

REGULAR COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF FLAT ROCK, MICHIGAN
25500 GIBRALTAR ROAD
FLAT ROCK, MI 48134

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019

The regular meeting of the Flat Rock City Council convened at the Municipal Building, 25500 Gibraltar Road, Flat Rock, Michigan 48134, on the above date at 7:30 p.m.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

PRESENT ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Dropiewski

Council Members: Bergeron, Little, Martin, Maul, Tefend, Wrobel

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Matthew Zick, City Clerk Meaghan Bachman, Fire Chief Bill Vack, Police Chief John Leacher, DPS Director Jim Lancaster, Recreation Director Rodney Wade, Treasurer/City Administrator Brian Marciniak, Economic Development Director Liz Hendley, Building Director Larry Dishaw.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Resolution 03-04-19-01

Motion by Maul

Supported by Bergeron

RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of February 19, 2019 as presented.

Motion carried unanimously 7-0

4. **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

Sue Farrar, citizen of Flat Rock, voiced concerns regarding the staffing levels for the Fire Department. The Mayor responded to her concern, noting the department is fully staffed with full-time fire fighters (6), all of which are paramedics. He also noted 10 candidates will go through agility training soon. The Mayor noted throughout the Wayne County area, communities are having a hard time finding fire fighters. He noted the Flat Rock Fire Department still has good response time and we receive assistance through Downriver Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid if needed.

5. **REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

Police Chief John Leacher presented the Oath of Honor to Flat Rock's newest Police Officer, Jeramey Mullins. His badge was pinned on his uniform by his wife, Kayla. Many of his family members, along with the Police Department staff joined him at the meeting to support and welcome him.

Treasurer/City Administrator Brian Marciniak noted taxes are now considered delinquent and have been turned over to the Wayne County Treasurer's Office. He gave the phone number and website address to contact Wayne County for tax information. He noted assessment changes went out in the mail and said homeowners can make an appointment to meet with the Board of Review to dispute the assessments on either March 12th or March 26th, from 1:00-9:00 PM at City Hall.

Building Director Larry Dishaw announced the Ford Data Center has a temporary Certificate of Occupancy for the office use, will receive another for the computer use and will receive a final Certificate of Occupancy by the end of March or mid-April 2019. Director Dishaw thanked the Council for their support over the last four (4) years and for allowing him to serve the public and the City Council. He noted he leaves with great regret because of getting old and having to take care of health issues. He further thanked the City Department Heads and noted they were wonderful to work with over the years.

City Clerk Meaghan Bachman wished Director Dishaw the best of luck and noted it was nice working with him.

Attorney Matthew Zick noted he received a grievance from the Clerical Union and asked for two (2) Council Members to serve in processing the grievance. Council Member Bergeron and Mayor Dropiewski volunteered.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

City Council Member Maul thanked everyone for showing up to the meeting and taking an active role in the community.

City Council Member Bergeron thanked Larry Dishaw for all he has done for the City and noted Larry is a professional in his field and has been a pleasure to work with. Council Member Bergeron congratulated the JV Girls Basketball Team on a 20-0 season, undefeated and further noted the Varsity team is doing great. The Mayor noted there is a lot of athletic talent in Flat Rock. He noted the 7th grade boys team went undefeated this season.

City Council Member Martin thanked Larry Dishaw for everything he did for the City and wished him well with his medical concerns. He also noted the Barnes Lego Team was invited to Cobo Hall (by invite only) to show off their Lego skills.

City Council Member Ken Wrobel thanked Larry Dishaw for all his years of service, noting he has known Larry for 50 years. He noted Larry is a good friend and good community leader.

City Council Member Rick Tefend congratulated Larry Dishaw on his retirement.

City Council Member Wally Little (lightheartedly) thanked the DPS Director for helping Larry Dishaw throughout the years.

7. MAYOR COMMENTS:

Mayor Dropiewski noted he spoke at the Flat Rock Boy Scouts Eagle Court of Honor. Four young men from the community obtained the rank of Eagle Scout. He noted it is not an easy

accomplishment and is truly a testament to the Scouts and leaders. He noted the Flat Rock Community has benefited greatly from projects done by the scouts. He congratulated Edwin, Liam, Sam and Jack on obtaining this special honor.

The Mayor began his annual 2019 State of the City Address.

