

May 20, 2024

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session Monday, May 20, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilwoman Feikes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

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

Absent: West

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. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented, motion seconded by Councilman Buchanan and unanimously carried.

Petitions and Comments of Citizens

None

Standing Committee Reports

Redevelopment Commission:

Councilman Franke reported the Redevelopment Commission will meet on May 29th at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Sustainability Commission:

Councilwoman Huffman reported the Sustainability Committee will next meet on May 28th at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Park Board:

Councilwoman Feikes reported the Park Board met on May 15th. Craig Phillips, Director of Community Development and Planning, requested Park Board approval to apply for variances for a possible Scott Park residential development in collaboration with Advantix Development Corporation out of Evansville, Indiana. He stated the plan is to construct affordable housing where the homes have a footprint similar to those on Jefferson Avenue and Holcomb Street. Specific details of the project have not been finalized. The Park Board granted approval. Discussion was held regarding parking around the Pine Lake Marina on Waverly Road. Park Superintendent Mark Schreiber attended the last Traffic Commission meeting requesting their help in creating a solution to the problem. The Board approved a contract with Twisted Tiki for the Stone Lake Beach concession stand for 2024. Ten

percent of the gross revenue will come back to the Park Department. The Civic Auditorium will extend their contract with Hometown Jams for another year. The contract terms will remain the same as previously agreed upon. Hometown Jams has brought entertainment such as Sarah Evans and Josh Turner.

Traffic Commission:

Councilwoman Feikes reported the next meeting of the Traffic Commission will be on Tuesday, June 4th at 5:00 p.m. at the Police Station.

Mayor's Veterans Committee:

Councilman Galloway reported the Mayor's Veterans Committee will be dedicating thirty (30) bricks on June 8th. This is their 25th year of doing the dedication. The Annual Veterans' Day Celebration will be held on November 11th at 10:30 a.m. at the Civic Auditorium. Their next meeting will be held on August 12, 2024.

Police Merit Commission:

Councilman Galloway reported the Police Department currently has forty-two (42) officers and have started working on a four (4) day work week.

Historic Preservation Commission

Councilman Buchanan reported the Historic Preservation Commission will be meeting tomorrow, May 21st at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The HPC is planning to attend another Round Table event on July 5th in Valparaiso to discuss common questions and effective processes within historic districts.

Plan Commission:

Councilman Buchanan reported the Plan Commission met on May 14th. Three agenda items were discussed and passed to allow for residential construction in various forms including the new Hunter Woods Subdivision and another phase to the Whispering Meadows Subdivision.

School Board Liaison:

Councilman Buchanan congratulated the La Porte High School boys track team; nine members of the girls track team and the girls tennis team for winning their sectional tournaments and advancing to regionals.

Business Improvement District Board

Councilwoman Konieczny reported the BID Board met and downtown maintenance is underway with repairs to trash receptacles, planters, weeding and the planting of flowers. Paver issues are being evaluated and addressed. The BID Board approved electrical work to be done for the area

around the farmer's market. Tucker King spoke to the Board about tree maintenance. The next BID Board meeting will be held on Monday, June 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Urban Enterprise Association

Councilwoman Konieczny reported the Urban Enterprise Association met on May 15th. The Board approved a draft developer's agreement with BAR Holdings, owners of the property located at 814 and 816 Lincolnway. The proposed development agreement is a special grant in the amount of \$150,000 for the rehabilitation work to begin this year. The UEA approved funding for the Downtown Arts Project not to exceed \$50,000. The project includes a sculpture, mural and window designs on vacant buildings in the downtown area. Councilwoman Konieczny reported the City is collaborating the Lubeznik Art Center and an agreement will need to be approved by the Board of Works before the project can proceed. The Board approved two (2) community enhancement grants in the amount of \$500 each for the Kiwanis Fourth of July Parade and Lakefest. The next meeting date has been changed to Tuesday, June 18th at 4:00 p.m. due to the Juneteenth Holiday.

Airport Authority

Councilwoman Konieczny reported the Airport Lunch on the Fly is in full swing. The next lunch will be held this Friday at the Airport from 11:00-1:00 p.m. at a cost of \$5.00 per person. The next Airport Authority meeting will be held June 12, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. at the Airport.

Rotary Club Donation to City of La Porte Sustainability Commission

Mayor Dermody stated the City is lucky to have great partners as it takes everyone helping others and invited Rick Bockhorst to the podium. Mr. Bockhorst presented a donation from the Rotary Club in the amount of \$7,500 to the City for the Blossom Trail around Clear Lake.

Council Appointment of Pro-Tem Member to Police Merit Commission

Nick Otis, Attorney for the City, reported the Council appoints one member to the Police Merit Commission. There is a conflict with a current situation requiring the Council to appoint a Pro-Tem Member for this particular issue.

Motion/Vote – Pro-Tem Member to Police Merit Commission

Councilman Franke moved to appoint Geoff Weliver as the Council's appointment to the Police Merit Commission; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Development Agreement – Mitch Feikes Builders, Inc.

Councilman Franke moved to introduce a Development Agreement with Mitch Feikes Builders, Inc.; motion seconded by Councilwoman Huffman with a 6-0 vote as Councilwoman Feikes abstained. Councilman Franke read the Development Agreement with Mitch Feikes Builders, Inc. through section eight on the advice of the City Attorney.

Bert Cook, Executive Director of La Porte Economic Development Advancement Partnership, addressed the Council regarding this agreement and the need for housing in the City of La Porte. Mitch Feikes, owner of Mitch Feikes Builders, Inc. advised the Council this is Phase Eight of the development with one house already started and one that is under contract.

Motion/Vote – Approve Development Agreement for Mitch Feikes Builders, Inc.

Councilman Galloway moved to approve the agreement as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Buchanan and approved with a 6-0 vote as Councilwoman Feikes abstained.

First Amendment to Development Agreement – Park Street Community, LLC

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to introduce a First Amendment to the Development Agreement with Park Street Community, LLC; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Konieczny read the First Amendment to the Development Agreement with Park Street Community, LLC in its entirety.

Bert Cook addressed the Council regarding this amendment noting there have been some changes that have occurred including that not only will there be single-family homes, but townhomes and apartments as well. Craig Phillips, Director of Community Development and Planning, reported he and five City employees from different departments involved in the development process had the opportunity to visit surrounding area of Grand Rapids sites that have been developed. He reported they were able to see the quality and layout of the homes, townhomes and apartments that have been built. Mr. Phillips answered questions from the Council.

Motion/Vote – Approve First Amendment to Development for Park Street Community LLC

Councilman Franke moved to approve the agreement as presented; motion seconded by Councilman Buchanan and unanimously carried.

Recommendation for Plan Commission to Review an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of La Porte, Indiana as Enacted August 21, 2017, which is Part of Chapter 82 of the Municipal Code of the City of La Porte by Amending the 2017 Revised City of La Porte Joint Zoning Ordinance and Exhibits

Councilwoman Huffman moved to Recommend to the Plan Commission a Review of an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of La Porte, Indiana, in regard to tobacco, vape and smoke shop retailers; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Nick Otis, City Attorney, gave an overview of the request to the Plan Commission. Mr. Otis stated currently the City does not have zoning stipulations for this type of establishment. He advised this will go through Plan Commission and referred back to the City Council for final approval. Councilwoman Huffman stated this will only effect new business.

Motion/Vote – Recommendation to Plan Commission to Review the City of La Porte Zoning Ordinance with Regard to Tobacco, Vape and Smoke Shop Retailers

Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve directing a recommendation to the Plan Commission to Review the Zoning Ordinance with Regard to Tobacco, Vape and Smoke Shop Retailers; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried.

Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 29-2023, to Amend Salaries in the Engineering Department and the Department of Transportation

Councilwoman Feikes moved to introduce an Ordinance; motion seconded by Councilwoman Konieczny and unanimously carried. Councilwoman Feikes read an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 29-2023, to Amend Salaries in the Engineering Department and the Department of Transportation in its entirety.

Mayor Dermody addressed the changes that have occurred at the Transportation Department.

The second and final reading of this Ordinance will take place at the June 3, 2024, Council meeting.

Introduction of a Resolution of the La Porte City Council Granting a Waiver of Non-Compliance Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1-11.3 with Respect to an Assessed Valuation Deduction (Tax Abatement) for the Real Property Improvements of La Porte 401 MP RK6 LLC

Councilman Buchanan moved to introduce a Resolution; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. Councilman Buchanan read a Resolution of the La Porte City Council Granting a Waiver of Non-Compliance Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1-11.3 with Respect to an Assessed Valuation Deduction (Tax Abatement) for the Real Property Improvements of La Porte 401 MP RK6 LLC in its entirety.

Craig Phillips advised the Council in 2023 when tax abatement compliance forms were filed with the City there was a typo in some of the language that was submitted by the company. Mr. Phillips stated they are allowed a one-time waiver which they are requesting. He reported there have been some issues with the County for other businesses that have tax abatements with the City of La Porte, so there is a possibility that this will come before the Council this year.

Motion/Vote – Adopt Resolution R-12-2024

Councilman Franke moved to approve the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R-12-2024
RESOLUTION OF THE LA PORTE CITY COUNCIL GRANTING A
WAIVER OF NON-COMPLIANCE PURSUANT TO INDIANA CODE
6-1.1-12.1-11.3 WITH RESPECT TO AN ASSESSED VALUATION
DEDUCTION (TAX ABATEMENT) FOR REAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS
OF LA PORTE 401 MP RK6 LLC**

Other Business

Motion/Vote – Remove from the Table Council Appointment to Business Improvement District

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to remove from the table the Council appointment to the Business Improvement District; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Motion/Vote – Council Appointment to the Business Improvement District

Councilwoman Konieczny moved to appoint Pattie Pierson, owner of the Pink Sheep to the BID Board for a two-year term; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried.

Mayor Dermody reported the City has received many telephone calls with regard to high grass not being taken care of. He advised the State only mows the grass in the median three (3) times a year which has the potential of safety issues as well as an eyesore.

Mayor Dermody reported for the past three years, the City has been working towards a career center and with the tenacity of Mike Riehle from LEAP and with the help of Superintendent Peggy Hinkley, and the La Porte Community School Board, they have created a plan for a Career and Technical Education Center at Boston Middle School.

Adjourn

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

Approved: _____
Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: June 3, 2024