

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE
COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES
JANUARY 4, 2021

The Common Council of the City of West Lafayette, Indiana, met electronically on January 4, 2021, at the hour of 6:30 p.m.

President Bunder called the meeting to order and presided.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: James Blanco, Peter Bunder, Nick DeBoer, Shannon Kang, Larry Leverenz, Kathy Parker, David Sanders, Gerald Thomas, and Norris Wang.

Absent: None

Also present: Mayor John Dennis, Corporation Counsel Eric Burns, Clerk Sana Booker, and City Controller Peter Gray. Other unnamed department heads who did not speak were available on the conference line.

The Council members wished a happy birthday to Mayor Dennis.

President Bunder asked that any Councilors who have not turned in their nepotism packets do so, and he also asked all Councilors to turn in their keys to the former temporary City Hall.

NOTES

► This meeting was conducted electronically, without the physical attendance of any person, due to the public health emergency (COVID-19 pandemic) and per IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 and State of Indiana Executive Order 20-09, Paragraph 4.

MINUTES

Councilor DeBoer moved for acceptance of the minutes of the December 3, 2020, Pre-Council Meeting, and the December 7, 2020, Common Council Meeting. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

REPORTS OF CITY DEPARTMENTS ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

There were no comments.

REPORT OF THE APC REPRESENTATIVES

Councilor Leverenz noted that the Student Rental Report is available on the agenda. Councilor DeBoer stated that his biggest takeaway from the report is that, despite adding capacity and volume, the vacancy rate in our core downtown district continues to be very low at below 1%. He believes this is a good indication that we have not yet met market demand for housing in the downtown core. As we continue to look at development properties, especially in the areas outlined in the master plan, we should take those very seriously and continue building on the progress we have made. Councilor DeBoer stated that the last thing he wants before leaving office is for the problem to be worse than when he started. There is not a lot of market pressure right now for landlords to do anything other than raise rent. Of course, COVID will be a big question mark there, but he has not heard of massive vacancies around campus. He wishes we had more live data.

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 4, 2021, CONTINUED

Mayor Dennis stated that there is still a lot of interest from developers who want to focus investments on the State Street Corridor, both east and west. They are not necessarily shaking off the fear of COVID, but they are still moving forward and inquiring about potentially developing those areas. That is good news for helping to drive down rates and open more vacancies.

Councilor Leverenz stated that the APC reported receiving better participation from the landlords on vacancies than in the past, so this data may be more valid than previously.

President Bunder expressed appreciation to Carl Griffin as he leaves APC. He spoke about Mr. Griffin's selflessness and noted that it was Mr. Griffin who introduced him to the idea of a land use plan for the New Chauncey Neighborhood. Mr. Griffin has also been a supporter of historic preservation.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Council Appointment: Go Greener Commission – Kayla Young

Councilor DeBoer motioned to approve the appointment of Kayla Young to the Go Greener Commission, and the vote be by roll call. Councilor Thomas seconded the motion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

<u>Councilperson</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Controller Gray stated that we are still wrapping up a few items, but we ended the year under-budget, at approximately 78%. He commended the department heads and elected officials on keeping expenditures down.

LEGAL REPORT

This report is on file.

SPECIAL REPORTS:

Joint Board Report

Councilor DeBoer stated that the next Joint Board meeting is January 19, 2021, likely via WebEx.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 23-20 An Ordinance To Approve Blanket Bond Coverage For 2021 (Prepared by Clerk Sana Booker) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 23-20 by title only.

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 4, 2021, CONTINUED

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 23-20 on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

There was no discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

Councilperson	Vote
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 23-20 passed on second and final reading.

Ordinance No. 24-20 An Ordinance Providing For Temporary Loans (2021) (Prepared by Controller) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 24-20 by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 24-20 on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

There was no discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

Councilperson	Vote
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 24-20 passed on second and final reading.

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 4, 2021, CONTINUED

Ordinance No. 26-20 (Amended) An Ordinance Clarifying The Existing Solid Waste Code (Sponsored by Mayor John Dennis) [No. of Readings 2 of 2]

Councilor DeBoer read Ordinance No. 26-20 (Amended) by title only.

Councilor DeBoer moved for passage of Ordinance No. 26-20 (Amended) on second and final reading, and that the vote be by roll call. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas.

There was no discussion.

Clerk Booker called the roll call vote:

Councilperson	Vote
Blanco	Aye
Bunder	Aye
DeBoer	Aye
Kang	Aye
Leverenz	Aye
Parker	Aye
Sanders	Aye
Thomas	Aye
Wang	Aye

Clerk Booker stated that the vote was 9 AYES and 0 NAYS.

President Bunder announced that Ordinance No. 26-20 (Amended) passed on second and final reading.

NEW BUSINESS: None

REPORT BY THE MAYOR

Mayor John Dennis invited everyone to stop by the new City Hall. It is open and beautiful. It celebrates former Mayor Sonya Margerum, our past, and our future. There are a lot of happy faces throughout the building at finally being in a permanent spot. This is our fifth location, so it is nice to have a place to call home again. He noted that one of the coolest things is the new Council Chambers.

COMMUNICATIONS

► Councilor Sanders stated that our republic faces a crisis of confidence in our system of government. It is being endangered by individuals who are trying to deny the votes of Americans, and the focus of that denial is on the votes – as we have seen for 150 years – of African Americans. African Americans are the ones who are being targeted for suppression. We saw that this past weekend. What is disgraceful about that is that Indiana representatives are supporting these efforts to destroy the electoral college and overturn the votes of the American public, and specifically suppress the votes, once again, of African Americans. Councilor Sanders stated that his voice is being spread loudly against this, and he would encourage everyone to contact our representatives to express how distasteful it is for people to be engaged in suppressing the votes of African Americans. He stated that suppressing the votes of any American is wrong but suppressing the votes of African Americans is a historic wrong and should not be allowed.

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 4, 2021, CONTINUED

► Councilor DeBoer stated that he is becoming increasingly worried about vaccine distribution and the speed at which it is occurring. He knows that the Council does not have leverage over that, as it is centered in the Health Department, but he would love to be able to give an answer to his family and friends about how or where they would begin looking for information. He believes the issue will raise in salience over the next 30 days. He hopes that by our February meeting that there will be a clear answer on how people know where they are in line. He noted that he is just flagging the issue and has no complaints right now.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

► No emails were received to the Clerk email address for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business at this time, Councilor DeBoer moved for adjournment, and President Bunder adjourned the meeting the time being 6:53 p.m.