

It was moved by Millard, seconded by Waterman to receive and place on file the 2019 Housing Commission Annual Report.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Milewski, Winters, Kelley, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman and Mayor Balice
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Approve – 2019 Downtown Development Annual Report

Linda Curtis of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) attended the meeting to present the DDA’s 2019 Annual Report. The Annual Report is required by the DDA’s Rules of Procedure.

It was moved by Millard, seconded by Gustafson to receive and place on file the 2019 Annual Report of the Downtown Development Authority.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Winters, Kelley, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, Milewski and Mayor Balice
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Update – Ionia Free Fair Association – Lisa Sanford

Lisa Sanford, Free Fair Association President, shared with Council the financial difficulties the Association is currently experiencing based on the cancellation of this year’s fair along with many of the other activities that are held (rent) at the fairgrounds. She discussed with Council some potential “relief” options from some of the contractual requirements contained in the fairgrounds lease.

It was moved by Kelley, seconded by Millard to allow the Fair Board to use direction and prioritize the essential areas to mow at the fairgrounds while the City will assume responsibility of mowing and maintaining the boat launch area and berm along M-66 for the remainder of 2020.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Kelley, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, Milewski, Winters and Mayor Balice
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Discussion – Recreational Marihuana Establishments – Councilmember Starr

Councilmember Starr requested that the matter of adopting an “opt in” ordinance for recreational marihuana establishments be placed on the agenda for Council discussion. According to the City Manager, Starr’s interest was based on his understanding (and confirmed by the City Clerk) that a local group of interested citizens may soon be undertaking the process of collecting signatures to

place on the November ballot an “initiated ordinance” which, if approved by the voters, amends the City Code (Chapter 870) permitting recreational marihuana establishments in the City.

Per the Home Rule Cities Act, initiative and referendum are “permissible” charter provisions rather than mandatory provisions. When the City’s current Charter was drafted, the Charter Commission did not “opt” for initiative and referendum therefore neither is an option for initiating an ordinance or pursuing a vote on an ordinance enacted by Council. However, the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act (the so-called recreational marihuana act) contains its own ordinance initiative provision which is applicable in this instance.

Councilmember Starr has completed research regarding recreational marihuana and has prepared a draft ordinance which, if approved, is intended to repeal the recreational prohibition ordinance enacted by Council (effective October 5, 2019) and “opt in”. His proposal amends the “Business Regulation and Taxation Code” of the City Code.

It was moved by Starr, seconded by Winters to direct the Planning Commission to propose an opt-in recreational marihuana ordinance pursuant to the Home Rules Cities Act.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, Milewski, Winters, Kelley and Mayor Balice
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Board Appointment

Mayor Dan Balice stated that Patricia McCrackin recently resigned from the Housing Commission Board which has created a partial-term vacancy ending on December 31, 2022. Mayor Balice recommended Lisa Brown for the position.

It was moved by Winters, seconded by Lee to appoint Lisa Brown to fulfill the Housing Commission Board vacancy with the partial term ending on December 31, 2022.

MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Balice: Commented that Sparrow Ionia handled and continues to handle Covid-19 very well. He reminded everyone to continue safe social distancing, wearing masks and maintaining good hygiene in order to prevent the further and unnecessary spread of Covid-19. He encouraged everyone to support local businesses who have struggled during these past few months.

Millard: Echoed Mayor Balice’s comments and mentioned that now is the perfect time to donate to the Ionia Free Fair as we’re all feeling the disappointment of missing out on an annual tradition.

Waterman: Stated that the Steele Street project is coming along nicely.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Gustafson, seconded by Lee to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:17 PM.

By Voice Vote: MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully Submitted:

Ally H. Cook, Clerk