

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
December 5, 2023

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomas L. Reed on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mayor Thomas L. Reed, Roger L. Collison, William R. Leonard, Kevin D. Palmer, Elizabeth A. Upton.

Council Members Absent: None

City Manager: Kurt Giles
Deputy Clerk: Bobbie Marr
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz, Jr.

Others in Attendance: Ralph Echtenaw-St. Louis Sentinel, Keith Risdon-Public Services Director, Ferris Azzam, Steve Donkersloot-MPPA, Michael McGeehan-GRP Engineers, Adam Musselman, Gary Smith, Matt VanHall, Carolynn Vanhall, Matt Vanhall's Parents, Jennifer Knoepfle-US EPA Riley Smith and several family members.

Member Collison led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Ramereiz presented officer Matt VanHall with a Life Saving Award.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on November 21, 2023. All ayes carried the motion.

Claims & Accounts.

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Upton supported by Collison, to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$383,589.15. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Board Minutes.

Members discussed the November 2023 Monthly Board Minutes.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to receive the November 2023 Monthly Board Minutes and place them on file. All ayes carried the motion.

Audience Recognition.

Presentation from Jennifer Knoepfle, US EPA, regarding the burn pit progress.

Gary Smith talked extensively about the Fishing Derby and the previous presentation by Alma College Professor, Murray Borrelo, regarding the river environmental study. He believes that council's suspension of the derby would be premature without additional data.

Consent Agenda.

Mayor Reed requested approval/receipt of Consent Agenda items "a" through "c" as shown below:

- a. Payment to Cummins Bridgeway for the Wastewater Treatment Plant generator exhaust stack repairs.
- b. Payment to Seifert Concrete for the 2023/2024 Sidewalk Replacement Program.
- c. Payment to Michigan CAT for purchase of a 2023 wheel loader with a 3-year exchange.

Moved by Upton, supported by Collison to approve Consent Agenda items "a" through "c." All ayes carried the motion.

New Business.

Temporary Street Closure-Small Town Christmas Parade.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the temporary street closure on December 7, 2023 for the Small Town Christmas Parade.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard to approve the temporary street closure on December 7, 2023 for the Small Town Christmas Parade. All ayes carried the motion.

DPW Concrete and Asphalt Crushing 2023/2024 Project.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the 2023/2024 Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Project with Fisher Concrete with a total cost not to exceed \$80,000.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Collison, supported by Leonard, to approve the 2023/2024 Concrete and Asphalt Crushing Project with Fisher Concrete with a total cost not to exceed \$80,000. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2023-24-Gratiot County Parks Grant Application.

After discussion, the following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Palmer, and supported by Member Upton:

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis has the authority to construct, operate and maintain the North Street Landing; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis is requesting a \$73,500 appropriation from the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis desires to enhance, provide or create the North Street Boat Launch to meet the needs of users in Gratiot County;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED by the City of St. Louis that, pursuant and subject to all of the terms and provisions of the Gratiot County Parks millage, application be made to the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners for funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kurt Giles, the City Manager of the City of St. Louis is hereby authorized and directed to cause the necessary data to be prepared and application be signed and filed with the County of Gratiot;

The forgoing resolution was offered by Member Palmer and supported by Member Leonard.

AYES: Palmer, Leonard, Collison, Upton, Reed

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution Declared Adopted this 5th day of December, 2023.

Resolution 2023-25-Temporary Suspension of the Joe Scholz Memorial Fishing Derby.

Discussion was held, including more audience comments.

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Upon, and supported by Member Palmer:

WHEREAS, Event founder and former Mayor Joe Scholtz began organizing a free fishing derby in 1999 which has been held annually on the second Saturday of June to coincide with Free Fishing Weekend in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Following Joe Scholtz' passing in 2011, the annual event was renamed the Joe Scholtz Memorial Free Fishing Derby and his work was continued by volunteer organizers to hold the event nearly every year since that time; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of St. Louis understands Joe Scholtz' motivation for organizing the event was to raise awareness of the condition of the Pine River and the necessity of the highest quality environmental remediation of the river and adjacent lands in the St. Louis area and to promote outdoor sporting activities, especially among our youth; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, the City Council and Staff have been continually supportive of the Free Fishing Derby and the ideals and goals that Founder Joe Scholtz had when the event was started; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, there has been evidence of increased algal blooms, excessive nutrient and elevated e-coli levels in waters of the St. Louis area of the Pine River and these e-coli levels have sometimes exceeded the safe threshold for human contact as determined by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Along with the current organizers of the Joe Scholtz Memorial Fishing Derby, the St. Louis City Council has concerns over a public event where activities may lead to harmful effects on the health and safety of its participants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of St.

Louis is supportive of a decision to temporarily suspend the organized event known as the Joe Scholtz Memorial Free Fishing Derby for calendar year 2024 by cancelling the event which would have been held on June 8, 2024.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Member Upton and supported by Member Collison.

Upon roll call vote, the following voted
“AYES:” Upton, Collison, Palmer, Reed
“NAYS:” Leonard
ABSENT: None

Resolution Declared Adopted this 5th day of December, 2023.

Presentation by Steve Donkersloot of the MPPA and Michael McGeehan of GRP Engineers Regarding the Solar Project.

Elizabeth Upton was excused from the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Approval of Interconnection and Power Purchase Agreements for SolAmerica Distributed Energy Project/Resolution 2023-26.

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Palmer, and supported by Member Leonard:

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, State of Michigan (the “City”) has a continual interest in projects and power supply opportunities that will improve its ability to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective electric service to its customers; and

WHEREAS, through its membership with the Michigan Public Power Agency (MPPA), the City has been in collaboration with St. Louis MI Affordable Solar, LLC (SLMAS) in the development of a 1.2 Megawatt (MW) solar generating facility located in Bethany Township which is proposed to have an interconnection with the City’s electric distribution system; and

WHEREAS, SLMAS has secured the rights for use of at least one viable parcel of land for siting the 1.2 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) distributed energy resource (DER) for a period of not less than 25 years; and

WHEREAS, MPPA members including the City have had impact studies performed by GRP Engineering to determine if the proposed interconnection with the City's distribution system would result in adverse impacts on the City's system or its customers and GRP's study has concluded that, with the proposed system upgrades, there will be no adverse impacts; and

WHEREAS, parties including the City, MPPA, GRP Engineering and SLMAS have reviewed and negotiated a proposed Interconnection Agreement (IA) with mutually acceptable terms; and

WHEREAS, parties including the City, MPPA and SolAmerica and respective legal counsel have reviewed and negotiated the terms of a proposed Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with mutually acceptable terms; and

WHEREAS, MPPA staff has performed a mark-to-market analysis of the financial terms of the proposed PPA and, along with being a desirable addition to the City's energy portfolio, finds the proposed cost to be favorable to the City over the term of the PPA; and

WHEREAS, SLMAS has successfully completed the first round, letter of interest process with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) loan/principal forgiveness program and has been invited to submit a final application by no later than December 15, 2023; and

WHEREAS, part of the final application requirements for USDA are that the terms of the applicable agreements have been successfully negotiated however, not yet entered into since the DER Solar Project is dependent on USDA funding:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the St. Louis City Council does hereby authorize the City Manager or designee and the City Clerk to execute the IA and PPA associated with the 1.2 MW Solar DER Project located in Bethany Township, subject to SLMAS receiving the project loan/principal forgiveness from USDA and the final form of the IA and PPA having no material changes from the versions presented on December 5, 2023 upon review of MPPA, legal counsel and the City.

AYES: Palmer, Leonard, Collison, Reed

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Upton

Resolution Declared Adopted this 5th day of December, 2023

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reminded the council of the Christmas parade on December 7, with Ralph Echtenaw and Kevin Palmer being the banner carriers.

Manager Giles reported that there will be a Master Plan Meeting on Thursday.

Manager Giles reminded the council of the retirement party for Reed and Collison on Friday, December 8, 2023.

City Clerk Report

Nothing to report.

Police Chief Report

There were none.

Council Comments.

There were none.

Public Comments.

There were none.

Adjournment.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Collison, to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Bobbie Marr, Deputy Clerk