

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, October 16, 2023 at 5:01 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
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Also present were City Manager Ritsema, City Attorney Aaron Leal, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Public Comments

When an opportunity was given for general public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

In Person

Nehemiah Scudder, City resident, spoke about the national debt.

An anonymous non-resident stated Black Lives Matter (BLM) had endorsed the recent attacks by Hamas against Israeli civilians, and he requested that the City remove the BLM mural on Rose Street.

Call In

None

2023-41-01
Downtown Updates

Economic Development Supervisor Paul Thuringer, Assistant City Manager Rebekah Kik, and Downtown Development Authority/Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board Vice Chair Grant Fletcher delivered a presentation entitled *Downtown Updates, October 2023*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to questions and comments from City Commissioners, Assistant City Manager Kik provided the following information:

- City staff has not directly managed the downtown area for the past 30 years. As a result, staff were still trying to figure out how to scale down and establish what the City should be doing with and for the downtown. Information exchange during the transition was difficult because Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership (KDP) was gone; the working relationship was very good, but there were capacity issues on both sides.
- KDP had event staff and a 45-page manual for how to plan and manage events at the Arcadia Festival Site. With KDP gone, the Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center and Deb Droppers were helping the Parks and Recreation Department with events at downtown parks, Bates Alley and the Festival Site.

- a Request for Proposal (RFP) for management of the parking system had just been processed, and another RFP would be issued soon for upgrades to the parking payment systems.
- business attraction/recruitment is a specialized field: this skill set does not currently exist within the City organization, Southwest Michigan First, or Chamber of Commerce. The City attempts to address requests for information, but staff is focusing more on retaining existing businesses. Developers are trying to fill vacant spaces, and they know the City's tools and capacities.

Commissioner Praedel remarked that many people had expressed reservations about a public/private partnership for public restrooms downtown.

Commissioner Decker expressed support for the proposed changes, commended staff for seeking grants, and encouraged them to continue seeking outside funding sources for the downtown.

Mayor Anderson reviewed how the funding model for downtown had collapsed and remarked on the struggle of stakeholders to adjust to new realities. Mayor Anderson acknowledged the work of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) Boards and their committees. Mayor Anderson stated there was a focused effort to create a shared vision and move forward together. Mayor Anderson acknowledged Carl Brown, who was leaving the DDA and DEGA Boards after 10 years of service.

Human Resources and Labor Relations Director Shelly Dusek reported the City Commission Subcommittee on Appointee Evaluations had been looking at the evaluation process for City Commission appointees was recommending implementation of a 360-degree review process.

Training and Staff Development Specialist Jessica Partello described the Focal 360 tool from Custom Insight and reviewed the implementation timeline.

In response to questions and comments from City Commissioners, Director Dusek and Training and Staff Development Specialist Partello provided the following information:

- a representative from Custom Insights can do in-person training for Commissioners and department directors. Written materials are available, and Human Resources staff can show users how to interact with the system.
- if an invited reviewer did not complete an evaluation, it would not count against the appointee being reviewed. Some questions have a "n/a" option, which could be used if a reviewer did not have much contact or experience with the person being reviewed.
- City Commissioners and department directors, not direct reports, will be the ones evaluating the appointees. City Commissioners will be able to see the comments made by department directors, but the comments will be anonymous.

Commissioner Praedel remarked that improvements to the appointee review process were a long time coming, and he reported the subcommittee looked at multiple 360-review processes. Commissioner Praedel stated the Focal 360 tool

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Downtown Updates
(cont'd)

2023-41-02

2023 Appointee
Evaluation Process

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2023 Appointee
Evaluation Process
(cont'd)

would be useful, as it would highlight the high and low scores and show the gaps between an employee's self-evaluation and the evaluations of others. Commissioner Praedel added that Focal 360 would allow for real-time evaluations and an expansion of the universe of reviewers.

Commissioner Hoffman noted the new evaluation tool would go beyond identifying bad performance; it would show ways for the employee to improve.

Mayor Anderson thanked Human Resources staff for their assistance and remarked that Commissioners had been talking for years about improving the appointee review process.

City Manager Ritsema acknowledged the presence of the City's 311 Customer Service Center team.

Commissioner
Comments

An opportunity was given for general comments from City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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