

**COMMON COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023  
6:00 PM**

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

**Council Members**

Walter Crowder – Present  
Jennifer Middleton – Absent  
Jennifer Romano – Present  
Tad Varga – Present  
Daniel Weigold – Present

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

**MINUTES** Mayor Daniel noted a change under the Redevelopment Commission discussion to correct Cardinal Grain. Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the September 12, 2023, meeting minutes as presented, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**PUBLIC HEARING – 2024 BUDGET** Mayor Daniel shared there had not been significant changes in the budget from this year to next year. He advised a 4% raise was being proposed for employees across the board and noted that was consistent with what the County was giving to their employees. He advised they put back in \$10,000 for the Housing Authority to offset the 90/10 owner occupied rehabilitation program. He reported they raised the amount being given to the Planning Commission. He shared they were proposing to add 2 new positions next year to the City; one being a Community Engagement Specialist which will fall under the Community Development Department. He explained they would be in charge of potentially running the Test Kitchen, if we get that up and running, they would handle some of the downtown beautification efforts we want to get moving on, handling some of the weed spraying and maintaining our pocket parks, as well as taking some of the burden off of our Community Development Director. He advised the other position was a new Administrative Assistant for our Parks Department. He shared Andrea Pequignot was hired as an Administrative Assistant, and her duties have just continued to expand in the programmatic area including running the concession stands, stocking those stands and making sure that the camps are running. He stressed that Andrea does a ton of different things, and the issue is, we do not have someone working the phones and being in the office all the time. He advised we just need someone there for responsiveness to our City residents. He added they obviously were still setting aside money for Eagle Park and for the trail extension. He shared there were different projects the public safety departments were doing, one of those projects is a text alert program where individuals can sign up for basically a menu of options for notifications and such within the City. He advised it also helps us from a public safety perspective so that if we have to clear a neighborhood for some reason, we can draw a circle around the affected area and send out a text alert to all those people. He noted residents would need to sign up for that service, however. He reported they have set aside money for phase II of the Westgate project that will be for next year. He explained we would be doing some building repairs on the fire department, including roof and the front of the exterior.

Mayor Daniel shared those were some highlights of the budget in and of itself. He did not feel there were any dramatic changes by any means and continue to try to be thoughtful about how we spend the people's money. He mentioned, as he has said before, the City can provide anything that citizens want but they have to be willing to pay for it. He felt we really try to do a good job of balancing that and making sure that we were providing the services that we should but at the same time not going way out of bounds.

Mayor Daniel recessed the Council meeting and opened the public hearing on the 2024

budget. Hearing no comments or questions, the public hearing was closed and the Council meeting was resumed.

**ORDINANCE 2023-17: 2024 BUDGET 1<sup>ST</sup> READING** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2023-17 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-17 an Ordinance or Resolution for Appropriations and Tax Rates.

Motion was made Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-17 on first reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**ORDINANCE 2023-18 REZONE – TIMBER’S EDGE DEVELOPMENT, LLC** Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2023-18 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-18 an Ordinance amending the zoning classification of certain property from the “R-2” two-family residential district to the “R-3” multi-family residential district.

Nathan Bilger, Planning Director, explained this ordinance was a proposal to rezone about 13 acres just north of Ravenwood Section 2 and just east of Timbers Edge. He advised the Plan Commission considered this at their September meeting and was being forwarded to the Council with a favorable recommendation. He explained they requested R-3 primarily for the smaller lot sizes, smaller setbacks and not for the multi-family component. He reported they submitted a zoning commitment that multi-family would be prohibited, and the Planning Commission is forwarding this as a requirement for a zoning commitment that multi-family would be prohibited. He shared two other commitments came out of that discussion; one being that a maximum of 25% of the lots developed would be of the lower R-3 standards but the setbacks would still be the same throughout all of them. He advised the other one was that driveways would be a minimum of 20 feet in width. He shared it was discussed about a 2-car attached garage for single family detached but they do want to do some villas there which could potentially be 1-car garages. He advised Council could make additional commitments as part of the consideration or could modify them but if made less restrictive the Plan Commission asked to act on it again.

Jennifer Romano questioned what the plans were for streets. Nathan Bilger explained the actual pavement should meet the street specification, but the right of way is expected to actually be slightly narrower in order to allow for a deeper front setback. Mayor Daniel clarified that the roadways would be built to current specs, whereas some of the other roadways were a smaller spec. Nathan Bilger advised that was correct, the actual pavement would still be held to the current standard.

Brooks Langeloh, Developer, was present to discuss the project further. He advised they were planning for around 50 lots.

Mayor Daniel shared that he and Brooks have been having conversations about expanding the trail in this neighborhood over to Parkview Hospital or expanding in some way to give additional connection to our trail system.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve Ordinance 2023-18 on first reading, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Brooks Langeloh questioned if the provision for the single car garage was included in the approval. Mayor Daniel advised they just approved the rezone but could have a motion to clarify.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to clarify that the third zoning commitment in the certification to include a 10 ft wide minimum for one car garages, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**TREE BOARD APPOINTMENT** Walt Crowder questioned if any Council members had a recommendation. He advised he had a current member on the Tree Board who would like to stay on but was willing to give up their position if somebody else was interested.

Jennifer Romano advised she forwarded a name to the Mayor. Mayor Daniel acknowledged that but felt the individual would better enjoy serving on another Board he had in mind. He questioned if the current Tree Board member was Larry Walters. Walt Crowder advised that was correct. It was noted that Larry was very passionate about the Tree Board.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to reappoint Larry Walters to the Tree Board, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**JOB DESCRIPTION – PARK DEPARTMENT** Mayor Daniel shared as discussed in his budget discussion this job description was really to accommodate what Andrea Pequignot was actually doing. He advised we do not necessarily like to write job descriptions to mirror what someone is actually doing but this was just not one of those cases.

Tad Varga questioned if her current job title or description would change, or would she just keep doing what she has been doing. Mayor Daniel explained this position description would be for her as we already have the administrative assistant job description that would go for the new person.

Jennifer Romano questioned if ‘Administrative Assistant’ needed to be removed from the new job description title. Mayor Daniel advised he talked to Beth Igney in HR about that but was not sure why it was decided to keep it. Matt Heiden explained Andrea was still going to help out in admin because of her years of being in that position. He explained she was going to be doing that dual role, more on the program side but still being able to help on the admin side.

Mayor Daniel suggested if the Council would like to clarify or change the wording, that would be perfectly fine. He noted it was done with the Aquatic Center. Rosie Coyle suggested administrative assistant could be in the job description, but her title would be Assistant Program Coordinator.

Mayor Daniel clarified we would change the position title to Assistant Program Coordinator but put in some of the duties of the administrative assistant into the essential functions of the job description. Jennifer Romano, Matt Heiden and Tad Varga all agreed that made the most sense. Mayor Daniel felt it probably would behoove us to send this back to Beth to have those adjustments made.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to table this for now and send back to Beth to make the suggested changes, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS** **Tom LaRue** – 102 failed pump testing and believe there is something wrong in the electrical system, it is out of service for firefighting duties but the rescue tools are still usable. Chris, Trent and he will be attending training in Fort Wayne. Trent starts Fire Inspection 2 training in October and will be his final certification to take over for Chris when he retires. Gas meter is being sent away for repair. Broken pack trackers that was broken finally returned. Update on IROL agreement on sprinkler system inspections. Request from Warsaw Fire Department for mutual aid and will be presenting an MOU to Council. **Mike Cook** - third quarter cleaning of the SDI force main and air release valves inspection has been completed. Held pre-construction meeting for the force main project. Lift stations have all been cleaned out thanks to Kelly and his guys. Pretreatment guys have been working on setting flow meters to monitor the flows in all our industries. **Mike Shoda** - Finished painting hydrants at Eagle Glen and will be heading to Deer Chase. Reported on Vac truck repairs. He advised they are going to get letters around for certain areas of town so they can

identify what types of piping were being used, copper or plastic. He explained everything has to be identified by October 2024 and anything that has not been identified they will have to assume is led and will be part of the ones they have to take out per Federal mandate. **Matt Heiden** – Rebuilt the surrounding area of the splash pad vault. They placed some concrete walls as parking deterrents. Drained and cleaned the pool and did warranty to work on the repainting. Rotary donated money for two benches, the concrete benches that Noah Hilty is making, and will be put on the overlook at the pond. Discussion on improving the Irish Glen trail to Morsches Park. **Terry Wherry** - Baseline Fiber is supposed to be in town this week to cut into the North and NW substations, so once that's complete, we should be able to finish the project up at the water booster station and get it on the fiber network. Equipment has been installed at the new park office, but the Cisco units were going to have to be set up and all the wiring checked to see if it was useful for the new system we are putting in out there.

**MAYOR REPORT** Mayor Daniel gave updates for the Police Department, Street Department and Community Development. He reported they held police interviews. He would be in Indianapolis for a Committee meeting. He advised a group of school kids would be in to do tours of City Hall. He reported the next Lunch with the Mayor was scheduled for October 6 at noon.

**EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION** Dan Weigold reported the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction expansion has been voted down.

**CHICKENS** Melanie Love of 113 E Market Street distributed additional paperwork on fun facts of chickens and plea to allow chickens in town.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

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Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

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Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle