

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
CITY COUNCIL  
MAY 12, 2008  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Michelle Hyne and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

Mayor Michelle Hyne, Mayor Pro-tem John Pratt, Council Members Carmen Siciliano, Traci Smith, Scott VanAllsburg, and Ken Zichi. Absent: None.

Also Present:

City Manager Lisa Hitchcock, Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Bonnie Toskey, Police Chief Mark Hetfield, Community Development Director Michelle Aniol, Deputy Treasurer Geral Jeffrey, JFM Productions, citizens Terri Campbell, Leo Sheets, Jane Sabin-Hanna, William and Melanie Schall, Marlene Epley, Earl Wolf, Paul & Dawn Marie Joseph, Terri Campbell, Dave & Theresa Okowitz, Barb Burke, Lea Estes, Scott Simmons, Ryan Sweeder, Dan Kazewych, Brooke Locke, and other members of the public.

**4. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **VanAllsburg**, approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**5. Audience Participation:**

Terri Campbell commented that she submitted a letter to the Council asking them to put an item on their agenda for action and asked why it was under information only.

Council members VanAllsburg and Siciliano requested this to be on the next agenda for action.

Dawn Marie Joseph stated that a Police Officer Stump came into Gracie's Place on Mother's Day and asked her to take down her sandwich **board** sign. She was told that Councilman Pratt was the complainant. She feels this is not business friendly, and noted that other sandwich board signs were not removed.

Mayor Hyne stated that she was sorry that it happened and feels it needs to be addressed immediately.

Councilman Pratt stated that he only called about the 'for rent' signs at McCormick Park.

Paul Joseph commented that sandwich **board** signs are important to their business.

Dave Okowitz asked if it would be possible to also address outdoor displays and sale signs.

A report on the issue will be given at the next meeting from the City Manager and Planning & Development Administrator and will be on the next Council agenda.

Dawn Marie Joseph stated she will bring a petition with her to the next meeting.

Dave Okowitz commented that he shares Ms. Joseph's concerns. He added that there is a group of businesses trying to revitalize the downtown and sandwich **board** signs are allowed in Mason and Howell.

Brooke Locke stated that he is the manager of Gracie's and feels Williamston is unique, but needs to move forward and work together as a team. The businesses send people to other businesses in the area.

Scott Simmons commented that the problems have been going on since 2001 with businesses closing as well.

Dawn Marie Joseph commented that she is helping Tina Bennington locate a consignment shop in Williamston.

Council directed City staff to prepare a document with information regarding the current standards as well as ideas for changes to the outside displays, and sandwich **board** signs.

William Schall commented that he wants to follow up on the previous meeting regarding the property maintenance violation against them. He asked if Councilman Pratt had the names of the people that made the complaint.

Councilman Pratt stated that he did not feel he has to give him anybody's name.

Melanie Schall commented that she listened to the tape from the previous meeting and Councilman Pratt stated that there were two people that complained to him from Plymouth Landing and one from elsewhere. She provided pictures to the Council of dilapidated outbuildings at other residences in the City and pointed out that some are near Council members' houses and are related to a Councilmember. She feels that the Council should be treating everyone the same and they are also a small business. Ms. Schall questioned why the attorney client privilege letter regarding a conflict of interest by a Councilmember was not made public. She encouraged the Council to make a motion to make the letter public. Ms. Schall stated that the speed limit change on Williamston Road was **also supposed to be increased to 30 mph to South Street** ~~not what the engineer had recommended.~~

Attorney Toskey recommended against Council discussing items with the audience during audience participation because it will slow down the progress of the agenda.

Dan Kazewych read aloud a letter from his daughter regarding the speed limit on Williamston Road. The letter stated that she is concerned that there is not enough **sight** distance and recommended that the Council allocate funds for signs stating that the speed limit will be strictly enforced.

Marlene Epley announced that the Williamston Community Library Foundation will be holding a Taste of the World Dinner on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Tickets can be purchased at the library office in the Community Center.

William Schall asked why the audience can only comment during audience participation and not during agenda items.

Mayor Hyne responded that the attorney **and City Manager** ~~haves~~ strongly recommended that the Roberts Rules of Order be followed to **run an effective and efficient meeting** ~~eliminate confrontations~~.

Leo Sheets commented that the City Council regularly seeks counsel from the attorney. He added that speed does kill, but differential speed kills too. He thanked the City Council for making the decision to raise the speed limit.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that the differential is still the same and has not improved.

Leo Sheets commented that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile drive 35 mph. There will be a change in speed but not the differential. When the speed was 25 mph there was a half hour wasted from everyone's time every day. He added that driving too slow is more dangerous.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he will be asking what the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is in a year on Williamston Road.

#### **6. Council Minutes of April 28, 2008:**

On page 5, item 9i, delete "and believes there are other structures that are just as bad that are not being taken care of." On page 6, 18 lines down delete "and" and add "The Police Department stated". On page 7, item 10a. 11 lines down, change "make the effort to make" to "confirm".

