

**May 6, 2024**

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session Monday, May 6, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilwoman Huffman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Galloway, Buchanan, Konieczny, Franke, Huffman, West, Feikes

Absent: None

**Approval of 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. Councilman Galloway moved to approve the minutes as presented, motion was seconded by Councilwoman West and unanimously carried.

**Petitions and Comments of Citizens**

Rick Ogle, 1902 Indiana Avenue, addressed the Council regarding his concerns for the Indiana Avenue Project. Mayor Dermody reported INDOT will be attending the Board of Works and Safety meeting on Wednesday to present the contract to the City.

Bob Sieko, Nutrition Teacher at Kesling Middle School, spoke to the Council regarding a project that is being done by his 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. He reported the class is working on a historic marker for Fred Mennen who owned and operated Jiffy Pop Popcorn at 506 Clay Street. Mr. Sieko reported Orville Redenbacher, Founder of Redenbacher Popcorn, has a statute in downtown Valparaiso. He stated that although Fred Mennen has a marker on a bridge on Fail Road, his class would like to have one in the City. He reported their goal is to raise \$3,300 for the marker and hopefully it can be placed at the Northeast corner on the Courthouse lawn. Councilman Buchanan suggested Mr. Sieko contact Bruce Johnson, the County Historian who has done many of these requests and knows all the ins and outs.

Sierra Sue Jesch, 204 Jefferson Avenue, reported the house next to her, 202 Jefferson, has been vacant for close to six years. She stated the grass is severely overgrown and the garage that was the best part of the property now has two holes in the roof. Ms. Jesch stated the downtown continues to be a tripping hazard and there is no place to sit for those that need to rest or want to watch the City go by.

## **Standing Committee Reports**

### **Redevelopment Commission:**

Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission met on April 24<sup>th</sup> at which time claims were approved and the closing for the Don George property was approved. The Commission approved a 50/50 grant application for Boyd Blvd. Sewer Separation Project. Councilman Franke reported a special meeting was approved for today, which he will cover later. Approval was given for a survey of Diedrich property for possible economic improvement. At today's special meeting, a Resolution was introduced and approved for amend and expand the economic development area which includes two new allocation areas, one for 39North and Boyd Blvd. Councilman Franke reported the Commission approved to spend \$650,000 for pipe and materials to water infrastructure for Thomas Rose Industrial Park and the 39North Expansion area. Approval was given to Nick Minich, City Engineer, to amend the agreement with Dr. Xang to include approximately one tenth of an acre due to a NIPSCO switch which would have been in the middle of the proposed driveway.

### **Sustainability Commission:**

Councilwoman Huffman reported the Sustainability normally meets the fourth Monday of each month, but due to scheduling conflicts their meetings will not take place on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

### **Park Board:**

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Nicholas Smith was hired as the new Recreation Director who comes to us from the Boys and Girls Club in Elgin, Illinois. Discussion and approval were made to name the new Fox Park Amphitheater Plaza in honor of Maria Fruth who recently retired from the Healthcare Foundation of La Porte who was the founding CEO and instrumental in funding numerous projects within City parks. RFP's will be sent out for a new play structure at Hastings Park. This is being funded with Big Comedy La Porte trivia night events with a match from the Park Foundation. The structure will be in honor of Amanda Sorg who was very involved in these events. RFP's will be going out for a new play structure at Rumley Park. The plan is to add a climbing structure to complement the current structure and is being paid for by a donation from the Jones family. Jon Rubel, Planned Environment Associates, presented three placement options for a new kayak launch at Kiwanis Teledyne Park. A placement option was approved, and the project will be sent out for bids. The Endowment Fund Event to be held at Beechwood Golf Course will offer free green fees and a cart with a \$50 donation. Also, the Park Foundation will be hosting their First Golf Outing on September 6<sup>th</sup> at Beechwood with green fees and cart fees waived for this event. Lastly, the Civic Auditorium will be installing a used LED wall display using money from their non-

reverting fund this year with the balance paid by a loan from the Civic Advisory Board to be paid back over seven years. No tax dollars are being used for this purchase. The wall will enhance lighting and video needs at Civic events.

**Traffic Commission:**

Councilwoman Feikes reported as a reminder, because of tomorrow's primary election, the Traffic Commission has moved their meeting to next Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m. at the Police Station.

**Police Merit Commission:**

Councilman Galloway reported the Police Merit Commission will meet on May 4<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the Police Station.

**Mayor's Veterans Committee:**

Councilman Galloway reported the Mayor's Veterans Committee will be meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. at the Park Office. This year's Brick Dedication will be held on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. with 30 bricks to be dedicated.

**Fire Merit Commission:**

Councilwoman West reported the Fire Merit Commission has 17 applicants who have passed the mental aptitude test for the hiring list and will move on to interviews scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The Fire Merit Commission will next meet on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Fire Station.

**Business Improvement District:**

Councilwoman West reported the Business Improvement District met on April 8<sup>th</sup> at which time Pattie Piesron, owner of the Pink Sheep, to the board. Discussion was held regarding the repair of downtown sidewalk pavers, benches, and trash receptacles. A bid for maintenance, watering of flowers and other repairs were approved. Discussion of a downtown mural is underway. The next BID Board meeting will take place on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**Urban Enterprise Association:**

Councilwoman West reported the UEA Board met in April and are nearing a special grant to foster the redevelopment of the former La Porte Sporting Goods building. Along with our downtown mural, the City will be having a beautiful sculpture to take residence at Plaza 618 very soon. The next UEA meeting will be Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**Plan Commission:**

Councilman Buchanan reported the Plan Commission is scheduled to meet next Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**2024 Annual Tax Abatement Compliance**

Craig Phillips, Director of Community Development and Planning, stated on an annual basis the City Council is required to approve Tax Abatement Compliance forms for those companies that have received a tax abatement from the City. Mr. Phillips reported he has reviewed the CF-1 forms and information submitted by each company and has found that all recipients have made best efforts to use La Porte County contractors at the prevailing wage. He stated all companies have substantially complied with or made substantial progress toward their goals for employment, salary and investment.

**Motion/Vote – Approve Annual Tax Abatement Compliance Forms**

Councilwoman Feikes stated as pertains to American Licorice Company, Winn Machine/Winndeavor Inc., Jaeger Unitek, and Pine Lake Development LLC moved to certify the taxpayer's current compliance statement of benefits on the following grounds: The taxpayer has substantially complied with the statement of benefits; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

Councilwoman Feikes stated as pertains to B&B Manufacturing, Howmet Casting and Services and La Porte 401 MP RK6 LLC/Remedy moved to certify the taxpayer's current compliance statement of benefits on the following grounds: The taxpayer has made a reasonable effort to comply with the statement of benefits; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

**Introduction of a Resolution Adopting a Definitive Policy and Fiscal Plan**

Councilman Buchanan moved to read a Resolution Adopting a Definitive Policy and Fiscal Plan for the first time within its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Buchanan read a Resolution Adopting a Definitive Policy and Fiscal Plan in its entirety.

Director of Community Development & Planning Craig Phillips summarized the Fiscal Plan for Qualls Real Estate Holding, LLC created by Baker Tilly highlighting this property is vacant agricultural land that is undeveloped in an M1, light industrial zone contiguous to adjacent property in Thomas Rose Industrial Park. Mr. Phillips noted the summary of costs and anticipated future revenues from this super voluntary annexation on page 11 of the Fiscal Plan.

**Motion/Vote:**

Councilman Galloway made a motion to approve a Resolution Adopting a Definitive Policy and Fiscal Plan; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Huffman and unanimously carried.

R-10-2024

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A DEFINITIVE POLICY AND FISCAL PLAN**

**Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of La Porte, Indiana, Annexing to and Bringing Within the City Limits of La Porte, Indiana, and Amending the Zoning Ordinance for Property Located in Center, Township, Contiguous Herewith;**

**Name of Petition: Qualls Real Estate Holding, LLC**

Councilman Franke moved to read an Ordinance read for the second time by title only; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and carried unanimously. Councilman Franke read an Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of La Porte, Indiana, Annexing to and Bringing Within the City Limits of La Porte, Indiana, and Amending the Zoning Ordinance for Property Located in Center, Township, Contiguous Herewith; Name of Petition: Qualls Real Estate Holding, LLC by title only.

Mayor Dermody invited Bert Cook to speak on Qualls Real Estate Holding, LLC. Mr. Cook reported this is a ninety-two-acre annexation, part of a one hundred nice acre property acquisition by Quincy Development. This property surrounds the Thomas Rose Industrial Park, so it is a logical expansion of the industrial park. In order to expand the Industrial Park, utilities would be required and in order for there to be utilities, annexation would have to take place. Mr. Cook reported this is a super voluntary annexation and requested the Council's approval of the petition.

**Motion/Vote:**

Councilwoman Konieczny made a motion to approve an Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of La Porte, Indiana, Annexing to and Bringing Within the City Limits of La Porte, Indiana, and Amending the Zoning Ordinance for Property Located in Center, Township, Contiguous Herewith; Name of Petition: Qualls Real Estate Holding, LLC; motion was seconded by Councilman Franke and unanimously carried.

**ORDINANCE NO. 4-2024**

ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA PORTE,  
INDIANA, ANNEXING TO AND BRINGING WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF LA  
PORTE, INDIANA, AND AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE FOR  
PROPERTY LOCATED IN CENTER, TOWNSHIP, CONTIGUOUS HEREWITH;  
NAME OF PETITION: QUALLS REAL ESTATE HOLDING, LLC

**Introduction of a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets**

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to read a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets for the first time within its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Konieczny read a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets in its entirety.

**Motion/Vote:**

Councilman Franke made a motion to approve a Resolution to Transfer Funds within the 2024 Budgets; motion was seconded by Councilwoman Huffman and unanimously carried.

R-11-2024

**A RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER FUNDS WITHIN THE 2024 BUDGETS**

**Other Business**

Mayor Dermody reminded the public of Election Day on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

**Adjourn**

Councilman Galloway moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: May 20, 2024

