



REGULAR MEETING  
October 26, 2023

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Ralph Mundt

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Finley

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Czilli made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of September 28, 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 October 26, 2023. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.  
5 yes 0 nays

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Director AJ Monroe invited Rich Piazza with Abonmarche to speak on the Portage Library Garden Project.

- **Portage Library Garden**  
Mr. Rich Piazza provided an update on the Library Garden Project. He stated that the project is moving ahead as planned. He informed the Commission that the foundations are in, and backfilling is being done. He further stated that the curtain wall for the sundial was constructed today, and they are progressing as much as they can while the weather cooperates with the manpower they have. In the next few weeks, he anticipates the forming of the seat wall, curb for the parking lot, some flat work throughout the site and mass grading as well to take place as electrical conduits and light pole bases being installed.
- **Downtown Development Corporation (Reactivation and Implementation of the Downtown Plan)**  
Mr. Matt Reardon with MRC-HWC informed the Commission that on October 5<sup>th</sup> they held meeting with Downtown Development Corporation. The outcome of the meeting resulted in them moving forward with the submission of reincorporating the organization with the State of Indiana. He stated they followed the previous guidelines set forth by the Downtown Development Corporation that was established previously. He further stated that once everything is finalized, he will work with Attorney Whitten for the submission back to

**President**  
Sue Lynch  
*Mayor*

**Vice President**  
Collin Czilli  
*Councilperson*

**Secretary**  
Greg Lach

**Members**  
Allen Ekdahl  
  
Ralph Mundt

**School Board Liaison**  
Dr. Shauna Finley

**Director**  
A.J. Monroe

**Legal**  
Dan Whitten

**Recording Secretary**  
Sonya Lindgren

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the US Government on the 501C3 status, he believes the Corporation may have to go back to the beginning stages of filing, but thinks there is an expedited way to move forward. Once final confirmation is given from the State, they will begin the process with the IRS.

- **Introduction of new Sports Director for the Portage Park & Recreation Department**

Dyan Leto introduced the new Sports Director for the Portage Park Department, Mr. Micheal Schassburger. She informed the Commission that he is a recent graduate of Ball State University, with a major in Sports Administration and a minor in Marketing. He has experience of working with the Munster Park Department and the Cal Ripken Baseball organization. Mr. Schassburger addressed the Commission and spoke of his appreciation of working for the City of Portage. Ms. Leto thanked the Commission for their help in providing the funding for this position.

Director AJ Monroe shared the staff report:

- **Marquette Greenway Trail.** Work continues to close out the documents for the most recently constructed segment.
- **Central Avenue West – Phase 1A.** The project is remaining on schedule for a second change order for construction to be presented to the Commission at November’s meeting.
- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant.** Bailey McGrath is working to wrap up the grant for reforestation along the Marquette Greenway Trail within Ameriplex to establish a tree canopy for the segment that makes its way out of the National Park segment.
- **Land sales.** The Planning & Community Development Department continues to work with the developer looking to build across the street here at City Hall. Expecting them to be before the approving bodies for site plan approval within the next couple of months. Also expecting the same on with the developer on the lot to the East in Founders Square. He further stated that at the Board of Zoning Appeals approved Holladay’s two building addition to the Promenade for the property recently purchased off Hamstrom Road.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Approval of HWC Agreement – Downtown Development Plan**

Director Monroe reminded the Commission that last month Commissioners Lach and Mundt made a recommendation to the Commission to move forward with HWC for Engineering Services related to the Downtown Development. The agreement before them would allow HWC to begin work in the amount of \$30,000.00. Attorney Whitten stated that he had reviewed the agreement.

Commission Lach moved to approve the agreement for HWC in the amount of \$30,000.00. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Award of Founders Square General Improvements 2023 Project – Grimmer Construction**

Director Monroe stated that this project was which identified in the Downtown Master Plan that was adopted in November 2022. He stated that at last month's meeting the Commission opened bids, with Grimmer Construction being the lowest responsive bidder in the amount of \$792,000. He stated it is DLZ's recommendation that we award the project to Grimmer Construction in this amount. Attorney Whitten has reviewed the contract and found it to be in order.

Commission Czilli moved to award the project to Grimmer Construction in the amount of \$792,000. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Commission Lach asked if there was a timeline for this project. Director Monroe stated that there is not a timeline at this moment, but sees this being done next spring. Mayor Lynch asked Mr. Monroe to inform those present what this project includes. Mr. Monroe stated that it includes additional sidewalks and pathways in Founders Square, additional lighting, a seating and plaza area NE of the amphitheater, and a dedication plaque for Hannahs Hope playground. It also includes taking the parallel parking and making them angled parking to provide additional parking spaces on PFC Steven Sirko Way, SPC Adam Harding Way and Mainstreet.

### **Approval of 2023-2024 Snow Removal contract for 6100 Southport Road**

Director Monroe stated that Holladay Properties letter recommends moving forward with Lakeshore Seasonal Services for the 2023-24 Snow Removal at 6100 Southport Road.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve the contract with Lakeshore Seasonal Services for snow removal for the 2023-2024 season. Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Approval of the Right of Way Dedication for 6051-6071 Central Avenue and Escrow**

Mr. Rathjen stated that this property is currently under contract for real estate sales. Part of the due diligence for this sale is for the buyer to deposit their escrow money. He stated the title company has provided an Escrow Agreement to be signed by the Commission. Attorney Whitten stated it is a standard agreement and suggested that the Commission authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement on their behalf.

