The Common Council of the City of Kokomo, Indiana met Monday August 29th, 2016 at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers for the purpose of a Public Hearing on Ordinance #6833.

Present: Wyant, Cameron, Haworth, Kennedy, Hayes, Whikehart, Sanders, Miklik

Absent: Young

President Hayes called for any comments from the audience, hearing none the Public Hearing was adjourned.

The Common Council of the City of Kokomo, Indiana met Monday August 29th 2016 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

The meeting was called to order by President Hayes.

Invocation was offered by Seyed Zarabadi of the Islamic Association of Kokomo.

Pledge:

Present: Wyant, Cameron, Haworth, Kennedy, Hayes, Whikehart, Sanders, Miklik

Absent: Young
The minutes of the Council Meeting Minutes August 8th, 2016 were declared approved as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS: President Hayes states, our next Council Meeting will be September 12th, 2016; with an Informational Meeting at 5:30 P.M. in the Louks Room. Public Hearing at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers and Council Meeting Immediately follows.

Councilman Miklik states, there is a school in Evansville Indiana, called Resurrection Elementary which is a private school. They have 328 elementary students that attend there; and they have raised $2,000 to give to the school system Lori’s Angels, for the Tornado Relief people. I thought that was remarkable.

Councilman Kennedy states, on behalf of Councilman Haworth and myself we were in the path of the storm. We were very lucky. The outpouring of support that came to this community, not only from those within the community but from those outside of our community is just unbelievable. Our City workers, workers from other communities who came to this community to help; are young people; and they worked hard. Many people just driving around offering water, food, what-ever they could do. Our power companies, contractors, who worked to get power back. These crews were not just local they were from all over the United States basically. I just wanted to thank our first responders, and everyone. It was amazing that we did not have serious injuries. Our properties can be re-built, our items that we lost can be re-placed, and we will come back because Kokomo’s Strong. We keep our prayers for those who lost everything; but they will come back too.

President Hayes states, we saw Kokomo at its best.
Cont. Communications.
Councilman Wyant states, I spent two days at the Civic Center helping. We want to thank Shirley, Berna Grace, for just opening their door and let 220 people stay there for the weekend; because they had no place to go. Their hearts are in the right place; and we want to thank them personally.

Councilwoman Sanders states, when I worked at the Civic Center one day, it was such a blessing. One of the gentlemen had been out, and working in difficult situations; and he said it’s so wonderful when a community can come together. We might not agree on everything, but you know we come together when there is a tragedy. I just echo those thanks to everybody.

There were no committee reports given at this regular meeting.

ORDINANCE 6833: AN ORDINANCE VACATING 2 EASEMENTS LOCATED IN THE CITY OF KOKOMO, INDIANA

Second reading

Ordinance 6833 was read by the Clerk by title only. Councilman Whikehart moved for passage on ordinance #6833 on second reading; seconded by Councilwoman Sanders.

Councilman Whikehart states, there is two easements located at 309 South Union Street, and 322 South Main Street. They need to be vacated this has to do with Flaherty & Collin; so in order to keep it going, I urge Council to pass Ordinance 6833 on second reading.

Vote for passage follows:
Aye: All
Nay: None
The vote was 8 to 0 for passage on second reading.
ORDINANCE 6837:

AN ORDINANCE VACATING RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATED IN THE CITY OF KOKOMO, INDIANA

First reading

Ordinance 6837 was read by the Clerk by title only. Councilman Whikehart moved for passage on ordinance #6837 on first reading; seconded by Councilman Wyant.

Councilman Whikehart states, this is a fourteen foot alley lying between Lots 85 & 86 on the West & Lots 93 & 94 on the East in Oakland Addition to the City of Kokomo, as recorded in Recorder’s Plat Book 2, Page 84. This is vacating the above right-of-way and appropriate for the following reasons: A. Petitioner owns an interest in real estate adjoining the right-of-way to be vacated. B. Vacating the right-of-way will not hinder or interfere with the public’s access to any of the adjoining real estate. C. The proposed vacation of the right-of-way will hinder the growth or development of the neighborhood, but will allow the petitioner to redevelop and grow within the neighborhood. D. Vacating the right-of-way will facilitate the development of all of the real estate in the affected block. This has no bearing on Ordinance #6841.

Vote for passage follows:
Aye: All
Nay: None

The vote was 8 to 0 for passage on first reading.
Ordinance 6838 was read by the Clerk by title only. Councilman Kennedy moved for passage on ordinance #6838 on first reading; seconded by Councilman Haworth.

Councilman Kennedy states, this is our salary ordinance for 2017; for City employees. Raises would be according to any contracted agencies Police, Fire and ASME that have contracts with the City. It would be accordance to the contracts that have been negotiated with those three organizations. This particular ordinance shows no raise for Non-Contractual for those individuals. I urge that the Council pass this ordinance on first reading.

Vote for passage follows:
Aye: All
Nay: None

The vote was 8 to 0 for passage on first reading.
ORDINANCE 6839:  

First reading

Ordinance 6839 was read by the Clerk by title only. Councilman Kennedy moved for passage on ordinance #6839 on first reading; seconded by Councilman Whikehart.

Councilman Kennedy states, this ordinance is also a salary ordinance; but this is for the Elected Officials which include the Mayor, City Clerk, and Common Council. This ordinance reflects no raises. It still reflects the same salaries, that were in ordinance in 2007. I do want to note Mayor Goodnight voluntary excepted salary payments of 2007 level of $79,754.00. I urge for passage of this ordinance on first reading.

Vote for passage follow:
Aye: All
Nay: None

The vote was 8 to 0 for passage on first reading.

ORDINANCE 6841:  
Rezoning: PR to M2
Location: 500 East Harrison
Petitioner: City of Kokomo

First reading

Ordinance 6841 was read by the Clerk by title only. Councilman Whikehart moved for passage on ordinance #6841 on first reading; seconded by Councilman Kennedy.

Councilman Whikehart states, this is a rezoning that came from the City of Kokomo being the petitioner.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.
The Planning Commission had a favorable recommendation 5 to 4. City of Kokomo requesting a change in zone classification from PR (Parks & Recreation) to M2 (General Multifamily Residential. The property is located at 500 East Harrison Street. The actual facility only takes up 15% of the park; there is some green space.

David Tharp, Deputy Mayor of the City of Kokomo. The City of Kokomo Administration fully supports this project, and this re-development. The rezoning of this allows for a project that fits many needs in our community. It’s a great way for the City of Kokomo to partner with Bona Vista, to help build support of housing for disable adults. If this land is not rezoned, then Bona Vista will not be able to build this much needed housing. The $1.5 Million Dollars in grant money and the ability to house 13 disable adults that goes away. There is not another option for this.

Currently there is a housing shortage in Kokomo, made all the worse by the recent tornados. Jill Dunn when she speaks, will talk about how that impacted their agency. This building will only be built on a fraction of the land, and all of the amenities remain: the Pavilion, basketball court, swing-sett, benches, and bell will all remain in the Park.

There will be some enhancements that can go along. Anytime you invest $1.5 Million Dollars on one side of the park, that is going to bleed over and do some new developments. It’s a good fit for the residents, that will live in this development. This is for development disable adults. It’s important that they have access to the amenities of the park.

They would be able to interact with folks in the park, and then also use features like public transportation. Placing this project in an underutilized section of Meridian Park ensure that these residents have quick access to recreational amenities of the park, access to public transportation, and close to downtown.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

If you look at the project as a whole, this rezoning allows important amenity for a segment of our community that needs support, and needs housing.

Councilman Cameron states, this enhancement to the park, after the fact, sounds great; but prior to all of this there is so transparency, to myself, and for the people of the community. We are in a catch 22 right here; what is taking part in there for those people; is something like the people is going to be dis-placed right now in the tornado they have nowhere to go. That park has been let go for years. I did not know until two weeks ago that the water fountain did not even work. Looking at that park it has a lot to be desired. If we are going to enhance the Bona Vista, that whole park needs to have enhancement people in there; even bringing back the crafts and arts that once was there.

If there is nothing in the park for kids, kids won’t go. I remember that park when I went to St. Joan of Ark that place used to be packed. I was not happy when I found out what was going on. I understand what needs to be done, but the people in that area felt like they were second class citizens from the stand-point that they did not know anything about it; nor did I the Councilman of that District. I talked to those people; and a few of them said if they would of come to us first we could of set down, and worked something out. I hope we learned something from this lesson here; don’t hide stuff from people, or even the Representative Councilman from that area or Councilwoman. They need to be involved transparency needs to be.

This may not seem like monumental to some people but it was for the people that use that park. I know a lot of people said they drive by there, and don’t see anybody there. There is not too much in there; it was a park that was let go. There used to be a little school in that area and that bell has to stay where it is; I talked to the Mayor about it.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

I was very disappointed being on the outside looking in on this; when everybody else knew it; that was involved. I understand where the people are right now; but you have to look at what can come out of this. It can be a good working relationship in the community. That facility has to have a generator, and if something goes out in your neighborhood I was told that community area would be in comfort. Do we want to dis-place these 13 people? There not any different then you and I. There just in a different roll; circumstances happen.

Jill Dunn President of Bona Vista Programs, states, I hope we can make this a win for everybody. Bona Vista lived thru our second tornado in 2013. We lost a building, and Wednesday late afternoon Lagona Street looked like your brush with bristles sticking out of it. Our ceiling tiles fell in and we had a mess. We opened today. We have housing for 73 supportive living adults, and six group homes in Kokomo, two in Peru eight people in a home. Community members you need to understand were not here to take anything away. Were here to give to you; we are going to be giving back to you. We are going to be part of your families. Many of my adults have no one in their life.

The Community room would be for use for some of you scheduled times, and activities. In the event that we would have thunder storms we would have generators there that you would be invited in to come, and stay and till it was safe for you to leave. Our adults want to interact with the Community. The space we are taking is about 37% of that property. We have many foster children attending Bona Vista Programs who may someday grow up and also need housing. Any one of us could have a child with the developmental delay. We are an important part of the Community, and we want to give back to you, and make you part of the Bona Vista Family.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

Some gentleman asked me about our employees, who do we employ at Bona Vista. We employ very special people, people who love giving back. Their servant leaders are here to serve. Right now I would like to introduce you to one of the people that work with our employees. Her name is Grace Miller.

Grace Miller, I am the HR Director at Bona Vista Programs. I am speaking today because Jill has received some questions about staff that we hire. Since I have the honor of working directly and hiring our staff I would like to respond to these concerns if there are any questions. To offer assurance is that these people serve have some degree of certainty with them. They are not hostel. The proposed homes will be for a quite segment of the community. This segment requires 24 hour staffing; somebody will be present in the home 24 hours a day.

All staff is required to pass multiple back ground checks before gaining employment with Bona Vista. By law our staff is not allowed to have any convictions that could en-danger the people that we serve. This regulation protection will extend to you once the project has been approved. Our staff, your potential neighbor, can-not have convictions of any drug related offences or even a misdemeanor battery charge. Bona Vista has quite a reputation for increasing home values in the area where we build and develop.

This means your home values will increase as we maintain this property; in addition we can offer jobs in the neighborhood. We have immediate openings available for care-givers of the development disable. I would ask that you really think about the benefits that this can bring to your back yard. This project can be really positive for your community.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.
Jason Fronczak 748 S. Bell Street Kokomo, Ind. states, I live directly across from the park. I have went through-out my neighborhood, and talked to them. For us this is not a question of whether or not Bona Vista should be able to build in our neighborhood. The issue to me, is that a public park is a valuable resource to this area. It is what unites the neighbors in our community. I personally feel that it is very wrong for us to go into that park, and to take any portion of that, and remove it from access. A petition was presented to the President of the Council. It contained names all over the community that are going to be affected by the removal of this piece of property.

