

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 26, 2007
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mayor Kenneth Zichi, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Mayor Kenneth Zichi, Mayor Pro-tem Robert Hanna, Council Members Penny Davis, George Monroe, and Scott VanAllsburg. Absent: Brian O'Connell (arrived at 7:05) and Michelle Hyne.

Also Present:

City Manager Lisa Hitchcock, Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Dave Stoker, Police Chief Mark Hetfield, Planning and Development Administrator Lynn Wilson, JFM Productions, MDOT Representatives Steve Shaunessy, and Paul Steinman, and citizens Gary Weston, Susan Graff, Robert St. John, Sue Nichani, Mike Thomas, John Pratt, Scott Simmons, Toby Weston, and Jonathon Dolecki.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to excuse Hyne. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

4. Approval of Agenda:

Add item 10b. City Building Work Sheet to the agenda.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

5. Audience Participation:

John Pratt questioned the removal of the Police and Kids sign on the City Hall lawn.

Manager Hitchcock responded that the sign was for the previous year and was taken down.

Robert St. John announced that there will be a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on Thursday, March 29, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

*Councilman O'Connell arrived at 7:05 p.m.

6. Council Minutes of March 12, 2007:

On page 1, item 4. change "budge" to "budget".

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to approve the Council regular meeting minutes of March 12, 2007 as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

7. Accounts Payable:

Councilmember Davis reported that the accounts payable totaled \$173,529.52 and included payments to the consultants, insurance, Red Cedar Recreation Association, utilities, DDA items, and the Tobias Drain. Reference #'s 8320-8478.

Motion by **Davis**, second by **Hanna**, to approve the accounts payable as presented. Yes: O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8. MDOT Presentation on Access Management Plan:

Traffic and Safety Engineer, Steve Shaunessy, of the Lansing Transportation Service Center, presented a slideshow on MDOT's Access Management Plan. The definition of access management is a set of techniques that can help reduce traffic congestion, preserve traffic flow, improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, preserve existing road capacity, preserve the existing investment in the road by managing location design and type of access to property.

MDOT follows a guidebook that addresses access management principals, traffic problems, number and type of location of the driveways, driveway geometrics, offsets, as well as intergovernmental cooperation and coordination on access decisions. They are looking for fewer, more distanced driveway entrances along M-43. The reasoning for MDOT to write the access management principles is to learn from past mistakes. Motorists benefit from access management from fewer traffic accidents, delays, and congestion. The benefits for business owners are preserving or enlarging market or delivery areas, reducing stress and crash risk for the employee, by improving safety for the customers. The benefits for land owners are increasing economic development potential of the land associated with an efficient transportation system, and improving travel times.

The consequences of not having an access management plan could result in the deterioration of the transportation system, traffic and land use conflicts will increase, commercial strip development will be encouraged, number of private drives will proliferate, more driveways will mean more traffic crashes and congestion.

Paul Steinman commented that the access points are based on speed limit. The speed limit for the property in question is thirty-five miles per hour. The permit that was issued to the previous owner is non-transferable. When there is a change in use, the permit changes.

Councilmember Davis commented that Sue Nichani attended the Planning Commission meeting and stated that she spoke with an MDOT employee and he was willing to work with them to keep the two driveways because the Governor wants Michigan to be small business friendly.

Paul Steinman commented that the people who issue the permits are the Lansing TSC. His staff has kept him apprised of the situation and have been very consistent on this issue.

Councilmember Davis commented that the site plan was based on MDOT's final decision regarding the multiple driveways.

Administrator Wilson stated that it was contingent on MDOT's decision on the number of entrances because of the implication that MDOT is willing to work with the applicant to keep the driveways.

Sue Nichani commented that she spoke with Rob Beckan and he indicated that MDOT would be willing to work with them to allow both of the driveways to remain.

Paul Steinman commented that Mr. Beckan is a technical expert and writes policy and has no jurisdictional authority to make any binding decisions and he has specifically asked Mr. Beckan if he had led the applicants to believe that there was a chance that both driveways could be kept and he replied that he did not.

Sue Nichani stated that Mr. Beckan said he was willing to review it and there were a lot of properties that had the same issue. She added that the problem with the property is there would be no way for semi-trucks to make deliveries without parking on Grand River.

Paul Steinman showed a diagram of the space a semi-truck would need to access the property and it is not large enough with the parking spaces as they are planned.

Scott Simmons commented that the plan is to have the deliveries done in the morning before they would have customers. He added that across the street there are semi-trucks that park on Grand River Avenue to deliver to the strip mall.

Sue Nichani commented that the change of use in the zoning ordinance is defined by changing residential to non-residential.

Paul Steinman stated that he will meet with the Mr. Simmons and Ms. Nichani to discuss the issue further.

9. Action Items

9a. Habitat for Humanity Request to Paint Fire Hydrants:

Motion by **Davis**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the request from Habitat for Humanity to paint the fire hydrants. Yes: Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, O'Connell. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9c. Patrol Vehicle Purchase:

Chief Hetfield reported that he received three quotes for police vehicles. He recommended accepting the low bid for the Dodge Magnum.

Councilman O'Connell questioned why he wants to downgrade the motor in the Magnum and why he chose the Magnum.

Chief Hetfield answered that he does not believe the high performance motor is needed and would have lower miles per gallon. The Magnum does not have a ~~sunken~~ **separate** trunk which will make it more climate controlled for the electronics and easier to move.

Councilman VanAllsburg asked if the Police could function with just two vehicles.

