

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 228 of 2020.

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.

Adoption of the Agenda

By unanimous consent the City Commission adopted its meeting agenda with the following change:

City Manager Ritsema requested that approval of an easement agreement with Consumers Energy be added to the Consent Agenda with a recommended action of postponing final consideration until November 16th.

Communications

Communication items were presented next.

2020-0

Communications: FFE
Draft 2021 Budget

City Manager Ritsema provided an overview of the Foundation for Excellence (FFE) Draft 2021 Budget, which would provide a total grant to the City of \$25,798,714. This grant included \$4,243,600 for budget stabilization, \$13,016,024 for tax reduction, and \$ 8,539,090 for aspirational projects. City Manager Ritsema noted the draft budget had been approved unanimously by the FFE Board.

2020-0

2020 COPS Grant
Overview

Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley reviewed highlights of the 2020 Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program grant award. Chief Coakley reported funds from the grant would be used to hire 15 new sworn Public Safety Officers. A copy of the slides from Chief Coakley's presentation were filed with the papers for this meeting.

2020-0

First Amendment
Assemblies Sub-
Committee Update

City Manager Ritsema provided an update on the work of the City Commission subcommittee tasked with creating standards for the City's response to first amendment assemblies. A copy of the PowerPoint slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

2020-0

Public Safety Action Plan
Update

City Manager Ritsema reported on the progress being made to implement the Public Safety Action Plan. A copy of the slides from City Manager Ritsema's presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

At 7:31 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on ORDINANCES to amend the text of Chapter 50 Zoning Code and update the Zoning Map for Downtown and adjacent blocks.

Pam O'Connor, City resident, expressed support for limiting the height of buildings around Bronson Park.

Elizabeth, City resident, asked the City to rezone industrial areas away from the Northside Neighborhood.

David Brose, City resident, expressed support for limiting building heights in the Bronson Park area.

Dorothy Appleyard, City resident, expressed opposition to ground floor residential uses, the lack of building height restrictions, and the lack of parking solutions in the downtown area.

Brandi Crawford-Johnson, City resident, stated Northside and Eastside residents should not be forced to live next to industrial properties.

Adrian Johnson, City resident, expressed opposition to industrial zoning next to the Northside Neighborhood.

Derek Wissner, City resident, expressed opposition to the buffer around playgrounds for marijuana businesses in the downtown area.

Dr. David Ansell, non-resident and a professor at Rush University, spoke about environmental racism in the City of Kalamazoo.

At 7:49 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, moved to adopt ORDINANCES to amend the text of Chapter 50 Zoning Code and update the Zoning Map for Downtown and adjacent blocks.

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Praedel thanked people for their comments and stated this was the first time he was hearing concerns about the lack of building height restrictions. Commissioner Praedel stated he would vote "yes" on this item, but Bronson Park needed to be respected because of its history and its special place in the life of the community. Commissioner Praedel encouraged the Commission and staff to keep talking about the building height issue.

City Planner Christina Anderson reported she was reaching out to architects to do a sun-angle study around Bronson Park and other areas downtown, and she would work with the Historic Preservation Commission to use the study results to create standards around Bronson Park and possibly the Arcadia Festival Site.

Commissioner Praedel added the City Commission needed to have a conversation around environmental justice.

Commissioner Urban remarked that the City Commission needed to consider multiple perspectives and interests and not just the historic preservation perspective. Commissioner Urban stated the conversation about building height limits needed to continue.

2020-0

Public Hearing re:
Ordinances to Amend the
Text of the Zoning Code
and Update the Zoning
Map for Downtown and
Adjacent Blocks

2020-0

Ordinance 2018 to
Amend the Text of the
Zoning Code and
Ordinance 2019 to
Update the Zoning Map
for Downtown and
Adjacent Blocks

2020-0
Ordinance 2018 to
Amend the Text of the
Zoning Code and
Ordinance 2019 to
Update the Zoning Map
for Downtown and
Adjacent Blocks (cont'd)

Commissioner Cunningham questioned whether the proposed zoning took into consideration the changes coming to downtown in the next five years, such as two-way streets and a reimagined Arcadia Festival Site.

In response to Commissioner Cunningham, City Planner Anderson stated the zoning changes took into consideration transportation issues, looking at both the current state and future possibilities. City Planner Anderson noted COVID-19 had stopped the planning process for the Festival Site.

Mayor Anderson thanked people for their comments and noted the proposed ordinances involved zoning for the downtown area, not the Northside Neighborhood.

Commissioner Cunningham remarked there would be three studies to test and monitor for pollutants in the Northside Neighborhood and a study to monitor health impacts.

Commissioner Praedel thanked City Planner Anderson for her work on the downtown zoning ordinances under difficult circumstances.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

Public Comments

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

Steve Tabarez, City resident, expressed concerns about the process for appointing members to the Civil Rights Board and that nothing was being done about the City's handling of protests over the summer. Mr. Tabarez stated the City should look at the organizational affiliations of its employees.

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:

2020-0

- authorization for the City Manager to sign an Authorization for a Change in the Standard Street Lighting Contract with Consumers Energy.

