



CITY OF PORTAGE
**REDEVELOPMENT
 COMMISSION**



REGULAR MEETING
 May 23, 2024

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Bonta

Commissioners Present: Mayor Bonta, Ambler, Jozwiak, Mundt, Vazquez

Commissioners Absent: Lach

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Ambler a motion to approve the April 25th, 2024. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.
 4 yes 0 nays

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Director Botich informed the Commission that there were a couple of items on the Dockets that needed to be changed, and asked Recording Secretary, Sonya Lindgren, to explain. Ms. Lindgren stated that on the General Docket there was a claim submitted for fluorescent lightbulbs in the amount of \$174.96 that were for City Hall, contrary to the Police Station, which was previously reported. With this cost removed the new total would be \$20,992.01. She further stated on the NIRPC Docket there was an invoice for Comcast in the amount of \$305.28, which was given to the City by mistake, and was the Portage Economic Development Corporations'. With this invoice removed the new total would be \$11,038.34. Commissioner Ambler made a motion to approve the May 23, 2024 dockets as verbally amended. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.
 4 yes 0 nays

STAFF REPORTS:

Director Botich stated that the Commission was presented with a staff report from the Department of Planning & Community Development and touched base on a couple of items from the report. He mentioned that the contractor for landscaping improvements and maintenance on properties throughout the city has begun work, and areas are showing improvement. He also stated that SEH is still on track to having the designs completed by the end of the year for the Burns Parkway Extension. He further stated that the Northside Limestone Trail Maintenance Project has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of the week. He also stated that the City and Redevelopment Commission Staff has met regarding the Downtown Development with the Portage Mall Area. He stated there was a presentation by a potential developer for an expansion of commercial property.

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 Mayor

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 Penny Ambler
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Secretary
 Greg Lach

Members
 Ralph Mundt
 Judi Jozwiak

School Board Liaison
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Director
 Daniel Botich

Legal
 Daniel Bartnicki

Recording Secretary
 Sonya Lindgren

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Director Botich further stated he was able to locate the template for the Towne of Merrillville's Redevelopment Commission's Educational Grant Program and hopes to have an updated template for their consideration at next month's meeting. He further stated that the City meet with the Regional Development Authority's CFO, Sherri Ziller, and her staff on the Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the next 20 years. He stated it was a positive meeting which focused on the City's Northside and how it can play an integral role in the development and branding of the National Park and surrounding cities for Northwest Indiana.

He informed the Commission that the Raise Grant has been submitted for the Burns Parkway Extension and is pending at the Forum and State level. He also stated that he did speak with Mayor Bonta regarding Residential Tax Increment Financing Allocation Areas, and has been asked to assemble a template for potential allocation areas that would be specific to residential development in the City. He stated that the intent is to allow those funds that would be captured to help subsidize the General Fund for the City.

Bill Rathjen, with McColly Real Estate stated that the Commission had instructed him to pursue property on the north side by the Marina, known as 1285 Washington Street. He stated that they have spoken with the owner and after consultation with Attorney Bartnicki, they would like to write a \$30,000.00 net offer to the property owner. He stated that he is asking authorization for the Mayor, as the President of the Redevelopment Commission to sign the on their behalf pending final legal review. Attorney Bartnicki stated that he has reviewed the Purchase Agreement and found no legal objection.

Commissioner Ambler made a motion to approve the purchase of this property for a net offer of \$30,000.00, with the Mayor signing on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.

4 yes 0 nays

Mr. Rathjen stated that his second item for tonight is related to 6100 Southport Road. He stated that mold testing was done on May 7th and during that time found that there were two additional HVAC Zones that needed to be included. He stated the decision was made to have those done while they were still on site. He is asking for approval of the Subcontractors Change Order of \$980 for the two additional zones.

Commissioner Jozwiak made a motion to approve the Change Order for an additional \$980.00 Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

4 yes 0 nays

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consideration: Central Avenue West – Chris Murphy – American Structurepoint

Chris Murphy with American Structurepoint along with John Tucker their Head Construction Engineer for the project, came before the Commission to provide a report of the work that has taken place during the time the project has been placed on hold. Mr. Murphy stated that in the interim additional geotechnical testing has been done, as well as engineering work to address the unsuitable soil and to provide a solution to allow for a 100-year life span of this project. He stated additional federal funding of a little over a million, has been secured and will assist with paying 80% of the added cost to address this soil problem.

Mr. Murphy stated that the contractor has identified the test piles needed to move forward; they have been purchased and are to be delivered on site. He stated this is the first step that is needed to address the solution. Once the test pile process is completed then they can order the production piles and continue with the project. He stated the plans are to be working consistently throughout the summer.

Mr. Murphy stated that there will be three Change Orders needed to address the additional work. He stated the first Change Order was presented to the Commission last fall. He stated it was a time and material change order, which provided the Notice to Proceed for the additional geotechnical testing and the additional engineering work needed to provide a solution. He stated that they now have a cost for this work and will present a Change Order next month, in the amount of approximately \$98,100.00. This cost will be shared between the City of Portage and the County.

