

MINUTES

I. Call to Order Public Hearing & Roll Call

The public hearing was called to order by Denison at 7:00pm. Weedon motions, supported by Money, to open the public hearing. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Roll Call: Denison, Weedon, Money, Swem, Vigansky

Introduction: The purpose of the Public Hearing is for the City Commission to receive public comment regarding the submittal of a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant application to fund the St. Joseph River Improvements Project in Buchanan, MI. The project will consist of Phase I improvements to the boat launch located at Riverfront Park in Buchanan, MI. Phase I improvements will include a portion of the paved parking area for vehicles and trailers, bioswale for runoff pre-treatment, concrete sidewalk extension, launch ramp surface replacement, and a portion of the paved launch approach.

Project Background Presented by Murphy: The Vision for Buchanan identified three goals; 1) doing more of what's working downtown, 2) concentrate on the northside neighborhood, and 3) reconnect to our public access on the St. Joseph River. Over the last year, we've been involved in the Buchanan St. Joseph Riverfront Master Plan funded by AEP and led by a team at Abonmarche. We will be presenting the Master Plan to the Planning Commission shortly for its adoption. We've had several public meetings and a survey to get community feedback. When asked to indicate how strongly respondents agreed with the statement, 'The city of Buchanan should make efforts to improve connectivity and access to the St. Joe River,' 80% strongly agreed. When asked if respondents would like to see a new riverfront park and accessible waterfront, 83.3% strongly agreed. The uses proposed for the riverfront included the kayak launch which we were funded for and just awarded, and an improved motorized boat launch which is what tonight's hearing is about.

Announcement of the Public Hearing Rules: At this time, the City Commission will hear public comments on proposed application for DNR MNRTF grant application to fund the St. Joseph River Improvements Projects.

Public Comment:

Mike Rowland- offered support both personally and on behalf of the board of trustees of Michigan Gateway for the submittal of this DNR grant for the St. Joe River improvement project. Recently we had Ashley and Rich come into our offices to do a lengthy presentation about the project as a whole. Our board of directors came away thoroughly impressed. As I have said many times, our foundation bases our work in three things, education, healthcare, and culture. This project encompasses all three.

Rick Briand – In support of the application. The more that you can do to give access to handicapped people and the elderly, and I don't think about that because I am able bodied, but I have an autistic son and he's kind of afraid to do that. If you could make it easier for him and people like him that would be great. If it's money from a grant I say go for it and ask for it.

Norma Ferris, 304 N Oak St – Concerns about the river and area staying clean.

Motion made by Money, supported by Vigansky, to close the public hearing and public comment. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

II. Close of Public Hearing

Motion made by Money, supported by Vigansky to close the public hearing at 7:12 P.M. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

III. Call to Order of the Regular Meeting

The regular meeting was called to order by Denison at 7:12pm.

IV. Recognition

V. Pledge of Allegiance

Denison led in the pledge of allegiance.

VI. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Mayor Pro Temp Mark Weedon, Commissioner Dan Vigansky, Commissioner Larry Money, Commissioner Patrick Swem

VII. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Swem, supported by Vigansky, to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

VIII. Public Comment - Agenda Items Only *(3-minute limit)*

Mac Elliot – We talked a couple weeks ago about the AEP building, now the Berrien County building. Looking forward to coming back hopefully in about 6 weeks with an announcement. Also is running for reelection to the county board. It will be a four-year term. Up until now it's always been two years, but I wanted to make you aware of what my plans are and to tell you I'd be happy to have your support.

Juanita Lewis, 809 Rynearson St Apt 5 – Just want to know from you all do you all have any listing of any of the realtors that's selling homes or going to start a subdivision somewhere in Buchanan.

IX. Consent Agenda *(can be approved all in one motion, for general housekeeping items)*

A. Street Closures

1) 16th Annual Chili Walk presented by the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce on April 11, 2024, from 4:45 PM-7:00 PM, Front St. (Between Redbud Trl & Oak).

2) Memorial Day Parade presented by American Legion Ralph Rumbaugh Post 51 on May 27, 2024, 9:30 AM- 11:30 AM, Front St. (American Legion to Oak Ridge Cemetery).

B. Minutes: Consider the Regular Meeting Minutes from March 11, 2024

C. Earth Day & Community Clean Up: Consider support for a sponsored event by BARB in cooperation with Friends of the McCoy Creek Trail & Buchanan Tree Friends for Earth Day & Community Clean up on Saturday, April 27th, from 9 AM to 1 PM.

Motion made by Weedon, supported by Money, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

X. Scheduled Matters from the Floor *(if any)*

XI. Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

A. **Community Development Report – Director Rich Murphy**

1) Recreation Passport Grant Application for Victory Park Improvements Project

- a) Public Comment on the Recreation Passport Grant Application for the Victory Park Improvements Project

Mayor Denison asked for public comments on the Recreation Passport Grant Application for the victory Improvements Project.

Jeanie Harris– commented on the Recreation Passport Grant application, this is really going to help Victory Park out a lot. With the pavilion now. With this grant, we can get playground equipment, handicap accessible playground equipment for the kids and there are some other things we want to do. The block is looking very nice. DPW, thank you Mike for all you’ve been doing on Victory Park with the sidewalk and redoing the bleachers. I’m in support of this grant, it’s really going to improve Victory Park to get the playground equipment.

No other comments.

- b) Consider Resolution 2024/03.08, a Resolution to approve the Recreational Passport Grant Application for the Victory Park Improvements Projects

Vigansky’s motion supported by Money to require Murphy to raise 75% of the grant’s 26% of funds we must raise is moved to a roll call vote.

Discussion led to Director Murphy raising 75% of the 26% match amount through local businesses.

Yea: Vigansky

Nay: Denison, Weedon, Money, Swem

Motion does not carry 4-1.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Weedon, to approve Resolution 2024.03/08, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- 2) Consider Resolution 2024.03/09, A Resolution to approve the MNRTF Grant Application for the St. Joseph River Improvements Project

Motion made by Weedon, supported by Money, to approve Resolution 2024.03/09 for the St. Joseph River Improvements Project MNRTF Grant Application. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- 3) Consider Resolution 2024.03/10, a Resolution of support for the Redevelopment Liquor License for the Sweet Shop Cafe Italiano LLC at 205 E Front St.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Vigansky, to approve resolution 2024.03/10 as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

XII. **Unfinished Business**

XIII. **New Business**

- A. **Expenditures**: Consider the expenditures for March 25th, 2024 in the amount of \$215,491.67

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Weedon, to approve the expenditures as presented.

Discussion on bills for a truck repair, lawyer fees and the southwest chamber of commerce.

Roll call vote to approve the expenditures carries unanimously.

XIV. Communications *(informational only, formal board action is not necessary for these items, unless so desired)*

XV. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only *(3-minute limit)*

James Busby – Comments about the Parks and the great job Director Murphy has done.

Rob Selvig– Comments about the ordinance violations he has occurred while living in the city.

Rick Briand,– Announcing his campaign to run for Berrien County Sheriff.

XVI. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

I have an update on the Days Ave/McCoy Creek Project. We are meeting with EGLE tomorrow regarding the permitting of that project and its impact on stream. I hope in the next week or so we will have some conceptual drawings and cost of opinions on that project as well. It's our initial meeting tomorrow and they will let us know their timeline and what the impact may be. Abonmarche has applied for the permits and the first step in that is having a meeting with EGLE at the site. That's scheduled for tomorrow.

B. Commissioner Comments

Money: I want to thank Tim for all of his hard work, I want to thank the staff for all that they do. There's a lot of hard work that goes in and a lot of people just don't really realize that. I know we are in the process of having a going away party, just wanted to wish her the best of luck. Congratulations on the passport grant, you did a great job. Everything seems to be moving well. Victory Park is going to be done here pretty quick hopefully and we can start utilizing that. Once again thank you to this group of fine gentlemen. Everybody have a good Easter, see you the next go around.

Vigansky: I am not going to say anything tonight. I'll keep my thoughts to myself.

Swem: Best of luck to Jill, I want to wish her the best in her ne-xt opportunity. I've always enjoyed Jill. I want to give kudos to the team for our budget setting session we had recently. We all came in with a very serious mindset, we had a lot of good discussion. We didn't solve the world's problems, but we gave the team some good direction I felt and I look forward to seeing their takeaways and what next steps look like out of that meeting. Keep up the good work Rich, I am proud that our name is in half of these applications. We're not going to get them all but keep taking swings at them. Happy Easter, wish everyone the best

Weedon: A little off topic but relevant to us I would just like to say publicly so it's on the record, congratulations to Brandywine. State champion for the boys, runners up for the young ladies. One of the reasons it does tie back to us is what I really enjoyed on Facebook over the period of the period of last couple weeks is just to see that the heard, individuals in the community, the Buchanan school system, just the outpouring of love and admiration for a program that is a rival but at the same time is a community of people who are working hard to raise children to do the best that they can. I know that they would the same for us, so I just want to say publicly to them congratulations. I really hope the girls would get it so we could have two of them but they'll get it next year. Thank you for supporting another small community.

C. Mayor Comments

Denison: as commissioner Swem mentioned we had a goal setting session on the 19th, there is a white board if you want to stick around after the meeting you can peruse. You'll be able to tell which goals got the most stickers so you can see the directions we are headed. I want to announce that B.A.R.B. is doing an Earth Day cleanup on April 27th from 9-1pm. That's a Saturday morning in partnership with Tree Friends and the Friends of the McCoy Creek Trail. We will meet at the Commons and then disburse to clean up a portion of the creek and several different parks. More information will be coming out and there will be a volunteer form very soon. Also, I wanted to remind you of the chili walk April 11th, downtown. Don't miss that.

XVII. Adjourn

Motion made by Weedon, supported by Money, to adjourn the meeting at 7:44pm. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Kalla Langston, City Clerk

Mayor Sean Denison