

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Jennifer Middleton – 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 Mayor Daniel noted a couple of changes under the public hearing discussion of the September 26 meeting minutes regarding adding 2 new positions next year and then the verbiage in regards to opening and closing the public hearing.

Having no other changes or corrections, motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve the September 26, 2023, meeting minutes with the noted corrections, Tad Varga seconded the motion, Walt Crowder, Jennifer Romano and Tad Varga voted aye, Jennifer Middleton abstained.

GARY BIRD – CEMETERY RESTORATION Gary Bird and his team were present to give a brief update on the cemetery monument marker restorations they have been doing. Mr. Bird reported they worked in Greenhill as well as several other cemeteries. He advised there were actually 6 cemeteries that they have worked in, and were not done yet. He shared that it seems the word has gotten out as the Trustees and other folks were asking when they could come do theirs.

Mayor Daniel advised he put a PowerPoint in the Dropbox so Council could follow along with the presentation.

Mr. Bird shared pictures of the variety of markers out there for veterans, as well as civilians. He advised they did get to the point where they were restoring civilian monuments as well. He noted it was helping the City and Trustees out. He explained to set a monument, for example, was anywhere from \$250 to \$1000 so depending on the size, it could be kind of expensive. He felt one of the cost avoidances that he has been able to do for the City was around \$23,000 in monument restoration. He shared that they have chosen to make our cemeteries look honorable and presentable.

Mr. Bird continued with his presentation, discussing the process for cleaning the markers and the cemeteries where they have been. He mentioned that many monuments have sunken underground and discussed the number that were now above ground and standing in the Greenhill Cemetery. He added that in the Eberhard Cemetery on Keiser Road there were over 100 markers now standing that did not use to be.

Mr. Bird shared there were a couple he could not fix until a tree was removed, which was targeted by Cory to be removed. He advised that happens in all cemeteries, the families plant a tree, the tree was little, the family dies off and there is nobody left to prune and take care of it. He explained the tree then starts breaking up the stones and in a lot of cases, where there is a bush, they find stones under those. He felt some people assume the responsibility of maintaining those trees or bushes falls on the owner of the cemetery, so then it just keeps growing. He shared they have decided that a lot of these just need to go away; they were not going to let the graves look like that so have been removing a lot of brush and stuff.

Mr. Bird shared he counts every veteran and takes photos of every monument marker in each cemetery. He explained he does that for several reasons, the DNR requires that he have a photo history so, if they want, they can see what he has done as well as it is a courtesy to the families. He expressed that when he leaves the cemetery, he has so much joy in his heart that he feels invincible. He shared that he does need more people to help as the list grows and can always use financial assistance too.

Mr. Bird reported their next task was Wreaths Across America. He shared they do have a Facebook page with a link to purchase a wreath and advised their goal was to get 400 wreaths for the Greenhill Cemetery. He advised the wreaths cost \$17.00 apiece and out of that \$17.00, Wreaths Across America allows them to put \$5.00 in their cemetery cleaning and restoration account at the Community Foundation. He advised there were no limitations on which cemetery you can purchase a wreath for, Greenhill was just his default location. He shared there is a program scheduled for December 16th and all across America, at all 3700 cemeteries, there will be a little ceremony and then at 1:00 will begin placing the wreath on the veteran's gravesites. He advised they will be at the Greenhill Cemetery at noon.

Mayor Daniel questioned if there was a deadline in which individuals can purchase a wreath. Mr. Bird advised the deadline was Thanksgiving, however, they did say they could make accommodations if somebody wanted one after that date. He explained he would need to come back for approval to park a semi-truck with all these wreaths in it. He shared that he wanted the semi to be visible because it will be decked out with Wreaths Across America. He noted he has already contacted some of the news Channels 15 & 21 to let them know because we were the only ones in this area participating.

Mr. Bird shared that he really appreciated the City's support and the Township's support. He advised Cleveland Township was now on board, South Whitley and Washington Township, so it was growing quickly. He thanked the City for purchasing the cleaning material; a 55-gallon drum of cleaning material, which was expensive and was one of their biggest expenses for cleaning.

Mayor Daniel expressed on behalf of he, Rosie and the Council just how thankful they were for the work that Mr. Bird and his team were all doing, day in and day out, on our cemeteries, not just in Columbia City but across the county. He felt the citizens owe them a debt of gratitude not only for making our cemeteries look good but to honor those individuals who are remembered in that cemetery.

Jennifer Romano felt it was important too to recognize this was a very physical job that they were doing out there and they were doing it with so much love, care and concern for the people who are there.

Mr. Bird shared they do a lot of research on these veteran's and advised there were very decorated soldiers in all of our cemeteries, there is a lot of history out there. He encouraged everyone to take the time to take a visit and walk around our cemeteries.

