



CITY OF PORTAGE  
**REDEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**



REGULAR MEETING  
November 16, 2023

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Attorney Whitten

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Finley, Czilli, Mundt

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of October 26, 2023. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.  
3 yes 0 nays

**APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:**

Commissioner Lach made a motion to approve the claims presented to the RDC on November 16, 2023. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.  
3 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 new parking lot curbs are installed, and they are getting ready to install the sidewalks. He stated that the earthwork and backfilling has been completed. He informed the Commission that Hasse Construction has asked for a time extension, and will be before them later to discuss this as it is an agenda item. Commissioner Lach asked if it would be paved, and he stated that it would be paved, but just with the base.

Director AJ Monroe shared the staff report:

- **Marquette Greenway Trail.** Work continues with SEH, Gariup and the State of Indiana to close out the documents for the most recently constructed segment.
- **Downtown Engineering Services.** Held a project kickoff meeting with HWC services on Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. Expect to have a report to the Commission by the end of December.

**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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Portage, IN 46368

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- **Burns Parkway Engineering Project.** Held a project kickoff meeting with SEH on Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Work has begun. The consultant from Commonwealth Engineering, who serves on the Sanitary Board was also in attendance and was able to provide valuable information for moving forward.
- **Land sales.** Work is progressing with the developer who is looking to purchase the property at 6051-6071 Central Avenue. They were on site performing geo-technical investigation as their work continues to prepare the site plan for the project. Expecting to see significant progress on this project over the next couple of weeks. They have sent a request for the extension of time for their due diligence period.

Director Monroe invited Chris Murphy with American Structurepoint to speak on the Central Avenue West Project.

- **Central Avenue West – Phase 1A.** Mr. Chris Murphy with American Structurepoint informed the Commission that they have been in constant communication with Dunnet Bay regarding the unsuitable soils that were found on site. The contractor has hired an independent engineer, Benesch Engineering out of Chicago, IL to review the additional soil borings and are putting together a solution to the situation. He stated the analysis should be completed within the next few weeks and upon receipt of Benesch Engineering's analysis the contractor will then put pricing to it and then it will be submitted to the City, County and INDOT for a construction change order. He stated that much of the additional work is the result of unknown conditions and therefore the solution to correct the issue would be eligible for 80% Federal funding. Mr. Murphy stated that they anticipate there will be an overlap in the two phases of this project, so much communication will be held during this process. Discussion was held.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Awarding of Bid for the Removal of the North Drive of 6260 Central Avenue (Portage Police Station)**

Director Monroe stated three bids were received at last month's meeting to close off the north entrance at the north end of the public parking lot at the police department, with Egolf Coates being the lowest responsible bidder. It is the Departments recommendation to award the bid to Egolf Coates in the amount of \$30,500.00 if it is the Commissions desire to do so. Attorney Whitten has reviewed the bid, and all is in order.

Mayor Lynch stated she had spoken with Commissioner Czilli, and they were concerned with that if the north end is closed what happens when people drive in expecting to proceed through. Director Monroe stated that at this time, the Police have placed a Police SUV to prevent them from driving through. Discussion was held on this topic. Mr. Monroe asked Assistant Director, Sandra McDaniel if the curb to be placed was a barrier curb, she informed him that the design is for a ribbon curb due to the drainage. He then stated that the only other deterrent would be signage. Discussion was held. Mr. Monroe stated that an option would be to install a barrier. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Lach moved to table to allow the Department to look into other options.  
Commissioner Eldahl seconded the motion.  
3 Yes 0 Nays

**Approval: CSK Agreement – Architectural Services – Open Air Pavilion – Renovations**

Commissioner Lach moved to table the item until there are more Commissioners in attendance.  
Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.  
3 Yes 0 Nays

Attorney Whitten stated that this is the best option since there are a couple of Commission members not present.

**Approval: Request for extension of time – Library Garden Project**

Mr. Rich Piazza with Abonmarche stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Chris Juda with Hasse Construction requesting a time extension due to the asphalt plants preparing to shut down, timing not conducive to planting coupled with supply and labor shortages they have been experiencing. Mr. Piazza stated that the timeline that has been provided to them by Hasse Construction requesting 120 days would place the completion day be near Memorial Day. Mr. Piazza agrees with their request.

Mr. Chris Juda stated that in the beginning they had delays with the sewer structures that took over a month to receive them, which then caused a snowball effect with the timeline.

Mayor Lynch stated that she is concerned with the fact that this will be extending into the next year and how that will effect the funds coming from the County and other parties that have agreed to help fund this project. Attorney Whitten stated that it will require communications with the County Attorney to help coordinate this accordingly. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Lach moved to accept the new timeline condition upon no increase of cost and attorney review. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.  
3 Yes 0 Nays

**Other Business**

Bill Rathjen stated that in support of the Downtown Plan we have an opportunity to pick up a couple of remaining parcels that are not yet owned by the RDC. He would like to have the opportunity to enter a couple of motions tonight. One to authorize to enter into a contingent purchase agreement also conditional upon Attorney Whitten's review. He further stated that upon acceptance of the purchase agreement, we would need a second motion to enter into an agreement with the appraisers as according to the ICC Code 36.

Attorney Whitten stated in the acquisition of real estate, two appraisals are required. He stated that what Mr. Rathjen is asking for is the authorization to go forward with the contingent conditional offer as discussed in the Executive Session, which would then be to authorize the hiring of the two appraisers .

Commissioner Lach moved to authorize Mr. Rathjen to proceed with the negotiations on the parcel contingent upon the requirements of the statutes, ordinance with respect to appraised value and upon legal review. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

3 Yes 0 Nays

Commissioner Lach moved upon acceptance of the offer, to authorize Mr. Rathjen to proceed with the appraisals as presented, upon Attorney Whitten's review.

With no further business to become before the Commission, Commissioner Lach moved to adjourn. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

3 Yes 0 Nays

  
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Sue Lynch, Mayor

  
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Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary