

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF OCTOBER 9, 2012 – 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE CITY OF PORTAGE**

Mayor Peter Strazdas called the meeting to order at 3:59 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Councilmembers Elizabeth Campbell, Jim Pearson, Patricia Randall and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Claudette Reid and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Councilmember Edward Sackley was absent with excuse. Also present were City Manager Maurice Evans and City Clerk James Hudson.

Mayor Strazdas listed six major ideas proposed by the Administration in the City Manager communication dated October 5, 2012, for commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City of Portage:

1. A commemorative edition of the *Portager*.
2. Proclamations from government representatives.
3. A display of historical documents.
4. A video “collage” with the help of the Public Media Network.
5. Major community events being planned to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, including a winter half marathon in cooperation with the Kalamazoo Area Runners Club; a groundbreaking ceremony of Phase I of the Eliason Nature Reserve property; a concert in the 2013 Summer Entertainment Series; and a new logo. Discussion followed.

City Council revealed their opposition to the polar dive and expressed interest and support for the citizen recommendation of the “fifty flowers” idea, including a big “50” at each entrance to the City where feasible and at City Hall; two banners resulting from a possible art competition among the three high schools with the Administration making the necessary contacts; possibly include businesses in the banner or sign efforts; set Portage flags along South Westnedge Avenue; a coffee table book in collaboration with volunteers and led by former Mayor Pro Tem Ted Vlieg; use of the electronic billboard; use of public transportation to get those in need to the various event offerings; and, approval of one of the logo designs informally presented to City Council, so request the Administration to bring the logo design options before City Council for consideration. Discussion followed regarding cost and funding, and mention was made that the Portage flags along South Westnedge could be intermingled with a flag with the new city logo on it at every other posting.

City Council liked the Senior Citizens Advisory Board suggestion of a parade with a theme of 50 years ago with 60’s vehicles and dress, but indicated that it could get very expensive to have an appreciation event for Board Members and Commissioners, but the outdoor art competition would be great and even a significant community art piece could be commissioned with private dollars which would require a fundraising effort led by City Councilmembers. There was a consensus for the suggestion that a voucher for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dedicated Summer Series event or any Summer Series event for Board and Commissioner Members would be appropriate. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Campbell revealed an effort by the Portage Rotary Club to dedicate a

“Peace Pole” with a “peace garden” and “peace benches” as a memorial of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that could become a landmark for the city. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Randall suggested promoting local businesses by involving them in the celebration and proposed a book with businesses that are 50 years old or older to be highlighted in the book. Discussion followed.

Mayor Pro Tem Reid offered the idea of video interviews of senior citizens to obtain a prospective of Portage then and now and Councilmember Urban requested that the petition to form a Charter Commission for the Township to consider becoming a city be obtained and to interview surviving petition signers as part of the video. Discussion followed.

Mayor Strazdas summed up and recapped each of the suggestions discussed.

**ADJOURN:** Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

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James R. Hudson, City Clerk