**City of Marine City**

**City Commission Minutes - *Revised***

**March 16, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Marine City Commission was held on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 260 South Parker Street, Marine City, and was called to order by Mayor Vandenbossche at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor Jennifer Vandenbossche; Commissioners Jacob Bryson, Elizabeth Hendrick, Michael Hilferink, William Klaassen, Rita G. Roehrig, Brian Ross; Interim City Manager James Heaslip; Interim City Clerk Jason Bell.

Also Present: City Attorney Robert Davis

**AUDIO/VIDEO AVAILABLE**

For complete audio/video of meeting, visit the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvMghx-O9AA>

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Bryson, seconded by Commissioner Ross, to approve the Agenda. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

**COMMUNICATION**

Communication from L. Girard was read against marijuana dispensaries.

Communication from Cheryl Vercammen was read regarding Commissioner Hilferink’s arrest.

Motion by Commissioner Ross, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to accept and file the communications. Ayes: Bryson, Hendrick, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche. Nays: Hilferink. Motion Carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laura Merchant of 300 Broadway Committee spoke in favor of the MEDC/CDBG Grant and requesting a public hearing on April 6, 2023.

Heather Bokram of the Historical Society spoke on the CDBG Grant for Historic City Hall and a plan for 300 Broadway.

Dave Warner spoke in support of the CDBG Grant for 300 Broadway.

Ray Skotarczyk spoke in favor of the CDBG Grant for 300 Broadway and the importance of the building.

John Sapienza spoke on 300 Broadway and inaccuracies in some past restoration. He also spoke on Liquor License and past political corruption in his opinion.

Roland Woelkers spoke on the positive public comments earlier and 300 Broadway. He also thanked the DPW and Police Department for their work during the ice storm and water main break. He also spoke against marijuana facilities.

Catherine Warner spoke on Commission being controlled by four members and Commissioner Hilferink’s incident and requested an investigation into his actions and follow up from the City Commission.

Cheryl Vercammen spoke on questions she’s asked at the past couple of meetings that she has yet to receive answers to and spoke to the lack of transparency. She also spoke on budget concerns and high wages being paid to fill the vacancies in City staff. She also spoke on Commissioner Hilferink’s incident and requested the Mayor to take action.

Allen Reichle spoke on former Mayor Vercammen’s abuse of power while in office and provided an email to the Commission. He also spoke on Vercammen’s past issues and character.

Phillip Oleksiak spoke on Vercammen’s past public comments on transparency and character while in office.

Joe Moran spoke on the $50,000 T-Mobile Grant the City received earlier in the day and thanked Deputy Clerk Michele Goodrich for her hard work on the grant. He also objected to Allen Reichle’s public comments.

**APPROVE MINUTES**

Motion by Commissioner Bryson, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to approve the City Commission Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2023, with the amendment of including specific comments under City Manager’s Report regarding the vacancy of 300 Broadway. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Bryson, Hendrick, Hilferink, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

Motion by Commissioner Ross, seconded by Commissioner Roehrig, to approve the City Commission Closed Session Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2023. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Motion by Commissioner Bryson, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to approve the Marijuana Town Hall Minutes of February 20, 2023. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Presented:

* 1. MCAFA Run Report
  2. Departmental Activity Monthly Reports
  3. Community & Economic Development Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2022
  4. Business License – Black Guard Reserve
  5. Business License – New Century Art Gallery
  6. Business License – Baab LLC

Motion by Commissioner Ross, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to approve the Consent Agenda a-b. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Bryson, Hendrick, Hilferink, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

**FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

Expenditures

Motion by Commissioner Hendrick, seconded by Commissioner Ross, to approve total expenditures including payroll, in the amount of $527,930.19. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Hendrick, Hilferink, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche, Bryson. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

Preliminary Financial Statements

Motion by Commissioner Bryson, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to receive and file the Preliminary Financial Statements. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Hilferink, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche, Bryson, Hendrick. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Social District Update Discussion

City Attorney Davis spoke on the progress of the Social District maps and the letters of support that were provided from businesses. Attorney Davis will provide a draft of rules at the next Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Hendrick commented on the map that was provided and removing the volleyball court and Memorial Monument park from the Social District. She also requested the sponsor businesses be added to the map along with businesses on the West side of S Water Street. Commissioner Hendrick also inquired about additional signage that was required. City Attorney Davis spoke on the signage rules. Commissioner Hendrick’s opinion is that she didn’t want downtown littered with signs.

Mayor Vandenbossche stated if areas were removed from the Social District, it required signage where the Social District began and ended. City Attorney Davis stated it was hard for the Social District to start and stop at points along the mapped area.

Commissioner Hendrick asked how much the Alcohol Consumption in Parks Resolution was utilized during COVID and how the City would enforce the Social District rules. Commissioner Hendrick also spoke on how much the Social District would be utilized as those were an option during COVID when businesses weren’t open and also the pressures it would put on the Police Department to enforce the rules. Interim City Manager Heaslip stated that a Social District cleared up the Alcohol Consumption in Parks Resolution and it was the easiest solution or the Commission could revisit the current Resolution. Commissioner Hendrick requested the current Resolution to be brought back to the Commission at the next meeting. City Attorney Davis stated that you could not put a moratorium on an ordinance for an infinite amount of time.

Commissioner Roehrig stated the area on the maps was too large where many people frequent. She also stated that current establishments have outdoor spaces already to be utilized for outdoor consumption. Commissioner Roehrig also stated a Social District will put a strain on City staff and create more liability.

Commissioner Hilferink asked if hours for the Social District can be set. City Attorney Davis stated that days and times can be set and they can be flexible. He also cautioned the Commission on how many rules they set for the Social District.

Commissioner Hilferink asked if the Commission could get estimates on City costs to which Commissioner Hendrick agreed.

Commissioner Ross stated the map that was created was close to being a Social District and he was in favor of it because it is easier to enforce the rules.

Commissioner Hilferink thanked the Marine City Fish Company for their letter of support.

Mayor Vandenbossche stated the Social District is something that works for everyone. City Attorney Davis stated the Social District was consistent on what the City wants to accomplish.

No action was taken.

303 S. Water Property Fund Allocation

Mayor Vandenbossche spoke on the 303 S Water Street fund allocation and stated the Commission voted to revisit the allocation in April. She also spoke on the memo from City Attorney Davis that was provided to the Commission. Commissioner Hendrick stated the Commission voted to revisit it during Budget Hearings. City Attorney Davis stated it was a reminder and it was a segue into the agenda item 11a.

**NEW BUSINESS**

MEDC/CDBG Public Spaces Grant

Laura Merchant spoke on the MEDC/CDBG Grant information that was provided in the agenda. She stated it was am amazing opportunity that does not come around often. She stated the grant could possibly bring up to $2,000,000 to restore 300 Broadway to create a public space for the community to use. Laura Merchant also spoke on the importance of the April 28, 2023 deadline for the grant application.

Commissioner Hilferink inquired on the approximately 19 items being requested for the grant application. Laura Merchant stated she did not have any of those items at this time, but the volunteers would pull all of the information as they move the application along. She stated most of the items on the checklist were already completed by different committees and just needed to be put together. Commissioner Hilferink also inquired about the Citizens Participation Plan and other aspects of the application process and items needed to proceed by the deadline. *Commissioner Ross stated a Citizens Participation Plan would need to be created and it would need to include how citizens can contribute, but it did not need to be up and running by the application deadline.*

Commissioner Hilferink commented on the public hearing deadline and stated there was only 15 days to complete the paperwork to have a public hearing on April 6, 2023. Commissioner Hilferink’s opinion was that the items needed will not be completed by the deadline for a public hearing. Laura Merchant stated the items can be completed by the deadline with the volunteers that the multiple Committees have for this grant project. Merchant also confirmed that most of the items have already been completed and they will work diligently to pull those items together to meet the deadline.

Commissioner Ross stated he forwarded this grant information along to the proper Committees once he received it from Deputy Clerk Michele Goodrich and that the City was eligible for the grant. Commissioner Ross also stated he is happy to help with whatever is needed and all the information was already there, the data just needs to be gathered now. He also stated that the building the grant would be applied to needs to be Municipal owned.

Laura Merchant stated the Historical Society is willing to donate money to the matching funds as well as the Community Group and they are all ready to move forward with the grant application process.

Commissioner Roehrig asked if the items were available, why the Commission did not have them for review. Laura Merchant stated the Commission only needed to approve to start the grant application process. Commissioner Roehrig asked where the plan was if it was completed. Laura Merchant stated that pieces were done by other Committees already. Commissioner Roehrig stated the Commission needed the completed items for the public hearing.

Commissioner Hendrick stated this grant would cost the City $200,000 and that money needed to be committed for the application. Mayor Vandenbossche stated the Commission needed to approve the grant application process to start and move forward for the public hearing in order to meet the application deadline. Commissioner Roehrig stated the City needed to commit the money already for the grant to be eligible. City Attorney Davis noted the money from the sale of 303 South Water Street had already been segregated if the Commission chose to use those funds for the 10% grant match.

Commissioner Hendrick addressed Laura Merchant’s letter which was provided to the Commission and also the money committed by Friends of City Hall. Commissioner Hendrick also asked if the grant funding of $2,000,000 would complete the interior of the building. Lauran Merchant stated the grant money would complete the interior to be a functioning public space. Commissioner Hendrick also stated the repair estimates for the building were $2,000,000 to $3,000,000 over 15 years and costs have now gone up and it was her opinion the grant money requested would not be sufficient enough to complete the interior of the building.

Commissioner Hendrick asked what the public space would be used for once completed. Laura Merchant stated the public space’s use would be based on the public interest of the space and that the Committee already had a completed business plan.

Motion by Commissioner Bryson, seconded by Commissioner Ross, to hold a public hearing on April 6, 2023 to discuss the Public Gathering Spaces Initiative Grant for 300 Broadway and to direct the Commission to proceed with preparing the grant, but do not submit without subsequent Commission approval and for the City’s investment be up to $200,000. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Hilferink, Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche, Bryson, Hendrick. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

Exemption from the Requirements of the “Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act” – Resolution 005-2023

Motion by Commissioner Hendrick, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to approve Resolution 005-2023 - Exemption from the Requirements of the “Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act”. **Roll Call Vote.** Ayes: Klaassen, Roehrig, Ross, Vandenbossche, Bryson, Hendrick, Hilferink. Nays: None. Motion Carried

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Interim City Manager Heaslip discussed the Water Main break in Cottrellville Township that affected our water supply. He also discussed the City being awarded a $50,000 grant from T-Mobile and thanked Michele Goodrich for all of her hard work on the grant. Interim City Manager Heaslip also stated the City was approved for a SEMCOG Tap Grant for the bike path project. Interim City Manager Heaslip stated he has also been working on finalizing the proposed budget with Mary Ellen and wanted to report the City was in the black. He also stated he was working with Nichole and Mary Ellen on other finance issues and the Commission would need to come up with a plan in May to find help for Nichole as Mary Ellen will not be working past May. He also stated he has received multiple applications for the City Clerk, DPW Supervisor and City Manager. He provided a City Manager Search Committee update and an update on the Planning Commission’s recommendation of a firm for the City’s Master Plan update and also the marijuana facilities maps would be presented to the Commission during April’s Meetings. Interim City Manager Heaslip also stated he is working on the Capital Improvement Plan as well. He stated he was awaiting an update on the DNR Grant and the property description issue. Heaslip also stated he attended a Stonegarden Meeting for the Police Department and funds have drastically decreased. He also stated is working on finishing up contract negotiations with the POAM and Teamsters and should have the contracts to the Commission in April. Heaslip stated he would be on vacation during the last week of March.

Commissioner Hilferink inquired if the County was still helping with the finances. Interim City Manager Heaslip stated the County helped as much as possible. Commissioner Hilferink asked if Consultant Scott Adkins was helping with finances. Interim City Manager Heaslip stated that he was currently working on other obligations and the Commission should have his contract for approval at the next Commission Meeting. Commissioner Hendrick asked if Interim City Manager Heaslip has looked into Plante Moran for finance help. Commissioner Roehrig asked if that was budgeted. Interim City Manager Heaslip stated they have not been looked into yet and noted that budget amendments will be needed.

**COMMISSIONER PRIVILEGE/LIAISON REPORTS**

Commissioner Klaassen stated the Planning Commission discussed the marijuana zoning maps and issues and thanked everyone who worked on the T-Mobile Grant.

Commissioner Bryson thanked Michele Goodrich for all her grant work for the City. He also thanked the Historical Society for their generous offer.

Commissioner Hilferink thanked Michele Goodrich for her work on the T-Mobile Grant.

Commissioner Ross congratulated the MCHS Swim Team and Michele Goodrich for her work on the T-Mobile Grant. He also thanked everyone who came out in support of the MEDC/CDBG Grant for 300 Broadway.

Commissioner Roehrig urged residents to shop local.

Commissioner Hendrick stated the Fire Authority discussed and insurance issue and that buildings were under insured and those figures have been updated and sent the information to Interim City Manager Heaslip. She also stated the Fire Authority hired four firefighters and 3 had resigned. The Fire Authority preliminary budget was approved. She also thanked Marine City Firefighters for their assistance with the Harsens Island fire. Commissioner Hendrick also stated the Fire Authority was approved for a grant. She also thanked Michele Goodrich for her grant work and City Staff for keeping things going.

Mayor Vandenbossche spoke about the water main break and encouraged residents to sign up for WINS notifications. She spoke about the Tot Lot Grant from T-Mobile and the SEMCOG Tap Grant for the bike path and thanked Michele Goodrich for her work on those. She also stated she attended the Maritime Days Committee Meeting and there were quite a few people there and stated their next meeting is March 23rd. Mayor Vandenbossche also stated the Marine City Little League was looking for sponsors and volunteers. She also thanked her fellow Commissioners for their support on the MEDC/CDBG Grant.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Hendrick, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to adjourn at 9:11 p.m. All Ayes**.** Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason A.Bell Interim City Clerk

Jennifer Vandenbossche

Mayor