

**CITY OF WHITING – JANUARY 16, 2007**

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITING, INDIANA**

The Common Council of the City of Whiting met in regular session on Tuesday, January 16, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Stahura presiding. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the invocation from Councilman Stolman.

**I. ROLL CALL**

Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck were present. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak, City Attorney Sejna and interested citizens.

**II. MINUTES**

Mayor Stahura asked for consideration of the minutes of the January 2, 2007, regular Common Council meeting.

Councilman Jennings moved to approve said minutes, as submitted. Councilwoman Greer seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman and Unate voted aye. Councilman Zubeck abstained from voting, due to his absence at said meeting. Vote: 6 ayes, no nays, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, MEMORIALS OR REMONSTRANCES**

None.

**IV. REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

Mayor Stahura welcomed the new Community Development Director, Brian Lowry, to the City staff. He noted the Bob Kark will now be working as Economic Development Director for the City of Whiting.

Mayor Stahura informed the Council that he will be in Indianapolis attending legislative conferences and meeting with State legislators until Friday of this week. The Mayor expects to make six more such trips to the State capital in the next two months.

Mayor Stahura reported that the demolition of the building at 1520-119<sup>th</sup> Street should be completed in the near future.

Mayor Stahura informed the Council that the Board of Public Works and Safety authorized advertisement for bids on the 118<sup>th</sup> Street and Ohio Street Water Main projects. Bid-opening is scheduled for the Board meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Stahura reported that the contract for installation of the new traffic signal at the intersection of Indianapolis Boulevard and 120<sup>th</sup> Street/Community Court was signed at today's Board meeting. Notice to Proceed on this project for the new Walgreens development will be issued at once.

Mayor Stahura reported that closing on the acquisition of the property at 1601 Fischrupp Avenue, and the three homes on Steiber Street and New York Avenue, is scheduled for later this week. Demolition bids on the buildings will be sought after closing.

#### **V. STANDING COMMITTEES**

Councilman Sarvanidis stated that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763, which vacates the portion of Dickey Road that is currently closed off, will be presented for Council consideration.

#### **VI. REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER**

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak reported that she collected the final tax draw for 2005 pay 2006 property taxes. Approximately 95% of those taxes were collected and paid to the City of Whiting.

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak presented Accounts Payable Vouchers #552 - #643 inclusive for approval.

Councilwoman Unate moved to approve said Vouchers for payment. Councilman Zubeck seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **VII. REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney Sejna reported that the Board of Public Works and Safety consented to the vacation of property outlined in Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763.

#### **VIII. SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

No report was given.

#### **IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

#### **X. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

Councilman Sarvanidis stated that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763 calls for the vacation of the east end of Dickey Road, which is currently closed off. That section was closed to public access a few years ago during a construction project at the BP refinery; in return, BP repaired and paved the east end of Standard Avenue to allow traffic to travel toward East Chicago. This Ordinance would officially vacate the former east end of Dickey Road, which would become BP property. In return, the City of Whiting will receive the east end of Standard Avenue, which was formerly BP property, to facilitate the Standard Avenue Reconstruction Project.

Councilman Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763 by title only for first reading.

AN ORDINANCE VACATING PORTIONS OF DICKEY ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS IN THE CITY OF WHITING, LAKE COUNTY INDIANA

Hearing no questions or comments, Councilman Sarvanidis moved to pass Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763 to second reading. Councilman Stolman seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2007-1763 by title only for second reading.

**AN ORDINANCE VACATING PORTIONS OF DICKEY ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS IN THE CITY OF WHITING, LAKE COUNTY INDIANA**

Councilman Sarvanidis stated that third reading of this Ordinance can take place at the next Common Council meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup>, after a Public Hearing on this matter.

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to authorize Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak to advertise Notice of Intent to Consider this Ordinance. Councilman Spebar seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**XI. NEW BUSINESS**

Councilman Spebar stated that, in a previous Ordinance, the Council made some amendments to the Salary Ordinance. One of those amendments gave the potential for different on-call duty status pay rates for the Whiting Fire Department. The Whiting Fire Department and the Board of Public Works and Safety have reached an agreement on these new rates, and the Board has signed the agreement on behalf of the City.

Councilman Spebar moved to ratify the action of the Board of Public Works and Safety in adopting the new on-call duty status pay rates for the Whiting Fire Department. Councilwoman Greer seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Councilman Stolman abstained from voting, due to his employment with the Whiting Fire Department. Vote: 6 ayes, no nays, 1 abstention. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Sarvanidis reported that he and Mayor Stahura attended a public forum in Crown Point last Saturday, attended by all area State legislators, concerning the 2% cap on property taxes. Although he and the Mayor thought the legislators would inform the audience about coming plans for dealing with this cap, it was a fact-finding meeting at which the legislators made few comments. They did share some information with respect to the 2007 pay 2008 residential property tax cap, which will be opened up to include all properties, including commercial and industry, by 2010. Lake County projects that, just by including residential rental properties in the 2% cap next year, the cost to the County will increase from \$19 million to \$70 million. In Whiting, the Civil City property tax cap cost will increase from \$504,000 to \$562,000; if the cap is expanded to commercial and industrial properties, the cost to the City will be \$3.3 million. The School City would lose \$3.1 million, and would no longer be able to function. It is unrealistic to allow this 2% cap to be applied to industry, so hopefully the State legislators understand the devastating impact it would have on Lake County communities, especially Whiting, and can modify the legislation. Mayor Stahura stated that there is good reason to believe the State House will repeal this legislation; the State Senate outcome is not so clear. Whiting has a lobbyist to work for us, to help formulate an exception to this industrial 2% cap for

small cities. Whiting's financial impact figures will be used as the worst case scenario example in budget discussions. The Mayor noted that Democrats in the State Legislature are committed to helping Whiting, and he remains optimistic for a good outcome.

**XII. PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

It was announced that there will be a Civil Defense meeting following the Common Council meeting.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m., seconded by Councilwoman Unate. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

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MARGARET DREWNIAK, Clerk-Treasurer