

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023, 7:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL.**

Mayor DeVore called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and City Clerk Sue Ullery called roll.

Present: Councilmembers Marty Chambers, Jim Salzwedel, Leah Groves, Cliff Yankovich, and Mayor DeVore.

Absent: None.

Present: City Clerk Sue Ullery, DPW Director Dan Czarnecki, City Manager Michael Burns, Chief of Police Chris Hurst, City Attorney Jessica Wood.

DeVore noted Gina Johansen was running late, move her on agenda to b.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

- Approval of the Agenda as amended.
- Approve and place on file the minutes of the February 6, 2023 Regular City Council meeting.
- Authorize payment of invoices for \$336,823.12.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by SALZWEDEL to approve the consent agenda as amended.

YES: Mayor Devore, Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Chambers, and Councilmember Groves, and Councilmember Yankovich.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

3. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

Ron Janowski who resides at 520 N Monroe Street and is a small business owner and spoke in favor of 2 hour parking in the City of Lowell and asked that it be an official agenda item at the next City Council meeting.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Patricia and Annelise Dlouhy of Sweet Seasons Bakery & Café who is in favor of two-hour parking and the limit signs.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Liz Baker of the Lowell City Council of Chamber who is also in favor of two-hour parking in the City of Lowell.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Karen Waid, a small business owner in the City of Lowell, and who also resides at 520 N Monroe Street, who is in favor of two-hour parking along Main Street in Lowell.

Perry Beachum who resides at 924 Riverside Dr is in favor of the some kind of enforcement for parking in

the city limits rather than not have any restrictions at all. Then he announced the Laugh Fest is coming to Lowell, it will be March 10, 2023, out at the Congregational Church in Lowell. Tickets sold locally at the Flat River Gallery here in Lowell or you can buy them on-line. This is a Gilda event.

Eric Bartkus who is a business owner in Lowell and resides at 215 ½ W Main understands both sides of the two-hour parking situation. Asked council to consider short-term loading zones or something of the like.

City Attorney Jessica Wood spoke to clarify a few statements that were made, stating there are many different issues being mixed together in this parking discussion. One in particular that she cares to address is the statement made that the ordinance or the restrictions never legally existed. That is not accurate. The City of Lowell does have a parking ordinance; they have adopted the Michigan Uniform Traffic Code and Michigan Vehicle Code. This tells them to regulate parking through signage, which is at their discretion. The way City Council was doing it before is legal, the way they are doing it now is legal, it is just a policy decision, just to be clear.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Moose Property Due Diligence Report.**

City Manager Michael Burns then introduced Nicole Mason with BLDI Environmental Engineering out of Grand Rapids.

Nicole Mason then gave a power point reporting on the investigation and what they found in the soil piles (non-native soil piles) at the Moose Property.

b. **Representative Gina Johansen.**

Gina Johansen spoke and provided a legislative update.

City Manager Michael Burns asked about the \$750 million pension that was approved for communities below 60%. City of Lowell was at that point three years ago, filed our corrective action plan, did all the right things and now the cities that are going to be getting funding, didn't do any corrective action, nor will they need to.

Johansen agreed and wants to work at getting a different program for those who take the right steps, agrees it isn't fair.

c. **Public Hearing for 990 N. Washington.**

Mayor DeVore opened the Public Hearing for 990 N. Washington.

Bruce Matthews who resides at 326 Riverside side spoke in favor of keeping the 990 N. Washington property and making it part of Scout Park.

Bill Schreur who resides at 538 Flat River Drive spoke in favor of keeping the 990 N. Washington property and making it part of Scout Park.

Elaine Gregerson who resides at 938 N. Washington wants it taken care of as soon as possible. Scared of the activities going on there since the renters were removed and she lives right near. Also commented on benefits of keeping the trees that are there.

Councilmember Groves stated a call to the police is always warranted; do not ever be afraid to call.

Mayor DeVore stands by his same decision, does not want it developed.

Mayor DeVore closed the Public Hearing. Second Public Hearing will be in March.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Monroe Street Tree Removal.**

DPW Director Dan Czarnecki read his memo regarding the Monroe Street project and the trees that will need to be removed to be able to do the work.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by GROVES that Lowell City Council approve the tree removal quote from Inbody Tree Service, Lowell, for the tree removal on N. Monroe St., for a total cost of \$7,050.00.

6. **BOARD/COMMISSION REPORTS.**

Councilmember Yankovich stated that LARA got a Gold Star from the accountant on the audit and they are taking a few more steps for more transparency to make it even better.

Councilmember Salzwedel stated this Thursday, we have the LCTV meeting, we have \$110,000 to give away but only had \$87,000 worth of funds applied for, still not 100% sure they are all eligible but will find out Thursday evening.

Councilmember Groves stated the Parks and Rec plan was approved by the state. Shannon Kennedy, the Chambers new executive director, did a great job at the first Chamber Meeting she ran. Approved Byrl Bartkus to the Chamber, welcome.

Councilmember Chambers stated the planning commission re-set their board members and discussed updating the Master Plan, Williams and Works will set up doing some remote meetings for us. Will do several community involvement type sessions to get all kinds of opinions and ideas. It will take up to 18 months. Going to start it in June or July.

Mayor DeVore had Fire Authority meeting, Tim Armstrong from Rockford came and they did their year end presentation, talked about some new truck they are getting and some education stuff they are doing in house to try to curb some of the labor shortage that all public safety is dealing with. Shannon Witherall gave his year-end report, he will be at the next council meeting. Sat at LL&P meeting for Jim Salzwedel. Wanted to note, they had one outage last month, and that is unbelievable. Doing a strategic plan update, really cool board. May need a budget adjustment for Fire Authority to get through to July.

7. **CITY MANAGERS REPORT.**

City Manager Michael Burns went over the following:

- Monroe Street project went out for bid, deadline for that bid is March 17, 2023. Will be working on Washington St this year as well.
- Jerry Hale will be at the next City Council meeting March 6, 2023.
- Everyone is preparing for the Ice Storm tomorrow, or whatever it may be. May send employees home early.
- Monday, June 12, 2023 Lew Bender will be coming.
- Starting the process for the new Budget, department heads are sending their capital requests, will get into that in the next couple of weeks.
- Budget Hearing will be Monday, April 24, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

8. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Paula is going to continue on Parks and Rec.

9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember Yankovich would like to thank everyone for showing up, good to see people engaged and passionate, also thank you to the DPW for the large containers of salt, they have come in handy and will probably be using them tomorrow.

Councilmember Salzwedel saw the new fire truck going down the road and it looks great.

Councilmember Chambers gave the history of fireman in the 1800's, pushing the engine into barn by hand.

Mayor DeVore stated the Fire event was great. Frank Martin and his family were there for the truck dedication. Can't say enough for what Shannon Witherall and his crew are doing, just so proud to be a part of it.

10. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED SALZWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to adjourn @ 8:16 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Mike DeVore, Mayor

Sue Ullery, Lowell City Clerk