- Not an easy job to be an elected official or work for a municipality in today's world.
- Unfortunately, national trends seem to be trickling down to the local level which Flat Rock traditionally has not had.
- We have instant access to all kinds of information, some true, some unintentionally false, and some just false for worse reasons.
- Easier to post on social media than to call the responsible parties.
- Decline in local news coverage makes this even worse.
- Team of people that run this City with integrity and honor.
- Follow the example that John Dingell set. Work with all, disagree civilly, and build versus tear down. We will all rise together as a community.

Financial Outlook

- Finances are stable, but outlook is still uncertain.
- Proposal A and Headlee are still dramatically affecting all municipal governments. Still 10+ years away from 2007 levels.
 - In Flat Rock, that's close to 3 million dollars per year, more if you include the rise in cost of medical and retirement benefits.
- State has changing requirements, measurements, and still has an inability to predict year to year funding levels.
- OPEB requirements are a real concern but we have begun the process.
- Back in 2006 we had over 80 full-time employees, now we are back up to 55. Still doing more with less.

Infrastructure

- Long awaited Phase IV sewers will soon start with around 4,500 feet of sewer.
- Water projects designed to enhance service and replace 1920's undersized pipes, but a lot more to go.
- Used relationships and hard work to avoid a massive increase in wholesale rates from GLWA.
- Continue to look for multi-faceted projects to extend the value of our projects and maximize benefits for the most people.

Roads

- Double whammy of a broken Municipal finance model and a bad concrete standard we didn't create.
- Paser Study still guiding decision making but needs updating.
- Milage increase will be very useful but is not the only answer.
 - (\$450k + vs. the \$286k today)
- Waiting for State Plan (Listen to Governor's Address)
- Targeted repairs while we await funding or bonding capacity.
- If it stopped snowing and icing that would be good.

Plans for Spring and Fall

- Seneca and Cahill will be chip sealed.
- Goal is to eventually chip seal or blacktop all dirt roads in town.
- Hawthorne and Huron Woods will be touched up and other areas evaluated for same treatment.
- Aggressive sectioning/block programs as budget allows (ie Field)
- Plan for longer term, large projects.
- Dependent on remaining Winter spending.
- Size and scope of additional projects will be determined towards end of budget year.

Police Department

- Police Department has become more stable but is still in flux.
 - Market for Officers is very tight and leads to poaching.
 - Some turnover is to be expected but we attempt to limit.
- Upgraded technology in several key areas.
- Expanded use of Dispatchers allow Sergeants to respond to the road.
- Expanded use and value of K-9 Officer Xander.
- Training program has been expanded.
- Policies and Procedures have been updated and modernized.

Fire Department

- Full complement of Full-time firefighters – All paramedics.
- Currently have 14 paid on-call.
- 10 more scheduled for testing on 3/21. 3 are paramedics.
- Brand new Ambulance on duty and looking at grants for a new Main Truck.
 - Increasing communication and coordination of equipment purchases.
- Massive upheaval in Fire Departments across the region.
 - Many reaching retirement age.
 - Increased training and licensing requirements.
 - Wayne County Community College has 8 students enrolled vs. 3 classes of 35.
 - Union Contracts prevent many who would like to work here from hiring.
- More money is not just the only answer. Communities that pay more than us are in the exact same situation. There just aren't many applicants.
- Solution must be a regional approach building on the success of Downriver Mutual Aid and our Automatic Aid agreements.
- Public safety will always be maintained.

Clerk and Treasurer/Administrator

- Hired a qualified Deputy Clerk.
- Successfully navigated an election with brand new equipment.
- Ability to auto-pay water bills.
- Migrated to new City Assessors who are bringing us in line with modern standards and technologies.
- Improved communication with Building Department leads to much more accurate and fair assessments.
- Will be bringing new website proposal which will modernize our ability to communicate via all modern channels.
- City Administrator working through options on City Sign.

Building/Safety

- Larry Dishaw has dramatically improved our building department, correcting many issues that existed since he left the first time.
- Built a great inspector staff.
- Addressed many longstanding issues and more are in the process.
- Large complex projects at Ford, Target Steel, and more.
- Addressed many issues in City Buildings.
 - City Hall, Rec Center.
 - Brought in a resource dedicated to maintenance.

Recreation

- Programming continues to expand.
- Rec Center is now 15 years old and going through the normal maintenance cycle for plant and equipment that occurs at that age.
- Will be replacing weight room equipment that is still original to the opening.
- Successfully partnered with schools to support Middle School Swim Team.
- Started a 7-8th grade Basketball league and new Volleyball offerings.
- Will be starting a summer swim program to take advantage of slower usage.
- Close coordination with DPS.
- Will be the first to take advantage of new website with Online Registration.

DPS

- New DPS Department Head has brought positive changes to DPS.
- Equipment has been assessed and a new equipment plan has been developed.
- Park coverage has been approved and weekend evening coverage is being greatly enhanced to upgrade and update our maintenance.
- New hoists were purchased for our Fleet Garage.
- Water Asset Management plan is nearing completion to go along with the Sewer Plan that was done with the State Saw Grant.
- Park Plan- Study session prior to next meeting on Community Park/Ballfield options to rejuvenate our Central Park and address long term future of Ice Rink/Fountain area and ballfields.

Economic Development

- Proud of our new and expanding businesses.
- Constant contact with Real Estate Companies and Brokers representing larger plazas.
- Can't control what property owners list their properties for.
- If a business meets zoning requirements, we cannot pick and choose.
- We speak regularly with national companies, regional and local franchises, and others to bring more businesses to Flat Rock.
- Working hard on updating data to reflect Flat Rock in the best possible light.
- Maco-economic factors at play as well- Casual Dining Segments.
- Started our Redevelopment Ready Community journey.
- Flat Rock Our Hometown successes, Taste of Flat Rock, Spooktacular.

Looking ahead- Turning Vision into Reality

- Finally, have acquired the Boat Launch property after 2 years of effort.
- Now we can finally apply for the State Grants for the area.

- Project involves coordination from 8+ entities.

Building on our Assets & Rebuilding our Downtown

- Viaduct improvements- Next step

Safe Routes to School – Sidewalks coming this year

- \$500k+ grant to address walkability
- Seneca
- Field
- Huron River Dr
- More to come

A New Vision for our Core Downtown

- Defining “Downtown Flat Rock” is different for many people.
- Utilizing our assets to create a walkable district of shops and restaurants from River to Garden along Huron River Drive and Gibraltar.
- We have individual building blocks
- Will need to address parking through DDA.
- Exciting things already happening Atwater, Wize Guys, S&J Cupcakery, old Dr. Premen building.

Concepts:

- We need to get rid of the trucks on Huron River Drive
- Vision for Huron River Dr. from Telegraph to Church

Looking ahead while we celebrate where we have come from

- We have a lot of great things going on but have a long way to go.
- We must continue to be vigilant in our financial management.
- We are laying a foundation for some large, transformative projects. Key to this has been careful planning, involvement of stakeholders, and making sure we could sustain what we do.
- We do more to preserve our history than any community Downriver, but we also can't be afraid to try new things.
- We must also continue to build bridges with our neighboring communities, businesses, and citizens.

Mayor Dropiewski closed his annual State of the City Address.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

Item 9-A-The Senior Alliance 2019 Community Match

Resolution 03-04-19-02

Motion by Martin
Supported by Bergeron

RESOLVED, to approve The Senior Alliance 2019 Community Match in the amount of \$679.00.

Motion carried unanimously 7-0

Item 9-B-Permission to Bid – Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Program

Resolution 03-04-19-03

Motion by Martin
Supported by Maul

RESOLVED, to approve the request to bid the Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Program.

Discussion: The Mayor noted we will see an increase in fees. Council Member Martin asked if we can eliminate recycling. Director Lancaster noted he will get several bids with different scenarios. The Mayor noted a couple different options we will have.

Motion carried unanimously 7-0

10. **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

Mary Washko, President of the Flat Rock Historical Society presented a packet of information to City Council. She noted a new schedule and that the open house will now be held on Saturday. She spoke of several programs, past events and future events. She thanked City Council Member Maul for attending the general membership dinner, serving tea, and joining the society.

11. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE:**

None

12. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Resolution 03-04-19-04

Motion by Martin
Supported by Bergeron

RESOLVED, to adjourn the regular City Council meeting of March 4, 2019 at 9:01 PM.

All voting yes; motion carried unanimously 7-0

DATE: _____
Approved

JONATHAN D. DROPIEWSKI, MAYOR

MEAGHAN K. BACHMAN, CITY CLERK