

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of Executive Order 2020-75 issued by Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin
Eric Cunningham
Jeanne Hess
Erin Knott
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

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

Invocation

The invocation was given by Bishop Daniel S. Cunningham of The Empowerment Center.

Proclamations
2020-149

Commissioner Hess proclaimed June 2020 *Justice Against Bullying @ School Awareness Month*. Gwendolyn Hooker was present to receive the proclamation.

Commissioner Urban proclaimed June 5, 2020 *National Gun Violence Awareness Day*.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Communications: Public
Safety Update on George
Floyd Protests

City Manager Ritsema stated the City stood in solidarity with people who were protesting the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. City Manager Ritsema asked the community for patience and expressed support for Chief Thomas and the work she was doing.

Public Safety Chief Karianne Thomas provided an update on protests that had taken place over the weekend and used video footage to show and explain why Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) officers had used certain tactics in various situations.

Public Comments

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

Tom Beech, City resident, asked about the City's use-of-force policy for Public Safety Officers and the discipline and termination of officers for violation of that policy.

Stacey Ledbetter, non-resident, spoke about the history of racism in the deployment of public safety services. Ms. Ledbetter asked the City to do more focused listening and voluntary transparency.

Sarah Ruggles, City resident, asked why the City stopped sending KDPS recruits to the police academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), which included training on racism and anti-police bias through

the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) program. Ms. Ruggles asked why KDPS was hiring when the City budget was being cut.

Tanya Bellamy, City resident, spoke about the partnership between the KVCC police academy and TRHT and asked why KDPS recruits were not being sent to KVCC anymore.

Sholanna Lewis, City resident, spoke about the need to value the lives of black people. Ms. Lewis reported conversations between ISAAC and a group of landlords had been productive, and she urged the City to move forward with the anti-discrimination housing ordinance.

Shardea Chambers, City resident, expressed displeasure with KDPS for using officers in riot gear to respond to peaceful protests over the weekend.

Nakia Baylis, non-resident, stated the only way to stop injustice against people of color was to close the power- and wealth-gaps in society.

Rachel Meyer, non-resident, stated she participated in the George Floyd protests over the weekend, and she expressed displeasure with KDPS officers for wearing riot gear to engaging peaceful protesters.

Caren Dybek, City resident, spoke about the partnership between the KVCC Policy Academy and TRHT and asked why KDPS recruits were being sent to other police academies.

Carrie Pickett-Erway, President and CEO of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, expressed opposition to racism, solidarity with communities of color, and a desire to work with community leaders through the TRHT initiative and Anti-Racism Transformation Team to make Kalamazoo the most equitable place to live.

Casey Coker, City resident, stated Kalamazoo needed to address its policing issues and systemic racism. Ms. Coker asked why KDPS recruits were sent to a police academy in Lansing rather than the KVCC Police Academy. Ms. Coker stated the City needed to listen to members of the black community regarding law enforcement and to compensate participants in listening sessions for their time.

Patrick O'Brien, City resident, spoke about the lack of affordable housing and stated that adding laws and regulations to housing providers would increase costs for both providers and people needing housing. Mr. O'Brien stated zoning changes were needed to allow for micro housing and greater density. Mr. O'Brien stated the proposed housing ordinance would create new risks for housing providers, which would increase costs.

Zack Lassiter, City resident, expressed disagreement with Chief Thomas's explanation of the tactics used by KDPS officers over the weekend and stated the Chief needed to be held accountable.

Ed Genesis, City resident, asked why KDPS was not sending its police recruits to KVCC, where they would benefit from the partnership with TRHT.

Public Comments
(cont'd)

Consent Agenda

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

2020-150

- approval of the purchase of Microsoft Office 365 annual licenses from CDWG through the MiDeal cooperative purchasing program in the amount of \$142,507.95.

2020-151

- approval of a sole source purchase with Ferguson Water Works for the installation of 12 Water Meter Gateway Collectors, in the amount of \$273,720.

2020-152

- approval of a professional service agreement with Peerless Midwest, Inc. for Well 46A Completion in the amount of \$146,545.50.

2020-153

Resolution 20-32

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** setting a public hearing on the 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan and 2019 Action Plan Substantial Amendment and DRAFT 2020 Action Plan and Budget required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2020-154

Resolution 20-33

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** to authorize membership in the Michigan Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network.

2020-155

- approval of an amendment to the recently adopted Social Equity Policy so as to be consistent with recent changes to the State's social equity program.

2020-156

- authorization of the settlement of a claim from Icon Properties for a sewer backup that occurred in August 2019 at 1319 Lafayette Street in the amount of \$26,454.54.

2020-157

- authorization for the City Manager to execute the proposed Extension of the Wastewater Agreement with the Village of Vicksburg.

2020-158

- approval of a recommendation to postpone until June 15, 2020 consideration of the sale of a portion of Eastern Hills Golf Course to the State of Michigan in the amount of \$9,400 for the construction of a roundabout located at Gull Road (M 343) and G Avenue.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Knott, moved to approve the consent agenda requests and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the City.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Regular Agenda

Regular Agenda Items were considered next.

Neighborhood Activator Katie Reilly and Peter Kushner, President of the Oakland/Winchell Neighborhood Association, provided an overview of the Winchell Neighborhood Plan and the process used to develop the plan.

Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to adopt a **RESOLUTION** affirming the adoption of the Winchell Neighborhood Plan 2020 as a subplan to the City of Kalamazoo's Comprehensive Plan.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Community Investment Manager Antonio Mitchell provided an overview of the proposed Kalamazoo Micro-Enterprise Grant Fund program.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to approve the use of \$300,000 from the City of Kalamazoo Business Development Fund budget funded from the Foundation for Excellence Aspiration Fund to create the Kalamazoo Micro-Enterprise Grant Fund (KMEG); and approval of a budget amendment to allocate the same amount from fund balance.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

City Clerk Borling reported absent ballot applications for the August 3rd election had been mailed to voters on the Permanent Application List at the end of the prior week. City Clerk Borling stated approximately 11,300 voters were on that list, compared to 4,600 who were on the permanent list in January.

In response to questions from Mayor Anderson, City Clerk Borling explained the format of the August 3rd election and stated voters could use the absentee ballot application for the August election to also request a ballot for the November election.

City Attorney Robinson explained the changes to the marijuana Social Equity Policy, which the City Commission had approved on the Consent Agenda. City Attorney Robinson reported he was asked to join a group of attorneys who were developing recommendations for changes to the Open Meetings Act regarding virtual meetings.

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

Commissioner Cunningham stated staff did try to address and respond to questions from citizens, and he stated Commissioners did not ask Chief Thomas questions earlier in the meeting because they had been in conversations with her over the course of the day. Commissioner Cunningham thanked people who were involved

2020-0159

Resolution 20-34
Approving the Winchell
Neighborhood Plan

2020-0160

Approval of Funding for
the Kalamazoo Micro-
Enterprise Grant Fund
Program

City Clerk's Report

City Attorney's Report

City Commissioner
Comments

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

with the protests to keep the peace, and he especially acknowledged Stephanie Moore for her role and actions. Commissioner Cunningham thanked Mayor Anderson, Vice Mayor Griffin, Commissioner Knott, and KDPS for staying in communication with him throughout the process. Commissioner Cunningham expressed excitement about the positive energy he was seeing. Commissioner Cunningham observed that the problems were not just in KDPS or certain City departments but across the board. Commissioner Cunningham stated he needed help from community leaders and the public, and he encouraged people to ask their leaders, "What are you doing to improve the quality of life for African Americans?" Commissioner Cunningham indicated community leaders should be able to give measurable actions and timelines in response to that question. Commissioner Cunningham asked people to come to the table and engage in a constructive way, and he identified Public Safety Officers, economic improvement, and generational wealth for African Americans as the primary issues that needed to be addressed. Commissioner Cunningham offered remarks on social equity in the marijuana industry. Commissioner Cunningham acknowledged there would be a youth rally on Friday, and he stated the questions about the KVCC police academy were important too.

Commissioner Knott noted June was Pride Month, and she explained that LGBTQ Pride had its origins in riots and resistance in New York City. Commissioner Knott described the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and communities of color. Commissioner Knott stated the country was in crisis, and with a lack of leadership at the national level it was the responsibility of state and local officials to bring attention to implicit bias and historical inequities for people of color. Commissioner Knott stated the City needed to communicate better than it did over the weekend, where 48 hours went by before she was able to get answers to the questions she had been asking concerning the protests. Commissioner Knott remarked on the gap in official, real-time communication, which led to social media taking over that space and shaping the narrative.

Commissioner Praedel commended Chief Thomas for her care for the community. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the events of the weekend and the paradox of seeing a successful launch of astronauts into space, while on earth there was rioting and destruction and people fighting each other. Commissioner Praedel stated the space launch showed that humans could do hard things, and he contrasted the small group of experts who launched people into space with the need for every person to be part of the hard work to address racism. Commissioner Praedel stated white Americans had perpetuated systemic racism for generations, and they bore a greater responsibility to recognize the existence of systemic and institutional racism in our community and around the country. Commissioner Praedel stated he felt the pain, trauma, and emotional burden borne by people of color, and he urged everyone to care for themselves spiritually and emotionally.

Commissioner Hess expressed gratitude to Chief Thomas and KDPS. Commissioner Hess stated the country was experiencing two pandemics: COVID-19 and systemic racism, which was a type of bullying. Commissioner Hess commented that Kalamazoo was big enough to have an impact when addressing racism but small enough to make it work. Commissioner Hess stated education and dialogue were the way out. Commissioner Hess remarked the current City Commission was one of great power.

Commissioner Urban state he was impressed with the young people who showed up to rally and protest, and he remarked that it would be great if more older people

participated in these gatherings. Commissioner Urban offered comments on the increased speed of news and information because of social media, and he urged people to be patient for complete and accurate information to come out.

Vice Mayor Griffin noted this day was the 99th anniversary of the 1921 Tulsa Massacre. Vice Mayor Griffin spoke about how revolution and creating change often involved pain. Vice Mayor Griffin expressed appreciation to the organizers of the protests and acknowledged the work that was required to organize these events. Vice Mayor Griffin urged people who were thinking about organizing such an event to contact people who had experience doing that work. Vice Mayor Griffin stated the community needed to see the videos Chief Thomas showed at the beginning of the meeting, and she indicated she had asked Chief Thomas about the procedures for the Crowd Management Team. Vice Mayor Griffin encouraged people to keep up the same energy and effort, as the work for equity and justice was a marathon, not a sprint. Vice Mayor Griffin stated the community we needed real healing, not band aids.

Mayor Anderson stated it was much better to do this work with seven, smart people. Mayor Anderson stated City Commissioners needed each other and everyone in the community. Mayor Anderson noted there would be ongoing protests and gatherings, and he asked people to speak their minds and build up rather than destroy and tear down. Mayor Anderson called for real action steps.

Commissioner Cunningham expressed appreciation to Mayor Anderson and encouraged people to reach out and share their opinions. Commissioner Cunningham stated some people were calling for the City Commission to adopt a resolution regarding George Floyd. Commissioner Cunningham stated resolutions were fine, but now was a time for action and engagement.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on November 16, 2020

Approved by: _____
David F. Anderson, Mayor
Dated: November 16, 2020

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

Adjournment