

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Leeming called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at 7:00 pm. She led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Matt Cooper, Denise Donohue, Dave Hunsaker, Mark Kellogg, Trevor VanDyke, Jennifer Whitman, and Mayor Leeming

Excused: None

STAFF:

Daniel Coss, Lisa Grysen, Bruce Ferguson, and Leslie Abdo, Foster Swift

AUDIENCE:

Stella Gallagher

AGENDA:

Motion by Cooper, seconded by VanDyke and carried by unanimous vote of the Council that **the agenda be approved as presented.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Donohue, seconded by Hunsaker and carried by unanimous vote of the Council to **approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022, Regular City Council Meeting as presented.**

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CITY ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

CHRISTMAS SNOW PLOWING

The DPS did a lot of snow plowing over the Christmas holiday. Fortunately, the snowfall totals were slightly less than predicted and they were able to get the streets clear by late morning on Christmas day. The city used approximately 35 tons of salt from late Thursday (12/22) through Christmas day and provided the DeWitt Public Schools with approximately 6 tons of salt for the school facilities. The school district does reimburse the city for the salt at the end of the season.

MCGUIRE PARK MNRTF GRANT APPLICATION

The DNR notified the city that the McGuire Park grant application will not be receiving funding for 2023. McGuire Park improvements were submitted for the Spark Grant program as the #1 priority, so there is still a possibility to receive funding in 2023.

DNR SPARK GRANTS

The grant applications were submitted for the three projects that Council approved at the December 12 meeting. McGuire Park – \$506,400, Riverside Park - \$250,000, Sports Park - \$735,000. The first-round awards will be announced the week of January 30 by the DNR, with round two in the spring and round three in the summer.

LOFTS @ 110 PROJECT

All of the financings are in place and the MEDC has officially closed on their portion of the project. The contractor, Kincaid Construction, will begin installing the safety fencing the week of January 9 and expects to start construction in early February. Plans are being developed for the relocation of the traffic signal controller and how the intersection will be handled during the period that the signal is turned off.

General Information Packet

- General Ledger Report 12/09 - 01/05
- Huntington Econ Report
- Assessors Monthly Report – December 2022
- Invoice Cloud Activity Report
- Resident Compliment Email

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Review Cemetery Commission Monument Maintenance Policy for DeWitt City:**

The Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commission (PRCT) at their December 14, 2022, regular meeting adopted a policy allowing for the City to perform maintenance, as time and funds allow, on monuments in the cemetery that are at least 100 years old or older. The date is determined by the interment date on the monument. City Council was provided with the approved policy.

The current city ordinance on damaged monuments states: “City not responsible. **The city assumes no responsibility for damage to markers or monuments whatsoever, including damage caused by regular cemetery maintenance.**”

The ordinance does not preclude the city from performing maintenance but also does not specifically permit maintenance. Due to a large number of markers in Sections A, B, and C that dates back to the 1800s and is constructed of softer stone material, the Commission felt it would be prudent to adopt a policy allowing for the maintenance of these monuments.

In the newer sections of the cemetery finding family or someone that is connected to a damaged marker is still possible. In the older sections of the cemetery, where the markers date back to the 1800s that is often not possible and many of those markers are made from material that is now deteriorating rapidly or easily damaged by tree branches.

City Council was provided with photos of the types of markers that are commonly damaged and some of the repair methods that have been employed.

City Council was provided with the draft minutes from the December 14 PRCT meeting for Council’s review.

Motion by Hunsaker, seconded by Donohue and carried by unanimous vote of the Council **to adopt the City of DeWitt Cemetery Monument Maintenance Policy dated January 9, 2023, as approved, and recommended by the Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commission with amendments to clarify that the policy does not obligate the City to maintain or replace any monument.**

2. Appointments to the City's Election Commission:

Section 5.7 of the City Charter states that the City Council shall appoint an Election Commission at least 90 days prior to the regular election. Per the Charter, the Election Commission consists of the Clerk-Treasurer and two other City Officers. The Election Commission is responsible for appointing the election inspectors and resolving election disputes

Motion by Donohue, seconded by VanDyke and carried by unanimous vote of the Council **to appoint the City of DeWitt's Election Commission for the 2023 Election cycle to consist of the City Administrator, City Clerk, Chief of Police, and the City Assessor as an alternate.**

3. Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Fences:

The Planning Commission has been reviewing the fence ordinance for the last two (2) meetings. After an extensive review, the Commission did approve amendments to three different sections of the zoning ordinances and forwarded that recommendation to City Council.

City Council was provided with the proposed amendments that the Planning Commission approved at the December 15, 2022, regular meeting. The commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments at the same meeting.

City Council was provided with the draft minutes from the December 15 meeting. The amendments the commission approved are:

- Front yard fences up to 48-inches in height
- One-foot front yard setback
- Non-solid fences in front yard (50% open per square foot)
- Finished side facing outward (toward the neighbor)
- Modified the definition of fence; barrier versus structure
- Specified 25-foot Natural Features setback applies to fences

Motion by Hunsaker, seconded by Whitman and carried by unanimous vote of the Council **to approve the prepared resolution to introduce Ordinance Amendment Number 2023-01 an ordinance to amend sections of Chapter 78, Article II, IV, and XXV.**

4. Consideration of rescheduling the January 17 Goal Setting Session:

Motion by Donohue, seconded by VanDyke and carried by unanimous vote of the Council **to change the January 17 Goal Setting Session to January 30th at 6 pm.**

5. Appointment to Downtown Development Authority and Planning Commission:

The following citizens are being appointed to fill the remainder of vacancies to the respective board/commission assignment for the specified term:

Downtown DeWitt Authority

Cathy Mitchell 117 South Scott St 12/12/2025

Planning Commission

Justin Clement 637 Senna Trail 12/30/2025

Motion by Whitman, seconded by VanDyke and carried by unanimous vote of the Council to **confirm Mayor Leeming's appointment of Cathy Mitchell to the Downtown DeWitt Authority Board of Directors with a term expiring on December 12, 2025, and Justin Clement to the Planning Commission with a term expiring on December 30, 2025.**

COUNCIL STAFF REPORTS:

City Attorney:

- Nothing to report

City Clerk-Treasurer:

- Recount complete and no totals changed
- Santa delivery was a success! 93 total stops and was completed in about 4 hours

DARA:

- Low participation for the high school basketball program
- Tai Chi classes started at City Hall on 1/9 and will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays
- Spark Grant application has been submitted
- Silver Sneakers is held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for a \$5 drop-in fee

DAESA:

- Meeting on 1/19

DDA:

- Photo Contest (Best of DeWitt)
- Beginning work on the Cabin Fever reliever for March 4th

Planning:

- Met and discussed fencing

Parks:

- New playground equipment is in a warehouse
- Discussed columbarium

Police Chief:

- Axon cameras and body cameras are all installed
- New air cards purchased through Verizon Wireless
- Conditional job offer has been given for a full-time officer
- New Year's Eve was very calm
- Adopt a family was a success

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by VanDyke, seconded by Whitman and carried by unanimous vote of the Council that **the meeting is adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Grysen
City Clerk-Treasurer

Susan J. Leeming
Mayor