

CITY OF MUSKEGON
CITY COMMISSION WORKSESSION

Monday, March 7, 2022
5:30 p.m.
City Commission Chambers
933 Terrace Street, Muskegon, MI 49440

MINUTES

2022-19

Present: Mayor Johnson, Vice Mayor German, Commissioners Gorman, Emory, St.Clair, Hood, and Ramsey

Attorney General Opinion on Open Meetings Act

City Attorney, John Schrier, presented information on the recent opinion from Michigan's Attorney General on the Open Meetings Act. Staff shared ideas on how to accommodate more public participation at city board and commission meetings and is seeking input from the commission on which proposals to pursue.

Social Sandbox Concert Series Fundraiser Request

Mr. Terry Puffer, through his non-profit organization, Lakeshore Legacy Project, is proposing a recurring concert series to take place downtown at the Downtown Muskegon Development Corporation owned lot known as the Social Sandbox. The organization is requesting the City agree to match their fundraising efforts to put on the concerts.

Mr. Puffer is proposing a concert series citing the city's Downtown Development Authority in the document but is asking for any eligible city funds to assist as match dollars. Staff is proposing that the commission determine willingness and limitation, if any, to assisting with this event. Mr. Puffer was in attendance to present information on the program and to answer questions.

This item will appear on the agenda on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 for further consideration.

Ride Muskegon Operating Agreement

City staff updated the proposed operating agreement with Ride Muskegon, LLC to operate a scooter rental business in the City and we are seeking approval. Ride Muskegon, LLC is locally owned and operated. We have incorporated a number of changes requested by the City Commission last year. This is latest the agreement can reasonably be approved if they are to acquire the scooters in time for the summer

season. We are finalizing a list of locations and will have that available for the Commission meeting.

This item will appear on the March 8, 2022 agenda for further consideration.

Neighborhood Engagement Training Proposal

Information was presented on a proposal to offer training that will educate our neighbors on communication with staff, boards, and elected officials with the goal of strengthening the representation and voice of our neighbors, especially those who rarely participate.

Laketon/Lakeshore Trail Connector

Staff is working towards submittal of a grant application to provide funding for construction of a new non-motorized trail within the City along Sanford and Terrace Streets that would serve as a connector between the Laketon and Lakeshore Trails. A resolution of support for the grant application is on the agenda for tomorrow night and staff is seeking commission/community feedback prior to the adoption and submittal.

Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Update

Staff presented updated information on progress with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity work.

The leadership team has completed the pre-work and is working with the consultant who is leading the Ottawa County team through the GARE program. The Core Team is meeting more frequently to complete the assignments given by the consultant. Our most recent effort is working toward creating an equity vision statement. The team considered:

- How do you define equity?
- What are the desired results?
- What would the results look like?
- What are desired outcomes?

Our draft equity vision statement began with the city's current vision statement and was built through the exercises noted above.

Current vision statement: Muskegon, the Premier Shoreline Offering a Vibrant, Affordable and Ethnically Diverse City where Citizens Feel Safe, Enjoy Their Neighborhoods and Have Access to Their City Government.

Draft equity vision statement: Muskegon is an ethnically diverse city where everyone is valued as an individual, access to city services and programs is universal, people are engaged in community building, and the diversity of the community is reflected in the city's businesses, events, boards, commissions, and staff.

Reorganization

Staff is seeking input on potential changes to the city staff's organization.

The division heads have been discussing changes to the staff organization with particular emphasis on changes to community engagement. Other small changes to Public Safety and Development Services are planned as well. There are three main options being presented to address community engagement, each with their own merits.

Option 1: Create a new Community Support and Engagement Division which would include three main functions – communications, city clerk, and parks and recreation

Option 2: Create a Parks and Recreation Department within the Municipal Services Division. Enhance communication efforts through additional staff in the Clerk's office.

Option 3: Create new Community Support and Engagement Division which would oversee the City Clerk, small business incubators, and community engagement. Enhance park management by adding an assistant parks supervisor.

The leadership team seeks input from the commission on the best direction forward to enhance our outreach to and connection with the community. Leadership will work together to determine details, phasing, and timing for implementation. Each option will have budget impacts that need to be considered. Commissioners seemed to favor Option 1.

Height Overlay District

The Imagine Muskegon Lake plan suggests creating a height overlay district on Nelson Street to allow three-story houses to increase lake visibility. The Lakeside Form Based Code allows three story residential buildings in the Lakeside Mixed Residential contact area. The code was written in 2019 and used the Imagine Muskegon Lake recommendation in the development of the ordinance. Staff is looking for approval from the Commission to go to the next Beachwood-Bluffton neighborhood meeting to discuss this proposal.

Public Comment: Public comments were received.

Adjournment: The Worksession meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Marie Meisch, MMC – City Clerk