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Smith**, to approve the Council minutes of April 28, 2008 as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

#### **7. Accounts Payable:**

Councilman Siciliano reported that the accounts payable totaled \$79,342.02 and included payments for the Annex demolition City staff health insurance, and other miscellaneous supplies and services. Reference #'s 10729-10820.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Siciliano**, to approve the accounts payables as presented. Yes: Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Hyne. No: None. **Motion passed.**

#### **8. Verizon Presentation on High Speed Internet:**

Bob Stewart and Bruce Grabertof Verizon introduced themselves and reported that Verizon will be offering high speed internet soon. They expect the roll out to begin June 6. They distributed information about their plans for implementation.

**9. Council Commendation for Eagle Scout Alex Grice:**

A Council proclamation was presented to Eagle Scout Alex Grice.

**10. Council Commendation for Richard Couturier:**

Postponed until next meeting.

**11. Action Items**

**11a. Traffic Control Order #27:**

Motion by **Smith**, second by **Pratt**, to accept the traffic control order #27 as presented and direct the City Clerk to file it as submitted as we believe it accurately recites the terms of the resolution as approved by the City Council on April 28, 2008. Yes: Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Motion by **Siciliano**, second by **Zichi**, to have signs stating that the speed limits will be strictly enforced placed wherever the Chief determines is appropriate. Yes: Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**11b. RFP/RFQ for Property Development:**

Motion by **Hyne**, second by **Smith**, to concur with the mayor's appointment of Siciliano, Zichi, and VanAllsburg to the Property Development Committee. Yes: VanAllsburg, Zichi, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**11c. Request for Additional Funds from Parks and Recreation Commission:**

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to follow the recommendation of the City Manager by approving \$20,701.50 plus irrigation costs for the island and river bank work. Yes: Zichi, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**11d. Park Property Splits:**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Siciliano**, to proceed with the property splits with the City and schools as provided in the property trade documents and boundary surveys of Memorial Park and Deer Creek Park dated 8-30-07. Yes: Hyne, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Couturier. No: Pratt. **Motion passed.**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Zichi**, to amend the park plan under the same specifications as the split as approved by the City Council. Yes: Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Hyne, Pratt. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**11e. Personal Leave Policy #3.8:**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Pratt**, to amend the personal leave policy #3.8 by deleting "retirement" and adding "departure from the City", deleting "from the City" in the next line, and changing "retirement" to "voluntary" and adding "departure or involuntary layoff" in the last paragraph. Yes: Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**11f. Patrol Car Purchase:**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Zichi**, to approve the purchase of the Ford Expedition for the Police Department in an amount not to exceed \$23,749 as presented. Yes: Hyne, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi. No: Pratt. **Motion passed.**

**11g. Temporary Sign Permit Fees:**

No action was taken.

**11h. Financial Task Force Plan of Action:**

Mayor Hyne presented a plan of action for the financial task force.

Councilman Zichi asked her to add the update of the five-year financial model.

**11i. Set Budget Workshops:**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Pratt**, to set a budget work session for Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 4p.m., and Wednesday, May 21, at 6p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

**Motion passed by voice vote.**

**11j. Set Budget Public Hearing for May 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:05 p.m.:**

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **Siciliano**, to set the budget public hearing for Tuesday, May 27, 2008 in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:05 p.m. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**11k. Change Orders for Spartan Project:**

No action was taken.

**14. Staff Reports**

**14a. City Manager:**

Manager Hitchcock submitted a written report for Council review.

**14b. City Attorney:**

Attorney Toskey reported on a Public Safety Employee act that was in the MML Alert.

**14c. Planning & Development Administrator:**

A written report was submitted for Council review.

**15. Audience Participation:**

Brooke Locke commented that he was not trying to criticize where the City is going, just wants the City to move forward. He believes the City now thinks of business friendly as a bad term and it is not. He suggested the City do a street fair on a weekly basis.

Terri Cambell expressed her disappointment of the Council not taking audience input during agenda items. She feels the public is being shut out and is decreasing community involvement. She added that the goal of a shorter meeting by not allowing public to comment on agenda items was not achieved. She asked what the point would be for people to stay for the entire meeting if they are not allowed to participate.

Jane Sabin-Hanna agreed with Ms. Campbell's comments. She added that she understands Roberts Rules of Order and the City Council should reevaluate the issue if their emphasis is on communication with the community.

**16. Council Member Comments:**

Councilman Zichi expressed his condolences over the passing of Sandy Buzzitta.

Councilman Pratt echoed Zichi's comments. He asked when the City Manager would be giving the Council the job evaluation forms and employee salaries.

Councilman VanAllsburg encouraged the City Manager to have the Community Development Director draft potential language for sandwich **board** signs. He added that Mother's Maidens, and Crones is showing at the Williamston Theatre. He encouraged Council to look over the City's current website and decide whether they want to budget for a new one.

Mayor Hyne thanked Manager Hitchcock for putting the budget information on the website. She also congratulated Paul Nilsson for his accomplishments and added that he is a tremendous asset to the community. She reported that she, the City Manager, Community Development Director, and Barb Vandenberg met with a legislative director regarding a downtown revitalization program. There will be an opportunity for board members to go on a tour in Traverse City regarding the program.

**17. Closed Session- Attorney Client Privilege Letter:**

No closed session was held.

**18. Adjournment:**

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **Pratt**, to adjourn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**\*Meeting Adjourned at 10:37 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle A. Hyne, Mayor

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_