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## Council Deals with Mosquito Control, Bailey Senior Housing, Lot Split, and More <sup>[1]</sup>

Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 8:18 am

**By:**

Alice Dreger



City Council's regular meeting last night lasted only about 75 minutes but covered a wide range of business. All five Council members were present.

**Mosquito control:** During public comments, Mike Vasievich of the Pinecrest neighborhood noted it has been a very wet spring and that mosquitoes are likely to be even worse than last year. He reported there is a lot of standing water throughout the City, including in places not usually so wet, and said that he is recommending to his neighborhood that they "proactively treat" standing water with bacteria to kill mosquito larvae. He told Council that *Bacillus thuringiensis serotype israelensis* <sup>[2]</sup> (Bti) "dunks" can be used for this purpose.

Vasievich told Council he believes the Commission on the Environment should work on

mitigating mosquito populations including through Bti dunks, installation of purple martin houses, and the like. (Later in the meeting, Council approved an earlier start [3] for meetings of the Commission on the Environment.) Vasievich warned that the Zika virus [4] is coming. In response, Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier asked if the City was looking into mosquito abatement and City Manager George Lahanas said yes.

**?Love East Lansing? event coming:** In her Councilmember report, Shanna Draheim drew notice to a ?place-making? workshop [5] that will take place on Friday, April 22, featuring Peter Kageyama, author of *Love Where You Live: Creating Emotionally Engaging Places*. According to the City website, ?Mr. Kageyama will lead an interactive workshop that guides community members on a fun journey to make downtown East Lansing more lovable by presenting small project ideas that can have a huge impact on everyone.? Tickets [6] are required.

**Permit parking to be revisited:** City Council set a public hearing for April 26 to discuss possible changes to how permit parking plans are approved or changed in the City. This follows on a controversial expansion [7] of permit parking in Chesterfield Hills. The Transportation Commission has made several recommendations [8] as has Councilmember Shanna Draheim [9].

**Solar carports to be discussed:** City Council set a public hearing for May 10 to discuss a zoning change [10] that would allow the addition of solar arrays on top of carports [11].

**Abbot Road development changes building style:** Council unanimously approved design changes [12] to a new development [13] being built at 6170 Abbot Road just north of Lake Lansing Road. The development involves [14] thirteen residential duplexes designed to be rentals primarily for students.

The windows will now be smaller with decorative shutters, and the buildings? fronts will feature all cement board siding instead of cultured stone. The design of the second-floor overhang has also changed. In response to questions from Council, the applicant told Council he was not doing this to save money but to have a design he says is better suited to East Lansing and student renters and to fix a zoning problem with an earlier design not caught by the City staff because of how it was presented on the application.

**No entertainment license for Tin Can:** Council voted 5-0 against granting an entertainment license for the Tin Can bar on Grand River Avenue. See separate report [15] on this.

**Mayor votes in minority against lot split:** Council approved an application [16] to split the lot at 419 Spartan Avenue [17] into two for ?redevelopment purposes.? Staff recommended approval [18]. The vote went 4-1 with Mayor Mark Meadows voting against. Meadows said he voted against it because the plan is not reasonably compatible with the neighborhood with regard to considerations such as density, traffic safety, privacy, open space, and property values, considerations which Council is supposed to take into account when considering lot split requests. No one else on Council commented on the application before voting in favor.

**Community Relations Coalition reports on work:** Sarah Wallace and Payden Myers, two interns with the Community Relations Coalition [19] (CRC), gave the group?s annual report to Council. Ten interns have worked over 2,400 hours, have participated in 16 CRC-sponsored events attended by a total of over 5,000 people, have attended many public meetings, have

talked with over 1,000 people individually, and have been spending Friday afternoons with the Prime Time Seniors group helping them with technology. This Saturday the group will have another Neighborhood cleanup starting at 10 a.m. outside City Hall. On April 23 the group will host the annual Taste of East Lansing [20] event.

**Budget for next year under consideration:** Council passed a resolution [21] establishing a public hearing on the preliminary Fiscal Year 2017 budget and tax rate for May 10, 2016. The proposed total tax rate [22] is 22.2107 mils. We will be bringing you a separate report from ELi's Chris Root on the special budget work session that City Council held before tonight's regular meeting.

**Arts Commission and its supporters ask for funds:** In a letter to Council, Sarah Gonzales Triplett, Chair of the East Lansing Arts Commission, asked for a special allocation of \$8,700 to restore bronze sculptures in the City's collections. City staff wants to hire Giorgio Gika of Venus Bronze Works to do this work.

In a separate letter, Triplett also asked Council not to eliminate the Arts Grants Program from the Fiscal Year 2017 budget. The Arts Grants Program provides small grants, totaling about \$10,000 per year, to groups like the East Lansing Film Festival and the Summer Solstice Jazz Festival. The East Lansing Arts Festival and the Arts Council of Greater Lansing also asked that the grants program be maintained. (All of these communications are available online [23].)

**White Oak Place decisions deferred:** At the request of the developer, Council's discussions of and decisions on the White Oak Place site plan and Brownfield tax increment financing (TIF) plan were deferred until May 24. ELi has a separate report on this. [24]

**Bailey Community Center project adds five more senior apartments:** Council approved a plan to add five market-rate senior apartments to the Capital Area Housing Partnership redevelopment of the Bailey Community Center. We'll have a separate report on this.

**Citizen communications to Council:** Oral comments made by citizens at last night's meeting are reported in sections and articles on the topics about which those citizens spoke. In written communications [23] to Council, Sherry Martin said that CATA's planned Bus Rapid Transit [25] (BRT) is "unnecessary and a misuse of taxpayer funds." She said she travels the route regularly and that the buses are often "empty, or half empty."

Also in writing, Sharon Schuille strongly supported "re-opening Red Cedar School in some capacity." She said it functions "as a focal point for the Red Cedar neighborhood which is not contiguous with other East Lansing neighborhoods."

Also in written communications, Eliot Singer objected "that developers who have received tax breaks have been allowed to change site plans, uses, and TIF reimbursement after approval" and objected to "a complete breakdown of risk management and due diligence" on the City Center II/Park District project. He also told Council that he "will no longer be taking responsibility for due diligence and keeping you informed with regard to City Center II related matters" and raised objections to the White Oak Place TIF plan.

Sarah Preisser wrote to suggest that the City make it easier for people to park downtown to

patronize businesses by changing the 15-minute free meters to 30-minute meters.

**Three community members remembered:** Mayor Mark Meadows noted the recent passing of three long-engaged members of the East Lansing community, Dick Hanna <sup>[26]</sup>, Jeanne Rogers <sup>[27]</sup>, and Bill Sharp <sup>[28]</sup>. He spoke warmly of all three individuals.

**Two executive sessions:** Two items of public business were conducted behind closed doors in ?executive sessions.? One was named by the City Manager as regarding ?sale or lease of land,? with no naming of what land is at issue. The second item was named by the City Attorney as regarding ?pending litigation of Stivers v. East Lansing.?

**Road closures:** City Council approved various road closures including on May 1 for the Glencairn Scottie Scramble <sup>[29]</sup>, on June 24 for the Summer Concert Series <sup>[30]</sup> opening, and on September 20 for the Capital City River Run <sup>[31]</sup>.

**Arbor Day:** Council passed a resolution <sup>[32]</sup> proclaiming April 29 ?Arbor Day? in the City.

**Bridge maintenance grant:** Council approved a resolution <sup>[33]</sup> needed by City staff to apply to MDOT (the Michigan Department of Transportation) for funds to do preventative maintenance <sup>[34]</sup> on three bridges, including the Bogue Street Bridge, the Harrison Road Bridge, and the Kalamazoo Street Bridge.

**New appointments:** Council approved the appointment of Jim Croom to the Downtown Management Board as the Downtown Development Authority liaison for a partial term ending June 30, 2017. Council also approved the appointment of City staff member Annette Irwin to the Capital Area Housing Partnership as an ex officio member.

**Upgrades to the Water Resource Recovery Facility continue:** Council approved a change order <sup>[35]</sup> of about \$108,000 with Grand River Construction for construction at the plant formerly known as the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

### **Related Categories:**

Council Capsule <sup>[36]</sup>

City Council <sup>[37]</sup>

Development and Planning <sup>[38]</sup>

Downtown Development Authority <sup>[39]</sup>

East Lansing Schools <sup>[40]</sup>

City Manager <sup>[41]</sup>

Government <sup>[42]</sup>

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- [3] [http://eastlansing.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=2&event\\_id=735&meta\\_id=36642](http://eastlansing.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=735&meta_id=36642)
- [4] <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- [5] <http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/1735/Love-EL-Workshop>
- [6] <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/love-el-tickets-22501392270>
- [7] <http://eastlansinginfo.org/content/chesterfield-hills-parking-approved-3-2-after-long-debate>
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- [19] <http://www.wealllivehere.org/>
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- [24] <http://eastlansinginfo.org/content/white-oak-place-project-remains-controversial>
- [25] <http://eastlansinginfo.org/content/rapid-transit-would-bring-changes-downtown-east-lansing>
- [26] <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/ljsj/obituary.aspx?pid=177320216>
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