

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 22, 2011

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Peter J. Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Strazdas provided a short synopsis of the Mayor and City Council for the Day Program and called forth the student who was voted Student Mayor for the Day, Nathan Novaria, and City Clerk James Hudson administered the Oath of Office to him. Mayor Strazdas called forth the students who were elected Student Councilmembers for the Day from Portage Northern High School: Youssef Farran, Kelcie Kitchens and Nate Rajpoot, and from Portage Central High School: Zach Cook, Maddy Krenselewski and Jared Szymanski, and Mr. Hudson administered the Oath of Office to them. The Student Mayor and Student Councilmembers took their seats at the dais.

Student Mayor Novaria introduced Pastor Mike Drew of Workplace Chaplains U.S., who gave the invocation and the City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Cory A. Bailes, Elizabeth A. Campbell, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette S. Reid and Terry R. Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Edward J. Sackley and Mayor Peter J. Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Maurice S. Evans, City Attorney Randall Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

The City Clerk called the Student Mayor and Student Councilmember roll with the following members present: Student Councilmembers Youssef Farran, Kelcie Kitchens, Nate Rajpoot, Zach Cook, Maddy Krenselewski and Jared Szymanski, and Student Mayor Nathan Novaria.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Sackley, seconded by Campbell, to approve the March 8, 2011 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0 with Councilmember Reid abstaining.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Student Mayor Navaria asked all of the Student Councilmembers to share in the reading of the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid asked that Item F.2, City-owned Property - 7130 South Westnedge Avenue, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda motions as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **APPROVAL OF CHECK REGISTER OF MARCH 22, 2011:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Check Register of March 22, 2011. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

* **SPECIAL ASSESSMENT BOND REDEMPTION:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to adopt the Resolutions Approving Redemption of all Callable Outstanding City of Portage Special Assessment Bonds, Series 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000, Prior to Maturity. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on pages 129, 135, 141, 147, 153, 159 and 165 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 44.

CITY-OWNED PROPERTY - 7130 SOUTH WESTNEDGE AVENUE: Councilmember Reid noted that the property appraisal for this property was \$835,000 in 2008, but the current asking price is \$435,000, so she asked what is the cost to the City of Portage to continue to hold on to this property. City Manager Evans responded that to raze the building would cost \$30,000; that there is an ongoing cost of maintenance of the building and the grounds; that there is no real estate agent; that we are marketing it globally; and that it may be a good time to sell because of declining values. Discussion

followed. Councilmember Randall added that there has been and continues to be a loss of tax revenue on the property; that there have been complaints regarding grass cutting and the deterioration of the building; that other lots in the area are for sale; that there is a need to enhance this section of the business corridor; and that there would be no realtor fee. Councilmember Campbell concurred saying that there is development occurring on land in the area so it is a good time to sell in conjunction with increased activity in the area. Mayor Pro Tem Sackley indicated that by contract, once Portage Community Outreach Center left the site, the City assumed the responsibility to pay the costs associated with the property, and that the building no longer has value.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Campbell, to authorize the City Manager to advertise the sale of an approximate 2.5 acre portion of 7130 South Westnedge Avenue at \$430,000 and solicit bids from interested parties. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Discussion followed.

* **APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to confirm the appointment of Vicki Georgeau as the Director of Community Development, effective July 1, 2011. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL LICENSE FOR THE SALE OF BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to resolve to submit an application to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission for a Special License for the sale of beer and wine for consumption on the premises at Portage Central Park, 7800 Shaver Road, for *The Taste of Portage* on June 25, 2011, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **LABOR COUNSEL SERVICES:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to renew the contract with McCarthy Smith Law Group for Labor Counsel Services through Fiscal Year 2013-14 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract renewal. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012 PROPOSED BUDGET REVIEW SCHEDULE:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to establish April 19 from 2 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. for review of the proposed Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **FEBRUARY 2011 SUMMARY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY REPORT – INFORMATION ONLY:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding the February 2011 Summary Environmental Activity Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORTS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the Department Monthly Reports from the various city departments. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNICATION:

TEXAS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR DAVID HEALY: After an explanation by Mayor Strazdas and a short discussion of the benefits of the request to both communities, motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to grant the request from Texas Township Supervisor David Healy to support the 2011 MDNR Trust Fund grant application for the trails system connection between Texas Township and the City of Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Discussion followed regarding a forthcoming letter of support from Mayor Strazdas.

