

**COMMON COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023  
6:00 PM**

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

**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 corrections to Alina Houser’s name and the other was under the retired shotguns discussion in that it should be Jared Lancaster, not Gary Lancaster.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve the October 10, 2023, meeting minutes, Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**ORDINANCE 2023-16: VACATE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY 325 N. ELM: 2<sup>ND</sup>**

**READING** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2023-16 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-16 Vacation of Public Right of Way.

Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was for the Community Bible Church and that there had been a lot of discussion in past meetings. He noted one of the main points of interest was whether or not the street department would have enough turning radius for their plows. He pointed out under the very last ‘Whereas’ statement that it does include an exclusive ingress/egress to turn their vehicles around there.

Dan Weigold advised Council could approve the vacate but the Church would need to take the information and have it recorded before it would become part of that parcel.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-16 on second and final reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**DOWNTOWN PLANNING PRESENTATION – HWC ENGINEERING**

Catherine Puckett, Landscape Architect with HWC Engineering, gave a presentation on the downtown plan and the process they went through to develop the plan.

Dan Weigold praised Catherine and her Company for doing a marvelous job putting some great ideas out there for them to think about. He shared one of his real concerns was for the parking on Van Buren between Chauncey and Line Street. He advised that area is very, very narrow and in the grand scheme of things, it was a minor issue but still felt it needed to be addressed. Ms. Puckett agreed that when you have these downtown streets where the buildings are set and the sidewalks are there, there is only so much you can do. Mayor Daniel felt the issue was parking during the open hours of a lot of the service-based businesses and trying to figure out a way to accommodate, while not spending a lot of money.

Jennifer Romano shared it had been 30 years since we have done anything to our downtown streetscapes and felt it was worth looking at and investing in.

Mayor Daniel shared one of the things Catherine has been really adamant about is when opportunities come up, having plans on the shelf ready to go. He advised that next year projects and plans are going to become eligible for Ready 2.0, a statewide program that

northeast Indiana is going to be a part of. He explained it would be a funding mechanism that we were not planning for when we did our comprehensive plan. He noted to also keep in mind OCRA, for instance, had downtown revitalization dollars that they put on the shelf for a little while, but would not be surprised if that comes back out. He mentioned all of that to say, opportunities come along all the time, and we have been really successful in getting grants for different things. He felt the State of Indiana, at least under this governor's administration, and even the legislature to a certain extent, have started to realize how important quality of life experiences are because we do not have the mountains, we do not have beaches and are surrounded by cornfields.

Walt Crowder felt there was a lot of coordination between the layout of the program and the funding. He mentioned what is above ground has different challenges than what is below ground. He acknowledged that we have infrastructure downtown that just needed some attention and felt we had the right people engaged to say 'hey, here's what we can do'. Mayor Daniel agreed. He shared he keeps coming back to planning for the future, and if we are going to do something, not doing it half-heartedly, but making sure that we are thinking about everything from 6 ft. below to all the way above the buildings. He agreed it was not going to be cheap and would not be tomorrow but is a plan for the future.

Tad Varga questioned the last time one of these was done. Mayor Daniel thought it would have been mid 1990's.

**2024 EMPLOYEE SALARY ORDINANCE – 1<sup>ST</sup> READING** Rosie Coyle reviewed changes for the 2024 Salary Ordinance. Mayor Daniel noted there was nothing new that had not already been discussed in the past. Rosie Coyle advised she gave the ordinance to all of the department heads to review.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2023-20 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-20, an ordinance to be known as the 2024 Salary Range Benefit Ordinance.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-20 on first reading, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**JOB DESCRIPTION – STORMWATER SUPERVISOR** Mike Shoda explained right now he has one supervisor covering both water and stormwater. He shared they were running into a lot of old catch basins that need relined and repaired, they also have some big projects like the Chauncey Street project as well as the Eagle Park project. He felt it would make it easier to have a second supervisor running the stormwater end of things to make sure everything is getting done. He shared they should be cleaning catch basins every year, but it just was not getting done because they are trying to keep up on the water side of things.

Dan Weigold questioned if we would be hiring another person. Mike Shoda advised he would not and would just advance from within. Mayor Daniel explained they basically were trying to provide additional leadership within the department so we can have two crews, one working on water and one working on stormwater. He advised with the electric department we have two supervisors, the police department has three shift sergeants among the other things. He mentioned not all departments have two supervisors, but it is always good, especially when looking at future leadership. Mike Shoda shared he and his supervisor would probably retire pretty close to the same time, so it would be a good thing to get someone started.

Tad Varga felt it was a good idea to have a succession. Mayor Daniel agreed succession planning was an important thing for sure

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve the position description for stormwater supervisor, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**2024 CIP BUDGET APPROVAL** Mayor Daniel noted the CIP Budget was in the

Dropbox and may look a little different than in the past. He advised he updated it as there was a lot of stuff in there that he did not think was important, imperative, or really timely, so tried to make it much more user friendly. He shared he was not necessarily asking for approval of the booklet as much as approval of the appropriations. He advised the CIP Committee already approved this on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Daniel noted they had already talked about this but reviewed some of the things again. He discussed the appropriations for curbs and sidewalks, most of which will go to the Westgate project. He noted he would really like to maintain that level for the next couple of years as there were a lot of areas in the community that he would like to hit sidewalk and curb wise.

Dan Weigold reported there was a lot of discussion about a sidewalk going out to the new Bowen Center. He advised a lot of people want a sidewalk but the question of who was paying for it remains. Mayor Daniel appreciated knowing that conversation was happening. Dan Weigold felt the sidewalk should have been put into the plan. Tad Varga agreed. Walt Crowder advised they were kind of at a standstill as it was strictly discussion as to who had what approval. He mentioned they needed help because there were no teeth in that particular location. He advised it was all built around safety as they were trying to eliminate, as much as possible, people crossing SR 205. Mayor Daniel shared he would be happy to have that conversation if it needed to be had. He felt, obviously, a group that must be at the table had to be INDOT because that was all their right-of-way through there. Dan Weigold shared they were even talking to the Community Foundation as they probably should have been brought into the plan of things to provide a sidewalk, as should the Bowen Center.

Jennifer Romano confirmed they would only be reviewing the 2024 part of the CIP budget. Mayor Daniel advised that was correct. He added that it was State mandate that after the budget is approved it has to be sent over to the County to get a non-binding review, which just means they get to look at it because they are the ones that pass the CREDIT Tax.

Mayor Daniel continued reviewing the budget.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve the 2024 CIP Budget, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**RDC COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS – VARGA, GATES** Mayor Daniel shared that Attorney McNagny recommended waiting for the new Council to make this appointment. He advised this would be on the agenda for the first meeting of January.

Walt Crowder added the incumbents were willing to stay on because they really enjoy it. He thought their last day of appointment was the 31st.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS** **Chip Hill** - working on the 100 S. 300 E. sewer line and the trail is supposed to go out for bid the 1st of December as well as bids for Eagle Park. **Mike Shoda** – update on South Chauncey Street stormwater project, new PLC put in that controls our pumps and wells. **Shawn Lickey** – update on the 69 KV conversion, changing out poles, met with contractors for new businesses coming in since lead times are not getting any better for any of our equipment, will be putting up Christmas decorations, two guys sent to pole climbing lab and finished first and second in the class. **Gary Parrett** - Veterans Marathon went very well, Officer Clark has been released to solo eval in the FTO process and Officer Bogner has started his FTO process, received new pistols, preparing for the lighted Christmas parade, Officer Thomas preparing for the Patrolling for Presents program, Dispatch is running smooth. **Mayor Daniel** shared department reports for Mike Cook, Matt Heiden, Kelly Cearbaugh, Terry Wherry and Tom LaRue.

**MAYOR REPORT** Mayor Daniel reported he would be in Indianapolis all day tomorrow for a task force meeting and will be meeting with the Youth Council on Thursday. He reminded Council that City Hall would be closed for Thanksgiving and the

day after. He gave an update on the US 30 PEL, Planning and Environmental Linkage study, and advised there would be another public input session at Peabody Library.

**REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT** Walt Crowder gave an update as to where they were in the process. He shared the engineering firm was going to have an open house and would forward the information along as soon as he receives it.

**ANNUAL MUNICIPAL LIGHTING CONTEST** Jennifer Romano advised anyone planning to participate in the annual municipal lighting contest should definitely try to have decorations up and ready by November 24<sup>th</sup>.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS & CONCERNS** Melanie Love of 113 E. Market Street added to the downtown parking concerns and agreed it was an issue. She also shared information on chickens.

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

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Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

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Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle