

**City of Olivet
Regular Council Minutes
October 10, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

Council Call to Order

Present: Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas, Gary Peterson, Larry Marsh, Don Walker, James Frohm, and Steve Penny.

Absent: Joe Hoffdahl.

Visitors' Section:

Resident Jennifer Miller addressed the Council regarding parking availability for the Olivet College Student Center. Mayor Laura Barlund-Maas stated parking for the Cutler Student Center will be addressed later in the meeting.

Olivet College Associate Professor of Media Production and Communication Joanne Williams informed the Council that she and upper-level students will be working on a project that will provide news 24/7 to the Olivet area. Williams stated this project will be developed in stages. She has asked the Olivet Chamber of Commerce about placing a monitor in a central location downtown. The monitor will have a scrolling calendar with information and videos regarding what is happening in Olivet. The ultimate goal, Williams stated, is to get reliable information regarding the City and schools to the public.

Olivet Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Courtney Mead informed Council that the Olivet Chamber will be hosting its Oli-Ween trick-or-treating at downtown businesses on Saturday, October 22 from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. The Oli-Day Cheer tree lighting will take place downtown Olivet on Saturday, December 3 at 6:00 pm. She asked Council's permission to decorate the street posts for a holiday decorating contest. Mead also suggested placing the Olivet College 24/7 news monitor in the City's park between City on a Hill Community Church and Eagle Automotive. Mead invited the public to attend Olivet Chamber community meetings being held on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Penny, supported by Frohm, to approve the agenda with the addition of Item D Firefighter Association Storage Shed. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION by Walker, supported by Penny, to approve the September 2022 minutes as written. Motion carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Olivet College Student Center Special Use Permit/Zoning Variance – Action Item.

Olivet College Vice President and Chief of Staff Ryan Shockey informed Council that he attended a meeting of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board regarding the special use permit proposed for the Olivet College Cutler Student Center as well as zoning variance for off-street parking for the building. He stated the current parking lot for Blair Hall would be used for the Student Center and will provide 43 parking spaces with five spaces reserved for staff. Shockey said Blair Hall residents can use the gravel parking lot on the west side of Main Street, providing an additional 57 parking spaces. Shockey confirmed there are 766 registered student vehicles and 480 proper campus parking spaces not including Oak Hill Apartments, Long Apartments, and the Cutler Event Center. Discussion took place regarding parking availability, construction of a new parking lot, safety issues, seasonal parking restriction concerns, and a large number of unpaid student-incurred parking tickets due to students parking on the streets during the restricted period in previous years.

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Peterson, to grant the special use permit and zoning variance for the Olivet College Cutler Student Center. Motion carried 5-0 with the following roll call vote:

Frohm – yes Peterson – yes Marsh – yes Walker – yes Penny – yes Barlund-Maas - abstain

B. Spruce Street Walnut Tree Removal – Action Item.

Mayor Barlund-Maas informed Council that a resident on Spruce Street is asking for approval to remove a walnut tree due to the number of walnuts that need to be cleared from the sidewalk. Barlund-Maas stated there would be no cost to the city as the walnut tree can be sold. DPW Director Jerry Staggs said Cole Enterprises would remove the tree and haul the brush away. The City would be responsible for the stump removal using the funds received from the tree. Commissioner Gary Peterson stated that in the past residents were upset when the City removed a healthy walnut tree. Commissioner Steve Penny suggested asking students or churches that do community service to help the resident instead of cutting down a healthy tree. Discussion took place regarding the decision to keep the tree and provide the resident with a contact list of local volunteer organizations to help them clear the walnuts from their sidewalk.

MOTION by Frohm, to remove the walnut tree located on Spruce Street.
Motion failed due to a lack of support.

C. Rotary Park Playground Structure – Action Item

DPW Director Jerry Staggs reported that the wooden playground structure at Rotary Park next to the Olivet Fire Department is in disrepair and is not safe. Staggs stated that a decision needs to be made whether to replace the playground structure. Discussion took place about removing the structure due to age and safety. It was suggested to contact the Lions Club to solicit a donation to erect a new structure. Commissioner Don Walker stated that he is a Lions Club member and asked Staggs to detail what is needed for a new structure. Walker will discuss it with the Lions Club at the next meeting.

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Penny, to remove the unsafe playground structure at Rotary Park next to the Olivet Fire Department. Motion carried 6-0.

D. Firefighters Association Storage Shed - Action Item

Fire Chief John Collins stated that the Olivet Firefighters Association is asking permission to pour a cement pad on city property near the Olivet Fire Department on which to erect a 12' X 32' storage shed. The Firefighters Association will get any applicable permits, if needed, and will pay all costs associated with the storage shed.

MOTION by Peterson, supported by Walker, to approve pouring a cement pad on City property for a 12' X 32' storage shed. The Olivet Firefighters Association is to get the required permits and pay all costs. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of the Bills

MOTION by Frohm, supported by Penny, to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Department Head Reports

DPW Director Jerry Staggs – Staggs stated that Lindco Equipment did a great job on the refurbishment of the F-800 salt/plow truck. He said DPW worker John Krohn will take the water test in November. Tree removal and trimming continue around the City. Staggs addressed Olivet Chamber Director Courtney Mead regarding decorating the light poles in town as the City already puts decorations on the poles.

Police Chief Shawn Garcia – Garcia was absent. In his absence, Mayor Barlund-Maas asked Police Officer Stacy DuBois if she had anything to add. She said she did not.

Fire Chief John Collins – Collins reminded everyone that Dan LaPoint's retirement party would be Sunday, October 16 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the Olivet Community School cafeteria. He stated the Olivet Firefighters Association Halloween Open House is Monday, October 31 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. More information is available on the City of Olivet website. He informed Council that fundraising at the Firefighters Festival went well and the department was able to purchase two battery-powered fans for the Fire Department. Collins stated that it has been a busy month with 29 calls. He also provided an update that the ambulance service at Sparrow Eaton Hospital will remain unchanged.

Clerk/Treasurer Amy Huepenbecker – Huepenbecker stated that she is busy furnishing information for audit week and sending out absentee voter applications and absentee ballots for the November election. She said the office has been busy with water bill payments that are due next week.

Commissioner Comments

Steve Penny – Penny stated the Police Department continues to be busy with the increased traffic in town along with larceny and auto thefts. He reminded community members to stay diligent with what is happening in the community and to keep their cars and homes locked.

Don Walker – Walker had nothing to add.

Larry Marsh –Marsh had nothing to add.

Gary Peterson – Peterson stated Eaton County Transportation Authority (EATRAN) has hired Brad Funkhouser as its Executive Director. Funkhouser will also continue as Executive Director for Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA). Peterson said Funkhouser and bookkeeper Donna Webb have been doing a great job. He will have more information next month.

James Frohm – Frohm had nothing to add.

Joe Hoffdahl – Hoffdahl was absent.

Laura Barlund-Maas – Barlund-Maas said to stay safe and Happy Halloween.

Council meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Laura Barlund-Maas, Mayor

Amy Huepenbecker, Clerk/Treasurer