

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 24, 2012**

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

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Richard Hertsel of the Centre Avenue Community Church of God of Portage 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 Elizabeth A. Campbell, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Edward J. Sackley, Terry R. Urban and Mayor Pro Tem Claudette S. Reid and Mayor Peter J. Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Maurice S. Evans, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by Reid, seconded by Campbell, to approve the January 10, 2012 Special and Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0 with Councilmember Sackley abstaining.

\* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Councilmember Campbell to read the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Randall asked that Item H.2, Secondhand Dealer/Pawnbroker Ordinance, and Councilmember Pearson asked that Item G.3, City Council Guiding Principles, 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 ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF JANUARY 24, 2012:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of January 24, 2012. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

**FINAL ACTION – TRADE CENTRE WAY AND WEST FORK CROSSING RIGHT-OF-WAY VACATION:** Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing and introduced Transportation & Utilities Director Chris Barnes, who provided a drawing of the location and explained the request. He outlined some of the history of the original Downtown Development Authority (DDA) location of the roadway and described the proposed changes in more detail and explained that these proposed changes were part of the amended plan of July 2011. Discussion followed. Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing for comment from the audience. There being no further discussion, motion by Campbell, seconded by Urban, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Campbell, to adopt Resolution No. 2, vacating a portion of West Fork Crossing and a portion of Trade Centre Way. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 331 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 44.

### **REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:**

\* **PROPOSED TWO-YEAR LABOR AGREEMENT - PORTAGE POLICE COMMAND OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (PPCOA):** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a two-year labor agreement between the City of Portage and the Portage Police Command Officers Association (PPCOA). Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **DECEMBER 2011 SUMMARY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY REPORT – INFORMATION ONLY:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding the December 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. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

**PRESENTATION BY YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Chairperson Sujay Dewan and Vice-Chairperson Humza Mirza came forward to provide an annual report. Mr. Dewan recognized the YAC Liaison, Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa, who was present. Mr. Dewan highlighted the YAC volunteer activities by mentioning their work with organizations in the community such as volunteering for the Adopt a Family Drive at Portage Community Center and the Sticker Shock Program for the Substance Abuse Task Force. He cited the three main events sponsored by YAC: The Portage Snow Party, the Greenathon and the Teenage Movie Night, as successful engagements in the community for Portage families and youth.

Mr. Dewan also announced a recent grant opportunity from the American Heart Association which challenges YAC to submit ideas for activities in the community to improve heart health and the awareness of heart issues. Mayor Pro Tem Reid later expressed her gratitude that YAC is considering participating in the grant opportunity and offered her assistance with this effort.

When Mayor Strazdas asked Mr. Mirza what was the number one issue in Portage at the present time, he responded that raising awareness in students about substance abuse and indicated that the events have helped them channel the information to young people with some success.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Sackley, to receive the presentation by Youth Advisory Committee Chairperson Sujay Dewan, Vice-Chairperson Humza Mirza and Secretary Sarah Perry. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**PRESENTATION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD:** At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Environmental Board Chairperson Ruth Caputo provided a brief summary of the progress of the Purple Loosestrife Program and indicated that for the last five (5) years, the problem had been treated with the beetle that eats Purple Loosestrife and nothing else, but the cost of the beetles has gone up significantly, so fewer were used in some places and a resurgence of the invasive species has changed the character of the Program and a more aggressive approach to the problem is necessary. She indicated that the cost of the beetles has increased since 2006, so only eleven beetle pots were released in 2011 instead of twenty in 2006. She indicated that the Board plans to maintain contact with the Kalamazoo Nature Center and Michigan State University for updates and information, and plans to apply for a grant that would assist in a more careful approach to monitoring the invasive species for a more systematic treatment of the problem. Also, the Board plans to approach the Lake Associations and get more citizen involvement, including current collaboration with the Park Board to help to generate volunteers to participate in “plant pulls” as another approach to lightly infested areas to cut, mow before the plant goes to seed. Discussion followed.

At the request of Mayor Pro Tem Reid, Ms. Caputo indicated that the cost of the plant has gone up from \$25 to \$45 since 2006. She also interjected great praise for Environmental Board Member Martin Sepanik, who has been very important to the continued success of the Program.

Councilmember Pearson referred Ms. Caputo to Gary Hahn from the Austin Lake Riparian Board as he expressed an interest in investigating the issues surrounding Purple Loosestrife as an invasive species. Discussion followed.

In response to City Clerk James Hudson, Ms. Caputo indicated that the best and last time to pull the plant before it goes to seed would be in July and August, but it is difficult to recognize, so you may have to wait to see it bloom, then dig it out. She pointed out that it is very difficult to dig, so “pull” is really not the term to use with Purple Loosestrife. In answer to Mayor Strazdas, Ms. Caputo indicated that the Board is enthusiastic with the response from the Park Board as a collaborator with the Environmental Board in an effort to protect the public land in Portage. Mayor Strazdas encouraged recruiting volunteers to help in environmental efforts. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Sackley introduced the idea of a “buying a brick” program to provide more funding for the beetles that eat Purple Loosestrife. Discussion followed regarding the quantity of beetles necessary for successful eradication. At the request of Councilmember Sackley, Ms. Caputo agreed to make an inquiry of the Environmental Board to determine if they would be interested in starting a campaign to accept donations from the public to sponsor beetle plants. Discussion followed.

Motion by Sackley, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from Environmental Board Chairperson Ruth Caputo regarding the 2011 Purple Loosestrife Program and annual presentation. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**CITY COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** Councilmember Pearson recognized the leadership of Mayor Strazdas for introducing this item at the City Council Goal Setting Session and reviewed some of the concepts that were presented and discussed. He also indicated since not all Councilmembers were present for this segment at the City Council Goal Setting Session, it is critical that there be a roll call vote of City Council to make sure all City Councilmembers are on the same page regarding any past behaviors and to pledge future positive teamwork. He pledged his support of the principles and welcomed comments before the vote from his colleagues on City Council. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Randall expressed her support for this item and her appreciation for the efforts of Mayor Strazdas and City Manager Maurice Evans for bringing Mr. David Wheatley, who aggressively addressed the issues of City Council in this regard. She said she plans to help modify and clarify the City Council Ethics Policy as a member on the City Council Ethics/Rules/Procedures Committee which is chaired by Councilmember Urban.

Mayor Pro Tem Reid expressed her support for this item and praised David Wheatley for a fine job articulating the best practices for City Council.

Mayor Strazdas expressed his support and thanked City Council for their support of this item.

Councilmember Urban expressed support of the general principles of interactions contained in this item and Councilmember Sackley concurred.

Councilmember Campbell indicated that it was too bad that those who were not able to attend were not able to be a part of the dialogue at the City Council Goal Setting because it was very valuable, and expressed her agreement with Councilmember Pearson and her support for this item. Discussion followed.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to commit to abide by the principles discussed at the December 9, 2011 City Council Goal Setting Session as set forth in the attached documents. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

\* **FINAL ACTION – TRADE CENTRE WAY AND WEST FORK CROSSING RIGHT-OF-WAY VACATION:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to adopt Resolution No. 2, granting an easement to the Michigan Department of Transportation on city-owned property for the installation of storm drainage improvements. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 335 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 44.

**FEE RESOLUTION - SECONDHAND DEALER (PAWNBROKER) LICENSING/RENEWAL:** Councilmember Randall commended the City Administration for the recommendation to not charge a fee for licensing or license renewal of Secondhand Dealer/Pawnbroker businesses despite the cost involved.

Motion by Campbell, seconded by Reid, to resolve to not establish a fee for licensing or license renewal of Secondhand Dealer/Pawnbroker businesses.

