

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, MARCH 20, 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, Leah Groves, Cliff Yankovich, Jim Salzwedel and Mayor DeVore.

Absent: None.

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

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

- Approval of the Agenda as amended.
- Approve and place on file the minutes of the March 6, 2023 Regular City Council meeting.
- Authorize payment of invoices for \$592,404.82.

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by GROVES to approve the consent agenda as amended, adding Thomas Albert with the Legislative Update to Old Business.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION CARRIED.

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

Perry Beachum who resides at 924 Riverside Drive observed while out in Colorado, two counties, had marijuana facilities that extended their hours until 11 and/or 12 pm and raised a lot of funding for a large portion of their infrastructure. We might want to look at doing something like that. If there is any money left over from what we raised for the Oakwood cemetery fence, it would be nice to see some porta johns at the cemetery. Everyone is aware of what Lowell's Pink Arrow stands for. Noel Dean, the former coach at Lowell who started that, has a son, Doak who is diagnosed with testicular cancer. We are having a benefit for him at the Lowell Showboat on Friday, March 24, 2023, to help with bills not covered by insurance.

Eric Bartkus who resides at 215 1/2 W. Main also wants to publicly thank Mike Burns for the article he wrote in the Ledger, it was very wonderful and full of information, so thank you.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Senator Thomas Albert – Legislative Update.**

Senator Thomas Albert introduced himself, stated he is now in the Senate and gave a legislative update.

b. Parking Ordinance.

City Manager Michael Burn went through a spreadsheet explaining his research with other like cities and what they're doing. Sent inquiries to 16 communities and heard back from seven of them. Pretty much, every community is doing it differently, and based on their needs. Pretty much no one is enforcing time restrictions.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Michael Lowery, business owner at 216 W Main, Suite 2, who is not in favor of restoring the 2-hour parking limit.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Karen Waid who would like to see Parking Ordinance 23-02 rewritten.

Carrie Scudder who resides at 820 N Jefferson asks if we should consider parking meters, like in Traverse City.

Burns stated we would have to meter the whole city, the majority of business owners would not be in favor of that and Traverse City is a lot larger than Lowell City.

Greg Canfield who resides at 403 N Washington is concerned that this parking issue is not a big enough problem to change, thinks it worked well the way it was and we should continue what we were doing.

Mayor DeVore stated we realized it was an oversight to make the parking ordinance year round and are changing it back to just the winter months as well as the permit thing has been corrected, so now we just need to figure out what to do on Main Street. Possibly have a few loading zones.

Beachum suggest a compromise, no parking from November 1st to April 1st on any of the streets but April 2nd till Oct 31 you can park on streets. Recommends not calling it loading zones but rather short-term zones.

Kim Dlouhy who resides at 810 Riverside agrees with Beachum, but we need some type of force for a change over at least on Main Street, so people don't park in a spot for an entire week.

Mayor DeVore believes we should give better signage to where parking is available in the City. 4 hour parking with a couple loading zones seems like a fair compromise.

Councilmember Groves suggest 2 hour parking on Main St for those coming and going and no time limits in the parking lots.

Dlouhy feels like sometimes by saying there is a policy, people tend to follow.

Susan Stephens who resides at 610 N Jefferson, has seen where people paint on side of buildings directing people to parking lots.

Councilmember Salzwedel questioned when are the times that it is so hard to find parking spots. He has been observing and does not see an issue.

Council continued to discuss.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by SALZWEDEL to make it a two-hour parking for all of Main Street and then one 30 minute loading zone per block per direction.

YES: Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Yankovich, Councilmember Groves. NO: Mayor DeVore and Councilmember Chambers. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Beachum suggest business owners in Lowell reach out to employees and explain the changes and not to park on Main Street when working.

c. Public Hearing for 990 N. Washington.

Mayor DeVore opened the public hearing.

City Clerk Sue Ullery read into record a letter from Sharon Ellison who resides at 407 North Division St who is in favor of preserving Scout Park and add 990 and 846 N Washington to the Scout Park.

Gary Dietzel who lived at 990 N Washington for 43 years spoke of barrels leaking oil and knowing many things being buried there that could potentially have seeped bad chemicals into the ground. Believes borings are necessary.

Robin Getz who resides in Lowell Township, has auto immune problems and really enjoys the North Country Trail and enjoys the property at Scout Park.

Jake Davenport who resides at 527 Lafayette wanted to express his support for turning the 990 N Washington Property into more Scout Park land. If the Bloughs do not want to use their name, he would suggest using Bill Nowak in the name of the Park since he helped build the original cabin.

Councilmember Chambers stated he has been working on changing the name and we do now have the blessing of the Bloughs to change the name of the park to Ivan and Jane Blough Park or something of that nature. Would like to see a hard surface parking lot, bathroom and drinking fountain become of 990 N. Washington. Would like to see it done in 3 years and it would be a good addition to our City Parks. Also would like to see the chimes put back up and a plaque for Gary Dietzel put on it.

