

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, MONDAY MARCH 20, 2017.

Mayor Denise Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Denise Lawrence and Council Members Joanne Bennett, Dave Lucas, Tim Schaiberger, Rusty Showalter, Aaron Tuttle, and Dan Weiler.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager Heather Grace, Treasurer/Clerk John Dantzer, Police Chief Ken Walters, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Dan Robb, City Attorney Dantzer, and County Commissioner Bruce Reetz.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

* * * * *

At 6:02, Mayor Denise Lawrence opened the public hearing to take public comment on a possible change to Lindsay St., making it a one-way street and installing a sidewalk to make it safer for students walking to and from school.

Jim Delahanty asked if a traffic flow study has been done yet to determine if it meets the needs for a one-way street. It was noted that it has not been done yet.

Mark Minnich noted that he thought the idea was good to increase safety for the children.

Dave Beck applauded the idea of safety for children but noted that he thought there might be better ideas to increase safety because there are inadequate sidewalks going north and south from Lindsay. He further noted there are also no sidewalks on Fifth St. He further noted his concern with snow plowing issues and winter safety concerns. He offered the idea that maybe a better idea would be to build more sidewalks throughout the area and connect more sidewalks that are coming from Lindsay St.

Dave Golden asked if it had been determined how the sidewalk and new road would be constructed. He further noted his concern that the sidewalk should be extended beyond Fifth St all the way to Annie St, not only for children but also adults that may be walking. He noted a concern that depending on what side of the road the sidewalk was, there could be issues with existing house lot lines and that there may be bridge issues to deal with.

No one else wished to be heard on the matter.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:15 PM

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

Manager Grace thanked everyone for their comments.

* * * * *

Dan Robb addressed Council and presented the sign that he received at a recent Michigan Rural Water Conference where the West Branch Area Wastewater Treatment Plant was named the Wastewater Utility Plant of the Year. He noted that it is given to only one plant in the entire state of Michigan.

* * * * *

A request was submitted by the Chamber of Commerce asking to hold a circus on August 20, 2017.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY LUCAS, TO APPROVE THE CHAMBER TO HOLD A CIRCUS ON AUGUST 20, 2017

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO POSTPONE THE DECISION ON MAKING LINDSAY ST. A ONE-WAY STREET AND TO RETURN IT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

Manager Grace updated Council on the procedures for the regulation of parking within the City.

Joe Clark noted his concern to Council on losing parking spots downtown and offered the suggestion to look into possibly removing the green barrier between the sidewalk and curb to allow for a wider street and repainting the street so they would not lose the parking spots.

Member Schaiberger asked if there were any other options for future parking. Manager Grace noted that there was not anything that they could develop in the short term.

Manager Grace discussed a parking program that other Cities, such as Gaylord, have used with parking. She noted that they have parking time limits and have permits and reserved areas for tenants and workers which would free up more parking along the businesses.

Member Showalter asked if the green space buffer was eliminated on North Second and North Third where the parking spots were eliminated, would it be wide enough to not lose the parking spots? Manager Grace noted that it probably would be wide enough but it would be costly and it would go against the current planning and zoning which calls for a green buffer whenever possible but that it could be considered.

* * * * *

City Attorney, Gabriel Dantzer, updated Council on the sale of the vacant lot in the Industrial Park and noted that the contract was approved and that she would be submitting it for signatures to finalize it.

Member Showalter asked about utility easements and Attorney Dantzer noted that there was a utility easement drawn into the agreement.

* * * * *

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY WEILER, TO PAY THE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$69,312.74.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

A communication from the Tolfree Foundation was shared asking to have their annual Ride On event go through downtown and have a police escort.

Manager Grace asked Chief Walters if he had any issues with the request and he noted that he did not.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE TOLFREE FOUNDATION RIDE ON EVENT AND ALLOW A POLICE ESCORT THROUGH TOWN.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 17-05

RESOLUTION #17-05

WHEREAS, Progress St. is currently designated as a local street, and

**WHEREAS, Progress St. is currently carrying a relatively high volume of traffic,
and**

**WHEREAS, Progress St. provides an integral network to service the traffic
demands created by commercial and other traffic generating centers, and**

**WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, at their regular meeting on February 14,
2017, approved the recommendation to City Council to change the designation of Progress
St. from a Local to a Major Street, and**

**WHEREAS, the City Council at their regular meeting on March 20, 2017, examined
the recommendation from Planning Commission and agreed that the designation of
Progress St should be changed from a Local to a Major street, and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the West Branch City Council
hereby designates Progress Street to be reclassified as a Major Street.**

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

**MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO APPROVE THE WATER BILL INSERT
REQUEST FROM NORTH WOODS KNIT AND PEARL AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT INCREASE THE COST
OF POSTAGE.**

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

Manager Grace shared information on a grant opportunity to build a dog park. She further noted that it appeared to be a zero match grant.

