

WHITEFISH CITY COUNCIL

March 6, 2023

7:10 P.M.

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Muhlfeld called the meeting to order. Councilors present were Feury, Caltabiano, Davis, Sweeney, and Norton. Councilor Qunell was absent. City Staff present were, City Clerk Howke, City Manager Smith, City Attorney Jacobs, Finance Director Gospodarek, Planning and Building Director Taylor, Public Works Director Workman, Parks and Recreation Director Butts, Police Chief Kelch and Fire Chief Page. Approximately 3 people were in the audience and 2 attended virtually.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Muhlfeld asked Phil Boland to lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC— (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The mayor has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)

Phil Boland thanked Mayor Muhlfeld and Councilor Feury for their tribute to his brother-in-law, Nick Palmer at the last Council meeting.

Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, missed the work session prior to the meeting regarding the update to the landscape regulations of the Whitefish Zoning Regulations. He has concerns that the tree ordinance is not being enforced.

4) COMMUNICATIONS FROM VOLUNTEER BOARDS

Councilor Caltabiano reported the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met and recommend Council to elevate the Riverbend Trail Project as a priority to the upcoming budget.

Councilor Norton stated she attended the Whitefish Community Housing Committee. The Committee is a great group of people who are interested in helping the city to start working on housing. She also had a discussion with the Interim Executive Director for the Whitefish Housing Authority and stated he is very informative. She thinks we are moving ~~a~~head with housing in a really good way.

5) CONSENT AGENDA (The consent agenda is a means of expediting routine matters that require the Council's action. Debate does not typically occur on consent agenda items. Any member of the Council may remove any item for debate. Such items will typically be debated and acted upon prior to proceeding to the rest of the agenda. Ordinances require 4 votes for passage – Section 1-6-2 (E)(3) WCC)

- a) [Minutes](#) from February 21, 2023 Special Session (p.31)
- b) [Minutes](#) from February 21, 2023 Regular Meeting (p.32)

Councilor Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Caltabiano to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilor Norton had a correction to page 3, second paragraph, Councilor Sweeney wants to ~~ensure~~ensure that we have an option. **The motion to approve the Consent Agenda as corrected carried.**

6) PUBLIC HEARINGS (Items will be considered for action after public hearings) (Resolution No. 07-33 establishes a 30-minute time limit for applicant's land use presentations. Ordinances require 4 votes for passage – Section 1-6-2 (E)(3) WCC)

- a) [Ordinance No. 23-03](#); An Ordinance amending Zoning Regulations Title 11, Chapter 3, Section 11, Fences and Retaining Walls, and Chapter 9, Section 2, Definitions, of the Whitefish City Code (First Reading) (WZTA 23-01) (p.39)

Planning and Building Director Dave Taylor presented his staff report that is provided in the packet on the website.

Mayor Muhlfeld opened the Public Hearing. There being no public comment, Mayor Muhlfeld closed the Public Hearing and turned the matters over to the Council for their consideration.

Councilor Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Caltabiano to adopt Ordinance No. 23-03; An Ordinance amending Zoning Regulations Title 11, Chapter 3, Section 11, Fences and Retaining Walls, and Chapter 9, Section 2, Definitions, of the Whitefish City Code (First Reading) (WZTA 23-01). The motion carried on a 5-0 vote. Councilor Norton recused herself from deliberation and vote.

7) COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

- a) [Consideration](#) to award the Engineering Contract for the Karrow Avenue Reconstruction Project (p.55)

Public Works Director Craig Workman presented his staff report that is provided in the packet on the website.

Councilor Davis made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sweeney to award the Engineering Contract for the Karrow Avenue Reconstruction Project to Robert, Peccia, & Associates and to authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. The motion carried.

City Manager Smith excused herself from the meeting at 7:31pm.

- b) [Consideration](#) to award the Engineering Contract for the Riverbend Trail Project (p.78)

Public Works Director Craig Workman presented his staff report that is provided in the packet on the website.

Councilor Davis made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sweeney to award the Engineering Contract for the Riverbend Trail Project to TD&H and to authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. The motion carried.

8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER

- a) [Written report](#) enclosed with the packet. Questions from Mayor and Council? (p.110)

None

- b) Other items arising between March 1st through March 6th.

None

- c) [Consideration](#) of a request to Hire a Consultant to Assist in the Creation of the Housing Development and Financing Plan as Identified in the Whitefish Community Housing Roadmap (p.116)

Attorney Jacobs presented City Manager Smith's staff report that is provided in the packet on the website.

Councilor Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feury to direct staff to hire a consultant to assist in the creation of the housing development plan and the financing plan as identified in the Whitefish Community Housing Roadmap. The motion carried.

9) COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILORS

- a) Appointment of Acting Deputy Mayor for March 20, 2023 City Council meeting

Councilor Sweeney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Caltabiano to appoint Councilor Qunell as Acting Deputy Mayor for the March 20, 2023 City Council meeting. The motion carried.

Councilor Comments

Councilor Norton recapped what was reviewed at the Council Retreat that took place on February 25, 2023 at the Whitefish Lake Lodge. The Council reviewed the notes from the last Council Retreat that was held in 2019. Council and staff discussed concerns for the future. The minutes from the meeting will be provided at the next Council meeting for approval. She also mentioned she has been receiving a lot of questions about the train safety in our town because of recent derailments in other parts of the country. She called Senators Tester and Daine's office and Congressman Zinke's office to see if they were engaged in safety measures. Senator Tester and Senator Daine's office stated they are tracking this motion. The local authorities train regularly for hazardous spills. There is a new infrastructure bill and funding in the bill for ~~real-rail~~ efficiency and climate action. Some of the new braking technology was pulled out by the previous administration. She asked and the City Council agreed to have Manager Smith write a letter to the Elected Officials at the federal level to pursue increasing safety infrastructure. Fire Chief Page stated that the tracks that run through our town are inspected more frequently because of the use of passenger trains and have more regulations.

Council Caltabiano asked, and Council agreed to have staff elevate the Riverbend Trail Project as a priority to the upcoming budget.

10) ADJOURNMENT (Resolution 08-10 establishes 11:00 p.m. as end of meeting unless extended to 11:30 by majority)

Mayor Muhlfeld adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

/s/John Muhlfeld

Mayor Muhlfeld

Attest:

/s/Michelle Howke

Michelle Howke, Whitefish City Clerk