MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, August 25, 2025 @ 5:30 p.m.
Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER
Council President Kost called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT
Councilmember Jeffrey Brown
Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Tamera Carter
Councilmember Trini Pehlivanoglu
Councilmember Jeremy Garza-excused
Councilmember Ryan Kost
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson

OTHERS PRESENT
Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Mark Lawrence, Mayor's Office
Greg Venker, City Attorney
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, City Attorney
Dominic Cochran, Ovation Representative
Emily Stevens, Parks and Recreation
Kris Klein, LEDC
Chris Swope, City Clerk
Emily Linden, Ovation Representative

Minutes
MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CARTER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 11, 2025, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Public Comment
Ms. Stanaway spoke on the sale of the cemetery property, and noting the VMG did withdraw their first offer 2 days before close. Per Ms. Stanaway stated this was due to code issues and criminal activity that occurred at their property. The Friends of Cemetery contributed to install trail cameras in the area.

Discussion/Action:
RESOLUTION – RESOLUTION – Polling Place; Early Voting at the Lansing Elections Office (LEO), 701 W Jolly Road
Mr. Swope outlined the office move and need for the change, and relocation of a temporary location through this year which is a current polling location already and he will come back to Council for a permanent location.

Council Member Garza asked about the location, and Mr. Swope said it will probably not be an election day polling place.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CARTER TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE POLLING PLACE LOCATION CHANGES. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

<u>RESOLUTION – Voter Approved Sale of City Property; portion of North Cemetery</u>
Ms. Stevens confirmed this is for property that the voters agreed to sell in August 2022. There was an earlier sale, but they withdrew and now they have made an offer again, and the Administration is looking for it again.

Council President Kost noted appraisal was $8,000, their first offer in 2022 was for $8,500 but now it is $3,000. Ms. Stevens stated she cannot speak to why the lower offer, and they do not have any knowledge of why.

Council Member Garza noted in the past the purchaser was speaking of park equipment on the parcel originally.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CARTER TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE SALE OF THE PROPERTY AT NORTH CEMETERY. MOTION CARRIED 7-1.

<u>ORDINANCE – Amending Chapter 210, add Section 210.06, City Council Attendance</u>
Council Member Pehlivanoglu explained the amendments, which were drafted to put forward definitions of meeting absence, perimeters around Committee and Council meetings. There is a scale of penalties for absences for Committee and Council meetings.

Council Member Carter asked her to identify “rules of council acceptable to council…”, with this the excused absence is based on body as a whole or council leadership. Council Member Pehlivanoglu state the practice would not change, according to this change it outlines the timeline on when requesting an excused absence with perimeters. There are exceptions for extreme issues. Council Member Carter asked about the confidentiality, and Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted there is not change in what is being practiced. Council Member Carter noted the first warning was given by the City Council office manager, and the second is the City Clerk, and Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted those are the recording secretary for each of those boards. Council Member Carter asked why there is nothing for the outside committees and boards, and Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted there is no record for any of the outside boards. Council Member Carter stated all boards and meetings, even outside boards participation, and would like that.   Council Member Kost stated this is a focus on the charge of the Charter. Council Member Spadafore noted that some outside boards are not official members, but liaison, and his attendance is not reflected in the minutes of those boards. Council Member Carter noted the President determines the membership on Committees and outside boards, those are all committees Council is a representative on, for consistency.

Mr. Venker for how excused absences are requested, the request for excusal at Council is a vote by everyone.

Council Member Brown concurred with Council Member Carter, they represent Council and this would show representative.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu concurred that attendance to those boards is important, there might be an option to coordinate with outside boards for their attendance.

Council Member Carter noted there is a disciplinary action by the office manager but that office manager reports to Council, is there a conflict. Mr. Venker stated there would not need to be a training, and there would be a letter or template. Council Member Spadafore spoke in support of the office manager. Council Member Brown asked about if there is an issue with staff, and Mr. Venker stated that personnel process for office staff. Mr. Venker stated the Council Personnel rules put that management in Council President and Vice President in managing office staff. Council Member Brown voiced his concern that there could be a potential conflict.

Council Member Hussain spoke on the history of excused absence requests, opposition to binding outside organizations for reporting absences; they have their own by-laws and articles which speak to their own attendance. This gives a framework.

Council Member Brown concurred that it is for binding outside boards, but having the information if possible. Council Member Brown referred again to the disciplinary point again.

Council Member Carter noted that she is not saying there is no transparency now, but in the future the ordinance will have structure for this board.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CARTER TO APPROVE THE ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 210 SECTION 210.06 CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Presentations:

LEDC Presentation on Development Incentives – Director Kris Klein

Mr. Klein provided a presentation on tax abatements and TIF's on how those are the tools for property improvements. This included breakdowns on the Brownfields for new construction and rehab of existing buildings. To qualify they need to be blighted, environmental or even landbank property. What is new is the Brownfields – Housing for new construction that would be income- qualified. Tables and graphs were part of the presentation in the meeting packet. Some tax abatement programs offered are the OPRA, Comm. Rehabilitation Act, Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption, New Personal Property Tax Exemption, the Neighborhood Enterprise Zones and the Attainable Housing/ Residential Housing Exemption. Included there was a graph presented in the packet that spoke to OPRA average, annual taxes, paid and abated.

Council Member Jackson asked Mr. Klein about the down sides, pitfalls or concerns as it relates to the City interest in the future. Mr. Klein stated they have gotten better reviewing up front their financial debt, and how much incentive is needed. There is always a challenge when projecting 30 years out in the future. They are looking trying to project out with the policy now and part of the expectation up front, and hoping to alleviate over incentivizing. Mr., Klein believes that these tools are necessary and hopes there are more positives then negatives.

Council Member Hussain noted plans like this are through the revolving fund, but what is funded out of those funds. Mr. Klein noted there are accelerated reimbursement loans.

Council Member Jackson stepped away at 6:26 p.m.

This would give funds up front, then reimburse through the revolving funds which help projects and help pre-development projects. They are creating criteria because there are more need. They are looking to help with the assessment costs up front.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

They continue to look at creative ways in deploying the funds. Council Member Hussain asked about residential incentives such as NEZ and asked about any marketing and RFP for the Life O'Reilly site, and asked if there is any additional interest in that property and what are they doing to incentivize that property. Mr. Klein stated that they do get interest on that one, and this Housing TIF tool is good for a site of that size. Council Member Hussain asked Mr. Klein to speak to what would disqualify them actually from receiving the benefit. Mr. Klein stated that depending on the tool, they are self-regulating, and invest less there is less taxable value, and if they do less improvement then there is less taxable value. Sometimes there is a time factor, and they try to be flexible with the developer and good faith effort to complete project as described.

Update on the Ovation Project
Mr. Cochran and Ms. Linden presented an update to Council and a brief presentation to Committee acknowledging he would email after the meeting. Regarding a news item and statement on tariffs, that the project could be in jeopardy; all that was known.

City TV stated at 6:37 p.m. there were technical issues that are delaying the presentation.

Mr. Cochran continued his presentation specific to how it will impact the budget, and they are continuing to fund raise, they have the City TV educational component. He then noted what he hopes to get back on track is transitioning to Design Build Methodology. There was a list outlined of work thus far, work planned on 500 and 520 coordination and ordering of equipment and hope to be on site in Q1 of 2026.

Council Member Garza asked how much money is raised to date, and Mr. Cochran stated the construction budget is $28 million. The naming rights are 2.585 million, and there are other leads at 1.5 million. Council Member Garza asked when completed, and Mr. Cochran stated the offices in March 2026 and the large project 2027.

Council Member Hussain asked what spent to date. Ms. Linden stated $2.238 million and vast majority of design and construction manager, and will send an update.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu spoke in support of the design build construction methodology.

Council President Kost asked if 2027 is realistic because the Brownfield stated it would be done this year, September. Mr. Cochran stated it is realistic. Council President Kost stated the January 2025 rendering is different then the venue that was just presented, and asked for the newest rendering to be sent over to Council.

Council Member Carter, noted they stated fundraising was $1.5 million and asked if that will satisfy, or do more. Mr. Cochran stated that fundraising would be applied to enhancements and stability once open. The goal is still to raise $5 million in additional funds.

Other
No other topics.

Adjourn
The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm
Respectfully Submitted by,
Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,
Lansing City Council
Approved by the Committee September 8, 2025