

COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2016
6:00 P.M.

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Absent

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Nicole Penrod – Present
Jennifer Romano - Present
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members present, Mayor Daniel presiding.

MINUTES Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the August 9, 2016 meeting minutes as presented, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye.

MARKETING VIDEO Mayor Daniel shared the marketing video for Columbia City that Sound Ideas put together. He explained we would be using this video to target certain areas and on social media to help grow our community. He thought the goal was to run the ad in September and October then again in March and April.

VISITOR CENTER FOR WHITLEY COUNTY – NATALIE SPAIN Natalie Spain was present to discuss the idea of a visitor center. She explained she moved to Whitley County about 2 years ago and found it difficult to navigate and track activities and events. She felt there were some excellent marketing materials available but not everything was available online and felt it would be more beneficial for it to be marketed on a regional, state and national level as well as online. She suggested Visit Whitley County would act as a catalyst to market and promote all of our community assets as well as the key component in attracting new visitors and residents. She shared that she has invested a great length of time and effort into this project. She advised she would like to share her passion and love of her new community through a Visitor's Center.

Mrs. Spain asked the Council to strongly consider implementing an Innkeeper's Tax to help fund Visit Whitley County. She explained the tax would not go towards the business or residents; it would go to the consumer. She advised we were one of the county's that did not have an Innkeeper's Tax in Indiana. She explained the tax usually runs 5% of the accommodation; however, she is only asking for 3.5%. She shared that some of the revenues that would go along with Visit Whitley County would include donations, sponsorships as well as paid advertising from businesses.

Mrs. Spain explained the key components would be to authorize the Innkeeper's Tax; with the help of the Downtown Business Alliance they have secured a location where they can distribute marketing material. She advised they have some options of where to house Visit Whitley County and also some options to securing non-profit status. She shared the goals, objectives, marketing and advertising materials of Visit Whitley County.

Mayor Daniel shared that in our Comprehensive Plan it does talk about a Visitor's Bureau and felt they should go back and review that part of the plan. He discussed Indiana Statute 6-9-18 regarding the Innkeeper's tax where it states the fiscal body of the County may levy the tax so was not sure City Council would have the ability to do that. He questioned if the County would decide not to pass this tax would there be a different way in which this could be funded. Mrs. Spain advised there was, it was called a Transient Tax, but she needed to do more research on it.

Additional discussion followed. Mrs. Spain advised she had a meeting set up with the County but felt she would probably be back in front of City Council at some point.

REMC APPRECIATION NIGHT Mayor Daniel advised the City had 2 tickets available for the annual REMC meeting and program on September 10. Rosie Coyle was nominated to attend to represent the City.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Mark Green** – pool closed and drained, selling pool items, football going well. **Terry Wherry** – SCADA upgrade moving forward, 2 new dispatchers will start training September 5th & 6th. **Tony Hively** – evidence locker arrived, hiring process update, EVOC training. **Tom LaRue** – firefighter program update, extrication training, Kyle Walters new firefighter.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported his Youth Council will hold their first meeting of the school year on Wednesday, August 24. He advised they will have 4 new students joining the Youth Council. He reported the Movie on the Square was scheduled for Friday, August 26.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION APPOINTMENT Walt Crowder advised there was a vacancy on the Redevelopment Commission. He shared the Commission was recommending that Council appoint Scott Gates to fill the vacancy left by Kevin Snell. Mayor Daniel noted the term would expire December 31, 2016.

Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to accept Scott Gates as the appointment to the Redevelopment Commission, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

INDOT MEETING Jennifer Romano reported she, Mayor Daniel, Commissioner Don Amber and Jeff Walker had an opportunity to meet with INDOT to ask questions and discuss future projects.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle