



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, February 1, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.
Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Hussain called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Carol Wood
Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley
Councilmember Jeremy Garza
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson
Councilmember Jeffrey Brown

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Jim Smiertka, OCA
Lisa Hagen, OCA
Mark Lawrence, Mayors Administration
Loretta Stanaway
Calvin Jones
Caitlin Cavanagh
Brian Daniels
Benjamin Dowd

Public Comment

Ms. Stanaway spoke in support of all the candidates and encouraged them to choose Benjamin Dowd.

Discussion/Action:

Finalist Interviews- Caitlin Cavanagh

Council Member Garza - What is the purpose of having "Ward" and "At-Large" Councilmembers?

Ms. Cavanagh replied by outlining the needs of the overall benefit for the At Large member for the City as a whole, and the Ward member representing the individual needs.

Council Member Jackson - What have you done in the last few years to demonstrate your commitment to the City of Lansing?

Ms. Cavanagh outlined her volunteerism with the animal shelter, court appointed special advocate for youth and other efforts.

Council Member Brown - Please discuss ways in which the City of Lansing and Lansing City Council can contribute to the creation of opportunities for our residents to have good education, employment and health.

Ms. Cavanagh began by pointing out that all three are linked and creating a policy they should all be considered. Ms. Cavanagh began with the education portion, the City can invest in the financial investment for school structure and school learning as transitioning out of the pandemic. She noted future opportunities would collaboration with the School Board and Lansing Community College. Ms. Cavanagh then highlighted ideas for employment opportunities with small business grants, investment, skilled training program and emerging markets. Regarding the last item of health, she noted offering efforts to reduce emissions, encourage solar energy to help with physical support.

Council Member Spitzley stepped away at 6:14 p.m.

Ms. Cavanagh continued by speaking on support of social workers.

Council Member Spitzley returned to the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Council Member Spitzley - As a Lansing City Council Member, how do you see your role working with the administration, neighborhoods and businesses respectively?

Ms. Cavanagh spoke on being a consensus builder.

Council Member Spitzley stepped away from the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Ms. Cavanagh spoke on working with administration on build consensus.

Council Member Spitzley returned to the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Ms. Cavanagh added her interest would be to hold the administration accountable. Lastly she recommended working with the neighborhood advocates on the expertise they can bring to the residents and neighborhood leaders.

Council Member Spadafore - What is the division of power between Council, Clerk, legal and administration?

Ms. Cavanagh summarized her understanding of the division, the clerk roles and the legal role of advising on matters, representing the Council. Lastly she noted the role of the Administration is the legislative branch and structure of the Administration.

Council Member Wood - As we turn from the downtown area, many neighborhoods are faced with deteriorating infrastructure and corridors, vacant homes, inadequate rentals, and Ingham County Land Bank owned properties; what are your ideas on improving neighborhoods in the short term and long term?

Ms. Cavanagh spoke on her short term plan for infrastructure, but also a focus on legal rental assistance. Ms. Cavanagh noted that overall Council needs to listen to the specific needs of the communities, and not project onto them what council feels is better for them. This is a belief in evidence based solutions and what is coming from the community. Long term solutions could be the partnership with LCC on apprenticeship or trade programs they could help fix blight, or apprentices in culinary work with food pantries for people who are food insecure.

Council Member Hussain - If appointed what will your key priorities be and what are your ideas for moving those priorities forward.

Ms. Cavanagh first pointed to youth violence as a key priority, and offered two types of solutions. To be proactive she was encouraged by restorative justice certification and believe it is one of the ways forward for Lansing. Any reactive solution would need to be evidence based. Council can look at community normalizing by taking something and make sure the intervention and risk assessment and then tailor the tool for the community. Lastly Ms.

Cavanagh spoke on her support of the Committee on Diversity Equity and Inclusion and evaluating MRJEA in addition to a focus on pandemic recovery.

Council President Hussain asked for any other statement she wanted Council to know before their deliberation. Ms. Cavanagh acknowledged the Council for the opportunity and would love to work with Council in any way.

Finalist Interviews- Brian Daniels

Council Member Garza - What is the purpose of having "Ward" and "At-Large" Councilmembers?

Mr. Daniels explained his understanding of the differences, noting Ward members are more in tune to the unique issues with those constituents.

Council Member Jackson - What have you done in the last few years to demonstrate your commitment to the City of Lansing?

Mr. Daniels highlighted his business Empower Lansing, being a member of the Parks Board. He added that he believes in transparency and accountability, more social workers in the LPD, bringing back a trust in local government.

Council Member Brown - Please discuss ways in which the City of Lansing and Lansing City Council can contribute to the creation of opportunities for our residents to have good education, employment and health.

Mr. Daniels spoke in support of approving projects that benefit the City, and he wants to make sure projects are done by people who live here, and tax dollars stay in the City and putting funds into schools. Mr. Daniels spoke was encouraged by the creation of employment for local labor on, and recruiting kids on the trades. Lastly Mr. Daniels spoke on the need for a focus on lead pipes in the private residence in Ward 1.

Council Member Spitzley - As a Lansing City Council Member, how do you see your role working with the administration, neighborhoods and businesses respectively?

Mr. Daniels asked for more work with the Administration to approve ordinances pushing for more ecofriendly solutions. Mr. Daniels was encouraged by continuing to be proactive with the neighborhoods.

Council Member Spadafore - What is the division of power between Council, Clerk, legal and administration?

Mr. Daniels defined the roles

Council Member Wood - As we turn from the downtown area, many neighborhoods are faced with deteriorating infrastructure and corridors, vacant homes, in adequate rentals, and Ingham County Land Bank owned properties; what are your ideas on improving neighborhoods in the short term and long term?

Mr. Daniels responded that the infrastructure should be addressed and letting the residents in the Wards delegate it to the right places. He was interested in bringing homes up to code and making sure the code is enforced. This would include working with the unions and skill trades, and teaching kids longer term life skills.

Council Member Hussain - If appointed what will your key priorities be and what are your ideas for moving those priorities forward.

Mr. Daniels noted the first priority would be to united the Ward; creating a space where everyone can be heard.

Council President Hussain asked if there was anything else he wanted to say.

Council Member Spitzley stepped away at 6:59 p.m.

Mr. Daniels spoke briefly about his personal life.

Council Member Spitzley returned to the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Mr. Daniels then spoke directly to the Ward residents letting them know they can reach out to him for any help and he hopes to build and foster relationships.

Council took a recess at 7:00 p.m.

Committee was reconvened at 7:09 p.m.

Finalist Interviews- Benjamin Dowd

Council Member Garza - What is the purpose of having "Ward" and "At-Large" Councilmembers?

Mr. Dowd explained his understanding of the defined breakdown between the two with a focus on a dedicated voice for the Ward.

Council Member Jackson - What have you done in the last few years to demonstrate your commitment to the City of Lansing?

Mr. Dowd provided his past experiences in 2019 with the Citizens Academy, involvement with Old Town, working with the parking services on street stripping and meter implementation community education in Old Town. He added that recently they have begun meeting as a small group with the Saginaw Corridor Authority, Old Town, and the other Authorities.

Council Member Brown - Please discuss ways in which the City of Lansing and Lansing City Council can contribute to the creation of opportunities for our residents to have good education, employment and health.

Mr. Dowd stated Council should be involved in the neighborhood meetings making sure the residents are aware of the focus of Council. For the business focus, Mr. Dowd proposed introducing a business leader round table, looking for an equitable conversation atmosphere where all have a change.

Council Member Spitzley - As a Lansing City Council Member, how do you see your role working with the administration, neighborhoods and businesses respectively?

Mr. Dowd stated he was looking for a role with the administration asking them the tough questions, making sure the administration is upholding their end. With the neighborhoods he hoped for continued support of the NEC Department and resources they provide. He hopes to get to know the neighborhood leaders and collaborate with Council.

Council Member Spadafore - What is the division of power between Council, Clerk, legal and administration?

Mr. Dowd provided his opinion on what each division oversees and the essential all areas work together.

Council Member Wood - As we turn from the downtown area, many neighborhoods are faced with deteriorating infrastructure and corridors, vacant homes, in adequate rentals, and Ingham County Land Bank owned properties; what are your ideas on improving neighborhoods in the short term and long term?

Mr. Dowd recommended neighborhood organizations for those that do not have one.

Council Member Hussain - If appointed what will your key priorities be and what are your ideas for moving those priorities forward.

Mr. Dowd believed there should be a priority to address the violence, a continued discussion with LPD and the need for more Community Policing Officers.

Mr. Dowd spoke to the Council in conclusion and the 1st Ward residents.

Council President Hussain offered Ms. Cavanagh an opportunity to speak to the 1st Ward because it was not provided earlier.

Ms. Cavanagh spoke to the 1st Ward and assured them she is committed to serving the community in any way she can and looks forward to working with residents in any capacity.

RESOLUTION – 1st Ward Council Member Selection; Term to end 12/31/2022

Council President Hussain highlighted the documents on front of the Committee and proposed changing the process and eliminating the paper ballot and then asked for an open conversation and a motion.

Council Member Jackson spoke in support of the paper ballot.

Council Member Spadafore asked the OCA if Council had the ability for a polling before voting. Mr. Smiertka stated that Council can decide the process and then they need 4 votes to make action. Council Member Spadafore supported a straw vote.

Council Member Spitzley stated she was not in support of changing the process since a paper ballot was done the night before.

Council President Hussain confirmed the vote would be on paper ballot and if there is a majority that action will move forward with a resolution.

Ms. Boak read the votes:

Council Member Hussain – Benjamin Dowd

Council Member Brown – Briand Daniels

Council Member Spadafore – Brian Daniels

Council Member Jackson – Caitlin Cavanagh

Council Member Spitzley – Brian Daniels

Council Member Wood – Brian Daniels

Council Member Garza – Brian Daniels

The tally of the votes determined that Brian Daniels would fill the 1st Ward Vacancy.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO APPOINT BRIAN DANIELS TO FILL THE 1ST WARD VACANCY THROUGH 12/31/2022.
MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at: 7:55 pm

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee February 14, 2022