

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, May 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Esteven Juarez

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioner Excused

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Vice Mayor Cooney, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Juarez. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Invocation

The invocation, given by Rabbi Hannah Estrin from the Congregation of Moses, was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Proclamations
2023-20-01

Commissioner Praedel proclaimed May 2023 *Bike Month*. Community Planner Nolan Bergstrom received the proclamation.

2023-20-02

Commissioner Hoffman read a proclamation recognizing the *Society for History and Racial Equity 20th Anniversary*. Chianté Lymon received the proclamation on behalf of the Society for History and Racial Equity (SHARE).

Adoption of the Agenda

By unanimous consent the City Commission adopted its meeting agenda as presented.

Public Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.

2023-20-03

Public Hearing re: the
PY 2023 Action Plan
and Budget for HUD
Funds

At 7:12 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on the Program Year 2023 Action Plan as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Compliance Specialist Julie Johnston delivered a presentation entitled *Program Year 2023 Action Plan Public Hearing*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to comments and questions from Commissioners, Compliance Specialist Johnston provided the following information:

- the City did not have any areas designated as “blighted” because HUD had specific requirements and conditions for making this designation. Instead, the City chose to work with individual blighted properties.
- some blighted properties were demolished voluntarily by the owner; other properties went through the Dangerous Buildings Board process.

- the City partnered with Community Homeworks for a code enforcement repair program. The Code Enforcement Division would make referrals for people whose homes needed repairs to address violations and make them habitable.
- demolitions cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 depending on the size of the structure and whether remediation was needed for hazardous materials.
- compliance staff did not have a list of properties slated for demolition. Demolition recommendations were made by the Code Enforcement Division.
- regarding the proposed budget and the reference to small business loans/code enforcement, program income from the repayment of small business loans made in prior program years was being proposed as a funding source for code enforcement activities.
- it was difficult to generalize about the City's role in blight abatement, but the process could be very long.

Commissioner Decker stated she received calls from residents concerned about blighted properties, and she noted the \$50,000 budgeted for demolitions would only pay for removing two structures at the high end of the cost range.

Vice Mayor Cooney thanked the members of the Community Development Act Advisory Committee (CDAAC) for their work on the proposed Annual Action Plan and budget. Vice Mayor Cooney stated the amount of federal funding available to address housing was disgraceful, and he stated the City needed to advocate for the federal government to get serious about housing.

Mayor Anderson stated federal dollars were not the only funding source for demolitions; sometimes private funds from property owners or insurance companies were used. Mayor Anderson thanked the members of CDAAC for their work on the budget recommendations. Mayor Anderson recognized the presence of representatives from Community Homeworks and Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS) and remarked on the City's dependence on community partners.

When an opportunity was given for public comments on the Program Year 2023 Action Plan and Action Plan Budget, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Matt Milcarek, City resident, expressed support for the 2023 Action Plan and thanked members of CDAAC and City staff for their work on this item.

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve the Program Year 2023 Action Plan and Action Plan Budget.

With a roll call vote this motion passed.

AYES: Commissioners Decker, Hess, Hoffman, Vice Mayor Cooney, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Praedel*

2023-20-03

Public Hearing re: the PY 2023 Action Plan and Budget for HUD Funds (cont'd)

2023-20-03

Approval of the PY 2023 Action Plan and Budget for HUD Funds

Consent Agenda

*At the time of the vote, Commissioner Praedel announced he was abstaining because his employer would be a recipient of funds under the proposed Action Plan and Action Plan Budget.

Consent Agenda items were presented as follows with a recommendation to approve the items and authorize the City Manager to sign all related documents on behalf of the city:

2023-20-04

- approval of a contract with OHM Advisors for the development of the Parks and Recreation Five Year Master Plan 2024-2029 in the amount of \$104,000.

2023-20-05

- approval of a professional services agreement with Mannik & Smith Group, Inc for the design of the Bronson Boulevard resurfacing project in the amount of \$112,583.

2023-20-06

- approval of an extension of the contract with Rathco Safety Supply, LLC for sign installation and maintenance services in the amount of \$182,275.

2023-20-07

- approval of an extension of the contract with Santiago Services, LLC for general and specialized trash and debris removal services in the amount of \$453,000.

