

CITY OF ST. JOHNS

CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

JULY 27, 2020

The regular meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Hufnagel at 6:00 p.m. through a virtual meeting at www.gotomeeting.com.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Heather Hanover, Eric Hufnagel, Bob Craig, Jean Ruestman, Tamara Kirschenbauer

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jon Stoppels, City Manager; Mindy J. Seavey, City Clerk; Dave Kudwa, Community Development Director; Kristina Kinde, Treasurer, Steve Martin, Director of Public Services; John B. Salemi, City Attorney; David Kirk, Police Chief

Mayor Hufnagel asked if any of the commissioners or persons present wished to discuss any of the items on the consent agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the consent agenda be approved as presented.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Craig

YEA: Hanover

YEA: Kirschenbauer

YEA: Ruestman

YEA: Hufnagel

NAY: None

Motion carried.

a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the minutes of the July 13, 2020 regular meeting be approved as presented.

YEA: Hanover, Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

b. Approval of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$445,186.83.

YEA: Hanover, Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman

NAY: None

Motion carried.

c. Renewal of Liability & Property Insurance

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission approve staying with the Michigan Municipal League for property and liability insurance coverage.

YEA: Hanover, Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. Land Purchase – 3.67 Acres East of Well Site #7

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission approve moving forward with a formal due diligence process to purchase approximately 3.67 acres of land located on west Gibbs Street between well site #7 and well site #8.

YEA: Hanover, Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

e. Approval of Purchase Agreement/Land Sale to DeShano Development Corporation

Motion by Commissioner Hanover seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission ratify the purchase agreement with DeShano Development Corporation and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.

YEA: Hanover, Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

AGENDA

Mayor Hufnagel asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Craig seconded by Commissioner Ruestman that the city commission approve the agenda as presented.

AGENDA**A. OPENING:**

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consent Agenda

The staff proposes the following items for the Consent Agenda. If any Commissioner or person attending wishes to discuss any of these items, it should be placed on the regular agenda. The remaining items and recommendations may be approved en masse:

- a. Approval of Minutes
 - Regular meeting of July 13, 2020
 - b. Approval of Warrants
 - In the amount of \$445,186.83
 - c. Renewal of Liability & Property Insurance
 - Staff recommends the city commission approve staying with the Michigan Municipal League for property and liability insurance coverage.
 - d. Land Purchase – 3.67 Acres East of Well Site #7
 - Staff recommends the city commission approve moving forward with a formal due diligence process to purchase approximately 3.67 acres of land located on west Gibbs Street between well site #7 and well site #8.
 - e. Approval of Purchase Agreement/Land Sale to DeShano Development Corporation
 - Staff recommends the city commission ratify the purchase agreement with DeShano Development Corporation and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.
4. Approval of Agenda:

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**C. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:**

1. Public comment (Agenda & Non-agenda items)

D. COMMUNICATIONS:**E. OLD BUSINESS:**

1. COVID 19 Response
2. Ordinance #656 - An Ordinance to Amend Title III, Chapter 30 (Entitled “City Commission”) of the City of St. Johns Code of Ordinances

F. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Railroad Depot Name
2. Commissioner Comments

G. ADJOURNMENT:

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Craig
YEA: Hanover
YEA: Kirschenbauer
YEA: Ruestman
YEA: Hufnagel
NAY: None
Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY

1. Public Comment

Marc Mercer was present. He said he took the parks and recreation survey. He said last week he received a letter and his water bill. He said you are sending out two different messages here. He said the newsletter says it is the city and your letter said to work it out with my neighbor. He said he has gone for walks lately and the city is having a hard time taking responsibility regarding ordinances. He discussed: letting things go sometimes; things people are doing is contagious. He said it is saddening, because St. Johns was a pretty town. He discussed Ferndale and said they had code enforcement that would drive around. He said this is something we have to fix. He said he doesn't want to always be the bad news.

Mayor Hufnagel said he appreciated him bringing that concern to the commission. He said it is on staff's radar and would be a discussion with the attorney.

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

1. COVID 19 Response

City Manager Stoppels said COVID is starting to spike again across the country, but Michigan is holding its own. He said our daily cases have crept up in the last several weeks. It may be because of a holiday weekend and the opening of businesses. He said also there is additional testing going on in the state. We are staying under 1,000 per day. We are the only state with an A rating and one of the best in battling the virus. He said we have resumed the brush and yard waste program and employees are now off of furlough. He said we have the concerts in the park every Wednesday and scheduled the clean-up in September that had been postponed. He said there has been a lot of

cooperation in town. He said he has heard no reports of arguments or incidents regarding masks. Ingham County spikes on occasion. He said he sent the commission a letter from the schools on their reopening plan for the fall. We need to be hopeful the plan is going to work. He said heat has not killed off the virus. Hopefully, we won't see a surge in COVID with the reopening of schools.

Mayor Hufnagel said Commissioner Kirschenbauer asked about getting additional signage out. He asked if that was being explored yet?

City Manager Stoppels said we put out 30 signs before. We are looking at more. They are kind of pricey, but it is a good idea to spread the word.

Commissioner Craig said there was a company that wanted to do training in St. Johns. They have looked for an opportunity in the courthouse, Chamber of Commerce, and RESA. RESA said they are closed unless it is for internal occupants. Agro Liquid said because of the Governor's Executive Order it is closed. They may end up doing Zoom, but prefer in-person training. What is it about the order that is prohibiting meetings?

City Manager Stoppels said he thinks it is two-fold: number of people in the building together; groups don't want to be involved in an outbreak. They are being cautious. He said service clubs have not been meeting.

There was a discussion of public buildings.

Commissioner Hanover said a neighbor was asking about the yard waste collection. She discussed the schedule that was in the newsletter possibly being incorrect.

City Manager Stoppels said right now the entire city is being handled.

There was a discussion of the schedule.

2. Ordinance #656 - An Ordinance to Amend Title III, Chapter 30 (Entitled "City Commission") of the City of St. Johns Code of Ordinances

City Manager Stoppels said this was discussed at the retreat. He said City Attorney Salemi spent a lot of time revising this.

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Craig that the city commission adopt Ordinance #656 an Ordinance to Amend Title III, Chapter 30 (Entitled "City Commission") of the City of St. Johns Code of Ordinances.

Commissioner Craig discussed the typo revision that was sent out earlier today.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Craig

YEA: Hanover

YEA: Kirschenbauer

YEA: Ruestman

YEA: Hufnagel

NAY: None

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Railroad Depot Name

City Manager Stoppels said St. Johns is one of the few communities in Michigan that still have a depot. Jenny & Gary McCampbell are requesting we rename the building to be St. Johns Railroad Depot Museum. They have an idea of what the signs should look like. They are requesting the city pay towards the sign out front.

Jenny McCampbell was present. She said when they got involved with the museum it was 5 years after it was named the Clinton Northern Railway Museum. She said they put their own phone home number down and people call and think it is in Clinton Township. She said it would make it more clear for people. Or it could just be called the St. Johns Depot. She said they would put signs out that say the museum is open and dates/times.

Gary McCampbell said he pictures the sign saying St. Johns Depot 1921. He said on the other side (facing trail) it could be a sign with St. Johns and then Detroit this way and Grand Haven the other way. That is what the passengers would have seen.

Mayor Hufnagel discussed the policy we created several years ago. Procedurally, it should be brought to a committee (Parks and Recreation Board) to have the idea introduced to them. He asked if that is what is being proposed by staff at this time?

City Manager Stoppels said yes.

Commissioner Craig said he is on the parks and recreation committee. They meet quarterly and their next meeting won't be until September. He asked if there is any urgency to this request?

Mr. McCampbell said the issue belongs to the city.

Mayor Hufnagel said Jenny and Gary can talk to Bill Schafer about getting it on the agenda.

2. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Kirschenbauer said it is nice to be supportive of businesses. She said most people wearing masks and she was very encouraged. She said she went to the library and it was different and totally doable. She said it worked out fine. Kudos to them getting it going.

Commissioner Hanover said a local artist was going to put a bike sculpture on the trail, but there have been some issues. She said Dave gave them four places in the city it could be placed and they like spot #1. She asked if it needs to be put on the agenda for the commission to approve. The location is near the driveway entrance on the east side of the depot.

Director Kudwa said we are going to schedule a property review committee meeting for later this week. He said they could put it on the agenda and have a recommendation for the August 10th meeting.

Commissioner Hanover said she is getting a lot of the comments on the lights on 27: who paid for them, why so many, etc. She said we approved them, but she doesn't remember the details. What should she tell people about those lights?

City Manager Stoppels said 27 is not in our jurisdiction. There has been an ongoing request for lights in that area and it is a safety issue. He said the request pre-dates the police department being there. He said it is a lease program. If the poles and lights were decorative, we would pay a lot of money. He said he hasn't seen if they have been energized yet. He said once they are energized, we may get some phone calls. Steve and I talked about it and we can do another report.

Director Martin said the city paid \$2,000 for installation.

There was a discussion of: churches in the area, accident studies, lane dropping down in that area.

Chief Kirk said there is heavy travel through there. We are at the mercy of MDOT on that roadway. He said pedestrian travel without illumination creates extra jeopardy. He said he has not seen them illuminated. He thinks it is going to be a benefit.

Director Kudwa said on Walker Road by Glanbia, he and Director Martin are working with Consumers on a project. He said for lights from 127 to the Glanbia entrance with underground wiring, different poles and half the lights we are paying \$36,000 for those. He said it is a lot more expensive. Also, wooden poles allow us to get higher with the lights.

Commissioner Ruestman encouraged people to go to the library. She said it is nice to see more places opening downtown (party store, candle store, relocation of Mint Door Boutique). She said people are being more conscientious of wearing masks down there. She discussed the letter and said it was well written. She asked if we have heard anything about the brew pub.

City Manager Stoppels said we haven't heard anything official. He asked Director Kudwa to make a phone call in the next day and ask their plans.

Commissioner Craig complimented city staff and the PSD/DDA on the letter. He said it was a positive move and good cooperation. He attended the parks and recreation board meeting and they had a long agenda. He said he hopes others participate in the survey. They will be doing a 5-year master plan. They talked a lot about the splash park and whether it should remain close. He said they appreciate Jon giving us his opinion. Hawk Island in Lansing is open, but we have a compact splash park and when it is open it is well attended. He said they reluctantly decided to keep it closed. He said with the Wilson Center Bill attended a meeting with the new developer.

Mayor Hufnagel said it great to see more businesses starting, like Commissioner Ruestman said. He said we should follow up with an invitation to have Mr. Purves present to us. He said he would love to have him come in and give us insights. Also, the brew pub as an example. He said also the director of the chamber may come and speak on what is happening in the surrounding community. He thanked staff and commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Kirschenbauer seconded by Commissioner Ruestman that the meeting be adjourned.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Hanover

YEA: Kirschenbauer

YEA: Ruestman

YEA: Hufnagel

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.