



CITY COUNCIL

March 15, 2021

A regular meeting of the City of Petoskey City Council was held from virtual locations on Monday, March 15, 2021. This meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.; then, after a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, a roll call then determined that the following were

Present: John Murphy, Mayor
Kate Marshall, City Councilmember
Derek Shiels, City Councilmember
Lindsey Walker, City Councilmember

Absent: Brian Wagner, City Councilmember

Also in attendance were City Manager Rob Straebel, Clerk-Treasurer Alan Terry, City Planner Amy Tweeten, Public Works Director Mike Robbins, Public Safety Director Matt Breed, Library Director Val Meyerson and Executive Assistant Sarah Bek.

Hear MPPA Presentation on City's Power Supply

Steve Donkersloot and Pat Bowland, Michigan Public Power Association representatives, gave a brief presentation on strategic energy sources; reviewed purpose of MPPA and state of City's power system; reviewed industry standards and power requirements to ensure high reliability; that June 1 – May 31 is the plan year through MISO which determines required resources; energy contracts fall off and are replaced with new contracts periodically; that the City is not committed to any long term projects that prohibits the City from taking advantage of new opportunities; that the City will meet its 30% renewable goal by 2025; that storage capabilities are still needed for solar and wind power; that solar can be overproduced and City would have to sell back to the market which is not efficient; reviewed long-term load forecasts; reviewed energy resources vs. capacity position; and reviewed cost projections associated with local/regional projects vs. utility scale projects; and that the landfill site has a lot of unusable area, but that MPPA will do whatever the City desires.

The Public Works Director reviewed issues with the landfill site making it unfeasible at this time and that there are other possible sites for solar projects.

City Councilmembers commented that cost is important, but not the only issue; heard from those advocating to keep power and projects locally and that there is a value to keeping locally; inquired if the City joined the Hart project would it delay a local project; inquired on the Harbor Springs Sewer Authority land and potential project; inquired if there has been any discussion within MPPA and renewable energy sectors on redefining what renewable means; inquired if there has been any movement to discontinue using methane from landfills and a push to include natural gas; and heard from those in favor of encouraging residents and businesses to invest in renewable energy and smaller scale, local projects should be more an individual burden vs public; and heard from those that would like to see more smaller hyper-local projects.

MPPA representatives responded that the Harbor Springs Sewer Authority is 75-100 acres in total size, but buildable part of land due to terrain is 46 acres and MPPA has communicated with the City of Harbor Springs on potential project; that by the City participating in the Hart project it does not prohibit other projects; that MPPA restructured landfill gas agreements and will end in 2026 and supply of biogas left in portfolio after 2026 will be very small; and reviewed gas projects in Kalkaska and northern Ohio.

Hear Public Safety 2020 Annual Report Presentation

Public Safety Director Matthew Breed gave a brief presentation concerning the department's 2020 annual statistics, programs and community engagement; that calls were significantly down due to the pandemic and less contact with the public; and that COVID-19 restrictions prohibited the department from performing a lot of their annual activities and programs. Mr. Breed reviewed the annual report and answered questions.

Hear District Library Presentation

District Library Director Val Meyerson made a brief presentation concerning the Petoskey District Library and reviewed 2020 statistics and operations and that the Library staff was resilient and community driven due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consent Agenda - Resolution No. 19517

Following introduction of the consent agenda for this meeting of March 15, 2021, City Councilmember Marshall moved that, seconded by City Councilmember Shiels adoption of the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council does and hereby confirms that the draft minutes of the March 1, 2021 regular session City Council meeting be and are hereby approved; and

BE IT RESOLVED that receipt by the City Council of a report concerning all checks that had been issued since March 1, 2021 for contract and vendor claims at \$1,348,499.83, intergovernmental claims at \$89,922.66, and the March 4 payroll at \$202,996.83, for a total of \$1,641,419.32 be and is hereby acknowledged.

Said resolution was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Marshall, Shiels, Walker, Murphy (4)

NAYS: None (0)

Hear Public Comment

Mayor Murphy asked for public comments and there were no comments.

Hear City Manager Updates

The City Manager reported that the City and MDOT have executed all documents pertaining to the City's \$28,500 purchase of railroad right-of-way from Emmet Street to Washington Street for continuation of the Greenway Corridor southward; that winter parking regulations end April 1 and thanked residents for cooperation during the winter months; that Emily Meyerson, Program Coordinator for the Little Traverse Bay Housing Partnership, recently submitted a letter of resignation from her part-time position with the organization and thanked Ms. Meyerson for her efforts to promote affordable/workforce housing in Emmet County; that the Petoskey Harbor Sprigs Area Community Foundation awarded the City a \$9,000 grant for planting native vegetation near the promenade which will stabilize the shoreline to assist in prevention of erosion due to wave overtopping and that the City will work with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for plant selection and planting best practices; that both Emmet County Commissioners and Resort Township officials heard separate presentations from Beckett and Rader regarding conceptual drawings for proposed detour around the slope failure areas of the Little Traverse Wheelway and both entities voiced concern regarding the US-31 highway crossing near East Park and to maintain momentum on this project would like City Council at their next meeting to discuss a possible tunnel and for Council to consider continued cost-sharing efforts with Resort Township and Emmet County; and that COVID-19 cases both locally and state-wide have seen a slight increase over the last 10 days, reviewed specifications on those who are eligible to receive a vaccine and continued to express that citizens remain vigilant and follow all CDC recommended guidelines.

City Councilmembers inquired if MDOT could reduce speed near East Park; if letters to State representatives would increase the possibility of speed reduction; and if there was support from Resort Township on lowering the speed.

The City Manager responded that there was some support to lower speed, but that the highway crossing was a bigger safety concern and letters would not be appropriate at this time.

Discuss Priority Redevelopment Sites

The City Planner reviewed the purpose and process of Redevelopment Ready Communities Program and priority redevelopment sites; reviewed current priority sites including 900 Emmet Street which is under contract, Darling Lot, 200 East Lake Street and 502 Michigan Street which is under purchase agreement; reviewed tools the City is able to use to assist redevelopment; that there is a great need for housing of all price ranges, but particularly workforce housing in the 80-120% Area Media Income range which is why all of the priority sites discuss housing or mixed-use as the desired development outcome; that staff does not see any downside to having additional sites identified whether they are officially identified as priority sites or simply potential redevelopment sites to be aware of; and reviewed potential sites including 316/318 East Lake Street, 1420 Standish Avenue the former Michigan Maple Block site, 319 State Street the former Petoskey News Review building and Bay and Howard.

City Councilmembers discussed which sites they would like to see as priority sites and concurred to keep 900 Emmet Street, Darling Lot, 502 Michigan Street and remove 200 East Lake Street; discussed and agreed to add 316/318 East Lake Street project and 1420 Standish Avenue to priority list; discussed and concurred to leave both 319 State Street and Bay and Howard off of list until more is known; and tabled discussion of surplus City-owned property until the next meeting.

Mayor Murphy asked for public comments and heard a comment if it would hurt anything to keep all current and proposed sites on priority list. The City Planner responded that there wouldn't be any drawback to keeping all sites on the list.

Oppose Federal Communications Commission Surcharge Fee for 911 Services – Resolution No. 19518

The City Manager reviewed that CCE is asking each local government entity within the three-county region to approve a resolution in opposition to proposed Federal Communications Commission (FCC) language limiting the use of 911 fees; that the FCC is soliciting comments on language that proposes to eliminate the utilization of funds for radio infrastructure and field equipment critical to the 911 response service; and reviewed that this language runs contrary with the Michigan Public Act 32 of 1986 which allows for the purchase of field equipment.

City Councilmember Walker moved that, seconded by City Councilmember Shields adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) is accepting comments in its plan to eliminate the diversion of 911 fees for items it deems not directly related to the 911 process; and

WHEREAS, Michigan Public Act 32 of 1986 provides for each local 911 district to utilize 911 fees within certain limitations that are determined by the State and regularly audited for compliance with the limitations; and

WHEREAS, under Michigan law, allowable uses include radio systems, paging systems, pagers, automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems, and mobile data computers (MDCs); and

WHEREAS, FCC proposed rules impinge upon Michigan’s ability to determine the definition of allowable costs for 911 fees; and

WHEREAS, FCC proposed rules would eliminate the utilization of funds for radio infrastructure, mobile radios, portable radios, pagers, AVL systems and MDCs, critical to dispatching the 911 response; and

WHEREAS, the City of Petoskey believes a broader use and interpretation of the phrase “directly related to the 911 process” should be adopted to include the entire 911 dispatching communication process; and

WHEREAS, the City of Petoskey believes that local decision making and local control regarding the utilization of 911 fees is paramount:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Petoskey supports a broader use and interpretation of the phrase “directly related to the 911 process” and supports local decision making and local control regarding the utilization of 911 fees.

Said resolution was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Marshall, Shiels, Walker, Murphy (4)

NAYS: None (0)

Table Public Safety Donation

The City Manager reviewed that staff was contacted by Ambassador Ronald Weiser regarding a donation he would like to make to the Public Safety Department; that Director Breed produced a list of unfunded equipment needs, while not critical, would be very beneficial to the department; and that the total estimated cost of equipment to be purchased is \$42,400 which would be funded by Mr. Weiser’s donation.

City Councilmembers commented that the donation request should be further discussed at a future meeting when the entire Council was present and suggested all Council members review the City Gift and Donation Policy and to pay close attention to Section IV(12)(c).

City Councilmember Marshall moved that, seconded by City Councilmember Walker to table donation request until the May 3, 2021 meeting.

Said motion was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Marshall, Shiels, Walker, Murphy (4)

NAYS: None (0)

Council Comments

Mayor Murphy asked for Council comments and Councilmember Marshall commented that she hopes the technical difficulties will be solved for the remaining remote meetings until City Council is able to attend in-person at City Hall. Councilmember Shiels encouraged citizens to remain diligent and continue to wear masks.

There being no further business to come before the City Council, this March 15, 2021, meeting of the City Council adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

John Murphy, Mayor

Alan Terry, Clerk-Treasurer