Randy Morris, Park Superintendent states, I was also a six year member of the Bona Vista Board of Directors; so I have some personal interest in their client base, and there success. Mr. Cameron pointed out some very obvious things. We do have a lot of parks that we need to maintain. We have 34 parks in our system, and some of them are better kept then others; but at no point have I ever received any kind of complaints, or comments, about Meridian Park being un-kept or not to satisfactory needs. I think that is important to point out.

As far as the transparency issue the park does a master plan every 5 years. It was conducted in 2014 concerning the status of the park system. During that master plan there is a part for public comment. During the public comment there were actually zero references to Meridian Park for or against that Park. All of this is available on the Park Website. This is the Master Plan. I am referencing, and I would like quote from page 13 of that Master Plan “Funding, acquisition, and maintenance was another common theme.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

Several people mentioned the need to review the usage and maintenance of park land. Consider selling or giving away some of the smaller parks that are under-utilized or not used.” As far as transparency goes, the public has given us input about the current status of our park system, and exactly what we are looking at doing moving forward. Thank you.

Jerry Paul 1326 South Webster Kokomo, Ind, presented the Council Members with a copy of a Proposal for Meridian Park.

Councilman Kennedy states, keep in mind we are just looking at the rezoning, not the actually structure that could be built.

President Hayes states, Councilman Kennedy makes a good point; we are not here to pass an ordinance on zoning.

Edna Smith 1901 Pleasant Drive Kokomo, Ind. (Montessori School) states, I have called many times for the need of that park. We do care about that park. We care about the space for our children to run, and play in the grass. I am here to speak for the children who use the park.

President Hayes states, we did receive a letter from Mr. Hoshaw.

Councilman Kennedy states, I call the question, seconded by Councilman Haworth.

Councilman Whikehart states, I have only been on the Council for about eight months; but as a private citizen before I have seen a lot of development come into the community. Kokomo Municipal Stadium, a number of Housing Projects that have come in to our community has been successful. I see this as an absolute win, win.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

It’s taking a property off of City tax roll, and giving it to an organization that has been so entrench in our community not just our community but surrounding communities as well. This is an amazing thing for Kokomo, the Neighborhood, and Bona Vista. I think it is a wonderful opportunity. I think we are going to be able to provide 13 people with something that no other surrounding others can even do. I applaud this. As we grow its going to be difficult at times, these will be growing pains; but we have to continue to be competitive, and this is how we do that. I applaud what Bona Vista does, and what they’re going to continue to do. There taking this Multi-Million Dollar project, and investing in our community; and I appreciate that.

Councilman Miklik states, from what I have heard; I think this is a really a gross failure of communication. I agree with the residents, and I agree with the City in wanting to support Bona Vista, and I agree with Mr. Cameron. I talked to Mr. Cameron, and I was so upset; that I read it in the newspaper before anybody else knew about it. I certainly did not know about it, because we did not communicate very well. If this is nothing more than a classic case of how to communicate in your community, I think we all have a lesson to learn here. I think green space is absolutely valuable. I have spent 8 years on the Park Board. I was on the School Board when Meridian School Park was given to the City; so when you look at it, and you think about what we are talking about here tonight were talking about communicating with each other.

If Parks are not being kept up, there our community members that use that park will volunteer to come and cut the grass. Cutting grass is not a reason to give away a Park. If you on the other hand say well look at the green space in our community, look at what we got we want to be inclusive.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.

We want people to come to our community. We have to look at green space we give them; the neighborhoods that it is located in, and what we do for the people from Bona Vista who also has to have a place to live. I am very attached to these homes, and Bona Vista; and support it. I am not attached to the way we communicate.

A Five Year Master Plan is pointed out by the Park Superintendent. I have done that Master Plan, and I have set there and nobody from the public shows up. How many people knew that the Master Plan was being re-done? At that point there is another opportunity to voice your input with the City, with the Park Superintendent. We have a wonderful City. We have dedicated people that are not afraid to speak up, and you have to value that. At the same-time we have value the ability to come together and share that knowledge with each other in an un-emotional environment. My question is how many kids use that park, how many kids live in that neighborhood, nobody can tell me. We do not tract that; from my point a view this is never been about Bona Vista this is always been about a Park.

I believe that if you look at real estate, and look at the highest investment use, it probably is a good thing for Bona Vista to share that space; people need to come together. If you want to get my input, and you want to work with me I am a reasonable person; but at the end of the day facts speak for themselves. That’s all I got to share. I think we can all improve our communications here.

President Hayes asks, have you taken any gage of how much green space we have in our current parks right now?
Cont. Ordinance #6841.
Randy Morris states, were over 400 acres currently; but that does not include all the miles of trails that we maintain. We have recently been doing some plantings, in our Jackson Morrow Park to reduce the amount of mowing that we currently do. In that park particular we have reduced the mowing there by almost 20%. This is something we are doing to better maintain all of our parks, and return them into more park like settings.

President Hayes asks, after hearing some of the concerns about the condition of Meridian Park, will there be plans to take a look at those concerns?

Randy Morris states, absolutely. I have already texted people to take care of the needs. We do address all concerns. Mr. Cameron has given me some concerns about parks. We do have a lot of parks. We do our best to maintain all of our parks to the same standards. Since this issue has arisen I have been in Meridian Park quite frequently, and I have been by myself.

President Hayes states, so if nothing else, it’s getting some attention.

Randy Morris states, it’s getting more attention than it was receiving.

President Hayes states, Park Board Meetings are Public Notice. People can come. I encourage anyone in the audience to go to the Board Meetings, come to the Council Meetings.

Councilwoman Sanders asks, do you have your Park Board Meetings on KGOV?
Cont. Ordinance #6841.
Randy Morris states, no we don’t. It is at 7:00 A.M. We do not get a lot of attendance, you are all invited. It is a huge responsibility to take care of all the parks that we have. We rank as one of the most park space in almost any City inside Indiana. We do very well in the United States about the amount of park space that we currently have.

President Hayes states, I encourage you after the meeting to find out when the next Park Meeting is.

Randy Morris states, the next Park Board Meeting is next Tuesday 7:00 A.M. at the Park Department.

Jill Dunn states, we offer Early Childhood thru our courses thru Early Head Start. We have childcare solutions that comes to childcare facilities, and helps with licensing. There are a lot of resources here that we can offer to all of you. I just want to remind people that were not just building houses for 13 developmentally disable adults, were offering the neighborhood some tremendous resources.

Jason Fronczak states, with the petitions that I raised if you just accounted for one child per family you would be looking at about 200 kids.

Councilman Wyant states, I have been driving that park ever since this came up. I have been driving by it 3-4 times a day. I have been in the park, walked thru the park, and even talked to people. I hardly ever see any children in that park playing. I wanted to personally myself check this park out; and I will continue going by and seeing how many children use this park.
Cont. Ordinance #6841.
President Hayes states, there has been a question called on the motion, and it has been seconded; being that there has been a question on the motion, and has been second. I will have to call for a vote.
All those in favor of the question on the motion:
Aye: All
Nay: None
The motion carries.

All those in favor of passage of ordinance #6841:
Aye: All
Nay: None
The vote was 8 to 0 for passage on first reading.

President Hayes states, this marks the end of this Council Meeting and our next Council Meeting will be September 12th, 2016 with an Informational Meeting at 5:30 P.M. in the Louks Room; Public Hearing at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers and Council Meeting immediately following.

Adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

______________________________
PRESIDING OFFICER

ATTEST:

______________________________
CITY CLERK