

COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 13, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

An electronic meeting through Zoom was held due to Governor Whitmer’s Stay Home Stay Safe Executive Order 2020-15 and to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The following were electronically present: Councilmembers Grano, Relan, Read, Hodges, Robson, and Fluitt, and Mayor Denner.

Also electronically present: Nick Sizeland, City Manager, Jane M. Blahut, Finance Director/Clerk, Jake Howlett, Interim City Attorney, and Leah Smith, Assistant to the City Manager, and Stephen Poloni, Director of Public Safety.

RECOGNITION TO CITY EMPLOYEE’S

Mayor Denner stated these are certainly unprecedented times, as we all face the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated he would like to open the meeting first with gratitude to our public safety department and our employees in all departments providing essential services, particularly the City Manager, Nick Sizeland, and Steve Poloni, Director of Public Safety, for their leadership.

Mayor Denner stated he is also proud of the response of our residents. There are many health care workers in our community who have selflessly continued to care for the most seriously ill. Our residents have also rallied to observe the governor’s orders, while supporting each other and our local businesses that continue to provide essential services and appreciates the efforts to keep our first responders safe.

Mayor Denner presented a few regarding the electronic meeting. He stated most of the Council will participate in video conferencing. To keep the discussions orderly, each Councilmember will be called individually to participate in deliberations on each issue. After the initial discussion, if a Councilmember has a comment, please raise your hand if on video.

The public has been invited to observe the meeting through a video link or listen via a phone link.

MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2020

Mayor Denner presented to Council for consideration the minutes of March 9, 2020, for approval.

Councilmember Read stated on page 7 Section III, third paragraph the first sentence should be removed.

Councilmember Fluitt stated at the last meeting that she would like to see more diversity to the TIFA Board and asked that it be included in the minutes.

Councilmember Fluitt stated on page 44 under New/Old Business she stated LGBTQ was not included in the Elliot-Larson Act of 1976 and she would like Grosse Pointe Park to be a leader to support the proposed petition ballot for the Michigan Legislature.

Councilmember Fluitt stated at the last meeting she read aloud a statement regarding the Art Center and it was not included in the minutes. She requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that she cannot support the project due to a lack of publicly available information.

Motion by Councilmember Hodges, supported by Councilmember Read, to approve the minutes of March 9<sup>th</sup> with the corrections as noted.

AYES: Councilmembers Grano, Relan, Read, Hodges, Robson, and Fluitt, and Mayor Denner

NAYS: None

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

##### COVID-19

City Manager presented a brief overview of the actions the City has taken to comply with the Executive Orders and has taken to inform the residents of Grosse Pointe Park. They are as follows:

- City Hall has not been open to the public since March 16 – social distancing
- Executive Order enacted March 24<sup>th</sup> – Stay Home – Stay Safe until April 13<sup>th</sup>
- Essential City staff working at reduced hours practicing social distancing
- Updating website and Facebook daily to inform the public of the latest information relative to COVID-19
- Parks remain open to allow walkers in the park from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- Parking meters have been bagged
- Executive Order Stay Home – Stay Safe has been extended to April 30
- All park activities indoors have been canceled at the Lavins Center and Tompkins Center. All outdoor park activities have been closed while the Stay Home – Stay Safe order is in effect.
- Marina has delayed its opening until the Stay Home – Stay Safe is no longer in effect

City Manager stated the Grosse Pointe communities are working with RRS, a recycling consultant to revise the Grosse Pointe Recycling bid.

City Manager stated the City has been promoting the census through the City website, Facebook and constant contact.

DTE has delayed its gas main upgrade program due to COVID-19. Waiting for new timeline from DTE

Director Poloni gave an update on the items related to the COVID-19 in the Public Safety Department.

City Clerk called the roll to determine if the Council had any questions.

Councilmember Grano: No comment

Councilmember Relan: No comment

Councilmember Read inquired what the status of the events at the park will be canceled for the summer.

City Manager Sizeland stated it depends on how long the “Stay Home – Stay Safe” Executive Order is in place. The Parks and Recreation Department will be ready to go if the Stay Home Order is lifted. Social

distancing may be a concern and have result in things possibly not opening once the Stay Home – Stay Safe Order is lifted.

Councilmember Hodges stated she is concerned about the recovery of the business district. She inquired what the status of the Master Plan.

City Manager stated he has received two proposals from potential consultants and is awaiting one more.

Councilmember Robson commended the city leadership. He inquired what employees were furloughed.

City Manager stated Park & Recreation staff were furloughed due to the closure of the parks. He stated as soon as the Stay Home – Stay Safe Order is lifted and if the parks open, employees will be called back to work.

Councilmember Fluitt inquired if there is a loop hole in the order for landscaping rules, for example; elderly residents who can't cut their lawn, would a neighbor be permitted to do it for them.

City Manager stated that a neighbor would be permitted to cut their lawn.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF CITY ATTORNEY TRANSITION

Mayor Denner presented to Council for consideration the transition from former City Attorney, Dennis J. Levasseur to Thomas J. Howlett (Jake) to serve as Grosse Pointe Park's City Attorney.

City Clerk called the roll to determine if the Council had comments.

Mayor Denner and Council expressed their gratitude to Dennis J. Levasseur for his years of dedicated service to the City of Grosse Pointe Park. They unanimously welcomed Jake Howlett as the City Attorney.

Attorney Jake Howlett thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve Grosse Pointe Park. He also expressed his gratitude to Dennis Levasseur for his assistance in this transition.

Motion by Mayor Denner, supported by Councilmember Read, to accept the transition from Dennis Levasseur to Jake Howlett as the City Attorney.

AYES: Councilmembers Grano, Relan, Read, Hodges, Robson, and Fluitt, and Mayor Denner

NAYS: None

#### RESOLUTION TO PUBLISH NOTICE AND HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE GROSSE POINTE PARK NORTHWEST TAX INCREMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN

Mayor Denner presented to Council for consideration the Public Meeting hearing date to be scheduled for May 11, 2020. He noted at the December 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, Council voted to approve moving DPW to the proposed Mack Avenue site between Wayburn and Maryland contingent on several conditions. One of the conditions related to funding, and that it be within that authorized by the TIFA Board, plus any donor support, and not exceed \$4 million dollars.

Mayor Denner stated a step in providing this funding through TIFA is the adoption of an Amended Development Plan which more specifically identifies the proposed project. TIFA has approved this amended plan. It is now the responsibility of Council to hold a Public Hearing regarding this plan. The scheduling of the hearing date is required to be approved 20 days prior to the Public Hearing date. Notices will be sent to all the homeowners located within the TIFA district. Notices will also be sent by certified mail to the governing bodies of the taxing jurisdictions and proper notice will be published in the Detroit News twice. This resolution does not approve the Amended TIFA Development Plan, it schedules the date for the Public Hearing. Council will vote on the Amended TIFA Development Plan following the Public Hearing on May 11, 2020.

The resolution reads as follows:

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
15115 EAST JEFFERSON AVENUE  
GROSSE POINTE PARK, MICHIGAN  
May 11th, 2020  
7:00 P.M.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan (the “City”) will hold a public hearing electronically in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Stay Home Stay Safe Executive Order. The hearing will be undertaken at the City Council’s regular meeting to be held at 7:00 o’clock p.m., Eastern Time on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments on proposed amendments to the City of Grosse Pointe Park Northwest Tax Increment Finance Authority Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan (collectively, the “Plan”). The City of Grosse Pointe Park Northwest Tax Increment Finance Authority (the “Authority”) has proposed the amendments to the Plan primarily to design and construct a public facility along Mack Avenue between Wayburn and Maryland Streets in the City for the location of the City’s Department of Public Works offices and a combined storage facility, including the acquisition of real property and furnishings to be used therein or in connection therewith and related architect, engineering, and other professional and administrative services (the “Project”) and to make related changes.

It is anticipated that the Project will be financed by the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to be issued by the Authority in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 (the “Bonds”), which will be issued in anticipation of and payable from certain tax increment revenues received by the Authority. The issuance of the Bonds shall be subject to the approval by the City Council of the City, subsequent to the hearing, of the City’s limited tax full faith and credit pledge for the payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds in case of insufficiency of the tax increment revenues.

The development area boundary for the City of Grosse Pointe Park Northwest Tax Increment Finance Authority extends throughout the entire Authority district, which is the area bordered by Mack Avenue on the north, the northern boundary of the Grosse Pointe Park Jefferson Avenue Downtown Development Authority on the south (which commences approximately at the City limits on the west at the intersection of Hampton and Wayburn, and then heads in a general easterly direction to the east boundary of the development area), the City limits on the west and the easterly edge of the alley

between Beaconsfield and Nottingham on the east. The area includes the residential streets of Wayburn, Maryland, Lakepointe, Beaconsfield, Vernor, St. Paul, and the primarily commercial streets of Mack, Charlevoix and Kercheval. No changes to the development area boundary are proposed.

