



REGULAR MEETING
 July 27, 2023

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Al Ekdahl

Commissioners Present: Mayor Lynch, Lach, Czilli, Ekdahl, Mundt, Finley

Commissioners Absent:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Czilli made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of June 22, 2023. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
 5 yes 0 nays

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Commissioner Czilli made a motion to approve the claims presented to the RDC on July 27, 2023. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
 5 yes 0 nays

STAFF REPORTS:

Director AJ Monroe shared the staff report:

- **Founders Square 2023 Improvement Projects (Lighting and Site Improvements).** DLZ is finalizing construction documents. The lighting project will be advertised in early August and the site improvement project will be advertised soon after.
- **Central Avenue West – Phase 1A.** The project is delayed. Dunnett Bay (contractor) discovered poor soil as soon as excavation began. The contractor has been directed to demobilize. Currently, all parties are working to identify a solution.
- **Central Avenue West – Phase 1B.** Design / Right-of-way Acquisition continues. Bid Letting for Phase Two is scheduled for FY 2024 (January 2024).
- **Marquette Greenway Trail (Raise / Ready Grant).** This project builds the remaining segments of the Marquette Greenway Trail in Portage (excluding trail segments within the boundary of the Indiana Dunes National Park. NIRPC (the lead agency) has hired BF&S to serve as project managers. The project managers are considering the previously explored Burns Parkway Alignment as the preferred alignment. Work continues.
- **Marquette Greenway Trail (Next Level Trails).** The Department is preparing a grant application that seeks funding of a grade-separated

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crossing near the intersection of Indiana 249 and AmeriPlex Drive / Burns Parkway.

- **Marquette Greenway Trail (fly-over of US Highway 12 – near Hillcrest Road).** The Department in partnership with Indiana Dunes National Park (INDU) and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (NWI RDA) is exploring a grade-separated crossing of US Highway 12 / NICTD / and, Norfolk Southern.
- **Open Air Pavilion / Craftsman Community Maker Labs of Indiana, Inc.** Work continues. The Department is coordinating a meeting with the Maker's Lab and project architect (CSK) to discuss electrical needs of equipment. The Department is also in ongoing discussions with NIPSCO regarding gas service to the building.
- **Portage Library Garden.** A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Thursday, July 20th. The Contractor (Hasse Construction) expects to mobilize in the next 2 weeks.
- **Downtown Plan Implementation.** Mayor and I have met with Matt Reardon with HWC to discuss next steps held, formation of the Downtown Development Corp., incentive packages and budget. Matt will present a formal report at the August 27th meeting. The Department has also advertised seeking Professional Engineering Services for Project 1B extension of Main Street and Vivian improvements to the Portage Mall. Proposals are due August 8th.
- **CommuniTree.** The Department submitted a grant application requesting 16 trees to be planted at Founders Square and the Plaza. Notice of Award is expected in August.

Mayor Lynch stated that she met with Superintendent's Reeder and Komenda as well Norma Laboy to go out and measure the size of the platforms for the art that will be placed around the City in the next month or so. She thanked the Commission for supporting the project.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

LOI for 6051-6071 Central Avenue

Director Monroe spoke on behalf of Mr. Rathjen with McColly Real Estate who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. He stated that Mr. Rathjen has been working diligently on the real estate front. He presented the Letter of Intent (LOI) to purchase the property across the street from City Hall at 6051-6071 Central Avenue. He stated it is staff's recommendation to approve this LOI.

Attorney Whitten reminded the Commission that there is non-disclosure information in the LOI that they need to abide by. He further reminded them that this is not a contract and does not bind them if details by way of a purchase agreement and or contingencies are not met.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the LOI. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.
5 Yes 0 nays

Amendment No. 1 to Abonmarche Contract for Irving Street Trail Project

Director Monroe stated that Rich Piazza with Abonmarche was present to speak on behalf of the project. Mr. Piazza stated that the pavement widths vary within the project area and they felt it would be more beneficial to the City to move the trail to the inside of the right-of-way. This will allow the library to retain their parking and also align the entrance to the library with Swan Avenue. He further stated that moving the trail off the back of the curb will allow for a safer area for pedestrians.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve Amendment No. 1. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 nays

OTHER BUSINESS:

Northside Geotechnical Investigation for Parcel C

Director Monroe stated that Mr. Rathjen is requesting a Geotechnical Investigation be done on Parcel C. He believes the information they will receive from the investigation will allow for the Commission negotiate with potential buyers with more accurate data. Mr. Monroe stated that Mr. Rathjen had received two proposals of the three he requested and it is his recommendation to approve the proposal with Advanced Engineering Services (AES) upon legal review.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the proposal with AES upon legal review. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Commissioner Lach asked about the accessibility of the property for AES to be able to perform their testing. He asked if the area needs to be bush hogged to allow access. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Lach moved to allow solicitation of up to \$10,000.00 for site preparation. Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Dayton Street Project Agreement

Attorney Whitten stated that this is the agreement they have been working on. This agreement memorializes the Redevelopment Commissions commitment to the project. Commissioner Czilli asked where they are on the timeline to be started this year. Mr. Monroe stated that are on track with the timeline that was presented a couple of months ago.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve the agreement. Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

6100 Southport Building Lease

Attorney Whitten informed the Commission that he and Bill Rathjen are continuing to work through the leasing issues at 6100 Southport Road. He stated that most issues they are working through are areas outside the responsibility or authority of this Commission.

With no further business to become before the Commission, Commissioner Mundt moved to adjourn.
Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.
5 Yes 0 Nays



Sue Lynch, Mayor



Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary