

CITY OF WHITING – FEBRUARY 20, 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, February 20, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Stahura presiding. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the invocation from Councilwoman Unate.

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.

Councilman Spebar moved for suspension of rules to hold a Public Hearing on Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764, which appropriates \$17,000.00 to the Local Supplemental Adult Probation Services Fund from unappropriated funds. Councilman Jennings seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Vote: 7 ayes, no nays, no abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak noted that this Ordinance was presented for first and second readings at the last Common Council meeting. The Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak reported on publication of this additional appropriation at that time.

Councilman Spebar explained that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764 is an annual procedure that appropriates probation fees that the Court accumulated over the previous year to the Local Supplemental Adult Probation Services fund. Councilman Spebar listed the appropriations as follows:

Salaries	\$ 3,000
Construction	\$ 1,000
Clothing	\$ 500
Medicare	\$ 50
Social Security	\$ 200
Supplies	\$ 1,500
Communications & Transportation	\$ 1,000
Repair & Maintenance	\$ 5,000
Services Contractual	\$ 3,000
Equipment	<u>\$ 1,750</u>
Total	\$17,000

Mayor Stahura opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764, and asked a first time for public comment on this appropriation. No comments were made.

Mayor Stahura asked a second time for comment on this Ordinance.

Harvey C. Shaffer, Jr., of 2109 New York Avenue, stated that he was new to these procedures so Mayor Stahura explained the appropriation process to him.

Mayor Stahura asked a third and final time for public comment on Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764. There being none, Mayor Stahura closed the Public Hearing and returned the meeting to the regular format of the Common Council.

II. MINUTES

Mayor Stahura asked for consideration of the minutes of the February 6, 2007, regular Common Council meeting.

Councilman Stolman moved to approve said minutes, as submitted. Councilwoman Greer seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Councilman Spebar 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 informed the Council that the Board of Public Works and Safety, at today's meeting, signed Notice of Award was issued to Walsh & Kelly Inc. for the Standard Avenue/Front Street/121st Street Reconstruction Project. That construction should begin in the near future.

Mayor Stahura stated that Notice of Award for the Parking Improvement Project was issued to Walsh & Kelly, as the lowest responsive responsible bidder. Construction will begin as soon as feasible.

Mayor Stahura stated that the Board of Public Works and Safety opened bids on the 118th Street and Ohio Avenue Water Line Replacement Project. The only bid received was higher than the construction estimate, so the bid will be reviewed to determine the City's course of action.

Mayor Stahura presented his 2007 State of the City Report, which was distributed to all Department Heads and all local organizations. The Mayor listed the following highlights of his report:

- The Administration focus changed from emergency property tax relief to City economic development opportunities.
- The City of Whiting continued to fund the 2% cap on property taxes, and funded a 20% Local Homestead Credit for homeowners and local business owners. The Homestead Credit was authorized for a second year for 2006 payable 2007 property taxes. The Mayor thanked the Common Council and the CIC for their assistance with this program.

- After partnering with Lake County and East Chicago to challenge BP property tax appeals for prior years, the City of Whiting received a \$2.4 million tax settlement from BP Products North America, Inc.
- The Civil City continues to partner with the School City of Whiting, the City of Hammond and the City of East Chicago to share resources and reduce costs.
- BP Products North America, Inc. announced a huge retooling project at the Whiting Refinery, which should generate thousands of construction jobs and almost one hundred full-time refinery jobs.
- The City of Whiting is working with other industrial entities to bring an additional \$1.5 billion of secondary development on BP refinery property. All such development would be located in Whiting, and nearly all subject to property taxes. These developments can also serve as springboards to other economic development opportunities.
- Since BP's announcement, many entrepreneurs have sought business opportunities in Whiting. For instance, seven or eight new restaurants are interested in locating in Whiting for the new refinery employees.
- The new Walgreens development has spurred business development in Whiting.
- A \$4.5 million investment in new facilities by the former BP chemical plant was announced.
- The City actively encouraged purchase of the Illiana Hotel by private investors. Plans are underway to refurbish all existing retail spaces, and to create 12 new condos in the upper level rooms.
- A new \$2 million office building is planned for the south end of the old Globe Roofing lot.
- The City is encouraging completion of the planned medical clinic on 119th Street.
- Construction of 5 to 7 new homes on New York Avenue should be completed this year.
- Plans for a Senior Citizens condominium complex are going through the approval process.
- Large-scale lakefront development is planned, in partnership with BP refinery and other agencies.
- Partners are being sought for development of the north end of the former Globe Roofing property, as well as demolition options for the old Globe buildings.
- The former Justak Trucking buildings were demolished to clear the way for redevelopment.
- The investor for a new 50s style diner in the former Wagner building was not able to obtain financing, so the project was abandoned.
- The City of Whiting searched for a Master Developer for City-owned properties at the lakefront, but had to abandon the plan to seek a more flexible developer. In recent months, development has increased in that area.
- In 2007, the top priority will be economic development, development in the TIF district, lakeshore development, and funding demolition of the Globe buildings.
- In 2006, the City had a financially sound year. The year started with a \$2 million operating revenue, and ended with \$1.8 million in operating revenue. During the year, all tax anticipation warrants were paid in full; the Mayor gave Clerk-

Treasurer Drewniak credit for outstanding financial management during extremely difficult times.

- Both Whiting Police Department and Whiting Fire Department received grants to improve training and equipment so they can better serve Whiting residents.
- Mutual Aid Police calls remained high to Hammond at 126 calls; East Chicago requested help 7 times. Whiting did not request aid from either city during 2006.
- Felony arrests in Classes B, C and D increased to 67 from 57 last year. Mayor Stahura thanked the Police Detectives for outstanding work.
- Mutual Aid Fire calls to Hammond occurred 18 times; fire assistance was sent to East Chicago 50 times. Whiting was assisted by Hammond 11 times and by East Chicago 6 times.
- Building Department Code Enforcement continues to improve. In 2003, 114 Contractors Licenses were issued. In 2006, 273 Contractors Licenses were issued. This ensures that contractors doing business in Whiting are bonded, licensed and insured, which protects Whiting residents from fraud, property damage and substandard work. Mayor Stahura thanked Building Commissioner Hrinyo for doing a great job.
- Mayor Stahura stated that many obstacles have prevented construction of the planned new Water Treatment Plant in Whiting. The main problem now is relocating the plant, since land near BP is at a premium; IDEM must also approve the site. The quality of water using the existing system remains high-quality.
- The water meter replacement program successfully replaced all old meters; this year, no meter will be more than 10 years old. The biggest success was from water meter replacement at local industry, which increased revenues dramatically and stabilized the finances of the Sanitary District. A planned increase in utility fees for users was no longer necessary, and major sewer improvement projects were funded from the Basin accounts.
- Operating balances at the Sanitary District grew during 2006. The severe rainfall during fall of 2006 affected Whiting only in minor ways. The Mayor credited the Sanitary District sewer replacements with increasing City sewer capacity enough to handle even intense steady rain.
- The alley recycling program, utilizing new totes, increased recycling tonnage by 36%, or 147 tons. Changes in procedure elevated total tonnage in all recyclables. Mayor Stahura thanked Acting Street Commissioner Spebar and Recycling Director Mark Harbin for a job well done.
- Infrastructure projects are funded following a Capital Plan to keep roadways paved and waterways in operating condition. The Mayor listed the many sidewalk replacements done in 2006, the Schrage Avenue improvements, and design engineering and engineering studies done, replacement of old brick sewers, and engineering work on the Standard Avenue/Front Street/121st Street Reconstruction Project. Mayor Stahura then outlined plans for 2007, which include New York Avenue improvements, many parking improvement projects, repaving projects and replacing old fire hydrants to provide improved flow and reliability.

Mayor Stahura invited questions and comments from the Councilmembers after they have had time to review his report.

Councilman Sarvanidis asked about the cost of the recycling totes, which paid for themselves in the first year of use, as predicted.

V. STANDING COMMITTEES

Councilman Spebar stated that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764 will be considered for third and final reading.

Councilman Sarvanidis stated that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765 and Resolution No. CC-2007-02, both related to the Planned Unit Development, will be presented for Council consideration.

VI. REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak stated that she completed and distributed to all Councilmembers the City Town Annual Report (CTAR), which is a financial report for the State Board of Accounts. Any questions can be directed to her office.

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak presented Civil City Accounts Payable Vouchers #789 - #858 inclusive for approval.

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

Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak announced that all City business licenses, amusement device licenses, and dog/cat licenses should be purchased before the March 31st deadline to avoid paying a penalty.

VII. REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

No report was given.

VIII. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

No report was given.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Councilman Spebar stated that Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764 was described in detail at today's Public Hearing.

There being no questions, Councilman Spebar moved to pass Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764 to third and final reading. Councilman Zubeck seconded the motion. Roll Call:

Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Vote: 7 ayes, no nays, no abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Spebar read Ordinance No. CC-2007-1764 by title only for third and final reading.

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING MONIES IN THE LOCAL
SUPPLEMENTAL ADULT PROBATION SERVICES FUND OF THE CITY
OF WHITING, INDIANA FROM UNAPPROPRIATED FUNDS

Councilman Sarvanidis explained that first and second readings of Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765 took place at the February 6th Common Council meeting. This Ordinance classifies the land on Schrage Avenue as a Planned Unit Development. Councilman Sarvanidis announced the following amendment to this Ordinance:

- Legal description section, in two locations, describing distance: change ‘S.45.3 feet’ to ‘S.50.3 feet’.

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to amend Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765, as presented. Councilwoman Greer seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Vote: 7 ayes, no nays, no abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

City Attorney Sejna informed the Council that Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak sent Legal Notice to the local newspapers and radio station of Intent to Consider Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765 on February 13, 2007. Economic Development Director Kark also sent Notice of Intent to Consider this Ordinance to Valdez Engineering.

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to pass Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765, As Amended, to third and final reading. Councilman Stolman seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Vote: 7 ayes, no nays, no abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Sarvanidis read Ordinance No. CC-2007-1765 by title only for third and final reading.

AN ORDINANCE CLASSIFYING CERTAIN LANDS IN THE CITY OF
WHITING AS PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH
ORDINANCE NO. CC-2001-1611 UNIFIED ZONING AND SUBDIVISION
CONTROL ORDINANCE FOR PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 2337
SCHRAGE AVENUE, WHITING, INDIANA, AS AMENDED

Councilman Sarvanidis introduced Resolution No. CC-2007-02, which approves Form SB-1 for this Planned Unit Development, which is the next step in this property development.

There being no questions, Councilman Sarvanidis read Resolution No. CC-2007-02 by title only.

A RESOLUTION APPROVING FORM SB-1, STATEMENT OF BENEFITS,
FOR 2305-2351 SCHRAGE AVENUE, AND ESTABLISHING THIS AS A
RESIDENTIALLY DISTRESSED LOT FOR WHICH TAX ABATEMENT
MAY BE REQUESTED

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to adopt Resolution No. CC-2007-02, seconded by Councilman Zubeck. Roll Call: Councilmembers Greer, Jennings, Sarvanidis, Spebar, Stolman, Unate and Zubeck voted aye. Vote: 7 ayes, no nays, no abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Spebar stated that four Form CF-1s will be presented tonight. These Forms are filed annually to make sure the recipients are in compliance with the original tax abatement agreement and stipulations. The four homes listed on these forms are:

- 1540 Center Street
- 1604 Center Street
- 1640 Center Court
- 1644 Center Court

Councilman Spebar moved to approve these four Form CF-1s, as presented. Councilman Jennings seconded the motion. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

XII. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Councilman Jennings confirmed that the new stoplight is being installed at the intersection near the Walgreens development.

Councilman Jennings asked if the stoplight at West Fred Street/Clark Street/Indianapolis Boulevard is going to be removed. There will be no electronic signal left at that intersection after the new signal is installed near Walgreens.

Councilman Jennings asked if the new homes being built on New York Avenue will affect the sidewalk project on that block. After the water lines are installed, sidewalk installation can be coordinated with the home construction.

Councilman Stolman complimented Mayor Stahura and his staff on the thoroughness of his State of the City Address; all applauded.

Mayor Stahura noted that a lot happens every day at City Hall, but every employee works hard to get things accomplished.

Councilman Zubeck reported that he got several calls complimenting the Street Department on the fine job they did removing snow after the recent storms.

Harvey Shaffer of 2109 New York Avenue asked questions regarding the duties of the City Attorney, and asked Clerk-Treasurer Drewniak what fee would be charged to get a copy of the transcript of tonight's meeting. Mayor Stahura informed him that the minutes of public meetings are available on the City website free of charge, and that he can come to City Hall and read the approved minutes for free. Copies cost ten cents per page.

Dennis Moore of 1928 New York Avenue complimented the Mayor, Common Council and City Hall staff on the progress they made last year and on their organizational skills.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Sarvanidis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m., seconded by Councilman Spebar. Roll Call: (Voice) All Councilmembers voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

MARGARET DREWNIAK, Clerk-Treasurer