The current Plan and the Plan as proposed to be amended, including all maps, plats, and a description of the Plan as proposed to be amended, are available for public inspection online upon the city website at:

<https://www.grossepointepark.org/Document%20Center/Government/Tax%20Increment%20Finance%20Authority/Documents/TIFA%20Amended%20Development%20Plan%20and%20Tax%20Increment%20Financing%20Plan.pdf>

and at the City Offices at 15115 E Jefferson within the entryway/atrium display rack.

It is anticipated that no relocation of families or individuals will occur as a result of the development projects described in the Plan. All aspects of the Plan will be open for discussion at the public hearing.

Interested parties are encouraged to provide written communications by mail or email to Jane M. Blahut [blahutj@grossepointepark.org](mailto:blahutj@grossepointepark.org), Grosse Pointe Park City Clerk, 15115 East Jefferson Avenue, Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230 (prior to the public hearing, or may participate in the public hearing through Zoom call in):

To join the Zoom Meeting please find the following link and telephone call in instructions:

<https://zoom.us> and enter the following meeting link and password:

Meeting ID: 963 7504 5394

Password: 299187

Also, interested parties can join by telephone through any of the following dial in numbers:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

Meeting ID: 963 7504 5394

Password: 299187

This notice is given pursuant to Section 317 of Act 57, Public Acts of Michigan, 2018 and the Open Meetings Act as modified by Executive Order 2020-48.

Jane M. Blahut, [blahutj@grossepointepark.org](mailto:blahutj@grossepointepark.org)  
City Clerk  
City of Grosse Pointe Park

## Wayne County, Michigan

Motion by Mayor Denner, supported by Councilmember Robson, to approve the Public Hearing date of May 11<sup>th</sup> for the Amended TIFA Development Plan having published proper notice and informing the residents within the TIFA district and the governing bodies of the affected taxing jurisdictions.

City Clerk called the roll for Council comment:

Councilmember Grano: No comment

Councilmember Relan: Concerned about setting the date so early.

Mayor Denner stated public hearings can be scheduled on Zoom. It is a benefit to start the construction process to get the construction started.

Councilmember Read stated she would not be in favor of a virtual public hearing for the public to debate.

Mayor Denner stated the public may contribute their opinion in writing or by calling in at the meeting. The timing is critical to get the process moving.

Councilmember Read inquired if the engineering opinion has been received back.

City Manager Sizeland stated he has not received the full written report, however in speaking with OHM Engineering, the determination was the Mack Avenue site was the appropriate site to build a DPW facility.

Councilmember Read inquired if the TIFA Board has proceeded with purchase of Verdonckt's Bakery on Mack.

Mayor Denner stated they exercised the option, however, has not closed on the property yet.

Councilmember Robson stated he agrees with the timing issue, the City must conduct business and he approves of the May 11<sup>th</sup> date.

Councilmember Hodges stated she agrees with City business moving forward.

Councilmember Fluitt stated she is concerned with having a virtual meeting instead of an in-person meeting and thinks it should be held at a separate meeting and does not believe it needs to happen in the next couple weeks.

Councilmember Read inquired with the Mayor if he would consider amending his motion to wait until a regular public meeting can be held to review the Amended TIFA Development Plan.

Mayor Denner stated he would not be willing to amend his motion. The Governor has set the guidelines and allows for virtual Public Hearings.

The City Clerk called the roll:

AYES: Councilmembers Grano, Hodges, and Robson, and Mayor Denner

NAYS: Councilmembers Relan, Read, and Fluitt

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### Communication Committee:

Councilmember Read presented a brief overview of the Communication Committee Meeting met via Zoom conference on April 2, 2020. The primary focus was to discuss emergency response communications due to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

- Include a link on the home page directly to our COVID-19 information page and a non-emergency public safety telephone number be displayed.
- Expansion of NIXLE
- Discussing enhanced technology to allow for the livestreaming of meetings and a revised agenda and public comment process.

