

AUGUST 17, 2020

The Common Council of the City of La Porte met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Monday, August 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge

Councilwoman Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Feikes, Galloway, Cutler, Franke, Vincent, Brown, and West

Absent: None

Minutes

As each Council Member received an advance copy of the minutes from the previous meeting, Mayor Dermody asked for a motion to approve. Councilwoman Feikes moved to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler. The Mayor asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes. Councilwoman Feikes stated that she needed to make a correction to her Park Board report from last meeting. She stated that she inadvertently referred to the Girl Scout Building at 1604 First Street as the old telephone building. Motion passed unanimously.

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Joanne Layman read the following statement on behalf of Clerk-Treasurer Courtney Parthun:

“Back in March, before the Governor even put in place the utility moratorium, the City voluntarily suspended shut offs, penalties for late payments and delinquency notices in an effort to help our residents through this difficult time. Following the expiration of the Governor’s moratorium, and as many people are getting back to work, procedures in the billing office will be shifting back to normal. This past Friday, the Utility Billing Office sent delinquency notices by mail, and beginning August 21, the City will resume shut offs for nonpayment. As we begin to make this shift, we want people to know that we are here to help! We do not want to shut anyone off, and we have resources to help those in need - we just need individuals to call and ask for help. Our team in the billing office can assist residents in creating payment plans to allow them time to pay off their balance. We can also connect individuals in need of financial assistance with Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski or other local social service agencies. We won’t be shutting off service to individuals who make arrangements with us - all it takes is a phone call. City Hall is open by phone and email only at the moment, but all arrangements can be made virtually for everyone’s safety. We can be reached by phone at 219-362-3175, or by email at UtilityBilling@CityofLaPorteIN.gov. We currently have 764 delinquent accounts owing a combined total of over \$206,000. This isn’t an issue that’s isolated to La Porte - communities throughout the region, State and country are in the same boat we are. We do not expect these individuals to pay their balance all at once - we just need them to reach out to us and make arrangements. Like we said, all it takes is a phone call.”

Petitions and Comments of Citizens

Blake Boardman, 1108 Ohio Street, addressed the Council with his sons Liam and Wyatt regarding making lemonade stands legal at the State and local level. He stated that there are only 14 states where lemonade stands are currently legal, and

Indiana is not one of them. Mr. Boardman has already spoken to a State Representative but hopes to turn this around locally first. Food and business permits are the current barriers for lemonade stands who are of no competition to other businesses locally. A lemonade stand, for our youth, fosters the entrepreneurial spirit and helps children learn money, social skills, how to run a business, overhead, profits, etc. The Mayor added that currently, lemonade stands are illegal and that the Health Department has some jurisdiction over this subject matter locally, but that he and the Council support lemonade stands and what they teach our youth.

Brian Kajer, no address stated, thanked the Council and the Mayor for their hard work in helping La Porte expand. He also wanted to notify the Council that the Park Department placed approximately thirty poles along Park Street to stop people from driving up to the pavilion at Lindewald Park. He stated that people are still driving around the horseshoe area and up to the pavilion, defeating the purpose of placing over thirty poles. Mr. Kajer is asking the Council to investigate other options to solve this problem.

Larry Pinkerton, 1612 L Street, donated ten dollars to Liam and Wyatt Boardman's next lemonade stand. He stated that he went to the Airport for the B-17 on display and noted his delight in its visit to La Porte. He then discussed his lingering concerns about the closure of Detroit Street. Mr. Pinkerton read from The Rail Administration Highway Rail which he received from the City Planner. Mr. Pinkerton stated that the data shows there were eleven crashes at the Tipton Street crossing, seven crashes at the Pulaski Street crossing and five crashes including one fatality at the Detroit Street crossing. He stated that he believed Detroit Street was the safest of the three crossings according to the data and stated he would get back with City Engineer, Nick Minich regarding three design possibilities.

Standing Committee Reports

Airport Authority - Councilwoman Brown reported that the Airport Committee celebrated their 75th Anniversary last week with the Sentimental Journey B-17 Bomber which was a sight to see and thanked the La Porte Municipal Airport for bringing it to La Porte.

Tree Commission - Councilwoman Brown reported the next Tree Commission meeting will be Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 5PM at City Hall.

Park Board - Councilwoman Feikes reported that the Park Board will meet Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 4 PM at the Park Office.

Traffic Commission - Councilwoman Feikes reported that Traffic Commission will meet Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:00 PM at the Police Station.

Planning Commission - Councilman Vincent reported that the Plan Commission has a new plat that will come before City Council within the next few weeks for the Industrial Park.

Police Merit Commission - Councilman Galloway reported that Police Merit Commission met August 11, 2020 and announced the retirement of Officer Reed and Officer Behenna, both longtime Police Officers for the City. He also reported that five recruits passed background checks.

Business Improvement District - Councilwoman Cutler reported that the Business Improvement District Board cancelled the August 10 meeting due sudden inclement weather. The next meeting will be held Monday, September 14 at 5 PM.

Urban Enterprise Association - Councilwoman Cutler reported the next meeting of the Urban Enterprise Association is scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 4 PM. There is a scheduled pre meeting of the residential subcommittee meeting at 3 PM. Both meetings will be held via Zoom Web Conferencing.

Alcohol Beverage Review Commission - Councilwoman Cutler reported that the Alcohol Beverage Review Commission meeting was held on Thursday, July 30. The election of officers occurred for 2020 with Brian Chalik elected as President, Brett Binversie as Vice President and Laura Cutler as Secretary/Treasurer. This Commission meets on an as needed basis and Bert Cook presented the current project and permit application for discussion. This application, for a Municipal Riverfront Alcohol Permit for El Cantarito, is on the agenda for tonight's Council meeting.

School Board - Councilman Franke reported that the School Board met in person for the first time since COVID and that on August 20, 2020, the decision for the start of school will be announced.

Redevelopment Commission - Councilman Franke reported that the Redevelopment Commission will meet the last Wednesday of the month.

Fire Merit Commission - Councilwoman West reported that the Fire Merit Commission certified the new hiring list which will remain in effect until May 2022.

Proclamation Celebrating Women 's Equality Day and Commemorating the Centennial of the Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment

Mayor Dermody read a Proclamation Celebrating Women's Equality Day and Commemorating the Centennial of the Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. The Mayor presented the Proclamation to Barbara Collins.

Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Section 94-237, Loading Zones, of the Municipal Code of the City of La Porte, Indiana

Councilwoman Feikes moved to introduce an Ordinance Amending Section 94-237, Loading Zones, of the Municipal Code of the City of La Porte, Indiana in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilman Galloway and unanimously carried. The Ordinance was read in its entirety.

Councilwoman Feikes reported to the Council that Father Ian from Sacred Heart Church made this request for a loading zone at the side of the church because it would make it easier for parishioners to more safely and easily come and go. There are no houses in front of this proposed loading zone so there are generally no cars parked there anyway. There has been no residential opposition to the proposed loading zone thus far.

Second and final reading of the Ordinance will take place at the next regular Council meeting.

Introduction of an Ordinance No. 10-267 Establishing Condemnation of a Dwelling or Dwelling Unit

Councilwoman West moved to introduce an Ordinance No. 10-267 Establishing Condemnation of a Dwelling or Dwelling Unit in its entirety; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously carried. The Ordinance was read in its entirety.

Mayor Dermody stated that this Ordinance will allow properties to be condemned and tenants to leave the property should there be more than five police calls in a six-month period to a specific property, deeming it a chronic nuisance property. He reported that this will assist police and code enforcement with people who do not want to behave in our community. Discussion was held regarding the defined number of calls and time frame in which those calls happen.

The second and final reading of the Ordinance will take place at the next regular Council meeting.

Introduction of a n Ordinance Establishing Rules & Regulations for Plaza 618

Councilman Franke moved to introduce an Ordinance Establishing Rules & Regulations for Plaza 618; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously carried. The Ordinance was read in its entirety.

Motion/Vote - Suspend the Rules

Councilwoman Feikes moved to suspend the rules; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously passed.

Mayor Dermody welcomed discussion regarding the need to establish rules and regulations for the water feature at Plaza 618. City Attorney Nick Otis stated that upon investigation and with input from several Department Heads, this water feature was not built for detergents, soap, shampoo or human waste and these items can severely damage, if not ruin the entire system.

Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Establishing Rules & Regulations for Plaza 618

Councilman Franke moved to read an Ordinance Establishing Rules & Regulations for Plaza 618 for the second time by title only; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously passed. The Ordinance was by title only.

Motion/Vote - Adopt Ordinance 12-2020

Councilwoman Feikes made a motion to adopt the Ordinance as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously passed.

**ORDINANCE NO. 12-2020
ESTABLISHING RULES & REGULATIONS FOR PLAZA 618**

Introduction of a Resolution of the Common Council of La Porte, Indiana Approving Application for a Municipal Riverfront Alcohol Permit Filed by Romo LLC, d/b/a El Cantarito

Councilwoman Cutler moved to introduce a Resolution of the Common Council of La Porte, Indiana Approving Application for a Municipal Riverfront Alcohol Permit Filed by Romo LLC, d/b/a El Cantarito read for the first and only time; motion seconded by Councilwoman Feikes and unanimously passed. The Resolution was read in its entirety.

Bert Cook, Executive Director of La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership, stated that this license is strictly for a dining establishment. El Cantarito is a great fit for this Riverfront Alcohol License as they have opened a location within the Riverfront District and have several other well-established locations in the region.

Motion/Vote - Adopt Resolution R-12-2020

Councilwoman Feikes moved to adopt the Resolution as presented; motion seconded by Councilwoman Cutler and unanimously carried.

**RESOLUTION R-12-2020
RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COULC OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
APPROVING
APPLICATION FOR A MUNICIPAL RIVERFRONT ALCOHOL PERMIT
FILED BY ROMO LLC, d/b/a EL CANTARITO**

Other Business

Mayor Dermody stated that the City is in the middle of Budgets and while he understands that times are tough for residents, the City is no different. Due to property tax caps on a \$10 million dollar budget, we will be short \$2.5 million along with an additional \$500,000 to \$1 million from the State of Indiana in other lost tax revenues. This gives us an opportunity to rethink how we are doing things to provide the services that this community wants. Mayor Dermody stated that one of the biggest challenges the City of La Porte faces is the fact that we are losing officers to other communities where they can make ten to fifteen thousand more per year. Mayor Dermody noted that Law Enforcement is important to this community to keep us safe and that we cannot afford to lose anymore officers. This is a serious concern and we are looking to prioritize and address it with this Budget.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Councilwoman Feikes moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Councilwoman Brown and unanimously carried.

Approved:

Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor

Attest: _____
Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: September 8, 2020