Chief Hetfield answered no because while two may be out on patrol, there may be one in the shop, and another running errands, or doing the Police and Kids program.

Motion by **Monroe**, second by **Hanna**, to approve the purchase of a patrol vehicle from Bill Snethkamp in the amount of \$21,717.50 as presented. Yes: Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, O'Connell, Davis. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9d. Bridge Inspections:

Manager Hitchcock reported that the bi-annual bridge inspections are required by MDOT this year for the Putnam Street Bridge and Wallace Street Bridge.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Monroe**, to approve the contract with C2AE for the bridge inspections in an amount not to exceed \$5400 as presented. Yes: Zichi, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9e. Set Annual Meeting Date:

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to present the annual meeting dates of May 16, 23, or 30 to Williamstown Township for consideration. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

9b. Water Bill Dispute- 317 S. Circle Dr.:

The applicants were not present to speak to the issue.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Hanna**, to table the water bill dispute for 317 S. Circle Dr. until the next meeting. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

10. Discussion Items

10a. Budget Workshop Agenda:

Mayor Zichi asked what the Council wants to discuss during the next budget work session.

Councilman Hanna asked if information could be given regarding the affect of the TIFA captures to the budget and what the estimate is for operating expenses.

Manager Hitchcock commented that she could make a list of cuts to the budget that could be done.

Council discussed having the water sewer rates at the first work session and a list of items that could be cut at the second work session.

10b. City Building Work Sheet:

Councilman VanAllsburg submitted a list of City building expenses to the Council for review and use in the City budgeting process.

Councilman Monroe commented that the hundred acres zoned industrial near the freeway should be rezoned to residential to get the space developed to bring in tax revenue.

Mayor Zichi commented that the area has been identified as Mixed Use in the Master Plan which would include residential.

Councilman Monroe commented that he would be willing to be a part of the people meeting with Granger regarding the agreement between the City, EDC, and Granger.

12. Staff Reports

12a. City Manager:

Manager Hitchcock submitted a written report for Council review and added that she was contacted by C2AE regarding Goldstein Enterprises no longer being in business. The work on the water main that was supposed to be finished by Goldstein will now be done by the City with a portion of the money for the work being held to pay for the City to finish it.

Manager Hitchcock reported that she and Deputy Clerk Thompson attended an election meeting regarding issues with the November recount. The state recommended receiving boards but she believes that it would be better to have Deputy Clerk Thompson and herself checking the information at the end of the night.

Manager Hitchcock reported that there is a grant available that the municipalities would be responsible for distributing to the group that receives approval. The Williamston Theatre and Bandshell Committee have asked that they be considered for the grants. Manager Hitchcock will be working with each group to decide who will apply for the funds.

12b. City Attorney:

Attorney Stoker reported that the Zoning Enabling Acts have passed. The Act will affect the City's Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. Some of the changes would be: A member of the Zoning Board of Appeals that is also a member of the Planning Commission could not vote, if the issue was at the Planning Commission's level first. The Council would need to fill vacancies on the ZBA and Planning Commission within 30 days. The member being replaced would remain a member until the position is filled. The Zoning Board of Appeals decision would not be official until the minutes are approved or the action was certified. Zoning Ordinances would not be in effect until seven days after the publication. Attorney Stoker will provide a copy of the Zoning Enabling Acts to the City Manager for distribution.

13. Committee/Sub-Committee Reports

13a. Legislative Director:

Councilman O'Connell reported that House Bill 4285 Disclosure Act passed and will need to be abided by. People that run for office will need to disclose their finances

and that of their spouses and family members. It does not currently apply to Council but could by amendment.

He also reported that a three bill package regarding property taxes has been considered because senior citizens are being taxed into and out of their homes.

Councilman O'Connell commented that the governor issued her second executive order with a disagreement that cuts should be handled separately or handled with next years budget. Some areas in government have already been cut. He believes that the City should budget for a cut in revenue sharing.

14. Audience Participation:

John Pratt commented that he found an advertisement at Baryames for a cab company serving Williamston.

Mike Thomas asked the status of the irrigation well ordinance and watershed protection.

Manager Hitchcock answered that it is part of the project that was approved by the City Council, but the ordinance has not been done.

Mike Thomas commented that he would also like to see the City Clerk and City Manager position separated in the budget with the City hiring a Clerk.

John Pratt commented that he believes the City should look at filling the position with the current Deputy Clerk.

Robert St. John commented that the City should make sure the yard waste collection remains from April through November when the contract is renegotiated with Granger.

Mayor Zichi commented that the contract with Granger has already been approved and there was no change in services.

15. Council Member Comments:

Mayor Zichi commented that the City Manager, Executive Secretary, Mayor Pro-tem, and he attended the Michigan Municipal League conference and felt it was not as valuable as previous years. The 'Walk in Williamston' campaign is ongoing. The library should be open at the Community Center by May 2, and they will be closed for two weeks during the move.

16. Closed Session – FOP Union Negotiations:

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to go into closed session to discuss the Fraternal Order of Police Union Negotiations. Yes: Hanna, Zichi, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Closed session began at 8:53 p.m.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to return to open session. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Closed session ended at 9:51 p.m.

Action on Closed Session:

No action was taken on closed session.

17. Adjournment:

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to adjourn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Meeting Adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

***THE PRECEDING MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF A CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND DO NOT REPRESENT A VERBATIM RECORD.**

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Holly M. Thompson, Deputy Clerk

Kenneth V. Zichi, Mayor

Date Approved: _____