



MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Tuesday, July 23, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Kost called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm

PRESENT

Council Member Ryan Kost, Chair
Council Member Trini Pehlivanoglu, Vice Chair
Council Member Peter Spadafore, Member- excused

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
DeYeya Jones
Chief Backus, LPD
Dave Ellis
Rawley Van Fossen, EDP
Joe Neller, SIMTOB
Nick Kwiatkowski

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JULY 9, 2024 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Neller provided updates; upcoming discussion with LPD Chief on Community Policing at 1317 E Kalamazoo, there is an electrician engaged for exterior lighting. The Holmes Street inspection was delayed due to permits, and all those have been resolved and they are hopeful the inspections will occur shortly. Mr. Neller stated he will continue to update the Committee.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION – Reappointment; DeYeya Jones; At Large Member- Board of Police Commissioners; Term to Expire June 30, 2028

Council Member Kost acknowledged Mr. Jones and asked him to provide some brief information on himself and his time thus far on the Commission. It was at the last meeting agenda and moved to this meeting because as a reappointment neither Committee member has met him.

Mr. Jones gave an overview of his work experience and Lansing residency. In addition to this Commission he serves on CADL Board as well. In terms of this Commission, he serves to make sure there is a cohesive relationship, and some of the issues that exist within the community and lack of transparency some individuals think to exist, some are not occurring. Mr. Jones stated his interested in to continue a equal relationship with the community and the department.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu acknowledged Mr. Jones for his work thus far on the Commission, and have heard people speak highly of him.

Council Member Kost acknowledged he sat in on the last Commission meeting, and believed he is doing an excellent job in his Chairperson role. He then referenced the agenda, specific to “comments on agenda items”, but the packet does not include any items, and the agenda only says “Discussion”. Mr. Jones noted it could be re-evaluate and revamped. Council Member Kost asked if he could look into that as Chair of the Commission, and continue his interest in transparency. Council Member Kost then acknowledged Mr. Jones for his willingness to serve.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO REAPPOINT DEYEYA JONES AS AT LARGE MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

DISCUSSION – Newly Appointed LPD Chief Backus

Council Member Kost acknowledged the Chief for attending, and spoke briefly on his work experience with the Chief over the last couple years. He then asked the Chief on his experience.

Chief Backus acknowledged the invitation, and provided historical information on how he began working with the LPD as a cadet via MSU. That led to a police sponsorship, academy and then working full time. Since his time with LPD he has been on the Michigan State Narcotics Team and collaboration. In addition to that role, he has also worked with LPD internal affairs, and bringing those two worlds together and why a police officer acts a certain way and then also looking into what might not be proactive. An assignment included Violent Crime Unit, which progressed to Captain, and then Assistant Chief. Chief Backus expanded on his future plan, and it speaks highly that his role was appointed as an internal candidate. His passion is to address violence crime, and back in 2010 this became a priority. His is focused on community collaboration, intervention and continue with the Violent Crime initiative. Speaking to recruitment and hiring, and in 1998 there was a crime bill that flooded the City with funds to hire. There are only 5 retirements in the next year, and there are 14 applicants to the academy, in the next month there will be 50 candidates interviewed. This is the time where the City will start gaining the Lansing police force back. Chief Backus noted he believes there needs to be a focus on training, there is a community policing with 12 spots, but only 6 staffed because of level of staffing. In conclusion he acknowledged he feels lucky to be coming in now because there is also a road map. The department needs to have transparency with the public, letting people know they are safe, sharing the intelligence, help them and make them aware the police is sharing as much as they can.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu acknowledged the Chief with his work ethic and integrity, feeling confident he will carry out the best that he can to the best of his ability.

Council Member Kost also acknowledged the Chief on his work ethic and goal to building trust with the community. He then asked if he would consider expanding the CPO positions past the 12 positions, and Chief Backus stated you need to look at those roles and areas, and balance with the areas that need visibility and neighborhoods. Council Member Kost referenced Fabulous Acres as an example and if the Chief would be open to expanding the areas of the current CPO roles.

DISCUSSION – Referral from Resident on Bike Paths on recently reconstructed Michigan Avenue

Council Member Kost referenced the referral from the resident Mr. Ellis on the Michigan Avenue project in relation to bike paths.

Mr. Ellis stated that after 2 years of public engagement in voicing concerns, wants and demands, and after shown the initial design they had issues. They were under the understanding those concerns would be addressed, but now the design is going forward with out being addressed. Theses included location of the path, lack of new crossings, and double stop lines.

Mr. Kwiatkowski acknowledged how Mr. Kilpatrick did meet with the neighborhood settings, and he took their input, but the final design as being constructed they are concerned could cause injuries.

Council Member Kost referred to a photo in the packet. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed it is the configuration with the ramp section on Michigan Avenue, which is 5', and shared area of pedestrians. Essentially they can have what is out there initially; 5 lanes. Proposed is parking eliminated on one side, and three driving lanes. Cannot look at pre-covid projections now, and that is why there are now proposed 4. The City master plan would like it to look like the 200 block, and convenient parking out front, but also consider parking behind. In some areas of the corridor there is no need for parking on the street due to the business. The City is looking at land use, 30+ years out, and the reason change of the cycle facilities because of the one lane. There are levels of bikers; comfortable with traffic, comfortable with some traffic, not comfortable with any traffic. With reviewing that they are looking at options for bringing bike near trees and street lights, but there needs to be a separation of trees for their future canopy and limit on species of trees. At intersections there were discussions on signals for cars and bikes, also potential raised crossings. There is federal funding on a project, and once that project goes forward there is limited ways to change since the Federal government is overseeing the project. The City did make decision changes; with original different color of sidewalk for the bike lane, and there were funds removed from the original project to make those happen, and depending on traffic volumes, if determine only three lanes, they can add another lane on the street 9' wide and buffered with posts, but they are limited by the size of the right of way. In conclusion, Mr. Kilpatrick stated there might be an option for more considerations, and they have gone back to MDOT to eliminate to down to 3 lanes and add a bike lane. Once the project is done, with traffic volumes the City can show they 2nd West bound lane is not needed, then yes. Everything has been designed for potential, the same with the signals. The goal is to try to get the approval for the stretch from 27 to UM Sparrow, to make those changes.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked if there is a projected end time, and Mr. Kilpatrick stated it is the end of next construction season. Currently it is pending if they will final pave one section, and that goal is to wait until all done for final top coat.

Mr. Ellis was asked if he was communicating with the City, and Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed he has spoken to Mr. Ellis and multiple meetings. In this decision, within the blocks the bikes are very separated from traffic, and the question is how to make those safe. Mr. Ellis asked Mr. Kilpatrick if there is potential have the 4th lane removed to add for bike lanes, but this lane is needed for cars, and because of this there has to be concessions with the bike lanes. He then asked why the cyclists are being asked to wait instead of vehicle parking wait. Mr. Kilpatrick stated the funds are coming from gas, weight, transportation tax, and some tax not all for roads. The distribution is what matches the Federal funds, and ACT 51 does not have to be used, there is a minimal 20% on construction and with Federal funding they have to demonstrate it will facilitate traffic volumes that is required with Federal funding. The question would be the policy question. The goal is to initially to take 5 lanes to 3 lanes, and an unbalanced 4 lane is uncommon. Traffic volumes have been going down in the area/region. His goal would to have bike facility all the way down Michigan Avenue, and asked for \$5 million from the State to go from Pennsylvania to the Capital, but were given \$500,000 so limited on the project. Mr. Ellis asked again why the is the space for the second driving lane coming from the cyclist lane instead of the parking lane. He asked why the City cannot put parking just on one side. Mr. Kilpatrick stated the businesses could be involved, whether using now or not, and during public input no one spoke that they didn't want parking, and there was in interest for the bike lane, so they came up with the design to accommodate the parking bike lanes inputs.

Council Member Kost stated if taking parking away on Michigan Avenue there is a concern with residents and visitors with disabilities and having to cross. There is an example on DeWitt Road with bike lanes and barriers. Mr. Kilpatrick stated without parking that is easy to do, but with parking that is harder to do. Again if 3 lanes works, they would have 9' for separation.

Council Member Kost acknowledged everyone's comments, and encouraged Mr. Ellis to continue discussions with the Public Service Department.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about markings for what is done now. Mr. Kilpatrick stated it was going to be different colors, it will be signed, different markings. Mr. Wykowski confirmed on MSU they used asphalt, and concrete, painted no walking signs, etc. Mr. Kilpatrick confirmed that there is only green striping in the driveways that are in the project right now. He concluded that there are constraints to each use and the City is trying to accommodate all uses of the street.

OTHER

Economic Development & Planning Department Updates

Council Member Kost asked for an update.

Mr. Van Fossen stated the MSD list is the same as the last meeting. The hearing officers are getting trained this week by OCA.

List of Open ACTION Letters – submitted a 34 page report, and not completed but some are multi year old and that is task for the department. They hope at the next meeting the Committee next time to propose more suggestions. Council Member Kost noted this is a good start.

ADJOURN

Adjourned 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on August 13, 2024