

VILLAGE OF SPARTA
Kent County, Michigan
Special Village Council Meeting
Monday, December 19, 2022 at 6:00 PM
75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)

Present: Village President Robert Whalen, Council Members Brenda Braybrook, Robert Carlstrom, Dave Cumings, Courtney Mais, Tom Peoples, and Gale Taylor.

Also present: Village Manager Shay Gallagher and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Roll Call:** Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
4. **Additions or Corrections to Consent and Business Agenda:** None.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Appoint Mike Lamb to a four-year term on the Downtown Development Authority Board
 - b. Appoint Robert Shangle to a four-year term on the Downtown Development Authority Board
5. **Approval of Consent and Business Agenda:** Motion by Braybrook with a second by Taylor to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
 6. **Public Comment for Agenda Item:** None.

Please Note: This Public Comment portion of the meeting is reserved for comment on agenda items.

Personal or abusive attacks on Council members, staff members, or other participants will not be tolerated and may result in the Village President taking action, up to and including, having the speaker removed from the meeting by law enforcement officers.

7. **Public Hearing**
 - a. Public Hearing – 223 E. Division St. Commercial Redevelopment District: Public hearing opened at 6:01pm. Rex Baker from Baker Development was present to answer questions. Public hearing was closed at 6:04pm.
8. **Old Business**

- a. None

9. New Business

- a. **223 E. Division St. Commercial Redevelopment District:** much like an industrial development district, this would allow for a future tax abatement. Once the property sells, the level of tax forgiveness and the exact time length would be determined. Rex Baker said that he was proposing more of a modern two story 4000 sq ft building with a deck on the back. He anticipates three retail/commercial spaces on the first floor with two apartments on the second level. He is working with The Right Place in search of grant monies. Motion by Braybrook with a second by Cumings to approve the establishment of this district. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Fleis & Vandenbrink WWTP Engineer Interview:** Bruce Pindzia, Joe Benjamin, and Bob Wilcox were here on behalf of Fleis & Vandenbrink. They had a Power Point presentation and then answered questions from the Village Manager and the Council members.
- c. **Spicer Group WWTP Engineer Interview:** Sean Middleton, Jenn Garza, and Kevin Wilkes were here on behalf of Spicer Group. They had a Power Point presentation and then answered questions from the Village Manager and the Council members.

**The Village Council took a recess at 7:25pm and resumed operations at 7:30pm.

- d. **Village Manager Search Discussion:** Former Sparta Village Manager/current Ada Village Manager Julius Suchy was in attendance to give an update on the search for a new Sparta Village Manager which he is heading. (He lead the search for our current Village Manager two years ago.) He said that village and township managers are in shorter supply now than they were even a few years ago. He told the Council that the Village is probably going to have to offer Village Manager candidates a salary above \$100,000 a year if we expect to attract a well qualified Village Manager. Council President Whalen asked about incorporating a retention bonus in order to have the new manager stay for more than a year or two. Mr Suchy presented the Council with the materials he's created in order to advertise both the Village Manager position and the Village of Sparta itself. He believes that the Village should have a new manager in place and "up and running" by March of 2023.

Mr Suchy then discussed the interim manager position. He believes that the Village will need to pay \$55-\$75 per hour for an interim manager. This would probably include three "in the office" days as well as additional hours via Zoom or on the phone conducting Village business. If the interim manager is from out of town, which seems likely, the Village would also probably have to negotiate payment for housing, mileage, and/or eating expenses. Village Manager Gallagher

distributed copies of several resumes from interested candidates. He and Mr Suchy said that there were two people from that list that were excellent candidates. The Village Manager also said that he was in discussion with a person from the W Michigan area who was also highly qualified and was possibly interested in the position.

The whole Council discussed this. The consensus was that the Village Manager reach out to the three candidates that he and Mr Suchy think are best qualified to gage their level of interest and see what their salary requirements are. The Council will then have a special meeting at 5pm on December 21, 2022 to review these candidates. It's expected that the Council will then instruct the Village Manager to offer one of those candidates the position of interim village manager for Sparta.

10. Public Comment: None

11. Council Member Announcements: None

12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by President Whalen at 8:06pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk