

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL STUDY SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF BRIGHTON
HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2017 AT THE BRIGHTON CITY HALL
200 N. 1ST STREET, BRIGHTON, MICHIGAN

SPECIAL STUDY SESSION

The Council conducted a Special Study Session at 6:30 p.m.

Present were Mayor Muzzin, Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly, Councilmembers: Bohn, Pettengill, Emaus, and Tobbe. Staff: City Manager Nate Geinzer, Attorney Paul Burns, Attorney Brad Maynes, Deputy Chief Rob Bradford, Utilities Director Tim Krugh, Community Development Associate Brandon Skopek, Management Assistant Jessica Reed, and Deputy City Clerk Kelly Haataja.

Tom Tolen from WHMI, from the media was present.

Councilmember Emaus moved and Pettengill seconded to excuse Councilmember Gardner for personal reasons.

Motion passed 6-0-1

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Muzzin proposed the following amendment to the agenda: Add 4A. Discussion of supporting the Brighton Arts and Culture Commission application to the Community Foundation for Livingston County. It was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly, seconded by Tobbe to approve the Agenda as amended.

Motion passed 6-0-1.

BACC GRANT APPLICATION DISCUSSION

Management Assistant Reed spoke about the Brighton Arts and Culture Commission wanting to apply for a grant of up to \$11,500 from the Community Foundation for Livingston County for the Story of Us proposal, held May through October 2017. The Story of Us is designed to engage the public on how to tell their stories through art of storytelling, encourage artistic expressions, and create a physical space for artists to gather, work, and perform. Promoting creativity between community members will give the City direction for forming its identity, vision, and goals.

Reed explained that due to the City structure, the City of Brighton has to be the main applicant for the grant. There is not a match required from the City to approve the application.

Councilmember Tobbe mentioned that the BACC has been working for at least two months to find alternative methods of funding for these activities.

Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly advised the Brighton 150th Committee has signed a letter of equivalence to support the grant application.

Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly moved and Emaus seconded to support the Brighton Arts and Culture Commission, The Story of Us application to the Community Foundation of Livingston County.

Motion passed 6-0-1.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Muzzin made a call to the Public at 6:34 p.m. Hearing and seeing none the call to the public was closed.

DISCUSSION

Community Development Associate Skopek discussed Commercial Rehabilitation Districts and how they are currently working in other communities. Commercial Rehabilitation provides tax incentives and abatements for a period of time to qualified commercial properties. Some of the guidelines for establishing a district are: at least three acres in size and a minimum of fifteen years of commercial residence. Only the rehabilitation/investment portion, which has to exceed 10% or more of the taxable value, is qualified for the exemption, and it does not exempt school taxes. The abatement can be for a period of 1-10 years and a municipality can have multiple districts.

Skopek said it is being used consistently and modestly in other municipalities. He stated the purpose is to increase the current tax base.

Skopek explained procedures for establishing districts and the application process. City Council would create the criteria for the program and determine the abatement periods. Proposed sites need approval from the County, an application is submitted to the City Clerk, the City Assessor evaluates the property, and then it is sent to Council for approval.

Manager Geinzer mentioned the Commercial Rehabilitation Act expires December 31, 2020. No new applications will be processed after this day however terms in place may exceed 2020.

Council discussed the proposal. Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly mentioned concern of not having enough time to implement and benefit the program before the Act expires. Emaus questioned the need for it and if different criteria's can be established for different districts.

Manager Geinzer responded that staff will be looking into the Act further as the parts of the information is vague and invites creativity. Skopek advised that he feels there is a demand and need for it. Investment interest is already strong in the downtown.

Councilmember Pettengill suggested that a ten year term may be too long and Council agreed.

Manager Geinzer stated that staff will gather more information, and it may be presented as part of the budget process.

The next discussion lead by Manager Geinzer was for Council to consider suspending additional contributions to the OPEB Trust, and the LDFA.

Councilmember Tobbe suggested doing more research to see if there would be any benefit for the LDFA to be transferred to the DDA and make it whole on investments made to Brighton Interior Drive. He also stated he has concerns with having bond payments when there is no significant increase in revenue in sight. Councilmember Bohn agreed and suggested looking at decreasing rather than eliminating the OPEB funding.

Manager Geinzer advised staff will continue their research and will return to Council with more information.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Muzzin made a call to the Public at 7:57 p.m. Tom Tolen from WHMI, who is a resident of the City, asked about risks of the businesses granted the tax incentives that don't perform.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Pipoly and seconded by Pettengill to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Motion passed 6-0-1.

Kelly Haataja, Deputy Clerk

James Muzzin, Mayor