2023-20-08

- approval of a two-year renewal contract with Republic Services, to perform quarterly bulk trash removal in the amount of \$559,214.04

2023-20-09

- approval of a 24-month contract extension with Constellation New Energy – Gas Division, LLC for natural gas to be used to heat selected City facilities in the amount of \$750,000.

2023-20-10

Resolution 23-21

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** recommending approval of a Social District Permit for Saugatuck Brewing Company, LLC at 200 East Michigan Avenue.

2023-20-11

Resolution 23-22

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** to authorize an official representative and certifying officer for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant documentation.

2023-20-12

- acceptance of a federal Highway Safety Improvement Program grant in the amount of \$164,000 for the citywide signal optimization project.

Vice Mayor Cooney, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve the consent agenda requests and authorize the City Manager to sign all related documents on behalf of the City.

With a roll call vote this motion passed.

AYES: Commissioners Decker, Hess, Hoffman, Praedel*, Vice Mayor Cooney, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

*At the time of the vote, Commissioner Praedel abstained from voting on item G-8, a resolution authorizing an official representative and certifying officer for HUD grant documentation, because it was related to Item F-1, approval of the 2023 Annual Action Plan and Action Plan Budget for HUD funds.

City Manager Ritsema provided the following reports and updates:

- parcels at the corner of Stadium Drive and Drake Road had been removed from the City-wide Zoning Code and Map Update.
- a meeting for residents to discuss the Zoning Code and map update would be held at the Dormouse Theatre on Portage Street on Wednesday, May 3rd at 6:00 p.m.
- Public Safety Officers saved the life of a man whose van had fallen on his chest.

Public Safety Chief Dave Boysen spoke about ongoing problems with large crowds at the Campus Pointe Mall and reported conversations with the property owner had not been productive. Chief Boysen announced a meeting of community stakeholders on May 8th to discuss potential solutions.

Next, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments from City Commissioners.

Commissioner Hoffman thanked Chief Boysen for his presentation at the Committee of the Whole (CoW) meeting. Commissioner Hoffman recommended a committee of City Commissioners review and revise the evaluation process for Commission appointees, including the use of a new evaluation tool. Commissioner Hoffman requested that CoW meetings be used for conversation and dialogue among Commissioners regarding issues facing the community.

Commissioner Hess stated she would serve on the appointee evaluation committee. Commissioner Hess noted Governor Whitmer had declared May “Military Appreciation Month.” Commissioner Hess thanked Parks and Recreation Department staff for cleaning up City parks and getting them ready for summer. Commissioner Hess announced public meetings about the two-way street conversion project would take place on May 24th and May 30th. Commissioner Hess spoke about the problem of speeding traffic and the need for drivers to be patient and slow down. Commissioner Hess stated speeding in an urban environment did not get people to their destinations faster. Commissioner Hess urged people to be aware of how fast they were going and slow down.

Commissioner Decker remarked on the design contract for the Bronson Boulevard resurfacing project and urged staff and the contractor to seek input from property owners. Commissioner Decker noted the City had hired another grant writer to seek funding from outside sources. Commissioner Decker expressed support for using CoW meetings to have open dialogue among Commissioners regarding issues facing the community.

Commissioner Praedel spoke about the need for a real-time process to give feedback to the City Commission appointees and stated was he was willing to work on the appointee evaluation process. Commissioner Praedel expressed agreement with Commissioners Hoffman and Decker regarding CoW meetings and stated the City Commission needed to hold itself to a high level of transparency. Commissioner Praedel reported good attendance at the community meetings for the Zoning Code updates. Commissioner Praedel noted another community meeting would take place on Wednesday in the Edison Neighborhood. Commissioner Praedel stated world class cities had good non-motorized

City Manager’s Report

Commissioner
Comments

Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

transportation systems, and he encouraged the City to keep promoting and expanding non-motorized transportation. Commissioner Praedel wished his three-year-old son “happy birthday” and reflected on welcoming a child into the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Praedel expressed appreciation to the City for supporting him as a young parent.

Mayor Anderson remarked on his participation in the Milwood Little League Opening Day festivities and the positive impact of recreational opportunities for young people.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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