

**Introduction of a Trailer Ordinance:**

Councilman Franke made a motion to table the introduction of a Trailer Ordinance; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Franke stated he has been talking with City Attorney Nick Otis and other council members over the last week regarding the Trailer Ordinance. He stated there are some flaws with the way the Ordinance is currently written which is why he is tabling it but would like to open it up for discussion. Councilman Franke stated there is a commercial business that is operating out of a home within city limits. The business is parking commercial vehicles on the street, and he has been getting complaints from neighbors. At this time, we can’t find anything actionable under our current ordinances. Councilman Franke agrees that this is not something a residential neighborhood should have to deal with as the vehicles take up an entire block. Councilwoman Feikes stated that the complaint has also come before the traffic commission. She stated that when the commercial vehicles are parked along both sides of the street it makes it difficult for cars to get down the street and nearly impossible for a fire truck. Discussion on residential verses commercial zoning took place. Councilwoman Feikes stated at the next council meeting there will likely be a recommendation from the traffic commission.

**Introduction of a Resolution Opposing Legislation Regarding the Business Personal Property Tax**:

Councilwoman Cutler moved to Introduce a Resolution for the first and only time in its entirety; motion was seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Cutler read a Resolution Opposing Legislation Regarding the Business Personal Property Tax in its entirety.

**Motion/Vote to Adopt:**

Councilwoman Feikes made a motion to adopt a Resolution Opposing Legislation Regarding the Business Personal Property Tax; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION NO. 3-2022**

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING LEGISLATION REGARDING THE BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX**

**Other Business**

Mayor Dermody stated he has been in contact with Norfolk Southern regarding the stopped train. Norfolk Southern is claiming they have nowhere to put the train due to a backup at the Elkhart terminal. Unfortunately, Norfolk is a federally protected transportation group, and we are stuck. Mayor Dermody understands the frustration from the public and feels the frustration as well.

Mayor Dermody announced that ten Towns and/or Councils have passed the Local Income Tax Resolution. Michigan City is the only unit yet to pass the resolution and hopefully it will be on an agenda in front of their Council soon.

Mayor Dermody discussed federal dollars that are available for infrastructure of new roads. He believes we need to compete for those federal dollars to help fund the North/South Corridor.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously passed.

**Approve: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor**

**Attest: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer**

**Approved: February 21, 2022**