Peggy Covert who resides at 982 N Washington is very pleased and appreciates what she is hearing and that Council is listening to the public and their requests. Also would like to get some kids to lay seeds for butterflies. Ivan Blough was a huge part of Scouts. Some informational signs would be nice of the history of the area.

Perry Beachum thinks renaming is a good idea.

Kim Dloughy stated his son is an Eagle and he is thrilled in hearing all this. Ivan Blough was a huge part of Scouts here in Lowell.

Public Hearing closed.

Councilmember Groves likes all the ideas, all good things.

Councilmember Chambers recommends the Boy Scouts Troops have reservations rights first, before other groups.

Councilmember Salzwedel wants to make sure, if there are Indian burials there, that we do things correctly.

Councilmember Yankovich likes all the ideas as well.

Mayor DeVore agrees there is a lot to do going forward, testing the soil is in the works.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by CHAMBERS that the City Council approve including 990 N Washington and all the surrounding undesignated parcels into the park system, upon the annexation from Vergennes Township.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Devore announced a 5-minute break.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Friends of the Library Shed.

City Manager Michael Burns read his memo stating the Library is asking to put a shed outside of the Library on City property, for the use of their twice a year book sales. Cost will be under \$5000. Burns is asking Council for permission to use City property for this.

Denise Barker with the Kent District Library explained in more detail.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by GROVES that Lowell City Council allow Friends of the Library to build a shed on the City property for book storage and sale needs.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

6. **BOARD/COMMISSION REPORTS.**

Councilmember Yankovich stated the EXPO is next week at the Lowell High School, Saturday, March 25, 2025 and is hoping to kick off the new website for LARA at the EXPO.

Councilmember Salzwedel stated we tried to have an Arbor Board Meeting, but there was not a quorum, will try next meeting again. He also attended the LL&P meeting; they had zero outages in February!

Councilmember Chambers stated the meeting for the Planning Commission was cancelled.

Councilmember Groves wanted say her praises for Shannon Kennedy, the new Executive Director at the Chamber of Commerce for her taking over for Liz Baker and doing it so well.

Mayor DeVore had Fire Authority; they promoted Bob Homes from Lieutenant to Captain, well deserved. They are going to grab a couple white Tahoe's and put them in service, fully licensed and stocked. At

Vision meeting, they are discussing moving the community cleanup from a Fall event to a Spring event as well as they are working on a Vision Alliance group, which would entail two people from each community to form an alliance. There will be a Pancake Breakfast from 7 to 11 on Saturday morning, March 25, 2023, before the EXPO.

Bruce Barker stated the City of Lowell will be having a Joint Meeting with Lowell Township and Vergennes Township on April 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

7. **CITY MANAGERS REPORT.**

City Manager Michael Burns went over the following:

- Thanked Matt Bloom from Bloom Specialties for cleaning up some graffiti in the City. Got 98% of the debris out of there.
- Staff is currently working on the budget.
- Had the bid openings for the Monroe Street Project. Low bid just over 3 Million, high bid came in under estimate. Going through everything right now to make sure that the all the requirements for USDA are met. Special meeting will be Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 6:30 pm to approve the bids and the bonds ordinance language. Even though we are seeking finance through the USDA, a 40-year loan at 2% interest in comparison to regular bond markets, we are seeing about a 1.1 Million dollars savings with going with the USDA.
- We purchased a hot box machine for about \$3000 for the DPW for patch work instead of cold patching .We are already using it and very happy with it.

8. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Thank you to Teresa Beachum, as she found someone to fill the Look Memorial Fund appointment.

9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember Groves thanked everyone for coming.

Councilmember Chamber reminded everyone that the EXPO is this weekend. Coffee with Council is Saturday morning at 8 am as well.

Councilmember Yankovich stated he misspoke on the LCTV Board needing to change the ordinance and how they approve grants. They are happy with it the way it is.

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

Mayor DeVore reminded everyone of the pancake breakfast on Saturday morning and then go to the EXPO.

10. **MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DIRECT CITY MANAGER TO PROCEED WITH LABOR NEGOTIATIONS.**

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by CHAMBERS to go into closed session at 8:49pm.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

11. MOTION TO GO BACK INTO OPEN SESSION @ 9:36

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by CHAMBERS to go back into open session at 9:36.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED DEVORE and seconded by SALZWEDEL to direct City Manager Michael Burns to proceed with labor negotiations.

YES: Mayor DeVore, Councilmembers Salzwedel, Yankovich, Chambers and Groves.

No: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

12. ADJOURNMENT.

IT WAS MOVED SALZWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to adjourn @ 9:37 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Mike DeVore, Mayor

Sue Ullery, Lowell City Clerk