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By:

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Each week, ELi brings you a summary of what happened at City Council. Our "Council Capsule" allows you to stay on top of what's happening in our local government.

All present: Mayor Mark Meadows, Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier, Councilmembers Erik Altmann, Shanna Draheim, Susan Woods (5 minutes late because she was coming from Austria).

Dangerous buildings demolition ordinance passed: Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance 1360, which makes it possible for the City to decide to tear down a dangerous building that is unsafe and when "the cost of the repairs would exceed 100 percent of the true cash value of the structure as reflected on the city assessment tax rolls." See our special report ^[2] from Chris Root.

Ethics rule changed with regard to campaign contributions: Council unanimously approved a change to a portion of the City's Code pertaining to Ethics with the aim of making it more transparent when someone with active financial business before Council has made a relatively

recent campaign contribution of more than \$100 to a seated Councilmember deliberating on the matter. Read more in our special report ^[3] from Coleen Moyerbrailean.

Resolution in support of refugees: Bob Pratt spoke during public comments on the resolution declaring the City of East Lansing a welcoming community for Syrian refugees. Pratt is a long-time resident of East Lansing and retired a few years ago from the position of Fire Marshall for the City of East Lansing. He said he looks forward to East Lansing welcoming refugees soon from Syria and from all over the world. Council passed the resolution ^[4] on the consent agenda, meaning there was no further discussion of the resolution.

Controversy over Planning Commission appointment: Following argument over how Mayor Meadows had handled the matter, Council approved in a split 3-2 vote the appointment of John Cahill to the Planning Commission. Councilmembers Woods and Draheim objected to Meadows failing to interview the other two candidates cooperatively with the Chair of the Planning Commission, Julie Jones-Fisk. We will have a special report on this later today. Woods and Draheim voted against the appointment; Meadows, Altmann, and Beier voted for. [Update: special report here ^[5].]

Public communications: To read written communications received by City Council, click here ^[6] and here ^[6].

During oral communications, Pat Wolff, President of the Tamarisk Neighborhood Association, spoke on deer management. He said he was shocked that the Council had decided to delay ^[7] on the government-run cull after ?years of inaction? by the City on deer management. He said he thought the prior Council would have moved forward on it. He said he thought the main issues were deer-car accidents and property damage, and that it is easy to see that this is an issue mostly north of Saginaw, such that people south of Saginaw Street may not appreciate what a problem the deer are. He said there are deer wandering around their streets and that the Council has made a real mistake in not moving forward on the cull. Wolff told Council that we need to find a balance between deer and people. He said most people in his neighborhood seem to be in favor of the hunt, although a couple have spoken against and some are neutral.

\$2,000,000 contract for Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility: Last week at its work session, Council discussed an approximately \$2,000,000 contract with Tetra Tech for work on the Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility (formerly known as the Wastewater Treatment Plant). See the associated memo ^[8], contract ^[9], and schedule ^[10]. Mayor Pro Tem Beier pulled approval of this contract off the consent agenda in order to have the City staff present the engineering and answer some questions about the matter.

City Engineering Administrator Bob Scheuerman presented for staff. He said that a needs assessment shows a lot of infrastructure needs fixing around the City but also especially at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is well past its planned lifespan. To take advantage of the State revolving fund money, which is money available at 2.5% interest, the City had to put together a comprehensive plan for dealing with infrastructure needs. They did so. It was approved and the City has been moving forward and various parts of that plan.

This contract is meant for design of what will ultimately be a \$25 million project. The City used a qualifications-basis for interviewing firms, working in conjunction with representatives from MSU

and Meridian Township, which are major partners in the use of the treatment plant. The interviewers unanimously selected Tetra Tech as the firm they wanted to use. Staff then negotiated the contract with Tetra Tech.

Beier asked Scheuerman to go over some of the schedule and costs of the various infrastructure plans. Scheuerman said projects coming up include the wastewater interceptor, a project to line a sewer under Brody, sewers in the Oakhill neighborhood which had been tied to the failed PDIG project, a siphon along Michigan Avenue near the Kellogg Center, and other problems identified in the future. In response to a question from Altmann, Scheuerman said the Brody project is meant to achieve a routing to get sewage from the northern side of the river across the river to the plant. Scheuerman said this would not impact the neighborhoods in the combined sanitary sewer-storm sewer areas [11].

Council unanimously approved the contract with Tetra Tech.

Tree protection ordinance: Council held a public hearing on a proposed ordinance to create a system for declaring certain trees ?protected.? If passed, the ordinance would require that anyone moving to trim or cut a protected tree get a permit from the City to do so. The draft ordinance was referred to the Commission on the Environment, the Planning Commission, and the Historic District Commission for further comment before Council reconsiders the matter in the spring. Council did pass a temporarily moratorium on cutting or clearing of the type that currently requires a permit. We?ll have a special report on this later matter today or tomorrow. [Update: report available here [12].]

Councilmember and City Manager reports: Councilmember Erik Altmann asked to second a written communication received from Arthur Sloboski about the value of the Transportation Bonanza [13] planned for December 10. He said the program looks terrific and that there are many good sessions planned. Meadows asked if it could be put on our City website calendar and City Manager George Lahanas said he could look into it. Councilmember Shanna Draheim also recommended the program. Meadows and Lahanas also recommended Green Friday [14] and Winter Glow [15], December 4 and 5. Lahanas also wished MSU?s football team good luck this weekend. Meadows also had comments on HB 5041, which are covered below. Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier and Councilmember Susan Woods had no reports.

HB 5041, on nonconforming properties: In his Councilmember report, Mayor Mark Meadows said he and the City staff are aware there is a public hearing about HB 5041 scheduled and said the City representatives would continue to oppose the legislation, which would remove East Lansing?s ability to regulate certain zoning issues. During public comments, Chris Root of the Oakwood neighborhood spoke in agreement with Meadows? comments on HB 5041. She said these are issues that matter a lot to people in the affected neighborhoods and that their input should be sought. She raised the concern that the bill has been tailored to target East Lansing, and noted that is not how State legislation is supposed to be crafted.

Meadows said that if it could be shown that it was targeted at East Lansing, it could be fought as unconstitutional, but suggested it is difficult to show that. He encouraged all citizens who wanted to register opposition to go to the hearing on December 2. Konrad Hittner also came to Council?s podium to speak as Chair of the Bailey Community Association (BCA) to also register opposition by the Board of the BCA against HB 5041. The opposition from the BCA centers on the State

seeking to take control of this away from the City's own government.

Read our report [\[16\]](#), published earlier today, on what happened at the HB 5041 hearing yesterday.

Consent agenda: The following items were approved on a consent agenda, meaning there was no additional discussion:

- Approval to accept the water main easement for the MSU Federal Credit Union Headquarters 2 site; see the memo [\[17\]](#) and easement [\[18\]](#).
- Approval of a change order to increase Able Concrete's contract for the 2015 Miscellaneous Concrete Project by \$10,000 to total not to exceed \$80,000; read the memo [\[19\]](#).
- Approval to award a sole source contract in the amount of \$28,486 to JWC Environmental to rebuild a raw sewage grinder for the Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF); see the memo [\[20\]](#) and the quote [\[21\]](#).
- Approval of a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) regarding a sound wall for US-127; see the memo [\[22\]](#) and contract [\[23\]](#).
- Approval of a resolution [\[24\]](#) congratulating the Zonta Club of East Lansing on its 40th anniversary.
- Approval of the Housing Commission recommendation to approve a conditional Class III rental license for up to 2 unrelated persons or a family for 637 Cornell Avenue; see memo [\[25\]](#), staff report [\[26\]](#), and application [\[27\]](#).
- Approval of the Housing Commission recommendation to approve a conditional Class III rental license for up to 2 unrelated persons or a family for 615 Glenmoor Road; see staff memo [\[28\]](#), staff report [\[29\]](#), and application [\[30\]](#).
- Approval of a resolution declaring the City of East Lansing a welcoming community for Syrian refugees; see above.
- Approval of a Policy Resolution [\[31\]](#) establishing procedures for council meetings, resolutions, and the preparation and content of the council agenda.

Executive session: After the public portion of the meeting, Council went into closed (?executive?) session to discuss confidential matters with the City Attorney.

To view the meeting, click here [\[32\]](#). Reminder: Citizens can speak at or write to City Council on any issue, including those not on the agenda. Email can be sent to Council by writing to council@cityofeastlansing.com [\[33\]](#).

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