

**MANISTEE CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2020**

The Manistee City Council met in a work session on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 7:00 pm remotely as authorized by Executive Order of the Governor.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dale Cooper, Lynda Beaton, Roger Zielinski, Jermaine Cipcic, Michael Szymanski, James Grabowski and Erin Martin-Pontiac (*arrived at 7:09 p.m.*)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager, Department Directors, and Public

City Manager Thad Taylor gave clarification on the first item on the agenda. The discussion will be on a business that would like to provide rentals in the downtown area, Fifth Avenue Beach and First Street Beach.

Public Comments on Work Session Related Items.

All individuals in attendance of the virtual meeting were in a virtual waiting room, with their microphones muted. When it came time for public comment, each person waiting in the virtual waiting room was called individually by the City Clerk by the last four digits of their telephone number. Individuals were asked if they had a comment or if they were passing.

Mayor Zielinski reviewed the items on the agenda for those in attendance that did not have a copy of the agenda.

No public comments received.

Discussion on a Temporary Permit for Downtown Rental -City Manager Thad Taylor led the discussion on a permit for a new business, Manistee Adventures, owned by the Reynolds Family. The business is a rental business for items such as kayaks, paddle boards, beach chairs/umbrellas, scooters, and bikes. The owners would like to like to set up several sights within the city including the downtown area and the beaches at Fifth Avenue and First Street. A location has been identified on the beaches that is agreeable to the City and the owners. There is no conflict with the current concession vendor at First Street Beach; the Fifth Avenue beach concession vendor does plan to have rentals available, but Mr. Reynolds agreed to not offer the same items for rent in that location. The concession vendors believe this could be a potential enhancement to their businesses. In 2016 Council approved a similar business with an agreement for fees associated with the use of the beach area and waived the first year's fee to allow the business time to get established. Taylor recommended a similar beach use agreement for Manistee Adventures which would forgo fees for this year with the understanding that there would be fees for future years of operation. With the Governor's current executive order and the uncertainty of future orders it is hard to determine what will be allowed with use of the beaches. The City will continue to work within the limits of the executive orders.

CONSENSUS: Council directed staff to draft an agreement for Manistee Adventures to be presented at the first Council meeting in June for Council consideration.

Discussion on Political Signs – Councilmember Lynda Beaton requested an opportunity to discuss political signs in the city. She stated that after receiving feedback on this issue, in order to protect freedom of speech, it may be better to monitor sign use and not discuss restrictions. She hopes to see signs posted no more than thirty days before an election. Beaton expressed that this discussion should be directed towards signs in general including garage sales signs.

Further discussion included:

- Garage sales under the Governor’s current executive order
- MML guidance on garage sales
- Planning Commission working on language for a sign ordinance
- Signs cannot be regulated by content
- State of Michigan has provisions for the time period signs can be out following an election
- Focus on regulation of temporary signs and not by content
- Regulate by size and placement

CONSENSUS: Council directed the City Manager to contact the Michigan Municipal League for guidance on garage sales during the Governor’s current executive order and report information received to Council.

Other – City Manager Thad Taylor informed Council that there are no action items for next week’s Council agenda and requested the meeting be cancelled; there were no objections from Council. Taylor also informed Council of a Work Share Program being investigated for City employees. This program allows employers to keep employees working with reduced hours, while employees collect partial unemployment benefits to make up lost wages. He explained that employees participating in Work Share due to COVID-19 are also eligible to receive additional Federal compensation of \$600 per week. This would not adversely impact the City and would be an additional benefit for employees. The City is looking at implementing this as early as next week and the program runs through the end of July. This would provide a significant savings to the City which would help with revenue shortfalls expected in the coming months. The DPW, Salary, and Non-Union employees have all agreed to participate in this program. Taylor will meet with the Police and Fire departments to discuss their participation in the program later this week. Taylor responded to Council concerns with the effect on City services. This program will not affect employee medical benefits.

Adjourned at approximately 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Pefley CMC/CMMC, MiCPT
City Clerk