

**CITY OF MASON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF JULY 6, 2020**

Mayor Whipple called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 201 W. Ash Street, Mason, Michigan (Via Zoom Teleconference). Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance and offered the invocation.

Present: Councilmembers: Brown, Droscha, Ferris, Madden, Schaffer, Vogel, Whipple

Absent: None

Also present: Deborah S. Stuart, City Manager, Sarah J. Jarvis, City Clerk, Michelle Pietsch, Finance Director

PUBLIC COMMENT

Firmin Charlot, 652 N. College Road, Mason, MI 48854:

Dear Mason City Council Members,

Mason is a wonderful town. My wife grew up here and all of my kids attended Mason Public Schools. The primary purpose of my letter is to educate the public about what happened here in Mason in August 1866.

History is very important. It shapes us and if we learn from it, we have a chance to create a better tomorrow. If we choose to ignore history or try to hide it, we deprive ourselves the opportunity to learn and grow.

I write to you to bring to your attention the story of Civil War Veteran John Taylor who was lynched in Mason on August 27, 1866. It is estimated that John Taylor would have been approximately the same age as my middle son.

On November 18th, 2019, Bill Savage, a Mason resident and retired Holt Public Schools teacher addressed this body and requested that a plaque or a marker be commissioned by the City Council to tell the story. A week earlier on November 12, 2019, the marker below was commissioned and erected by the Ingham County Parks Commission after a citizen committee (of which I was a member) was formed to study the records and to recommend a name change to a park formerly known as Deadman's Hill. Below is the historical marker that was produced:

I am urging the City Council to commission a marker at the site of the lynching in an effort to educate the public. I suggest that a citizen committee be formed to further study the issue (if needed) and identify a suitable location for a marker in Mason.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION by Brown, second by Vogel,
to approve the Consent Calendar as presented.

A. Minutes:

1. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting June 15, 2020

B. Correspondence:

1. Receipt of City Attorney's Report Dated July 1, 2020
2. Receipt of Proclamation to Nicole Rathbun of Girl Scout Troop 30481 for earning the Gold Award
3. Receipt of Letter from Sharon Peltelky Regarding Policing

C. Financials:

1. Approve Bills in the Amount of \$172,622.53

MOTION APPROVED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Approval of Recommendation by the City Manager for Council, Boards and Commissions to Meet Electronically as Long as Legally Permitted or Until Council Determines Otherwise

MOTION by Vogel, second by Brown,
to approve the recommendation by the City Manager for Council, Boards and Commissions to Meet Electronically as Long as Legally Permitted or Until Council Determines Otherwise

Yes (5) Brown, Ferris, Madden, Vogel, Whipple
No (2) Droscha, Schaffer

MOTION APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution 2020-19: Reaffirming the City of Mason’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion (Mayor Pro Tem Brown)

MOTION by Brown, second by Droscha,
to approve Resolution 2020-19: Reaffirming the City of Mason’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

CITY OF MASON

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 2020-19

REAFFIRMING THE CITY OF MASON’S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

July 6, 2020

WHEREAS, Mason is a community founded upon a respect for our historic past while encouraging an atmosphere that values family, business, the environment, and the arts, creating a sense of place for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Mason City Council desires to promote an environment that embraces diversity and actively seeks inclusiveness for all who live, work, or raise a family in our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mason City Council reaffirms its commitment to diversity and inclusion by pledging to maintain a welcoming and safe environment for all persons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mason City Council encourages and welcomes all members of our community to make this same commitment to diversity and inclusion.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- B. Discussion on Implicit Bias Training for City Council (Councilmember Vogel)

Vogel requested that Implicit Bias training be provided to City Councilmembers

Brown suggested the following resources: 1. MML would be doing a workshop on this during the upcoming annual conference; 2. We could possibly partner with neighboring communities to have a combined training; 3. Brown also stated he also has contacts with the Civil Rights Department at the State that could provide

resources as well.

Mayor Whipple stated that he did not see the need for bias training for himself and the City Council as whole and that it would not be the best resource of City tax payers money.

Brown stated since Vogel stated she was interested in more information on Implicit Bias training and in the interest of both sides of this issue he commits to bringing back to the Council any information or resources that he receives or hears about.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

- Schaffer referenced the Brookdale street construction notifications and requested that staff inform all property owners and occupants when construction is to take place. Even if the property owner does not reside at the property.
- Vogel reported that the Historical District Commission met on June 22 and that they approved remodel request for 124 E. Ash Street – Apartments above Salon 130.
- Brown – Reported that the Election Commission met on June 29 to conduct the Public Accuracy test for the August 4, 2020 Primary Election and that the City of Mason’s election equipment test went well. Brown also commented on the layout of City Hall and the attention of detail to make sure visitors to City Hall in respect to COVID-19. Brown also reported that the Election Commission would be meeting again on July 8, to appoint election inspectors, receiving board inspectors and to establish the Absent Voter Counting Board.
- Vogel – Thanked Manager Stuart on providing feedback on how residents can report tree concerns through the City’s website. Vogel also requested an overview of the protocols in the City. Manager Stuart gave an overview of the tree assessment and how we are using this to maintain and or remove trees within the City.
- Ferris – Reminded everyone that with the hot weather you can help your tree put apply a slow trickle of water to your trees overnight.
- Brown asked whether two stamps are required to return an absent voter ballot through the U.S. Mail. Clerk Jarvis responded that one stamp should be sufficient but suggested you error on the side of caution and include two stamps. Clerk Jarvis did confirm that a ballot will not be returned to a voter for not having sufficient enough postage and will be delivered to the Clerk’s office. Manager Stuart also reminded everyone that they can use the City Hall drop box and postage would not be needed at all.

MANAGERS REPORT (07/02/2020)

Stuart reported that Senate bill 690 was approved which outlines the spending of CARES Money. Three areas the City is most interested in is water and utility assistance, hazard pay for first responders, and reimbursement of payroll for police for April and May. Stuart said that there may be an item addressing this on the next agenda and that there is a very short turnaround time to submit requests. Stuart also reported that adjustments may need to be made to the budget to accommodate for extra expenses related to the August election. With COVID-19 we will be setting up outside City Hall to limit the time and number of people in the building and to allow for social distancing. This will require us to rent a ten as well as other items.

Stuart reported that an agreement was reached with the Non-Supervisory Police Union and they have started a 10% decrease in hours in the workshare program.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.



Sarah J. Jarvis, City Clerk