

SPECIAL ZOOM MEETING – July 28, 2020

The Common Council of the City of Michigan City, Indiana, met in Special session on Monday evening, July 28, 2020 at the hour of 6:00 p.m., Hosted by “Zoom” and streamed live on “My Michigan City” Facebook Page.

The meeting was called to order at 7:43 p.m. by Council President Fitzpatrick.

NOTE: This meeting followed the Council’s Workshop regarding the closing of Washington Park beaches

Roll call was authorized, and the following were noted present and/or absent.

PRESENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS Bryant Dabney, Sean Fitzpatrick, Michael Mack, Don Przybylinski, Angie Nelson Deutch, Paul Przybylinski, Gene Simmons, Dalia Zygas and Tracie Tillman (9).

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBER None (0).

ALSO, PRESENT: Jim Meyer – Council Attorney, Gale Neulieb City Clerk and Dawn Debald Deputy Clerk

A QUORUM WAS NOTED PRESENT

President Fitzpatrick advised the reason for the meeting is discuss the proposed ordinance pertaining to Washington Park

ORDINANCE

The Clerk read the following proposed ordinance on 1st Reading by title only,
ESTABLISHING RULES FOR ATTENDANCE AT AND THE USE OF WASHINGTON PARK AND PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING SAME AND FOR VIOLATING PARK DEPARTMENT RULES CONCERNING THE USE OF WASHINGTON PARK AND THE ZOO

Introduced by: Paul A. Przybylinski
Co-Sponsor: Sean Fitzpatrick
Don Przybylinski

President Fitzpatrick asked if the Author of the proposed ordinance had anything to state.

Councilman P. Przybylinski stated at this time he had nothing to add.

President Fitzpatrick asked if there were any other Council comments.

Councilwoman Zygas stated that she wouldn’t be in favor of the proposed ordinance due to Covid-19 still on the uphill and want to be safe not only for our City employees as well as for the residents of Michigan City.

Councilman Mack stated he also will not be supporting the proposed ordinance as is; advising that he does agree with the spirit of it but if the council would work together with the Park Department administration, make a few amendments that he would be able to support it.

Councilman Mack stated that he believes even after Labor Day is over Washington Park beaches are still going to be busy having issues to address on a daily bases; bringing some long term solutions to the table addressing covid-19 on our beaches should be our goal, because this is not going away in the near future.

Councilman Dabney advised that everyone knows how I stand and that he agrees with Councilwoman Zygas; that everything that has been talked about and that the top issue is “safety”.

Councilman Dabney commented on the language in No. 6. of the proposed ordinance: **6. If their assistance is requested, the Michigan City Police Department shall assist the Park Department;** stating several concerns he has regarding the rules in the proposed ordinance that will be the responsibility of the seasonal personnel working for Park Department.

Councilman Simmons stated he is also stuck on “public safety” that he feels we are opening our community to a wide spread of Covid-19 virus; advising that since last week LaPorte County has had 36 new cases with 21 of them here in Michigan City.

President Fitzpatrick stated the Park personnel is already enforcing the rules and dealing with different issues at the gate now; processing each vehicle in before they enter Washington Park; agreeing with Councilman Mack that we need to think long term and why this proposed ordinance was put in place, something had to happen and the Council can't sit by and wait to move forward regarding this matter; advising that he did schedule another Council “Special Meeting” for Thursday, July 31, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. to make any amendments any council member may have; that we need to think through the proposed ordinance, make decisions about what we want to do to make our city safe and as well a plan for long term.

Councilman D. Przybylinski agreed with the comments made by both President Fitzpatrick as well as Councilman P. Przybylinski; stating the Covid-19 is not going away soon that is going to be here the rest of this summer and possibly still be here in the summer of 2021; with this proposed ordinance not being perfect and great points being discussed the last few weeks; the goal we are trying to reach is to come together with a long term solution for the safety and wellbeing to not only Park/City employees, but citizens of Michigan City and people wanting to visit our beaches.

Councilman D. Przybylinski stated several concerns he had that Washington Park beach was closed but the beaches weren't closed from Stop 2 to Stop 13; advising if other surrounding communities shut their beaches down (Gary, East Chicago, Miller) that is up to them; we have scheduled another Special meeting for Thursday; asking the council to think about what we want to do to cover the next four weeks until Labor Day weekend for the city employees as well as for the safety of our City.

Councilman Dabney stated the last Executive Order 9 – 2020 from the Mayor closed Washington Park beach along with the beaches from Stop 2 through Stop 13; was brought to the Council and failed.

Councilman Dabney addressed the Council regarding other rules that are in the proposed ordinance adding more duties/responsibilities to the seasonal park employees; changing their dynamics.

Councilman Mack stated that he doesn't disagree with Councilman D. Przybylinski with his desire to open the beach up with the possibility of re-opening the beach just for the Michigan City residents; asking this council to consider the Covid-19 tasks that people are facing in our daily routines to come up with realistic expectations and performances that are happening in our community and addressing them at our Council meeting Thursday evening making a decision.

Councilman P. Przybylinski thanked his colleagues for their comments regarding the proposed ordinance; advising that this isn't set in stone and that as a council, amendments can be proposed. Councilman Przybylinski stated the proposed ordinance

was brought to the Council to let us discuss a long-term plan to manage the changes our community is going to have to face and that could work with the support of the Park Department administration.

President Fitzpatrick asked if there were any other Council comments; there was no response.

President Fitzpatrick advised the proposed ordinance will be held over on second reading until Thursday, July 30, 2020 scheduled "Special" Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Mack made a motion to adjourn, second by Councilwoman Tillman and there being no further business to transact, President Fitzpatrick declared the meeting **ADJOURNED** (approximately 8:11p.m.)

Gale A. Neulieb