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**MINUTES****III. Regular Meeting - Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm.

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

McDonald led in the pledge of allegiance.

**V. Roll Call**

Present: Vice Chair McDonald, Secretary Tony Houser, Jacob Brown, Matt Pleasant, Peter Lysy, Jen Garry

Absent: Mayor Sean Denison (at the Mayor Blossomtime Event)

City Staff: Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; Assistant Community Development Director, Ashley Regal; City Clerk, Kalla Langston

**VI. Approve Agenda**

Motion made by Houser, supported by Lysy, to approve the agenda as presented. Voice vote carries unanimously.

**VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items**

None.

**VIII. Approve Minutes**

**A. Minutes**- Consider approving the Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes from April 9, 2024.

Amend the minutes to include:

- i. Under **I. Public Hearing Item E. Presentation by the Applicant, Ordinance and Licensing Information**, amend “There is nuance the licensing” to “There is nuance **with** the licensing.”
- ii. Under **IX. New Business Item A. Consider an ordinance amending the city of Buchanan zoning ordinance, Motions on Proposed Amendments** where it says, “with the finding of facts,” change to “with the findings of fact **per the submitted staff report by Rich Murphy.**”

Motion made by Houser, supported by Brown, to approve the minutes as amended. Voice vote carries unanimously.

**IX. New Business**

**A. Presentation of the Buchanan St. Joseph Riverfront Master Plan. – Murphy & Abonmarche Team**

***Introduction***

Things started with *A Vision for Buchanan*. We approached the AEP Foundation to request grant funding for a master plan which they awarded, allowing us to contract with Abonmarche. AEP is also a major landowner adjacent to some of the public access areas. The Steering Committee has been very helpful. The Great Lakes St Lawrence Cities Initiative Grant gave us money which helped market both our Master Plan for the Riverfront and any subsequent ecological restoration plan. We won the kayak launch grant and currently have two applications in for an improved boat launch and an eco-playground equipment grant – each for several hundred thousand dollars.

### ***Project Process***

1. Solicit Public Input for Preliminary Design
2. Conceptual Land Use and Design
3. Review Conceptual Land Use and Design Options
4. Public Design Workshops
5. Develop Finals Plans for Consideration
6. Committee Review and Input
7. Finalize Waterfront Master Plan

### ***Community Engagement Overview***

Community Survey: 162 respondents 79.63% agree or strongly agree that the city should improve access to the St. Joseph River

Steering Committee: seven members, responsible for reviewing concepts and provide input on the community engagement process, significant conversation with the Pokagon Band, propose improvements you might see at a state or national park (lower footprint, maximum stewardship)

Community Workshops: held two in October, 32 people participated, consensus from discussions – eco-playground, council ring, trails, gathering space, over looks only on the AEP property, no additional buildings, and interpretive signage

### ***Consistency with A Vision for Buchanan***

Engaging the River → increased access and safety, low-impact construction, raised boardwalk  
Honoring Culture → Pokagon Band of Potawatomi indigenous history through interpretive signage  
Celebrating Ecology → Education markers, promote restoration of native species ecology  
A Northside Destination → Redevelopment opportunities, making a local and regional destination  
Pedestrian & Bike Connectivity → sharrows, wayfinding signage, safe pedestrian/bike connections

### ***Buchanan Waterfront Master Plan***

Project Site: ~50 acres – 20 acres owned by the city with the rest owned privately and by AEP, 2,000ft of linear shoreline, plan is focusing on the available public land

***Master Plan Option 1***: Pullouts at boat launch landing and at the bluffs, upgraded boat launch, accessible kayak and canoe launch, fishing platforms, restrooms, picnic pavilion, natural play area, nature trail, river front seating, restrooms

***Master Plan Option 2***: High end details, investigates potential with privately owned property like reuse of the former marina site, different layout to access landing area, adds in dedicated sidewalk for pedestrians, elevated overlook in the bluffs, keep access points as far from the dam as possible

***Next Steps***: Master plan will be refined to create a site development plan. If pursuing option 2, next steps would include potential partnership with private landowners to bring additional assets.

### ***B. Consider the adoption of the Buchanan St. Joseph Riverfront Master Plan.***

We do want to reserve the right to make an amendment under the Celebrating Ecology section that will open more funding opportunities on climate resiliency. It would help to outline how our plan builds resiliency and adaptability through sustainable choices and low-impact techniques.

Motion made by Brown, supported by Pleasant, to approve the Riverfront Master Plan with an amendment to outline how the Master Plan builds resiliency. Motion is moved to a roll call vote.

Yea: Brown, Pleasant, Lysy, Gerry, McDonald, Houser

Nay: None

Motion carries.

**X. Old Business**

**A. Discussion regarding the status of Cannavista Wellness, 120 E. Front St, Mill Alley wall painting.**

The Planning Commission approved them to paint the façade red to maintain harmony with Mill Alley. They painted it grey, they say it is primer. We would like is to reaffirm the position of the Planning Commission and provide a letter with language such as;

*On this day the Planning Commission voted they would proceed with the project painting it Mill Alley red due to the harmony considerations of Mill Alley. At this time, we find that it is painted grey. Please indicate to us by X date when it will be painted red, and you will be in compliance.*

Motion made by Lysy, supported by Brown, to reaffirm their motion from the meeting held on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to “approve the recommendation of the Design Review Committee as submitted which is to paint the west wall of the Cannavista building a red close to or compatible with the opposing wall and providing that the wainscoting brick is left unpainted in its natural state.” The Planning Commission also directs Rich Murphy to send a letter to the owner of Cannavista to the effect of the previous motion. The motion is moved to a roll call vote.

Yea: Pleasant, Lysy, Gerry, McDonald, Brown

Nay: None

Abstain: Houser

Motion carries.

**XI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only**

*Flenar – Thanks for the water bottle.*

*Casey Schlutt– Disabled vet new to the area, an avid canoe and kayaker, this river is 206 miles and perfect for a canoe and kayak marathon, wants to get involved with the community.*

**XII. Community Development Director Comments**

Murphy – Your ordinance you recommended for approval at the last meeting was approved last night.

**XIII. Commissioner Comments**

Gerry – Loves the plan.

Pleasant – Loves the plan, the Buchanan tree friends could help consult on tree maintenance

Houser – Thanks for the presentation tonight, where are we with the assigned meetings about changing the zoning ordinance?

Murphy: We resigned the contract that gives us until the end of 2025 to do this project. Ashley, Emma and I are meeting most Thursday’s at 11am to create a strategy to reactivate the zoning project. The meetings are open to everyone.

Brwon – Plan was great, would like to revisit the parking.

McDonald – Again, thank you for that fantastic presentation. Also, you received the minutes for the trial meetings for the last two months. Please review those when you have time.

**XIV. Adjournment**

Motion made by Houser, supported by Brown, to adjourn at 7:35 pm. Voice vote carries unanimously.