2020-0
Resolution 20-60

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving an interlocal agreement with Kalamazoo County to approve Aaron Powers as the Designated Assessor for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2025.

2020-0
Resolution 20-61

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** setting a public hearing for December 7, 2020 regarding an amendment to the Kalamazoo Downtown Economic Growth Authority Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan.

2020-0

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** vacating Scudder Court between Frank and Parsons Streets.

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|--|--------|
| - authorization for the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to participate in the current planning process to update Kalamazoo County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. | 2020-0 |
| - acceptance of the 2020 Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program award from the U.S. Department of Justice in the amount of \$1,875,000. | 2020-0 |
| - approval of the appointment of Chief Vernon Coakley and the reappointment of City Manager James Ritsema to the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority Governing Board of Directors, with Public Safety Assistant Chief Matthew Huber and Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain as alternates; and approval of the appointment of Public Safety Assistant Chief Matthew Huber to the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Technical Advisory Committee, with Captain Christopher Franks as an alternate. These appointments will expire on November 8, 2021. | 2020-0 |
| - approval of the following appointments to the Civil Rights Board: | 2020-0 |
| - the appointment of DeShawn Houston for a three-year term expiring on March 31, 2024. | |
| - the appointment of Dr. Angie Graham-Williams for a three-year term expiring on March 31, 2024. | |
| - the appointment of Jessica Glynn for a three-year term expiring on March 31, 2024. | |
| - the appointment of Marissa Harrington for a two-year term expiring on March 31, 2023. | |
| - the appointment of Gabriela De La Cruz for a two-year term expiring on March 31, 2023. | |
| - the appointment of Jacob Beach for a one-year term expiring on March 31, 2022. | |
| - the appointment of Janeen Brown for a one-year term expiring on March 31, 2022. | |
| - approval of a recommendation to postpone until November 16, 2020 consideration of the sale of the City-owned lot at 1015 Albert Avenue to Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services for \$500. | 2020-0 |
| - approval of a recommendation to postpone until November 16, 2020 consideration of an easement on City property, located at 1415 Harrison, to Consumers Energy to supply three-phase electric power to Graphic Packaging International and to the City of Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant. | 2020-0 |

Commissioner Hess, 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.

Consent Agenda
(cont'd)

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Anderson thanked members of the Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals who worked to advise the City Commission on issues like the downtown zoning ordinances. Mayor Anderson explained there was an application process for the Civil Rights Board positions, and applications were reviewed and recommended by a group of City Commissioners.

City Clerk's Report

City Clerk Borling noted the next day was election day, and he encouraged people to vote. City Clerk Borling encouraged people to return their absentee ballots if they still had them, and he indicated absentee ballots needed to be returned to the Clerk's Office by 8:00 p.m. on election night in order to be counted. City Clerk Borling reported approximately 19,000 absentee ballots had been returned to date.

In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel, City Clerk Borling explained how absentee ballots could be tracked through mi.gov/vote. City Clerk Borling stated there was not a specific option for people who had mailed their voted absentee ballots, but those ballots had not yet been received in the Clerk's Office. City Clerk Borling explained a voter in that situation would need to be able to sign an affidavit saying they had not received their ballot or that their ballot had been lost or damaged in order to vote in the precinct. City Clerk Borling indicated polling locations would be open until 8:00 p.m., and anyone standing in line at that time would be able to vote. City Clerk Borling stated voted absentee ballots could be dropped off at the satellite Clerk's Office at the Bernhard Center in addition to City Hall. City Clerk Borling stated voters could help speed up the process by going to their correct polling location and bringing photo identification, although he noted photo identification was not required to be able to vote.

City Commissioner
Comments

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

Commissioner Urban remarked on Mr. Brose's comments regarding building heights around Bronson Park and stated consideration of this issue was not over.

Commissioner Cunningham urged people to vote and stated there would be trying times after the election regardless of the results. Commissioner Cunningham thanked the City Manager for his update on the subcommittee work. Commissioner Cunningham stated the Public Safety Department would be ready for incidents that happened on election day.

Commissioner Knott stated the Public Safety Department and City Clerk would be working their plans to make sure voting was a smooth and safe process.

Commissioner Praedel commended City Clerk Borling and his staff for their work on elections all year and stated voter intimidation and suppression would not be tolerated. Commissioner Praedel thanked everyone who had the courage to run for office and who participated in election campaigns.

Commissioner Hess expressed gratitude that Kalamazoo was a functional, educational, and generous city. Commissioner Hess thanked City staff for their tireless work for the City.

Vice Mayor Griffin thanked volunteers who facilitated voter registration Vice Mayor Griffin encouraged people to vote and thanked Chief Coakley and City Clerk Borling for being proactive in their preparations for election day. Vice Mayor Griffin reported she had attended a virtual event on gun violence and trauma. In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Vice Mayor Griffin stated ISAAC would have information on how to access a recording of the event.

Mayor Anderson stated it felt like society was on the brink of cataclysm, but it was not. Mayor Anderson stated the future depended on us, and people should not assume things would devolve into two warring camps after the election.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on December 7, 2020

Approved by: _____
David F. Anderson, Mayor
Dated: December 7, 2020

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

Adjournment