2024 BUDGET ADOPTION: ORDINANCE 2023-17: 2ND 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 which is the adoption of the 2024 Budgets for the City.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-17 on second and final reading, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Mayor Daniel advised they also have the excess levy appeal that they have done the last couple of years due to our growth outpacing the growth of others.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve the petition for the excess levy appeal as presented, Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2023-18 REZONE: TIMBER'S EDGE DEVELOPMENT, LLC – 2ND

READING Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2023-18 by title only, Walt Crowder 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.

Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was presented at the last meeting by Nathan Bilger and Brooks Langeloh regarding the second phase of Timbers Edge.

Dan Weigold mentioned the adjustment that was going to be made for the width of the driveway. Mayor Daniel advised that was included when approved the first time so would need to be included this time.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-18 with the change, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

JOB DESCRIPTION – PARK Mayor Daniel advised this came in front of Council last time. He reported changes were made as discussed and can be seen in red.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve the position description for the Assistant Program Coordinator, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Chip Hill** – will be installing pipe in Eagle Park in the next couple weeks for the drainage system and will be going out for bids for Eagle Park and the trail extension towards the end of November/first of December. **Shawn Lickey** – update on the 69 KV conversion project as well as the Morsches Road project, working with a company on getting a quote for line clearing, several new businesses coming to town which is keeping them busy. **Gary Parrett** – First Fridays completed for the year without any issues, replaced 30+ year old shotguns, gearing up for Halloween and Veteran's Marathon. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – preparing for leaf pickup, working on Asset Management Plan Certification so they can proceed with getting Community Crossings grant money, attended the Indiana Street Commissioners Conference, installed flashing stop signs at Jefferson and Deer Path, paved Grove Park and limb pickup done for the year. **Matt Heiden** – working to bring in a Certified Pool Operator class, preparing for the Mother/Son Halloween event, high school 2D art class started their painting project on the concrete balls by the Splash Pad. **Mike Shoda** – continue with painting hydrants, drainage tile delivered for Eagle Park as well as pipe for the first phase of Chauncey Street to separate from the combined sewer. **Mike Cook** – waiting for a quote to repair older secondary, update on SCADA system project.

YOUTH COUNCIL Alina Houser with the Youth Council was present to report on their activities for the month.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel requested to cancel the next City Council meeting due to scheduling conflicts among several of the members. He gave the department report for the Fire Department. He reported he, Rosie and Beth Igney were working on health insurance quotes for next year. He shared he attended a Community Crossings workshop in Plainfield. He advised students were in to tour City Hall and learn about government.

WHITLEY COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT Walt Crowder gave an update on their progress and advised there were some places that they have already connected.

ARTS COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported the Arts commission will be partnering with Columbia City Connect on winter projects and events. She advised they were also doing some strategic planning for next year and decision making on some grants they would like to apply for.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported the LML property is requiring additional borings and fortunately they still have the funds to cover this. He felt they were looking at another 60-90 days.

CHICKENS Caspian Love of 113 E. Market Street was present to express his support for allowing chickens in town.

Melanie Love of 113 E. Market presented suggested options for ways in which we could handle allowing chickens. She shared in her research she found an existing ordinance in Chapter 90 of the Animal Ordinance which grants the Common Council the authority to appoint an Animal Control Commission and designate the Board's duty. She felt from the wording it was referring to the Board of Works and Safety being already designated as the one in charge of dealing with the potential consequences. She questioned if the Animal Control Commission was something that already exists or was never actually implemented. Mayor Daniel explained the Board of Works has done all of the duties of what was being described in regards to animals.

Ms. Love felt a lot of the issues that have been cited about having backyard chickens is already addressed in the existing ordinances. She continued to share suggested solutions on ways in which they could record and track chickens. She shared the 4-H Poultry Club has said they could be a resource to assist with animal intake and finding new homes for flocks as long as they were not large in size. She advised the Giving Gardens has said they would be willing to help in the future if they had the facilities and volunteers to help. She shared they could also put together a list of local farms who would be willing to take on additional hens from time to time.

Ms. Love shared roosters can be as loud as a barking dog, but hens were pretty quiet. She shared a list of common noises that were louder than chickens. She felt bringing in backyard chickens would bring in new challenges but felt it would also be an opportunity to show their creativity, resourcefulness, and community.

RETIRED SHOTGUNS Jared Landcaster questioned in terms of the retired shotguns, how many were retired and what the brands were. Chief Parrett explained the previous shotguns were Remington 870's and they were retiring 13 of those. Mr. Landcaster questioned what the process was when the guns are retired. Chief Parrett advised they were traded in.

Hearing no further comments or questions, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle