

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Jennifer Middleton – Present
Leslee Robinson - 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 called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a grammatical error under his report. Leslee Robinson pointed out a spelling error under Terry Wherry’s report.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve the February 27, 2024, meeting minutes as amended. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, Leslee Robinson, Tad Varga and Dan Weigold voted aye, Jennifer Middleton and Jennifer Romano abstained.

PUBLIC HEARING – CONNIE DYE ANNEXATION Mayor Daniel recessed the public hearing and opened up the floor for a public hearing regarding the annexation of the Connie Dye property off of 200 East.

Hearing no comments or questions, Mayor Daniel closed the public hearing and restarted the Common Council meeting.

ORDINANCE 2024-3: DYE ANNEXATION – 2ND READING Jennifer Middleton made a motion to read Ordinance 2024-3 by title only. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2024-3 an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Columbia City, Indiana, annexing certain territory to the City of Columbia City, Indiana, placing the same within the Corporate boundaries thereof and making the same a part of the City of County City.

Mayor Daniel reminded Council this was the second annexation of the Connie Dye property off of 200 East and advised there would actually be three readings of this Ordinance.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-3 on second reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT ANNUAL REPORT – NIKI KIESTER Niki Kiester was present to review their report for 2023. She shared she was particularly proud and excited about their downtown historic walking tour that they partnered with the school and the museum on.

She advised they hope to expand and do some interior tours where they would get to go in some of the older historic buildings. She noted that clean up day was scheduled for April 27th and First Friday starts in May and will run through October.

Tad Varga questioned if they were able to track how many people do the walking tour. She shared they could probably figure that out but she did not have the numbers.

Mayor Daniel questioned if they could estimate how many people, on average, come to First Friday. Niki Kiester advised that was a tricky question but there are a lot of people that come. She shared last year they had a drone fly over to try and get an estimate. She advised they also talked with Chief LaRue, and he had a way to calculate but seemed too complicated. She noted two years ago they had an estimate of about 2500 in one Friday. She shared it was hard because there is no single-entry point and then it flexes as people walk around. She advised they have tried different things but just cannot figure it out. Mayor Daniel felt it seemed like it was definitely thousands, it was just a matter of how many thousands.

Tad Varga questioned if they were getting a lot of food trucks and vendors signing up consistently. Niki Kiester reported this year they opened up registration for First Fridays earlier than usual and they do have quite a few returning vendors. She shared last year they had a really large influx of vendors because our neighboring City changed their First Fridays so received a lot of their vendors.

Jennifer Romano commented that she felt it was really a positive thing to have Columbia City Connect involved in our downtown. She added that the amount of partnerships that happen and the collaborative projects that have come out of it has had a really good impact. She advised it has also been really helpful for businesses downtown and it just has a lot of feel good about it.

YOUTH COUNCIL Lilly Joseph was present representing the Youth Council and shared what they have been doing since the last meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Shawn Lickey** - Board of Works approved for a company to come in and do pole testing, working at Big G's to get the overhead power lines that go through the middle of the Speedway Gas Station parking lot underground and rerouted, continue with Bair Road pole replacement project, Eli Stangland testing to become Journeyman Lineman. **Terry Wherry** - Surf Internet lines are ready for use and will be moving some of our equipment over to those lines, network outage scheduled to install some new certifications on the firewall, copier installed at the Water department and is the last one on the contract, meeting tomorrow with Spillman in reference to new server upgrade. **Gary Parrett** - received 19 applications for the three open positions on the Police Department and have set April 13th as the testing date for the physical agility and written test, accepting applications up to the testing date, several officers completed trainings since the first of the year, officers out doing Operation Pullover looking for seat belt and other violations, replaced a couple tabletops in Dispatch, Shane and Shift Leads are going to a leadership training later this week, participated in a Statewide tornado warning test. **Matt Heiden** - have about 521 kids in baseball and softball, opening up Dreamland bathrooms, new Administrative Assistant starting on Monday the 18th. **Mike Shoda** - continue work on South Chauncey Street, hooking up new car wash on Main Street. **Mike Cook** - still working on flow meters, update on restroom project, UV structure cleaned and ready for bulbs. **Mayor Daniel** gave reports for Fire Chief Tom LaRue, Kelly Cearbaugh and Chip Hill.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported the State of the City address was scheduled for this Friday at the Library. He shared he was hosting the Mayors and Commissioners caucus next Wednesday at the new Community Foundation building. He reported the Housing Authority received a full price offer on the house they rehabilitated.

LINCOLNWAY SPEED Dan Weigold reported an email was received about slowing the speed down on Lincolnway coming up to 30. He advised the Plan Commission has pushed it to the Board of Works so are working through that. He noted there were State regulations that we have to abide by and are trying to figure out a solution.

Mayor Daniel advised he and Nathan Bilger have been going back and forth a little bit, after Attorney McNagny and he had been going back and forth on a couple of things. He explained a good portion of Lincolnway is not within our City limits so it kind of creates a weird scenario. He explained that Nathan sent him an email mentioning because of annexation laws we may need to push it out to the other side of the road or something. He stated the point of the matter is, that a portion of Lincolnway that is not currently in the City limits, probably should be, or should have been as a part of our annexations in that area, which means that we would potentially be able to set the speed limit for at least the City portion of that road. He noted it was kind of an urban district when you think about Culver's being there and now Farm Credit Services going in, More Farm Store and Precision Plastics there, not to mention all the jail activity that will be out there within the year. He hoped we would be able to do something to make that area safer, especially in light of the growth that has happened there.

ARTS COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported the Arts Commission applied to the Indiana Arts Commission for funding for a summer art program that would be multidisciplinary. She advised it would probably be next year before they would get funding but there might be a trial run version of it this year and would include art and music and some other things. She reported they were partnering with the museum for some projects in May, and are partnering with the City for Taste of the Arts probably in June, and they might be doing something on 3rd Thursdays or something adjacent to that and have a date set for the Whitley County Studio Art Tour, which is going to be the 7th of September.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported they have a couple more shallow borings to do on the LML property but shared they were really close to having that project done.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle