

**BRIDGMAN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 3, 2021  
6:30 PM**

The regular meeting of the Bridgman City Council was held on May 3, 2021 remotely by means of electronic conferencing and called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Stacy Stine at 6:30 p.m.

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Pam Hahaj, John Bonkoske, Jan Trapani, Stacy Stine, Sam Stine

**COUNCIL ABSENT:** Georgia Gipson, Vince Rose

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Ganum, City Clerk Holm, Attorney Senica, Police Chief Unruh, Public Service Director Kading, Building Inspector Mattner, Assessor Baumann

The pledge of allegiance was led by Ezra Reppart, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Bridgman Elementary School.

**Mayor Pro-Tem Stacy Stine** explained the meeting procedure and how the public will be able to comment under the Hearing of Citizens.

**APPROVE/AMEND THE AGENDA:**

**Motion** by Council Member Trapani, seconded by Council Member Hahaj to approve the agenda for May 3, 2021 as presented,

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yeas:** Bonkoske, Trapani, Stacy Stine, Sam Stine, Hahaj

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

**HEARING OF CITIZENS:**

- Dennis Kreps, Bridgman Public Library Director – Would like to remind everyone that the library is open to the public without an appointment, and he touched on a few upcoming programs.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Motion** by Council Member Bonkoske, seconded by Council Member Sam Stine to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2021 regular meeting,

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yeas:** Trapani, Stacy Stine, Sam Stine, Hahaj, Bonkoske

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

**Motion** by Council Member Hahaj, seconded by Council Member Sam Stine to approve the bills in the amount of \$52,627.18

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yeas:** Stacy Stine, Sam Stine, Hahaj, Bonkoske, Trapani

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

### **Consideration of the establishment of a Social District in downtown Bridgman**

Ganum stated that the ball started rolling with Arthur Havilicek, Director and CEO of the Southwest Regional Chamber, encouraging the city to establish a social district as a number of other communities have done in the last year. The bulk of the work has been done by the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) who went through the management and maintenance plan that was prepared by Havilicek. Several changes have been made including reducing the size of the original district. This area is to help spur economics in the small downtown and spin off to the retail businesses. Lazy Ballerina has also written a letter in support of the proposed district.

The council discussed the information at length with Havilicek and the main discussion points were as follows:

- The three establishments that are going to be a part of the district already have outdoor seating areas so what would having this district gain.
- Concerns with people bringing coolers into the district and tailgating in the parking lot.
- Concerns with trash and sanitation and who will be responsible for both.
- This district could be temporary or long lasting so it can be revisited after the summer season to discuss how it is working out.
- Have the council regroup after Labor Day with more information and statistics from businesses to see if they are benefiting from this.

Havilicek addressed some of the council comments and concerns:

- Creating the district would help with the indoor capacity limitations right now, draw communities together as a whole, and help spring the economy.
- Most of the rules are set by State Statute. Having the date and time placed on the cups will help deter tailgating.
- The licensees would have to police the area around their business for trash and the people with drinks.
- The other municipalities that have created a social district have not run into too much trouble and he feels pretty confident that Bridgman will prevail from this.
- Amendments to the plan can be made at any time which allows for flexibility, as long as those amendments fit within the State Statute.

CIA Chair Anderson addressed some of the council comments and concerns:

- The district is being kept within a small area which will alleviate some of council's concerns.
- It is the licensee's obligation to police the people with drinks.
- Creating this district will relieve some of the current congestion at Transient for instance. It will allow people to grab food from one place, a drink from another, and sit in the courtyard area to enjoy.
- There are no obligations to keep the social district if it is not working. It can be discontinued at any time.
- The participating businesses would be responsible for sanitation and trash outside their business while the Parks Department staff would be responsible for the rest of the district. The CIA will discuss hiring a specific person to handle this to supplement the Parks Department at their next meeting.
- Four sandwich signs will be displayed along with a stencil being made to outline the social district boundary. The crosswalks will also be outlined to better display the locations to cross Lake Street to help slow down the jaywalkers and convince people they have to go to the crosswalk.

Lauren Kniebes who is one of the owners of Lazy Ballerina addressed the council from her perspective as a business owner in that district. They have a small outside seating area, but not enough to currently sustain their business with the current capacity limitations. She feels it would draw people into the community and bring more people to the downtown area and businesses.

**Motion** by Council Member Hahaj, seconded by Council Member Bonkoske to adopt **Resolution 2021-05, A Resolution to Establish a Social District,**

**Roll Call:**

**Yeas:** Sam Stine, Hahaj, Bonkoske, Trapani, Stacy Stine

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Gipson, Rose

**Motion carried.**

### **WORKSHOP ITEMS AND REPORTS:**

#### **City Manager's Report**

Ganum talked about a new House Bill introduced to the State Legislature like the one from a few years ago which will allow short term rentals, HB 4722. This bill is backed strongly by the real estate lobby. Bridgman has one of the most stringent short term rental Ordinances and has been defended in court.

Attorney Senica stated it could potentially change what the neighborhoods look like everywhere and local authorities would not be able to do anything about it. Allowing short term rentals is a big selling point to realtors, but it could lead to a change in property values and neighborhoods. Bridgman has taken a tough stance on short term rentals and has previously gone to court. She is recommending the council pass a resolution that is strongly against this proposed bill. The council can act tonight against this and pass a formal resolution at the next meeting. If the council would like, she can contact her Representative from the 78<sup>th</sup> district after the meeting and let him know that Bridgman is strongly against the House Bill and will be working on a formal resolution to adopt at the next meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stacy Stine suggested getting names of committee members to contact in addition to a collective resolution. After discussion was had by council on short term rentals, the consensus was to have Attorney Senica reach out to her Representative from the 78<sup>th</sup> district and create a formal resolution to adopt at the next council meeting.

### **HEARING OF CITIZENS:**

- Bill Boyd – Thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Stacy Stine for a job well done tonight. He would also like the clock at the Fire Department fixed as he has asked council numerous times.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

- Member Hahaj is still waiting to hear about the Memorial Day Parade. She should hear the final answer later tonight.
- Member Sam Stine thanked Members Trapani and Bonkoske for willing to participate in the shoreline protection committee with Lake Township. He is disappointed with Lake Township for not moving forward.

- Member Trapani agrees with Member Sam Stine. She also commented on the city roads that are turning into bad shape and inquired about obtaining any matching funds from the State for road projects. Ganum explained the three projects planned for this year and how the city is going to address other roads in the near future.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Stacy Stine is extremely unhappy with Lake Township and shared two comments regarding their letter. Their attorney's opinion to back off and not take a stance is a dangerous message to community members. The substance of the letter is to leave it to the State to make the decisions. The State Statute allows for local municipalities to voice their opinion.
- Member Bonkoske stated elected officials are obliged to take action and not put their head in the sand per say. To ignore it suggests that it is not important. EGLE looks to local communities for a box to operate within and looks for guidance which is important. The point of the committee was to come to the table to get educated, not to make a decision. This is extremely disappointing and their leadership at the Township is lacking.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion** by Council Member Trapani, seconded by Council Member Sam Stine to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m.,

**Roll Call:**

**Yeas:** Hahaj, Bonkoske, Trapani, Stacy Stine, Sam Stine

**Nays:** None

**Motion carried.**

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Stacy Stine, Mayor Pro-Tem

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Allyson Holm, City Clerk