POINT OF ORDER: Mayor Pro Tem Sackley took exception to the use of the word “consider” in the agenda outline for items H.2, Senior Citizen Advisory Board Ordinance and Rules, and H.3, Ordinance Amendment, Chapter 24, Article 5, Safety, Sanitation and Health. Discussion followed regarding the language used in the Consent Agenda Motions which reflects the actual vote of City Council unless the item is removed from the Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

* **SALE OF EXCESS CITY-OWNED PROPERTY, 2125 BENDER ROAD:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to reconfirm the Resolution to sell excess city-owned property, 2125 Bender Road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD ORDINANCE AND RULES:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve an Amendment to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Portage, Michigan, on second reading by amending Chapter 2, Article 7, Section 2-293, for the Senior Citizens Advisory Board to lower the age for advisory board members and Section 2-297, to clarify distribution of records, and approve the revised Senior Citizen Advisory Board rules of operation. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **ORDINANCE AMENDMENT, CHAPTER 24, ARTICLE 5, SAFETY, SANITATION AND HEALTH:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve an Amendment to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Portage, Michigan, on second reading by amending Chapter 24, Article 5, Section 24-113, Safety, Sanitation and Health, with provisions for nuisance abatement and cost recovery, and adopt the resolution establishing the nuisance abatement fee. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Ordinance recorded on page 157 of City of Portage Ordinance Book No. 12. Resolution recorded on page 171 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 44.

* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** City Council received the minutes of the:

Portage Historic District Commission of January 5, 2011.

Portage Zoning Board of Appeals of February 14, 2011.

Portage Park Board of February 16, 2011.

Portage Youth Advisory Committee of February 28, 2011.

Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners Regular and Committee of the Whole of March 1, 2011.

Portage Planning Commission of March 3, 2011.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT:

CITY COUNCIL SIGN ORDINANCE COMMITTEE: City Council received the presentation by Councilmember Urban regarding an update on the recent activity of the City Council Sign Ordinance Committee.

BID TABULATION:

* **DOCUMENT MICROFILMING, IMAGING AND DESTRUCTION:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the contract with Microsystems, Inc., for document microfilming, imaging and destruction for the low bid of \$19,747.95 for a one-year period with the option of two annual

extensions and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS:

STATEMENTS OF STUDENT MAYOR AND STUDENT CITY COUNCIL FOR THE DAY AND FACULTY ADVISOR: Mayor Strazdas introduced Portage Central High School Student Senate Adviser Mark Sutherland, who provided brief review of the Mayor and City Council for the Day Program experiences and thanked Mayor Strazdas and City Council for the opportunity to learn about local government through hands-on participation.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, the Student Councilmembers and the Student Mayor expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Student Council and Mayor for the Day Program. Each of them indicated that the experience was enjoyable, rewarding and enlightening. Discussion followed.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Mayor and City Council expressed their appreciation to the students who participated in the Student Council and Mayor for the Day Program and the Faculty Advisors for their efforts with the Program, extended congratulations to Transportation & Utilities Director Chris Barnes for winning Public Servant of the Year from the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce and congratulated Vicki Georgeau as Community Development Director.

Councilmember Randall posed a question about the use of City Hall by the public saying that the current policy seems too restrictive. She complimented the Board of Review Members and the City Assessor staff for their efforts during the 2011 Board of Review sessions.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, City Manager Maurice Evans noted that the use of City Hall after hours requires paying overtime and that staff time for the Congressman Upton visit was minimal as it took place during working hours.

Councilmember Reid indicated that the \$100 million gift to Western Michigan University for a Medical School would have a huge impact on the Region. Mayor Strazdas concurred. As mentioned in the invocation by Pastor Mike Drew, she expressed her concern for the people of Japan, who are facing new challenges each day as a result of the recent earthquake and subsequent tsunami and the people of Libya, who are in the midst of a military struggle for power.

City Manager Evans indicated that the recent Census 2010 revealed that the City of Portage population grew from 44,897 to 46,292 with a 4.9% increase in Kalamazoo County.

Mayor Pro Tem Sackley invited the public to the detailed line by line Budget Review Sessions, Tuesday, April 19, 2011, from 2 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

James R. Hudson, City Clerk

***Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**