Mr. Murphy informed the Commission that as the project moves forward there may be costs that will not be covered under the Federal Funding. He stated since mobilization was already covered in the original price of the contract, the cost to remobilize will have to be incurred by the City and the County.

He stated the second change order will be for time and materials, to include the additional timber piles needed as well as the installation of the test piles, and the purchase and installation of the actual piling, in the amount of \$600,000.00.

He stated that the third change order will be for a unit price change. This will include the additional cost that was needed for this additional work, such as grading, excavation, the concrete pile caps, etc. He stated this change order should be in the \$600,000.00 range.

Mr. Tucker stated that they will have a better idea of the schedule once the test piles have been placed, which will be in June. This will provide them with the length and duration to get all the production piles ordered. He stated that the change orders that will be presented are all included in the Federal Funding.

Mr. Murphy stated that the total amount of the change order for the additional work has been estimated at \$1.3 million. He stated that the 20% local match to be covered by the City and County is required by INDOT to be paid for in advance. He stated that INDOT prefers to invoice for the full amount upfront and has submitted an invoice to the County for \$264,135.00. The split of the costs between the County and City is based on where the limits of the bridgework in relation to the additional work and where the road work is. The bridgework is covered by the County and the roadwork is covered by the City. The split is about 20% of the work is involved by the bridge with 80% being the roadwork. The total due by the City is approximately \$211,000.00. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Vazquez asked about the time frame of when work will be complete. Mr. Murphy stated that he anticipates it mostly being completed this year in regard to the bridge work. He stated that the second phase of the project is to be let in October. Which should allow the bridge portion to be completed. Discussion was held.

Consideration: GIS System for the City – Northside/Hillcrest/US 20

Director Botich stated that he has been in discussions with a company who can provide a GIS System that would be a Beta Test for the City. They are looking for the Redevelopment Commission to fund the project. The project would be to have a program through ARC GIS that would identify all the parcels in the US 20 Corridor as well as the Northside, and identify them for the purposes of economic development and redevelopment. This would include accessing information regarding utilities and zoning as well as all the roadways and pavement conditions. Discussion held.

Other Business

Consideration: NIPSCO Easement

Commissioner Ambler, as an employee of NIPSCO, recused herself.

Director Botich stated that NIPSCO had submitted a request for a temporary easement on US 249 just north of the Burns Parkway extension. He stated it is 20' x 80' for NIPSCO to make utility infrastructure improvements and is asking for permission to store their equipment and materials at this location. Mr. Matt Gillikin of NIPSCO stated this project serves a customer located in Ameriplex at the Port. He apologized for the last-minute notification. He anticipates the temporary easement to last approximately two months and will restore the area once completed. Mayor Bonta asked if this work would interfere with any of the work going on in the area regarding the potential sale of the property. Mr. Rathjen stated it would not. Discussion was held. Attorney Bartnicki stated that the motion will be to approve the easement to NIPSCO as outlined in the easement documentation provided to staff.

Commissioner Mundt made a motion to approve the Easement to NIPSCO as outlined in the easement documentation provided to staff. Commissioner Jozwiak seconded the motion.

3 yes 0 nays

Consideration: Portage Park Department Generator Replacement

Assistant Park Superintendent, John Harrison, came before the Commission seeking help in funding a Generator for the Park Department as they are an emergency heating and cooling facility. He stated that the lowest quote they received was in the amount of \$58,220.00 from Alta. He stated that it is a Gillet generator that is compatible with the equipment they have. Mayor Bonta asked if this has been brought in front of the Director and Attorney. Director Botich stated that their approved 2024 Budget shows this budgeted for \$60,000.00. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Ambler made a motion to approve the purchase in the amount of \$58,220.00 contingent upon legal review. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

3 yes 0 nays

Discussion: Commissioner Mundt stated that he was approached by the owners of On the Roxx in the Portage Mall regarding a dirt road that cuts across their recently purchased property (the old car wash) and the City's property and their desire to have this road blocked off. Discussion was held on looking into this and reporting back at next month's meeting.

Consideration: Invoice from ms consultants

Recording Secretary, Sonya Lindgren informed the Commission that there is an additional invoice from ms consultants in the amount of \$3,141.35 that needs approved. She reminded the Commission that they approved an invoice last month, however this is an additional invoice taking them to the contract amount of the NTE \$10,000.00. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Ambler made a motion to approve the invoice. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.

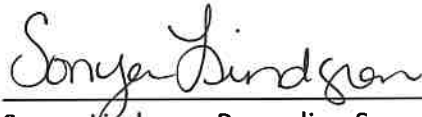
4 yes 0 nays

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

4 yes 0 nays



Austin Bonta, Mayor



Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary