

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, July 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of Executive Order 2020-154 (COVID19) 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 Dr. Pradip Sagdeo.

Proclamations

Commissioner Hess read a proclamation recognizing the *League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area 100th Anniversary*. Fran Eckenrode, Co-President, received the proclamation on behalf of the League.

Vice Mayor Griffin proclaimed July 23, 2020 *National Summer Learning Day*. Stacy Jackson, Out-of-School Time Program Development Coach, received the proclamation on behalf of KYDNet.

Mayor Anderson read a proclamation *Honoring Phillip Arthur Blanks*.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

2020-0203

Presentation on Draft
Civil Rights and Fair
Housing Ordinances

City Attorney Robinson, Community Planning and Economic Development Director Rebekah Kik, and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Dorla Bonner delivered a presentation entitled *Chapter 18 Civil Rights Ordinance & Chapter 18A Fair Housing Ordinance: Draft Introduction*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Director Kik stated the Facebook Town Hall would be widely publicized and available through the City's website.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, Director Kik stated feedback on the proposed ordinances should be directed to her at kikr@kalamazoocity.org or to hello@kalamazoocity.org.

Vice Mayor Griffin thanked Director Kik, Director Bonner, and City Attorney Robinson for their work to improve the draft ordinance. Vice Mayor Griffin noted the investigative powers of the Civil Rights Board had been removed in the updated ordinance. Vice Mayor Griffin stated Director Bonner would need to have support and staff assistance to do the investigative work.

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

Public Comments

The following people expressed support for the proposed fair housing/housing equity ordinance:

Shaquise Robertson, City resident
Stephanie Hoffman, City resident
Matt Smith, City resident
Tobi Hanna-Davies, City resident
Ray Sweany, City resident
Ben Brown, City resident
Ed Genesis, City resident
Matthew Lechel, City resident
Dr. Charlae Davis, City resident and Executive Director of ISAAC
Katherine Mason, City resident
Jacob Johnson, City resident
Sholanna Lewis, City resident
Valerie Brooks, City resident
Andrew, a non-resident
Gwendolyn Hooker, City resident

Tom Jangula, City resident, criticized the lack of response from Commissioners to anti-Semitic remarks made at a rally in Bronson Park on Saturday, July 11th. Mr. Jangula called for the City Commission to make an open and public declaration against anti-Semitism.

Timothy Bonds, non-resident, stated he was a paraplegic and was experiencing housing discrimination at the 58 West Apartments.

Benjamin Stanley, City resident, asked whether the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety was able to enforce policies enacted by the City Manager.

Jeff Messer, City resident, asked that the City Commission start holding its meetings as hybrid in-person/electronic meetings, beginning with the meeting scheduled for August 3rd.

Marissa Harrington, City resident, stated the GARE study provided evidence of housing discrimination in the City of Kalamazoo.

Dr. Michelle Johnson, City resident, thanked Patrise Griffin and Stephanie Hoffman for their work on the housing equity ordinance. Dr. Johnson noted she had not received an apology from KDPS for tear-gassing young people at a public rally, and she had not heard an update on the independent investigation into KDPS actions.

Victoria Marcetti, City resident, asked about the City's plans for reparations and affordable housing.

William Roland, City resident, expressed concerns about the volume and speed of traffic in the Northside Neighborhood and asked that something be done. Mr. Roland stated residents were very dissatisfied with the lack of traffic control in the neighborhood.

Public Comments
(cont'd)

Lionel LeBrown, City resident, expressed support for the housing equity ordinance. Mr. LeBrown encouraged the City to be careful when working with the Fair Housing Center, and he asked why the complaint filing period was reduced in the current draft of the ordinance from 180 to 91 days.

Jacob Johnson, City resident, noted Kalamazoo County had declared racism a public health crisis and asked the Mayor and City Manager to discuss reparations and a specific black agenda.

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:

2020-0204

- approval of the purchase of video conferencing equipment from TRACE3 through the MIDeal cooperative purchasing program in the amount of \$121,890.65.

2020-0205
Resolution 20-40

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** designating the polling facility location for Precincts 1 and 3 to be used during the election on August 4, 2020 and at each election thereafter.

2020-0206

- approval and acceptance of a permanent easement with Oakland Ridge Estates for the consideration amount of \$4,592; and a Temporary Grading Permit for the consideration amount of \$1,674.

2020-0207

- approval and acceptance of a permanent easement from Phi Nguyen at 2108 E. Cork Street (parcel #0635227002) for the consideration amount of \$1,026.

2020-0208

- approval and acceptance of a public easement from Jerome Jr. and Donna M. Wilinski at 2122 E. Cork Street (parcel #0635227001) for the consideration amount of \$1,026.

2020-0209

- approval and acceptance of a permanent easement from Kalamazoo Valley Non-Profit Housing Corporation at 2208 E. Cork Street (parcel #0635228003) for the consideration amount of \$1,539.

2020-0210

- approval of the following appointment and reappointment to the Environmental Concerns Committee:
 - the appointment of **Wayne Bond** for a term expiring on January 1, 2023.
 - the reappointment of **Aaron Wright** for a term beginning on January 1, 2020 and expiring on January 1, 2023.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Hess, 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.

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

Consent Agenda
(cont'd)

NAYS: None

City Manager reported the Citizens Public Safety Review and Appeals Board (CPSRAB) would be assisting with the selection of an independent investigator to review the response of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to public rallies and protests that took place at the end of May and beginning of June. City Manager Ritsema reported KDPS would start sending recruits to the Police Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

City Manager's
Report

City Clerk Borling provided an update on preparations for the August 4th Primary election and answered Commissioners' questions.

City Clerk's Report

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

City Commissioner
Comments

Commissioner Urban described his Public Safety ride-along experience from the past weekend and stated he had a new appreciation for the issue of nuisance parties. Commissioner Urban encouraged Commissioners to go on a ride-along with a Public Safety Officer.

Commissioner Cunningham encouraged the Commission to explore hybrid meetings. Commissioner Cunningham stated the City should explore expanding its ban-the-box policy. Commissioner Cunningham reported the event with the brothers of George Floyd was successful, and he stated anti-Semitic comments were not appropriate anywhere. Commissioner Cunningham expressed support for the housing equity ordinance. Commissioner Cunningham noted there were a lot of conversations happening about reparations and adopting resolutions, but he remarked that resolutions and committees did not accomplish much. Commissioner Cunningham stated there was a need for transformative, systemic change in the City Administration, KDPS, and the City's relationships with outside organizations, such as the Sheriff's Office, the County Prosecutor, the County Administration, and the juvenile justice system.

Commissioner Praedel spoke about a man named Jerry who had expressed concern about the lack of sidewalks on Cork Street. Commissioner Praedel stated the easements approved tonight would result in the installation of sidewalks on Cork Street. Commissioner Praedel thanked City Clerk's Office staff for their work and offered well-wishes to the candidates on the August 4th ballot. Commissioner Praedel noted the moratorium on evictions ended on July 15th, and he explained Housing Resources Incorporated (HRI) was the local agency designated to funnel eviction assistance funding from the state to renters in Kalamazoo. Commissioner Praedel provided the contact information for HRI.

Commissioner Hess reported on the various meetings and events she had attended since the last Commission meeting. Commissioner Hess stated the issues facing the community were complex, but she expressed confidence in the City Commission and City staff. Commissioner Hess thanked people for calling and offering comments, and she stated the community was doing the work together.

Vice Mayor Griffin expressed support for continued online meetings, as online meetings had actually increased public participation. Vice Mayor Griffin stated

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

she wanted the community to be involved with policing, and there were people who wanted to be involved. Vice Mayor Griffin asked how this could happen, how the community could be merged with policing. Vice Mayor Griffin observed that speeding traffic seemed to be a problem in every neighborhood and described how a neighbor had put up traffic barriers, which worked. Vice Mayor Griffin questioned why Public Safety ride-alongs always took place in the Northside Neighborhood between 10:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. Vice Mayor Griffin suggested City Commissioners do “live-alongs” where they spent some normal time with people who lived in that neighborhood. Vice Mayor Griffin stated she was not aware that anti-Semitic comments were made at the rally in Bronson Park, and she did not know what those comments were. Vice Mayor Griffin stated she did not support discrimination.

Mayor Anderson explained the government was not able to issue a blanket “no rent due” order. Mayor Anderson confirmed HRI was the non-profit organization that was distributing ESG funds for non-payment of rent. Mayor Anderson stated the funds were not in-hand yet, so HRI might be issuing letters of commitment. Mayor Anderson noted renters did not need to provide a Summons and Complaint in order to get assistance; a Notice to Quit was sufficient. Mayor Anderson stated he was part of the US Conference of Mayors, and he reported the mayor of Louisville, Kentucky had asked for federal legislation on reparations. Mayor Anderson remarked that the conversation around reparations was broached by Abraham Lincoln in 1863-1864, and he recommended the book *From Here to Equality* by William Darity and A. Kirsten Mullen. Mayor Anderson stated times were difficult: there were issues with speeding traffic and nuisance parties in some neighborhoods, but there was a reticence to police those neighborhoods. Mayor Anderson stated the community must move forward. Mayor Anderson suggested selective visits to neighborhoods were not necessarily good. Mayor Anderson remarked on neighborhoods that had suffered for years from lack of investment and stated it was startling to go from street-to-street and see the differences. Mayor Anderson stated the City need to take real action to address these differences.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 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

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