Council discussed the pros and cons of having a dog park.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY LAWRENCE, TO APPROVE MANAGER GRACE TO HAVE GRANT COORDINATOR, KELLI COLLINS, LOOK FURTHER INTO OBTAINING A GRANT FOR A DOG PARK.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY LAWRENCE, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MCL 15.268 (H) AND (E) TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF PENDING LITIGATION THAT ARE SUBJECT TO ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY LAWRENCE, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY LAWRENCE, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO ALLOW THE CITY ATTORNEY TO PROCEED WITH THE RESPONSE OF PLEADINGS, TO ALLOW THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN ANY NECESSARY DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE LAWSUIT, AND ALLOW THE CITY ATTORNEY TO ENTER INTO ANY TYPE OF NEGOTIATIONS DEEMED NECESSARY WITH THE OPPOSING COUNCIL.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY LAWRENCE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE WORK SESSION HELD MARCH 9, 2017 AND THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD MARCH 9, 2017.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

* * * * *

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE FEBRUARY POLICE REPORT, THE TREASURERS REPORT AND INVESTMENT REPORT, AS WELL AS THE MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING HELD MARCH 13, 2017

Yes — Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

Communications from Charter Communications on cable lineup changes were shared.

An I-75 road construction article was shared.

The MDOT Annual Rural Elected Officials meeting notice was shared.

Manager Grace noted the date and time that SHPO Representative, Robb McKay, would be touring the City as part of the facade grant process.

* * * * *

Member Showalter noted that he will be attending the MML Capital Conference.

Member Lucas noted that he will also be attending the MML Capital Conference.

Member Bennett commended Wastewater Superintendent Dan Robb for winning the Wastewater Utility plant of the year.

Member Schaiberger noted that on April 3rd they will be holding a tip night at G's Pizzeria to raise money for the West Branch/Rose City Music Boosters. He further noted there will be a free concert on April 7th with all donations going to the same booster organization.

Mayor Lawrence noted that there will be a grand opening on March 21 for the new Ogemaw Pharmacy at 11:00.

Mayor Lawrence noted that the Fabulous Fridays group does have some events planned and are working on finalizing details.

* * * * *

Manager Grace noted that she is working on the budget for 2017/2018 and was seeking direction from Council on the Capital Improvements Policy and would like to focus on sidewalks, parking lots, and street striping instead of road construction this year. She also noted that she would like to look into the possibility of applying for a bond to cover road construction costs for future projects because most of them will be larger projects that require infrastructure improvements as well.

Member Weiler asked if the parking lots were going to be redesigned or just resurfaced. Manger Grace noted they would be looking at both.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE 2017/2018 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT POLICY TO FOCUS ON SIDEWALKS, PARKING LOTS, AND STREET STRIPING; AS WELL AS HAVE MANAGER GRACE CONTINUE TO LOOK INTO FUNDING, INCLUDING BONDING, FOR FUTURE STREET PROJECTS.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

Manager Grace noted that she will also be attending the MML Capital Conference.

Manager Grace noted that she would like to schedule a work session to go over the March Manager review and Police Department Budget issues.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO SCHEDULE A WORK SESSION FOR TUESDAY MARCH 28, 2017 AT 6:00 PM.

Yes – Bennett, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter, Tuttle, Weiler

No – None

Absent –None

Motion carried

* * * * *

Mayor Lawrence thanked GLD Management and Rusty Showalter for the donation of tickets to the camel races.

* * * * *

Joe Clark addressed Council with concerns on changing truck traffic routes throughout the City.

Lois Bergquist welcomed new Council Member Aaron Tuttle.

* * * * *

Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Denise Lawrence, Mayor

John Dantzer, Clerk