Mayor Pro Tem Reid expressed her support and recognized that setting fees is not always easy and pointed out that City Council has a Subcommittee that will be looking into fees and fee structure. She expressed her concern whether it would be easier to track businesses of this type if a fee was charged, but City Manager Evans informed her that there are only ten businesses of this type in Portage, so that is not an issue.

Mayor Strazdas expressed his support and recognized the efforts of Public Safety Director Richard White for moving from a paper system to a more efficient electronic system, especially with the increase in activity in this area.

City Attorney Randy Brown asked that the Resolution be adopted, also. Motion by Campbell, seconded by Reid, to amend the motion and to adopt the Resolution for License Fee under Article 8 of Chapter 14, Businesses.

Councilmember Urban referred to the discussion at the last meeting where Public Safety Director White entertained the possibility of placing some of this information on the website and expressed his concern that it occurred to him that some people may not want the public to know that a certain item or items were taken from their house. He offered the suggestion that we obtain permission from the victim, first, and deferred to the Administration and/or the City Attorney for a response. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 339 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 44.

\* **8046 NEWELLS LANE - WOOD BURNERS - INFORMATION ONLY:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding 8046 Newells Lane - Wood Burners as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** City Council received the minutes for the following boards and commissions:

Portage Historic District Commission of December 7, 2011.

Portage Zoning Board of Appeals of December 12, 2011.

Portage Environmental Board of December 14, 2011.

Portage Human Services Board of January 5, 2012.

Portage Planning Commission of January 5, 2012.

#### **AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT:**

**JOINT PORTAGE MARKETING EFFORTS:** Mayor Strazdas introduced this item and asked Councilmember Pearson and Campbell to share any thoughts they may have regarding the meeting with the Portage District Library and Portage Public Schools representatives.

Councilmember Pearson expressed great enthusiasm for the collective efforts by the core team and all of the participants from the three organizations.

Councilmember Campbell expressed her excitement also and indicated it is logical that the three organizations should be doing this as a great help for all three organizations.

Mayor Strazdas reviewed the advantages to be realized by having a collaborative marketing effort among the three organizations and thanked the Committee for their support and participation.

He asked Councilmembers Pearson and Campbell to share with him in the reading of the Collaborative Marketing Effort Proclamation. Discussion followed.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to adopt the adjoining proclamation to commence the collaborative marketing effort as coordinated by the Portage District Library Board, the Portage Public Schools Board of Education and the City Council City-School Committee. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Discussion followed.

#### **OTHER CITY MATTERS:**

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:** Councilmember Randall recognized that January 28, 2012, is the date that the last *Portage Gazette* would be published and acknowledged the many contributions of Portage Gazette Editor Tom Haroldson and the outstanding job he has done. She also announced the 26th Annual Bowl For Kids' Sake event is on Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at PINZ Bowling Center, 4500 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, (269) 375-1379. Note: Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup> is reserved for college students only and all proceeds from Bowl For Kids' Sake go to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program where children are matched with positive role models.

As a home brewer of beer, Councilmember Pearson expressed his excitement for Kalamazoo Beer Week and noted that Portage City Center has zoned property and could accommodate a microbrewery if anyone is interested.

City Manager Evans announced the launch of the new online Media Center on the Portage City website [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) which is a repository of city related news, information and communications tools designed to better connect residents with the city, and includes video archives of televised City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings and other community related videos on various topics such as special city programs and services, as well as easy access to the award-winning *Portager* newsletter, RSS feeds, news releases and more. Mayor Strazdas concurred.

Mayor Pro Tem Reid recruited dancers for the Public Media Network First Annual Groundhog Ball on Feb 4<sup>th</sup> from noon until midnight which will be televised.

Mayor Strazdas concurred with Councilmember Randall that *Portage Gazette* Editor Tom Haroldson has made many contributions over the years with the Portage Gazette and has done an outstanding job.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

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James R. Hudson, City Clerk

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