

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

September 27, 2021

7:00 P.M.

9/27/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Hamel 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

7. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7.A. Regular meeting minutes of September 13, 2021

Minutes of the meeting were distributed to the City Council on Thursday, September 16, 2021. With no corrections or changes submitted to the Clerk, the minutes will be accepted as distributed.

8. CONSENT & ACTION ITEMS

9. CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Christy Decormier, Beech Street - Concerned about the condition of her street. She stated that it has sunk over the past few years. She spoke to Councilor Haynes who said the street would be done this year. Then she spoke to the City Manager and DPW Director who stated Beech Street would not be done this year. Ms. Decormier thinks it is a waste of tax payers money if the street is not going to be fixed right the first time. She stated this street has been on the list for many years and it still has not been addressed.

10. INTERVIEWS

11. NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS & ELECTIONS

12. COMMUNICATIONS

13. PUBLIC HEARINGS

13.A. Public hearing for Ordinance 2021-235-22.7 Impact Fees

Notice of this public hearing was made available in the September 15, 2021 edition of the Laconia Daily Sun, and posted at City Hall, Laconia Public Library, Community Center, and the SAU.

Mayor Hosmer opened the public hearing at 7:07 pm.

With no comments from the public, Mayor Hosmer closed the public hearing at 7:07:44 pm.

13.B. **Public hearing for the parking garage repair or deconstruct options**

Notice of this public hearing was made available in the September 15, 2021, edition of the Laconia Daily Sun, and posted at Laconia City Hall, Public Library, Community Center and SAU

Mayor Hosmer opened the public hearing at 7:08 pm.

Patrick Wood - Mr. Wood is in favor of whatever can be done to repair the parking garage and would like to see it happen as soon as possible. Mr. Wood thinks one of the important factors is to add an elevator and outside stairways.

Warren Clement, Old North Main Street - Mr. Clement is in favor of repairing the parking garage which would probably last about 25 years. Mr. Clement would like the Council to make a decision at tonight's meeting.

Scott McWilliam, 61 Pearl Street - Mr. McWilliam is in support to rehabilitate the parking garage, especially with the growing downtown area. Mr. McWilliam would like to see an exit be made directly on to Main Street.

Rob Sawyer, Main Street - Spoke in favor of moving forward with fixing the parking garage. It would be the only place downtown with covered parking.

Jane Wood, Ward 3 - Mrs. Wood spoke of the parking garage in Clairmont and how beautiful it is. The parking garage needs to be redone and in a beautiful way.

Charlie St. Clair - In favor of fixing the parking garage.

Hearing no other comments from the public, Mayor Hosmer closed the public hearing at 7:17 pm.

14. **PRESENTATIONS**

15. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Hosmer spoke of the Municipal Primary on September 14, 2021 and thanked the City Clerk's Office for the professionalism and organization to get the election done well.

16. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilor Cheney asked for this item to be moved towards the end of the agenda.

Councilor Cheney would like our sign Ordinance reviewed by the Government Operations & Ordinances Subcommittee. The reason for this is because it seems like political signs are removed from public property but there are non-political signs that are never removed. Councilor Cheney would like to know what the standards actually are. Councilor Cheney thinks it is time that we look at where and when signs can be placed.

Councilor Cheney mentioned a complaint that was received from a Gilford resident regarding the parking meters in the Weirs not functioning properly. This is not the first time he has heard of this type of complaint. Councilor Cheney would like to ask the City Manager to ask whoever is responsible for these machines to make sure they are running properly.

Councilor Cheney also asked a while ago about the administrative procedures to be reviewed for the Historic District Commission. There are a number of items that concern Councilor Cheney, especially financial matters. Councilor Cheney is hoping the appropriate committee could review these procedures. Mayor Hosmer said this would fall under Government Operations & Ordinances.

Councilor Cheney prefers to look at the temporary sign ordinance separate from business signs.

Councilor Cheney also brought up concern with left turn arrows, especially the one on Oak Street. Councilor Cheney

thinks there are plenty of lights in Laconia that could utilize the blinking yellow turn signals, therefore he asks if Public Works could look into this.

Councilor Cheney also spoke of Hilliard Road and he would like Public Works to look at it in terms of our right-of-way. City Manager Myers explained we are looking at the State to get into the 10 year bridge work.

A discussion was had about the pedestrian light on Beacon Street West.

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. LANDS & BUILDINGS (Hamel (Chair), Haynes, Felch)

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

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 - Hopes the Council will approve fixing the garage and would also like the Council to make sure it is maintained.

20. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

20.A. Project Updates Report

City Manager Myers reviewed the report.

20.B. Monthly Economic Development Report

City Manager Myers reviewed the report.

City Manager Myers stated that Beech Street was intended to be paved this year and that was relayed to Councilor Haynes. Whenever a road is to be done, sidewalks and ADA improvements need to be looked at as well. The parking on this street has been an issue. The residents were approached to remove the sidewalk and they were in agreement with this. By the time this was lined up and with the weather this summer, this road was not able to be completed but it will be addressed in the spring. The City Manager apologized for that not happening this year.

City Manager Myers explained that the ballot question was approved by the Secretary of State's Office, Department of Revenue, and Attorney General's office to be placed on the ballot.

City Manager Myers also spoke of the Chaos and Kindness Event that is happening this coming Saturday night (10/2/2021). This item was brought to the City's attention very late. An escrow check was dropped off to the City today to cover trash, and police and fire services. City Manager Myers received a request to waive fees (Special Event Application: \$175, Licensing Fee: \$150, and Parks and Recreation User Fees: \$500), to be waived. The City Manager is asking for guidance from the Council.

Mayor Hosmer asked if the \$5,000 escrow check that was received, would be used to offset any unanticipated expenses. City Manager Myers explained it would. The intent is that the hard costs of this event is not put on the taxpayers. The City would also be added as an additional insured.

Mayor Hosmer asked how we decide when our road construction season ends? City Manager Myers explained it is usually around mid-November. It also has to do with when the asphalt plants shut down.

City Manager Myers updated the Council on the water main break that happened on Hill Street last night.

Councilor Hamel said that the Court Street bridge will be shut down after Columbus Day and will be shut down for 30 days.

Councilor Hamel does not like us making promises to fix a street and then we can't fulfill those promises. Councilor Hamel hopes we do whatever engineering that needs to be done to get this street fixed next Spring. Councilor Haynes asked that Beech Street be on the top of the list for the Spring time.

Councilor Hamel asked where the fireworks will be shot from and where will the food trucks will be parked. City Manager Myers said there will be three barges in the water and the food trucks will be parked on the pavement.

Councilor Soucy asked if we had any idea how many people would be showing up for the Chaos and Kindness Event. City Manager Myers explained this group has a large following not just from Laconia and New Hampshire but throughout the Country. When they had their event in the O's parking lot, there were about 8,000 people that attended. This event does not have any entertainment at Opechee, just food trucks and then the fireworks going off around 8 pm. City Manager Myers stated this is the second time this group has planned an event last minute. For our motorcycle week event, we have UNH officers come help with it and we reciprocate that by sending our officers down to UNH when they have large events. They are having homecoming this weekend so some of our officers will be at UNH. This puts a strain on our departments to make sure we are safely staffed. This group tends to plan and then ask for forgiveness afterwards.

Councilor Lipman asked for an explanation regarding the insurance for the event.

Chief Beattie explained that Atlas Fireworks is putting the show on. Chief Beattie explained the insurance is very

detailed. City Manager Myers also explained that along with Atlas Fireworks insurance policy, Chaos and Kindness' listed the City as an additional insured. The City Manager also explained that there will be no parking on the street similar to the Fourth of July event.

Mayor Hosmer appreciates the City staff bending over backwards to help with this last minute event. Mayor Hosmer would like to be able to set up a relationship to be able to have more time in planning these types of events. Councilor Soucy said he would reach out to Justin from Chaos and Kindness to discuss having some better communication between them and the City.

Councilor Felch would be happy to waive fees if they would work with the City in a timely manner but in this case he does not think we should waive the fees.

Councilor Hamel moved that we do not waive the fees for this event, seconded by Councilor Felch; ***the motion passed with all in favor.***

City Manager Myers briefed the Council on the ARPA Funds (American Rescue Plan Act) - Laconia is in receipt of a little over \$1.7 million, \$800,000 now, with another \$800,000 being received next July. There has been a lot of back and forward with guidance on what these funds can be used for. They can be used to support hard hit neighborhoods, non-profits, and replace identifiable loss revenue. City Manager Myers stated we can identify significant loss in ambulance reimbursement, the loss in the Motorcycle Week Fund because of the decrease in vendors and high price of port-a-potties. Infrastructure was also looked into such as water or sewer projects and broadband. We do not need the broadband. Storm water is a component to these funds.

Councilor Lipman would like the Council to support what the City Manager is advising us regarding the ARPA Funds. He thinks the City Manager and Finance Director have done a great job as far as navigating these types of opportunities.

City Manager Myers explained we have until the end of calendar year 2024 to spend these funds. If we identify a project then we have until the end of 2026.

There is consensus from the Council for the City Manager to move forward with the ARPA funds.

21. NEW BUSINESS

21.A. **Application for tax relief under RSA 79-E for the property at 51 Elm Street, formerly known as 49-63 Elm Street and 10 Railroad Ave**

City Manager Myers briefed the Council on this item.

Councilor Haynes moved to schedule a public hearing on October 12, 2021 during the regular Council meeting to gather public input prior to any action being taken, seconded by Councilor Hamel; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

21.B. **Hiring incentives for Laconia Fire and Police Departments**

Councilor Cheney moved to approve the two attached hiring incentive proposals for the Laconia Fire and Police Departments, seconded by Councilor Felch;

Councilor Lipman asked to hear from the Chiefs.

Councilor Cheney explained that back in the 80's, there would be hundreds of applicants, now we are lucky if we have five applicants.

Chief Beattie and Chief Canfield explained their incentives.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

the motion passed with all in favor.

21.C. **Sale of unique property**

City Manager Myers briefed the Council on this item.

Councilor Cheney moved to accept the written recommendation of the City Manager that Lot 180/516/15 has unique characteristics and direct the City Manager to enter into a negotiated sale of the property with Laconia Pickerel Cove Association as a single, private purchaser for \$1 with any closing costs to be paid by the purchaser, seconded by Councilor Soucy;

Councilor Lipman asked about closing costs. City Manager Myers expects there will not be any closing costs but if there is, the purchaser will cover them.

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

Councilor Cheney moved to authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to the sale of this property, seconded by Councilor Soucy; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

22. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

22.A. Parking Garage repair or deconstruct options

Councilor Hamel thinks a decision needs to be made tonight and he would be in favor of fixing it.

City Manager Myers reviewed the two different costs.

Mayor Hosmer asked if we were to reconstruct this and allocate funds, what would the revenue structures look like.

City Manager Myers explained all of that could be looked at, such as a parking fee structure. The City Manager also spoke of the properties that are now or coming on the tax rolls that were not on there previously. These would be about \$4 million worth of taxable property. The City also have about \$400,000 worth of bonds that will be falling off the City debt service within the next year.

Councilor Lipman thinks we can look at a bond and amortization schedule that would make this affordable to the City. Councilor Lipman thinks we should move ahead tonight and wait to look at the revenue part until we get a little more information. We could also look at the impact fees to see if we could use those.

Councilor Cheney supports moving forward with this project. Councilor Cheney also thinks there are hidden costs to deconstruct the garage and just put a roof on it. He is not sure the business owners would be in favor of doing that.

Councilor Soucy would like us to look into the low interest rates sooner rather than later.

Mayor Hosmer stated we need to support our downtown community.

Councilor Lipman thinks that a committee needs to work on this like in any other large projects that we have done.

Mayor Hosmer agrees and thinks this would fall under the Land and Buildings Subcommittee and he would also like Councilor Lipman and himself involved.

Councilor Felch moved to allow City Staff to move forward with an outline of what the next steps are to reconstruct the parking garage and a timetable to be presented to the Council, seconded by Councilor Hamel;

Councilor Felch would like to make sure that this includes total reconstruction and all the architectural improvements.

Councilor Cheney would like to encourage the City Manager to act as quickly as possible and maybe involve an architectural firm.

Councilor Hamel would like to see a Construction Engineer be involved in this project as well, similar to what happened at the Colonial Theatre. Possible send out RFP or RIP for engineers and architectures.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

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

22.B. **Request to approve and authorize the City Manager to sign any and all documents relative to the license agreement with the Belknap Mill Society**

Councilor Felch moved to waive a reading of the proposed license agreement with the Belknap Mill Society in its entirety and to read by title only, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Felch moved a first reading of the proposed license agreement with the Belknap Mill Society, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

Councilor Soucy moved to approve and authorize the City Manager to sign any and all documents pertaining to the license agreement with the Belknap Mill Society Cheney;

Councilor Lipman asked for the City Manager to review the financials. City Manager Myers reviewed the terms of the license agreement.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

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

22.C. **Second reading of Ordinance 235-22.7 to amend City Code Chapter 235 Zoning, Impact Fees**

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

Councilor Felch moved a second reading of Ordinance 2021-235-22.7, amending the adopted Impact Fee Schedule to increase the amount collected to 50% on April 1, 2022, and to re-evaluate yearly any future increases, seconded by Councilor Cheney;

Councilor Lipman asked if this would be re-evaluated during the budget process. City Manager Myers explained by default it would be re-evaluated in April.

Mayor Hosmer called the question.

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

Councilor Cheney moved to approve Ordinance 2021-235-22.7, amending the adopted Impact Fee Schedule to increase the amount collected to 50% on April 1, 2022, and to to re-evaluate yearly any future increases, seconded by Councilor Soucy; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

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 9:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

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