

City of Northville
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2014

Mayor Christopher Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Northville City Hall Council Chambers, 215 West Main Street, Northville, Michigan.

Present: Mayor Christopher Johnson, Mayor Pro Tem James Allen, Councilmembers Sam Ekong (arrived at 7:23 p.m.) and Ryan McKindles

Absent: Councilmember Nancy Darga (excused)

Also Present: City Manager Patrick Sullivan, Finance Director/Treasurer Sandi Wiktorowski, Director of Public Works James Gallogly, Fire Chief James Allen, Police Chief Gary Goss, DDA Executive Director Lori Ward, City Clerk Dianne Massa, Northville Youth Assistance Director Sue Campbell, Housing Commissioner Genie Nehs, reporter from the Northville Record, and one citizen

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Resident Joelle Sarkozy, spoke about the deer problem in her neighborhood. Approximately eight to twelve deer are decimating the landscaping at her home and others in the neighborhood. There is a concern with ticks and deer feces in the yards. Sarkozy was seeking direction on where to go for assistance.

The Police Chief noted that Ms. Sarkozy had contacted him earlier in the day regarding the deer. His research found that per the Department of Natural Resources, it is legal to feed deer up to two gallons of feed per day for recreational viewing. There are no ordinances or statutes that would make this a health or safety issue and it would be contrary to the DNR rules to adopt a local ordinance pertaining to deer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion Allen, seconded by McKindles to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

FY 2014-2015 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PRIORITIES

The City Manager briefly reviewed the FY 2013-2014 City Council Goals, Objectives and Priorities.

City Staff goals, objectives, and priorities reports were included as part of the City Council meeting packet. As the City Council had previously received and reviewed City Staff's goals and objectives, City Council determined that Department presentations or summaries were not necessary.

Instead, it was requested that Staff respond to questions from City Council, which are summarized as follows:

Building Department

Concern was voiced regarding exterior projects in the Historic District that are not built or done according to Historic District Commission approval. Project should include a “final check requirement,” prior to any final building permit inspections, to ensure that the project was completed in accordance with the approval received from the Historic District Commission. Options to alert the property owner of this requirement include amending the Historic District Commission Application, amending the Building Permit Application, and including language on the Building Permit. The City Manager noted that he has already contacted City Planning Consultants Carlisle/Wortman for assistance.

City Clerk and Elections

It was noted that the Clerk’s Office will administer the August and November elections.

Downtown Development Authority

Discussion pertained to attendance at the Movies at the Marquis Theater event. It was also explained that this year there will be a four movie events. The DDA will guide the Marquis Theater in hosting, promoting, and securing sponsors for the movie events. The DDA will not be funding the event.

(Councilmember Ekong arrived)

Finance and Administrative Services

Since the City converted to MERS Option B to smooth out the City’s annual contributions for pension obligations, it was requested that Staff contact MERS to see if the City could enter into a contract that would protect the City and ensure this payment mechanism remains in place.

Fire Department

Discussion pertained to the driveway repairs needed in the front of the Fire Hall. The Fire Chief gave a brief review of the Plymouth fire operation and run counts.

Housing Commission

None

Parks and Recreation

None

Police Department

None

Department of Public Works

Discussion and questions pertained to the cost of the solid waste program, which, at this time, is fully funded with customer fees. Contractor fees will increase 2% per the contract and it is uncertain if the rate increase will be passed along to the customer.

Further discussion pertained to tree plantings. It was noted there are funds available in an environmental fund. This would be a good year to plant trees to replace those lost during the severe storms that occurred in September 2013. Council asked the DPW Director to call this to their attention during the upcoming budget discussions.

Youth Assistance

Brief discussion ensued pertaining to Northville Township's upcoming millage request to fund their portion of the Shared Services.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PRIORITIES FOR FY 2014-2015

Comments from Council found that its goals for FY2014-2015 remain consistent with the current goals, objectives, and priorities, broadly described as follows (and not ranked in any order).

High Priority

Long-Term Fiscal and Financial Stability: Continuation of the long-term fiscal and financial stability efforts outlined in the City Manager's report to City Council dated January 13, 2014. This includes continued implementation of significant measures to stabilize the budget through the reduction of expenditures, stabilization of revenues, reduction of the City's full-time work force, addressing long-term pension obligations and other post-employment benefit liabilities, health insurance cost containment, and continued efforts to make the City compliant with the State's Economic Vitality and Incentive Program revenue sharing payments.

Medium Priority

Water and Sewer System Improvements: Remain current with the commitment to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to clean 20% of the City's sanitary sewer system each year to comply with Abatement Order No. 2096. To minimize the possibility of sanitary sewer backups in the City, efforts to clean 50% of the City's sanitary sewers should continue.

Continue efforts to detect water loss through leak detection surveys and continue to monitor the City's water controls and equipment to continue to control peak water usage during the summer months. These efforts demonstrated to Detroit Water and Sewer Department (DWSD) that the City could reduce its contracted peak flow amounts, which will result in a water rate decrease from DWSD in FY2015.

Corrections to a previously unknown sanitary sewer overflow into the storm sewer system were made. This is suspected to have been the major cause of basement flooding in Allen Drive and Novi Street homes in 2011. The City should continue to explore sanitary sewer improvements in the area to further reduce the possibility of future basement backups in the area.

Continue to partner with Wayne County and several other neighboring communities to design a Long Term Corrective Action Plan (LTCAP) for sanitary sewer excess flow as required under Final Order of Abatement 2096 with MDEQ.

Preservation of Downtown Funding: The implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan is almost complete and limited funding opportunities exist. Therefore, efforts should now focus on continuing to monitor efforts in Lansing that would reduce or eliminate the DDA and TIFA funding mechanisms, which provides the funding needed to improve the physical and economic environment of the downtown.

Street, Sidewalk, and Bike Path Improvement Connectivity: Continue the annual crack sealing program and the annual street and sidewalk program approved in 1997.

Wayne County is moving forward with improvements to Seven Mile Road between Northville Road and western City limits. Continue to work with the Oakland County Road Commission,

City of Novi, and Northville Township to arrange for the placement of sidewalk/pedestrian paths along Eight Mile Road from Taft Road west to Napier as part of the county road improvement project. This would lead to an eventual connection to Maybury State Park.

Oakland County improved Eight Mile Road from Beck Road to Napier Road and has awarded contracts for the reconstruction of Eight Mile Road between Beck Road and Taft Road for the summer of 2014. As part of this project, the City's sidewalk system will be extended to Beck Road on the north side of Eight Mile Road, and a bike path will be extended on the south side of the road to Beck Road for the Township.

City Staff is preparing a long term street improvement program for Northville funding options for presentation to City Council in the near future.

Complete the non-motorized pedestrian plan. The plan will identify a route which will connect Hines Park, through the downtown, to Maybury Park, using a combination of bike paths, bike lanes, and shared streets to accomplish the connection.

Lower Priority

Retaining the Retail Operation of the Northville Post Office within the Central Business District:

Continuing to work with the United States Postal Service (USPS) to address the needs of the post office while preserving the economic benefits of a post office (particularly the retail function) within the Central Business District.

The Post Office building is under lease through 2016. Future land use of the city-owned property, south of the Post Office, will be addressed in the Community Master Plan update.

Development and Redevelopment Issues: Work to continue quality development and redevelopment of the McDonald Ford property and other areas in Cadytown. Continue working with the Planning Commission on zoning ordinance amendments that would clarify when approvals are needed for existing non-confirming sites, and amend the City's cell-tower ordinance to comply with the new state law.

Continue the major planning initiatives that began in 2013 to determine future land use and transportation strategies. The Joint Master Plan Committee, which was appointed to study areas near the downtown which are likely to be redeveloped in future years, will present a report to the DDA, Planning Commission, and City Council. The Committee's report will emphasize new areas for mixed-use and residential development. The Planning Commission will then implement updates to the Master Plan.

Cemetery Build-Out: Continue working to develop the remaining portion of Rural Hill Cemetery within available resources.

Projects on Hold

Mill Pond Improvements/Watershed Enhancements are on hold due to lack of available funding sources. Staff will continue to monitor funding opportunities.

The City Manager was directed to summarize the proposed FY2014-2015 City Council goals, objectives, and priorities and place them on a future agenda for City Council review and adoption.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor and Council

Johnson noted that two Councilmembers had conflicts with the January 21st City Council meeting date, suggesting the Council meeting be moved to another date to ensure a quorum.

Motion Allen, seconded by McKindles to move the January 21st City Council regular meeting date to January 22, 2014. **Motion carried unanimously.**

McKindles acknowledged the hard work of the City Manager, Finance Director, and Department Heads and Staff in the accomplishment of much work completed in 2013 to help the City achieve long-term financial stability.

Ekong apologized for being late as he believed the meeting time was 7:30 p.m. and not 7:00 p.m.

Staff None

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment: 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Massa, CMC
City Clerk

Christopher J. Johnson
Mayor

Approved as submitted: 2/3/2014