Commissioner Czilli moved to authorize Mayor Lynch to sign the agreement on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the Right of Way Deed of Dedication for 6051-6071 Central Avenue as presented. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

**Open Bids for the Removal of the North Drive of 6260 Central Avenue (Portage Police Station)**

Director Monroe stated three bids were received with results as follows:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Reith-Riley Construction	\$43,700.00
Gariup Construction	\$47,500.00
Egolf Coates	\$30,500.00

Commissioner Czilli moved to take the bids under advisement. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5Yes 0 Nays

**Discussion of Summary of the Business Plan for the Craftsman Community Maker Labs of IN, Inc.**

Councilperson Scott Williams spoke on the summary provided. Mr. Williams introduced Steve Devillos and Joe Eberts, who both serve on the Board of Directors for the Maker Labs. He stated that this facility will put Portage on the map by being one of the first facilities in the area. He stated that they are before the Commission seeking to use the Open-Air Pavilion and are seeking the Commissions support for a monetary commitment of \$160,000 for Engineering and Architectural Designs. He further stated that regardless of whether they use the space or someone else, to make the space a usable/rentable space, design and engineering work needs to be done.

Commissioner Lach asked about the path for financing this renovation. He stated that the last estimate was upwards of \$2.5 million. He further asked if this was a priority of the Parks Department. Mr. Williams stated that they are looking to discuss this with the Park Board as the Park Board is looking to obtain a Park Bond in the near future. Discussion was held. Mayor Lynch informed Commission that she had spoken with Mr. Williams they discussed the possibility of doing this work in stages to get the building to a usable state. Dyan Leto, Park Superintendent, stated that it is not rentable as it is now but can see how it could be a usable space if enclosed. Discussion was held.

Commission Czilli moved to approve the funding request for \$160,000 contingent upon legal review of CSK's Contract. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

Mayor Lynch requested a Roll Call vote:

Commissioner Lach: No

Commission Czilli: Yes

Commission Ekdahl: Yes

Commissioner: Mundt: Yes

Mayor Lynch: Yes

**Discussion of City of Portage Port Authority Funding Request – Local Match Indiana Department of Natural Resources (Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act – Sport Fish Restoration Grant)**

Mr. Jeff Fleming, the Port Authority President and Mr. Steve Nelson came before the Commission seeking monetary support for the matching portion of the grant to capture \$1.2 million in funding. They informed the Commission that they pulled four projects from their Master Plan to seek grants and were successful on receiving a grant for two of the four projects. US Fish and Wildlife through the Fish Restoration Act will pay 75% of the two projects, which is about an \$850,000 investment to the City of Portage. This will help finish the demolition of the Paunaka Property by removing the remaining poles and old docks that are still in the waterway as well as building of a community fishing pier on this property.

Commissioner Lach asked if this was part of the Port Authority's Master Plan. Mr. Nelson said yes and no. He stated the fish cleaning station was a part of the Master Plan, but the donation of the property where the fishing pier is to be installed was given after their 2017 Master Plan was done.

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve \$300,000 for the matching portion of the grant. Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

Commissioner Ekdahl stated that the Marina was built in 1996 and by spring of 1997 four docks are in the water. He stated that the docks are currently 5 years past their 20-year lifespan. Discussion was held. Mr. Nelson stated that they are aware and are looking at \$3.0 million in dock replacement in the future. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Czilli commented that we want to be clear on what the Commission is being asked to do today. He stated that the Commission is being asked for funds to match the \$1.2 million Grant they have obtained, and the grant is specifically for the projects outlined in their grant request. Discussion was held.

Mayor Lynch requested a Roll Call vote:

Commissioner Lach: Yes

Commission Czilli: Yes

Commissioner Ekdahl: No

Commissioner Mundt: Yes

Mayor Lynch: Yes

**Discussion on SEH – Engineering Design Services Agreement for Burns Parkway**

Director Monroe stated that before them is a letter of proposal from SEH to reactivate a contract they had with the City of Portage from 2016. He further stated that in the cover letter from Mr. Peterson, he articulates the additional costs to that contract. Mr. Monroe stated that this is consistent with what the Commission has done previously with the reactivation of another contract with SEH which was for the Marquette Greenway Trail. The contract is for

Engineering and Design services related to the construction and extension of Burns Parkway from its current end by extending north to the new NICTD parking lot on the south side of US Highway 12.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the contract with SEH contingent upon legal review. Commission Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

#### **Opening of Quotes for Power Outlet Installation at the Garyton Building**

Director Monroe stated that this was an additional task required by ADT for the security at Garyton School. The Department of Planning & Community Development solicited quotes with one being received as follows:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Circle R	\$1,230.00

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the quote contingent upon legal review. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

With no further business to become before the Commission, Commissioner Czilli moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

  
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Sue Lynch, Mayor

  
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Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary