

**City of Marine City
City Commission
January 11, 2018**

A special meeting of the Marine City Commission was held on Thursday, January 11, 2018, in the Fire Hall, 200 South Parker Street, Marine City, Michigan, and was called to order by Mayor Vandebossche at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Dave Vandebossche; Commissioners Terrance Avery, Elizabeth Hendrick, William Klaassen, Rebecca Lepley, David Simpson, James Turner; City Manager Elaine Leven; City Clerk Kristen Baxter

COMMUNICATIONS

Received:

- Janet & Ted Carmody

Motion by Commissioner Avery, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to receive and file the Communication. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Vandebossche stated that he would like to move the Public Comment portion of the meeting to New Business as the intent of the meeting was to have it open to public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Klaassen, to move the Public Comment portion of the meeting to New Business. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Klassen, to approve the Agenda, as amended. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Future of City Hall and Community Center

City Manager Leven opened with a quick summary of the purpose of the meeting. She explained that, due to City Hall residing temporarily at the Guy Center for the past twelve years, the City Commission felt it was time to move forward and find a way to take care of the long-standing issue the city had between the Community Center and city offices.

City Manager Leven said the following:

- The designation for a community center was not tied to 303 S. Water Street
- The City Commission recently approved a lease for River Rec Teen Zone at 300 Broadway
- The City Commission would be considering a lease for Friends of City Hall at 300 Broadway in the near future

The process would involve exploring several options which would all include costs:

- Finding another building that might better suit our needs
- Constructing a new building
- Making modifications to the Guy Center (issues with the Guy Center included ADA access, parking, and difficulty accessing storage in the basement)

City Manager Leven stated that she and the City Commission set the meeting in order to listen to comments and feedback to aid them in finding a resolution.

Judy White, 8757 Anchor Bay Drive, Clay Township, read a statement that said she would love to see the city government go back into a restored city hall. She said she knows, financially, it is impossible for the city to restore it at this time. She stated that, if the building was leased to Friends of City Hall, they would have the best chance to raise millions of dollars needed through foundation grants.

Heather Bokram, 6294 River Road, East China, commented that the Guy Center was a lovely place for people to work but was not accessible for city staff or the public. She said the city should look into elevators or lifts to make the building handicapped accessible.

Ray Skwiers, 211 Michigan, complimented the meeting process and said it was a good way to share ideas. Mr. Skwiers said it was time for the city to move forward with a brand new facility, and the finances should come from TIFA. He said city employees deserved a nice working environment, and a new building would be a blessing to residents and something to be proud of.

Bob Lepley, 539 N. William, spoke about 300 Broadway and spoke in favor of the lease option the Friends of City Hall was proposing. Mr. Lepley said he would love to see city offices back at 300 Broadway. He also spoke about how the city needed a vehicle for investment and, with the possible dissolution of TIFA, there would be no vehicle for investment.

Keith Jenken, 809 S. Water Street, spoke in support of continuing TIFA and recommended that the city speak with the TIFA Board about building a new City Hall.

Larry Biscorner, 415 Carroll, said Marine City was the most visited city in the area and the city's leadership should be congratulated. He said he was proud of our city.

Louise Beutell, 535 N. Main Street, commented that City Hall was a gathering place for the city, and Historic City Hall was a beautiful building – something that defined the city. She asked that everyone work together to come up with a definitive plan to use all the space at Historic City Hall.

Judee Jobin, 5691 River Road, East China, said investing money into renovating Historic City Hall would give you many more years there and would last longer than new construction.

Joe Moran, 710 Pleasant, said it was sinful that the city allowed Historic City Hall to deteriorate – the city's most beautiful edifice. Going forward, he said the best option was to lease the building to Friends of City Hall, keeping City Hall downtown, and investigating updates to the Guy Center.

Georgia Phelan, 6004 Lozon Road, Cottrellville, asked if it was physically possible to add a second floor onto the Guy Center, and recommended that the city move forward with the lease with Friends of City Hall which would take the maintenance burden away from the city.

Robert Blanchard, 622 Alger, made the recommendation to consolidate every city department into one location to give the city the best option to move forward. He suggested the city-owned property on King Road as a great location to build a complex to house everything.

Commissioner Avery asked what the value was in the future so the city may build for longevity. He suggested a committee be formed to follow through on some of the concepts suggested.

Rosalie Skwiers, 211 Michigan agreed with a multi-departmental facility. She said Historic City Hall should be put in the past and the city should move forward and quit paying for all the buildings they currently have.

Commissioner Simpson commented that we need to stop thinking about physical buildings and locations and focus on the future and how city services are rendered. He questioned the audience on how the city could adapt some of their physical services to better serve the citizens.

Mayor Vandenbossche commented that shared spaces should be looked at, not just with government, but maybe other groups as well.

Charles Seigneurie, 224 N. Elizabeth, commented that a new plaza for all departments made sense, but questioned if the city could do it financially. He said the city should do their homework and make a timeline and stick to it. In addition, he said Friends of City Hall should lease Historic City Hall, the Guy Center should not house City Hall, and said a future City Hall should be located by businesses and people in the South Parker area.

Gary Gray, 610 N. Mary, said he agreed with the consolidation of city departments and liked the idea of Friends of City Hall leasing Historic City Hall. He said the city needed to show people that they are not just a bedroom community, and time should be taken to make a state of the art building to bring in the future.

Keith Jenken, 809 S. Water Street, said the city needed to look short-term. He suggested hiring an architect to check out the Guy Center to make it ADA compliant and see what else needed to be modified to make the Guy Center work.

Commissioner Avery commented that plans needed to be consistent with how much the city was prepared to spend.

Mayor Vandenbossche, responded and stated that we have a return on investment to look at.

Joe Moran, 710 Pleasant, commented that regardless of what the city decided to do, they had to pay for it and they don't have the means right now to do it. He said the city needed to think outside of the box on how they were going to pay for it.

Bill Klaassen commented that if people financially don't want it, and if the city didn't get help to get there, it wouldn't happen.

Bill Danneels, 206 Westminster, suggested the city explore their options, set guidelines of what they were looking for, have a positive attitude, and they would get there. He said it was a good idea to form a sub-committee to work on this.

Elaine Leven asked, at this time, if a Community Center was something that the city needed to move forward on. There was no response or feedback to her question.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Hendrick, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to adjourn at 8:27 pm. All ayes of those present. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Baxter

Kristen Baxter
City Clerk