

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL MEETING
November 8, 2021
7:00 P.M.

11/8/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hosmer called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

Mayor Hosmer lead a moment of silence for past Mayor Ed Engler. Mayor Hosmer spoke about Ed and his memories of him and all that he did for Laconia. Other Councilors shared their thoughtful sentiments.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Cheney lead the Salute to the Flag.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

4. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hebert took a roll call vote with the following Councilors in attendance: Bruce Cheney, Bob Soucy, Henry Lipman, Mark Haynes, Bob Hamel, and Tony Felch

Mayor Hosmer noted all six Councilors were in attendance and a quorum was established.

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Scott Myers, City Manager

Glenn Smith, Finance Director

6. COUNCIL PROCLAMATION

6.A. Proclamation - Father Adrien Longchamps

Betty Ballantyne from the Putnam Fund spoke briefly of Father Adrien Longchamps.

Mayor Hosmer read into the record the following proclamation:

Whereas, Fr. Adrien Longchamps was Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish from 1998 to 2009; and

Whereas, the City of Laconia had virtually no entertainment venues for large capacity concerts; and

Whereas, Fr. Adrien had a life-long love of the performing arts; and

Whereas, on March 24, 2000, Father Adrien opened Sacred Heart Church to the music of the greatest Irish tenor of all time, Frank Patterson, whose music brought the lilt of Irish laughter to the smiling faces of all 700 in attendance; and

Whereas, on October 18, 2002, Father Adrien opened Sacred Heart Church to the music of Anthony

Kearns, one of the original Irish Tenors, and a packed Sacred Heart Church again experienced the joy of music and song; and

Whereas, Fr. Adrien opened Sacred Heart Church on September 16, 2005 to the "Sound of Music" performed by Elizabeth von Trapp, the granddaughter of Maria von Trapp, and then again on November 21, 2005 the Von Trapp children, the great-grandchildren of Maria von Trapp, performed the delight of a packed concert hall; and

Whereas, Fr. Adrien opened Sacred Heart Church on November 28, 2003, to the sublime and ethereal voice of the world-famous Judy Collins, who bewitched the audience with her incomparable voice; and

Whereas, Fr. Adrien opened Sacred Heart Church on December 18, 2007, to Clara Ann Fowler, whose stage name was Patti Page, the top-charting female artist of the 1950's, selling over 100 million records during her career, known as "The Singin Rage, Miss Patti Page." That memorable night Patti Page sang many of her hits, including "The Tennessee Waltz" and "Changing Partners" ; and

Whereas, there were so many other memorable shows at Sacred Heart Church that brought multiple standing ovations to the performers;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Laconia Putnam Fund and the Laconia City Council recognize Fr. Adrien Longchamps, former Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, who passed away on November 17, 2020 for his invaluable support of the Laconia Putnam Fund shows the citizens of Laconia by providing a large-capacity venue for numerous special shows. Without his support and that of the Sacred Heart Parish, these shows would not have been possible. In view of Fr. Adrien Longchamps unheralded contribution to the citizens of Laconia, the Laconia City Council is requested to designate November 17, 2021, the anniversary of Father's passing, as FATHER ADRIEN LONGCHAMPS DAY in the City of Laconia.

The Council is in agreement to pass this proclamation.

7. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7.A. Regular meeting minutes of October 25, 2021

Minutes of the meeting were distributed to the Council on Wednesday, October 27, 2021. With no corrections or changes submitted to the Clerk, the minutes will be accepted as distributed.

8. CONSENT & ACTION ITEMS

8.A. Request by the Weirs Action Committee to use Endicott Rock Parking Lot for Laconia Motorcycle Week parking from June 11, 2022 through June 19, 2022, and to waive all Special Event fees in connection with the requested use

Councilor Felch moved to approve the request by the Weirs Action Committee to use Endicott Rock Parking Lot for Laconia Motorcycle Week parking from June 11, 2022 through June 19, 2022, and to waive all Special Event fees in connection with the requested use, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the *motion passed with all in favor.*

9. CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Charlie St. Clair echoes everyone's comments from regarding Ed Engler. He also congratulated the Council and Mayor on their recent elections. Mr. St. Clair also brought up the two-hour time-limits in regards to parking in the downtown area on weekends.

Councilor Cheney is not opposed to working with the police department to find out about the parking ticket issue.

Mayor Hosmer suggested working with the police department to see if they could refrain from issuing tickets on Saturdays and Sundays in the downtown area through the end of 2021 until something more can be formalized.

10. INTERVIEWS

10.A. **Robert Harrington - Seeking appointment as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission to a three-year term expiring at the end of August, 2024**

Robert Harrington was interviewed.

11. NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS & ELECTIONS

12. COMMUNICATIONS

13. PUBLIC HEARINGS

14. PRESENTATIONS

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Hosmer mentioned the elections and the Clerk's staff and poll workers for their wonderful job they did leading up to and the day of the election. He stated we are very fortunate to have such a professional staff to run our elections in our City.

