



**CITY OF HART**  
**407 S. STATE ST.**  
**HART, MI 49420**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL - COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**MINUTES – Approved**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Vicki Platt, Councilors Catalina Burillo, Jim Cunningham, Dean Hodges, and Amanda Klotz

**ABSENT:** Jim Evans and Kris Trygstad

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Manager – Rob Splane, City Clerk – Karla Swihart, and Christina Juska,

Mayor Platt called the meeting to order; following the roll call, then led the Council in the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

- C. Burillo motioned to approve Amended agenda and was supported by J. Cunningham
  - Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- None

**CORRESPONDENCE, EVENTS, PRESENTATIONS:**

- None

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of minutes from August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Bills, Claims, Payroll
- Reports of Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Department Reports – Police/BioPure/Public Works/Energy/C&E Dvlp
  - A. Klotz motioned to approve Consent Agenda and supported by C. Burillo
    - Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Resolution 2024-23 Authorize amendment of Social District Boundaries  
WHEREAS, the State of Michigan through PA 124 of 2020 has authorized the creation of Social Districts in communities throughout the state; and  
WHEREAS, on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, City Council passed Resolution 2021-40 authorizing the creation of a social district in Downtown Hart, managed by the Community and Economic Development Director; and  
WHEREAS, the Community and Economic Development Director is seeking amendment to Resolution 2021-40 to expand the Social District boundaries to include the Pink Elephant Diner and the Main Street Market Chalets and contiguous common areas as shown in Exhibit A; and  
WHEREAS, to secure the benefits of efficient self-governance and to promote and protect our common interests and welfare, the City Council hereby declares;  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL  
*Authorizes the expansion of the Social District Boundaries as shown in Exhibit A for use and operation of a Social District in the downtown area as authorized by PA 124 of 2020 to be overseen by the Community and Economic Development Director*
  - J. Cunningham motioned to approve Resolution 2024-23 and supported by A. Klotz
    - Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2
- Resolution 2024-24 Approve Social District Permit Application – Pink Elephant Diner  
WHEREAS, the State of Michigan through PA 124 of 2020 has authorized the creation of Social Districts in communities throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing limitations placed on businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has led communities to be creative in supporting businesses which includes passage of regulations permitting the creation of a local Social District; and  
WHEREAS, the City Council must approve a Social District Permit for each license to engage in participating Social District business activities per MLCC direction; and  
WHEREAS, to secure the benefits of efficient self-governance and promote and protect our common interests and welfare, the City Council hereby declares;  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL

*Authorizes City staff to approve City of Hart Social District Permit Application and sign the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Liquor Control Commission Local Government Unit Approval For Social District Permit form, pending Pink Elephant Diner Inc. submitting proper Downtown Hart Social District Permit Application Paperwork*

- C. Burillo motioned to approve Resolution 2024-24 and supported by D. Hodges
  - Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- Hart Historic District Update  
The Hart Historic Preservation Group is a 501c3 non-profit organization that operates the City Property within the Hart Historic District. The City and the HHPG have a hundred-year agreement that was executed in April 1995. The agreement allows for the dissolution of the document every 10 years with a 6-month notice. With two long-time volunteers and other board members indicating a desire to resign from their positions leaves a concern for the future of the district.  
In an attempt to continue operations, the Hart Parks and Recreation Department has offered to help facilitate and City Hall staff has been fielding Phone calls until operations can be established. It was suggested that the Hart Economic and Redevelopment Team could serve a dual role as board members of both non-profit entities. Would Council be opposed to the HEART Board serving a dual role to provide due diligence and recommendations to council on future goals/activities in the Historic District? And would Council be opposed to the Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with City Hall providing support services to the Historic District in the short term as future plans are set?
- Starting Block Update  
The Starting Block Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization that operates the City Owned Property at the Hart Industrial Park. The City partnered with the Starting Block in 2004 to seek and execute grant funds from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Since then, the City has supported the Starting Block with some City support services and financial support to cover various operating expenses.  
In the last 20 years the starting block has helped grow over 40 companies regionally and continues to connect our agriculture industry and food processing. The current operating agreement provides a termination clause that may allow the City to dissolve the relationship in or about 2024, in 2023 the City approached the Starting Block, seeking to identify if the Starting Block could build a strategic plan in pursuit of covering its own expenses and/or provide more of a community benefit to area residents. Since then, the Starting Block Board has been working to draft a short- and long-term strategy. The discussion has been healthy, identifying that we need a Starting Block 2.0. Priorities have been set to create initiatives to:
  - Increase community engagement and partnerships
  - See financial stability inclusive of potential corporate sponsorships
  - Enhance current offerings to provide new business development/mentorship opportunities
  - Plan for and build future leadership both on the board of directors and in the paid operating directors' role.General, how do we feel about the standing relationship?  
Is there more information Council would like?  
Should we look to seek public input to help both the City and the Starting Block home what the future of the entity becomes?

The Starting Block currently uses rental revenues to staff a director for the facility. The position is a part-time position that frequently includes full-time attention. How would the Council feel about combining two-part time positions into one full time City employee that could oversee the Starting Block and the Historic District as two pieces of a larger economic development push? The City owns the building and the land which the Starting Block Operates out of. The building is in need of a roof repair, can we authorize the use of some funds to help sustain the building as these discussions go on?

Burillo – There is opportunity

Cunningham – if it's a City Building than the City should maintain it.

#### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

##### **Updates:**

- City Staff met with engineers to discuss our Water Department Capital Improvement plan based on an updated informational risk assessment. This will help to re-affirm out existing CIP and form updated data for the in-progress water rate study. The CIP will be introduced to the Council this fall for review and adoption.
- Wadel Stabilization is completing the West Main Street surface today with some finish work and lane striping left.
- The Starting Block Board held its third strategic planning session on August 28<sup>th</sup>, the focus and planned outcomes anticipate providing sustainability for the non-profit, as well as a renewed focus on adding value to our community.
- The developer that had built the past 5 duplexes in the Creeks Subdivision made an offer to construct another two and anticipates breaking ground next week.
- Michigan Municipal League Annual Conference begins tomorrow, this is a great annual opportunity to learn with our colleague municipalities about current opportunities and challenges facing our communities.
- City auditors will be on-site Monday through next week. We look forward to another year of good learning opportunities to help City Staff in maintaining a solid City budget that includes good public transparency. All City financials are available on the City's website including a citizen dashboard provided by Munetrix that helps to track year over year financial activity.

##### **Legacy Topics:**

- Safe Routes to School trail project – **Approved for bid letting in October' 24!**

##### **Upcoming Topics:**

- Adoption of 5-year Park and Rec Master Plan
- Council review of rental inspection policies, procedures, and implementation. Chief Salazar is delayed due to 2 employee resignations and 2 employees parental leave)

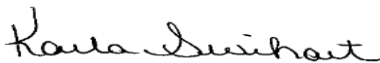
#### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

- Mayor Platt – Friendly reminder of Mr. Hansens memorial Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-4pm at the Oceana Eagles

#### **ADJOURN:**

- There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned upon a motion by J. Cunningham and supported by A. Klotz. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted



Karla Swihart, City Clerk