##### Ad Hoc Board of Education Committee:

Councilmember Hodges presented a brief overview of the Ad Hoc Board of Education Meeting held via Zoom on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Topics of discussion were the following:

- Re-configuration plans in light of COVID-19 pandemic and shut down.
- The Committee is continuing due diligence

##### Beautification Commission:

Councilmember Relan stated there was not a formal meeting, however, wanted to inform everyone that the Arbor Day Poster Contest may be done on-line for those children interested in participating.

#### FINANCE REPORT – MARCH, 2020

Councilmember for Finance Hodges presented to Mayor Denner and Council for consideration the invoices exceeding \$5,000 for the month of March, 2020 as presented.

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Payment</u>
Bodman	Pros. Atty. & retainer fee	\$ 10,000
Build Safe	Building Inspector – Feb.	9,600
The Helm Life Center	Transit Services/CDBG	14,000
PAATS	Transit Services/CDBG	6,000
Compass Minerals	Salt for streets	22,570
J & W Trees	City Tree Work	27,075
Cipparrone Contractors	Jeff Ave. street repairs	44,892
Huntington National Bank	Interest on Cap. Imp. Bond	27,684
Aquatic Source	Pool chemicals	5,801
Great Lakes Water	Water usage - January	113,732
Great Lakes Water	Waste water – February	151,000
Green for Life	Recycling for March	18,756
Green for Life	Rubbish for March	30,027

Councilmember Hodges stated funds are available within the budget.

Councilmember Hodges stated the shortfall within the current year budget within Park and Recreation and ticket revenue could be down by approximately \$400,000. State Shared Revenue is undetermined at this time.

Councilmember Hodges stated a Budget Workshop will be held virtually the week prior to the May 11<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. A date has not been scheduled yet and will be placed on the City calendar when a date is selected.

City Clerk called the roll for Council comment:

Councilmember Grano: No comment  
Councilmember Relan: No comment  
Councilmember Read: No comment  
Councilmember Robson: No comment  
Councilmember Fluitt: No comment  
Mayor Denner: No comment

Motion by Councilmember Hodges, supported by Councilmember Robson, to approve the invoices exceeding \$5,000 for the month of March, 2020, as presented in accordance with Section 2.249 of the Charter.

AYES: Councilmembers Grano, Relan, Read, Hodges, Robson, and Fluitt, and Mayor Denner

NAYS: None

#### NEW/OLD BUSINESS

City Manager Sizeland reiterated his opinion that City employees are doing a great job and expressed his gratitude.

Councilmember Grano thanked the employees and residents in dealing with the crises.

Councilmember Relan stated that the situation with Trombly Elementary School needs to be re-evaluated in light of the crises.

City Attorney Howlett commented regarding the separation of duties between the City and the School Board.

Councilmember Read recommended the continuation of support for each other and local businesses. She recommended residents complete their Census 2020 as soon as possible, noting the more residents who submit their information, the more funding the City will received for the next decade.



Councilmember Hodges commended the superb action of the first-time responders and the way they have reacted in this crises.

Councilmember Fluitt stated she was frustrated that issues related to COVID-19 were not placed on the Agenda and indicated she requested this issue be on the March 9<sup>th</sup> agenda and does not understand why it wasn't on this agenda. She inquired if there were resources within the budget to assist residents who are in need.

Mayor Denner stated as pointed out by Councilmember for Finance Hodges, resources are limited and revenues are expected to fall under the f/y 2020 budget.

Councilmember Relan inquired if the Administration is considering allowing longer hours for the parks to be open.

City Manager stated not at this time due to limited resources.

Councilmember Relan inquired what the next step is for the Art Center and can the information that was placed on the City website be removed.

Mayor Denner stated he does not want to entertain a conversation regarding the Art Center at this time or remove the information on the website. If the members of Council have identified a statement that needs clarification, it may be submitted to the City Manager and it will be reviewed.

Councilmember Fluitt does not understand the process in which items are blocked from being placed on the agenda.

City Attorney Howlett stated Grosse Pointe Park is a Council/Manager form of government which allows for administrative actions to be performed by the City Manager and the Mayor and although it does not specifically indicate that the Manager and Mayor place items on the agenda, it has historically been done in this manner.

City Attorney Howlett stated he is working the City Manager to developing guidelines for City Council including setting the agenda.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident of Lakepointe emailed questions to the City Clerk on Sunday regarding the Amended TIFA Development Plan.

Resident of Westchester phoned in stating he was disappointed with the Council electing to have a virtual meeting on the Amended TIFA Development Plan.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