Mayor Hosmer also noted that there will be a gathering at 4:30 pm at Temple B'Nai Israel on Court Street to participate in a Global Campaign of Unity in Solidarity Against antisemitism, racism, hatred, and intolerance.

16. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Cheney spoke of the use of sick leave pertaining to COVID. He spoke of an article in the Laconia Daily Sun on page 4 in the November 6, 2021 edition regarding this same topic. He would like the Council to consider that public safety employees that are vaccinated, should not need to use their banked sick time if they are asked to stay home by the City. He does believe the City Manager is doing exactly what he is supposed to do.

Councilor Cheney also spoke of the culverts on Hilliard Road. He would like to ask the Public Works Director to look at both culverts and can we close off one of them. Also, he would like to know what it would cost to put a dropped culvert to replace what is there.

Councilor Cheney also spoke of the 10-year transportation plan public hearing that was held. A few people expressed concern of the wooden bridge in the Weirs. Councilor Cheney spoke with two people from DOT at that meeting about how that bridge could be saved, and one of them said the budget for that project is about \$400,000. Councilor Cheney thinks we are going to start hearing from people in the Weirs that this bridge needs to be fixed. Councilor Cheney is submitting a proposal through the DOT.

City Manager Myers explained that the City has been following the State guidelines throughout the entire pandemic. If someone is vaccinated, and they have been in close contact with someone who gets COVID, the City is not requiring them to quarantine, but they are strongly encouraged to self-monitor. City Manager Myers stated if employees are being asked to quarantine, then he is assuming they are not vaccinated. He also explained the City's sick-time process.

Councilor Cheney is not questioning what the Manager is stating. Councilor Cheney doesn't think we should draw down one's sick leave that we are putting in a situation to possibly get COVID.

City Manager Myers also stated that we cannot pinpoint where one became affected with COVID and if we make a policy, then it needs to be a policy for all employees, not just a select few.

Councilor Lipman stated that if this is looked into it needs to be done the correct way, and involve personnel and legal.

Councilor Felch agrees with the City Manager regarding the policies that have been set in place by the City.

Councilor Cheney would hope that the personnel committee could make a recommendation on this.

Councilor Lipman agrees with the City Manager. He also thinks we need to be sensitive to the extra risks that people put themselves into. This may also have precedent that we may not want in the long term.

Councilor Haynes mentioned that the winter parking ban began November 1. Are sub-lawns part of that?

City Manager Myers explained that the Police Department started given out warnings which will turn into tickets. They are trying to be pro-active. A sub-lawn would need to be on a case-by-case basis.

Councilor Haynes spoke of the past couple of weeks and the accidents that have happened in the crosswalks. Councilor Haynes would like to see the mentality that happens in other places, is that if someone is in a crosswalk, vehicles stop. This needs to happen there.

Councilor Haynes also mentioned the Court Street traffic. He stated the sign up at the Belknap Mall states "Court Street Bridge Closed." Not everyone knows where that bridge is. He is extremely upset with the lack of proper signage and this needs to be a learning lesson for the City.

Councilor Felch also spoke of the Court Street Bridge closure and the misleading signs that are up.

17. COMMITTEE REPORTS

17.A. FINANCE (Lipman (Chair), Hamel, Cheney)

17.A.i. WOW Trail Funding

17.A.ii. Downtown TIF Financing

17.B. PUBLIC SAFETY (Cheney (Chair), Soucy, Lipman)

17.C. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ORDINANCES (Soucy (Chair), Felch, Cheney)

17.C.i. Review of Chapter 167, Noise and Chapter 161 Licensing as it pertains to outdoor sound equipment and loudspeakers

17.C.ii. Ordinance Amending Chapter 221, Vehicles and Traffic/Parking on Sublawns

17.C.iii. Procedural review of grant applications

17.C.iv. Regulation of Short Term Residential Rental Businesses

17.C.v. Proposed Historic Overlay District

17.C.vi. **Scenic Road Motorcycle Noise Petition**

17.C.vii. **Use of public property by for-profit entities**

17.C.viii. **Short Term Rentals**

17.D. **LAND & BUILDINGS (Hamel (Chair), Haynes, Felch)**

17.D.i. **Downtown parking garage**

Councilor Hamel shared with the Council the discussion that was had at tonight's Land & Buildings Committee Meeting. He explained the committee voted to allow Dubois and King to proceed with their engineering on the parking garage. They were hired many years ago and they are also the ones that have been doing the annual inspections. The Committee also heard from Peter Stewart of Stewart Associates, (a subcontractor of Dubois and King). Mr. Stewart presented drawings. The committee is asking the Council to vote to allow Dubois and King to continue with the engineering process that they have already started.

Councilor Soucy asked if this has already been funded.

City Manager Myers explained the bond process. The engineering work would need to be done so we know how much we would need to bond. But that would still be a rough estimate. We still have not gone out to bid, plus with the pandemic and supply chain issues, we would probably need to come back with a supplemental bond. The bid would go out in January 2023.

Councilor Hamel moved that the City Council continue the contract with Dubois and King and all the subcontractor of Stewart Associates for the engineering and architectural design of the parking garage, seconded by Councilor Soucy;

Councilor Lipman would like to make sure we are following our contractual procurement rules.

City Manager Myers explained we already had him contracted and it was just on a pause.

Mayor Hosmer has reservations about what we are doing. He thinks the parking garage is just one aspect of the overall development of the downtown. Mayor Hosmer asked when the last traffic study was done, a parking study, and have we spoken to the downtown businesses? Mayor Hosmer is not quite sure the proper outreach has been done to the downtown businesses and the people that have skin in the game. Does this follow our master plan? He thinks more homework needs to be done on this before we move any further. He knows something needs to be done with the garage and we need more parking downtown. Mayor Hosmer stated he wants to fix this problem and has faith in the aforementioned contractors. Mayor Hosmer wonders if we should be working with parking experts. The Mayor thinks we need to do more homework on this and make sure we find the right people.

Councilor Lipman stated that he respectfully disagrees with the Mayor.

Mayor Hosmer thinks if this is going to be a multi-million dollar project we need to make sure it is going to be done right and last many many years.

Councilor Lipman stated that a vote was taken previously with all six Councilors in favor to move forward with this.

Mayor Hosmer thinks the committee has done their diligence and they have done what the Council has asked of them. But he doesn't think there has been enough input from the downtown on what their needs and expectations are.

Councilor Felch explained that there are plans to have informational meetings to get the public's input. This is the final plan.

Mayor Hosmer has the utmost confidence in Public Works but thinks we need to span our view on this. We should have a professional organization to lead this chapter in the City. We need to be particularly cautious when we don't have all of the variables.

Councilor Hamel thinks there is a process to this and this is just the start to the process. He stated what we have presented tonight does not need to be the end result. There will be several opportunities for anyone to weigh in with the architect and engineer. Part of the other process is in order to get an accurate cost on what this project will be, we will need to hire a construction manager.

Mayor Hosmer just doesn't think we have reached out to the business owners to get their thoughts.

Councilor Lipman stated we have been discussing this for years and the public has had plenty of opportunities to speak.

Councilor Soucy asked how many traffic studies have been done over the years? It seems many and we have always come up with the same conclusion, that the parking garage needs to be fixed.

Councilor Hamel called the motion.

Mayor Hosmer called the question;

the motion passed with five in favor and one opposed (Cheney).

DPW Director Anderson explained the Request for Qualifications. (a copy is part of the record). The next step would be to send a request of qualifications to look for Construction Management Services. This is the first step. The second step would be to send out a request for proposals. The object is to have them on board fully no later than then March 15, 2022.

Councilor Soucy asked if any funds are being committed at this point.

DPW Director Anderson stated this will be broken down into two parts. Once the design is committed to, money will be committed to that, Then once a construction manager is chosen, costs will then be presented.

Councilor Hamel explained right now we would be paying for the architect and engineer to do their job.

Councilor Soucy asked if the business owners will have any input?

Councilor Hamel stated they will have the opportunity to attend the public hearings. Councilor Hamel explained we have put this off long enough and we have done parking studies.

Councilor Cheney explained the reason he voted against the motion was because he didn't have time to weigh in before the motion was called. Councilor Cheney stated he did vote to repair the parking garage, but he doesn't see why we can't think of another location for it as well. He is not opposed to this, but he is opposed to not asking more questions before moving forward. He mentioned Dartmouth Hitchcock's parking garage and how amazing it is. He also spoke of the late Councilor Bownes idea of looking into having the parking garage in the City Hall parking lot instead of where it is located now.

Councilor Felch stated that when numbers were received in 2017, the cost to build a new outweighed the cost to fix the current one.

Councilor Hamel asked if we looked into building a new garage somewhere else, we would have the added expense of tearing down the current one.

Councilor Felch moved to approve the presented Request for Qualifications, seconded by Councilor Lipman; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

17.D.ii. **Repair & maintenance of City buildings**

17.D.iii. **Perley Pond Maintenance**

17.D.iv. **Plan for the DPW Compound**

17.D.v. **Continuation of the discussion regarding parking in the Lakeport area**

17.E. **PUBLIC WORKS (Haynes (Chair), Felch, Soucy)**

17.E.i. **Retaining Wall Policy**

17.E.ii. **Discussion for converting from a manual to an automated solid waste curbside collection service**

18. **LIAISON REPORTS**

19. **CITIZENS REQUESTS TO COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Patrick Wood, Ward 3 - Is in support of the CDBG request and asked for the Council to support it as well. Mr. Wood also spoke about Mr. Harrington and stated he would be a great addition to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Wood stated it is critical that the parking garage be addressed and it is very important to fix it. He has spoken to many of the downtown business owners and they are concerned with the current condition of the parking garage. He said we also need to be looking into the future. He thinks it will be hard to get a consensus from everyone downtown.

Breanna Neal - Spoke of the parking garage and asked the Council to be open to ideas from others. She stated she wants to see more vision and creativity as a whole and not just the garage.

20. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

20.A. **Financial and Operational Trends Report**

City Manager Myers reviewed the report.

21. **NEW BUSINESS**

21.A. **First reading of Resolution 2021-18 to declare Plantation and Colonial Roads as Emergency Lanes**

City Manager Myers reviewed the background to this item.

Councilor Cheney moved to waive a reading of this Resolution in its entirety and to read by title only, seconded by Councilor Felch; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved a first reading of Resolution 2021-18, pertaining to establishing Plantation and

Colonial Roads as Emergency Lanes under RSA 231:59-A, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on November 22, 2021, during the regular Council meeting to gather public input prior to any action being taken, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.B. Request for a building permit on a Class VI road

City Manager Myers explained what a paper street is.

Councilor Cheney moved to authorize the City Manager to sign on behalf of the City the Notice of Limits of Responsibility and Liability regarding property abutting a "paper street" for a property on Eastman Shore Road South with Tax Map 316/67/3 and authorize the Code Department to issue a building permit for the same property, seconded by Councilor Felch; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.C. Update to the Ambulance Fees

City Manager Myers explained the background to this item.

Councilor Lipman asked what the net revenue of this would be.

Chief Beattie explained with the proposed changes, the net would be a little over \$113,000.

Councilor Hamel would have liked to have seen what a private ambulance would charge. Chief Beattie has done some comparison and they charge roughly the same.

Councilor Cheney moved to approve the adjustment to the fee schedule as presented, effective, December 1, 2021, seconded by Councilor Felch; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.D. First reading of Ordinance 149-14 Ambulance Fees

Councilor Cheney moved to waive a reading of this Ordinance in its entirety and to read by title only, seconded by Councilor Haynes; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved a first reading of Ordinance 2021-149-14, Ambulance Fees, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on November 22, 2021, during the regular Council meeting to gather public input prior to any action being taken, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.E. Reallocation of funds for pedestrian beacons on South Main Street

City Manager Myers reviewed the background to this request.

Councilor Haynes moved to approve the reallocation of \$23,648.11, previously authorized for the Weirs Beach retaining wall repairs, to allow for the installation of pedestrian beacons on South Main Street in front of Vista Foods, seconded by Councilor Hamel;

Councilor Hamel asked about the ballards? City Manager Myers stated yes those would be installed as soon as they come in, that way if the beacons do not come in until after the ground freezes, they can still be installed.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.F. **Request to schedule three (3) public hearings on November 22, 2021 during the regular City Council Meeting in connection with Community Development Block Grants**

City Manager Myers reviewed the background to this item.

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on November 22, 2021 during the regular City Council meeting regarding the Housing and Community Development Plan, seconded by Councilor Soucy; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on November 22, 2021 during the regular City Council meeting regarding the progress of the CDBG-COVID project that provides funding to service providing sub-applicants for costs in preparing for, responding to, or recovering from COVID-19. Participating organizations include: The City of Laconia, Lakes Region Community Developers, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Belknap House, Community Action Program, and possibly Isaiah 61 Café, seconded by Councilor Haynes; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved to schedule a public hearing on November 22, 2021 during the regular City Council meeting regarding the progress of the Laconia Housing Authority's balcony door replacement project at Sunrise Towers, 25 Union Avenue. The project also includes renovations between Sunrise Towers and Sunrise House, 423 South Main Street, to improve accessibility between the buildings and energy improvements. Energy improvements have been completed. The replacement balcony doors are under construction as well as the exterior work, seconded by Councilor Haynes; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

22. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

23. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

23.A. **Master Plan**

23.B. **Milfoil Treatment funding requests**

23.C. **Sewer & Water Master Plan**

23.D. **Single Stream Recycling/Concord Co-op/Solid Waste disposal cost reductions**

23.E. **Strategic Planning/Goal Setting**

23.F. **WOW Trail**

23.G. **Weirs Beach Restoration Project**

23.H. **Fair St/Court St traffic problems and accidents**

24. **Any other business that may come before the Council**

25. **NON-PUBLIC SESSION (According to RSA 91-A:3, II)**

26. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Council and hearing no objection, Mayor Hosmer adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

MINUTES OF THIS MEETING WERE APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 22, 2021