

TOWN OF MUNSTER
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
JULY 1, 2024

A meeting of the Munster Town Council convened at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, July 1, 2024. Ordinance 1830 is the basis for holding electronic meetings. The announced meeting location was Munster Town Hall, 1005 Ridge Road, Munster, Indiana. Councilors, Staff, and the public had the option to participate via Zoom meeting technology.

Councilors George Shinkan, Joseph G. Hofferth, Chuck Gardiner, Jonathan Petersen, and David B. Nellans were physically present at Town Hall. Also present in Town Hall were Clerk-Treasurer Wendy Mis, Controller/Interim Town Manager Patricia Abbott, Police Chief Steve Scheckel, Police Lieutenant Dan Broelmann, Fire Chief Mark Hajduk, Town Attorney Dave Westland, and Interim Director of Operations Chris Spolnik. Representatives from the media were present.

President Nellans presided and opened the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Town of Munster accepts public comments submitted both in-person and electronically. The public was informed, via the agenda posted at munster.org, that questions or comments about an item on the agenda were to be emailed to wmis@munster.org. All in-person public comments are limited to two minutes and limited to a total of twenty minutes for the public comment section.

Mr. Dave Curtin, 1045 Azalea, a street known for traffic calmers. Right now, there are four chicanes on the street and two of them are in front of his home. One takes up all his parking. He has invested in his home and learned from a prominent local realtor the chicanes will have a negative impact on the resale value of his house. Were surveys done of the stakeholders? Were there any injuries that required that they be placed in this area.

Mr. Mike Englert, 113 Beverly, reported the Beverly committee meet and provided an update. The neighborhood team of seven have overall concepts with ancillary greenspace ideas. They got in contact with the landscape architect and will all get together with the Town to move forward.

Mr. Mike Dujmovic, 1833 Tulip Lane, had a question about Resolution 2134 and asked if you had the option to extend the public comment beyond the first ten people or twenty minutes. Also, will the clock stop if the Council answers the question, or will that take away from the public commenters' time allotment? He also asked about a play street violation as references in proposed Ordinance 1959. Attorney Westland clarified that we could extend the time.

Mr. Mike Wachala, 7 Terrace Avenue, thanked Council for closing the road on the state line which has been the best traffic calming measure. Closing the road will redirect traffic to

Ridge and the businesses there. Closing the road has giving the road has given the neighbors their neighborhood back. People are driving around the barricades onto the lawns. Since the road has been closed, there is noticeably less garbage, more bicycles, and more walkers on both sides of the state line.

Ms. Jennifer Grow, 8339 Northcote, supporting the opportunity to reimagine Ridge Road. Urban renewal is an opportunity for tax revenue near the new train station, to improve safety and reduce accidents while creating a more livable area. Receiving the funding was extraordinary and the plans were too. Bringing younger families will be a boon is a boon especially in a political climate where tax breaks for seniors is being seriously discussed.

Mr. Mitch Barloga, 1900 Bluebird, For the Love of Munster submitted a letter reiterated asking for a public forum to discuss the Ridge Road project. He believes more people in Town support the project than don't. Heavy public comment developed the plan that was submitted. During the election issues were raised but only one concern was emergency access, and that concern was addressed. Having the roadway going from five to three is proven is a proven strategy. What you didn't run on is giving back the \$17 million. Everyone in the room would agree that Ridge Road needs to be improved. For the Love of Munster is going to move forward with its own public hearing in the next month.

Ms. Dawn DeMario, 8546 Forest Avenue, Terrace is used as a cut through. Recently the road was closed, and the neighborhood is noticeably quieter and safer. Yes, it is inconvenient but please keep Terrace closed.

Ms. Marsha Horak, 1008 Azalea, the streetlight between Oriole and Columbia has been removed and especially with the chicanes is especially dangerous. She appreciates the speedhumps but they between Oriole and Columbia where the chicanes are, they are not slowing down. The trash collectors are expressing concerns about the chicanes. The neighborhood has lost eight parking spots from the chicanes.

Ms. Sarah Hirsch, 247/303 Beverly Place, they love Ridge Road and the local businesses. It is not very safe and not very attractive. It does not do the businesses over there justice. She works with federal granters and if we give the grant back, we will never get another federal grant. She urged us to invest in Munster.

Council President closed public Comment and advanced to Old Business. Electronic Comments were reviewed at the conclusion of Old Business and included in their normal position in the minutes.

Clerk-Treasurer Mis shared a summary of emails were submitted electronically. Twenty-six emails were submitted supporting Re-Imagine Ridge Road, two emails supporting Beverly Place, three emails did not like the chicanes on Azalea, five supported permanently closing Terrace at the state line. One email requested the trash cans at Bluebird Park get emptied more frequently, one email wants the Town not to purchase the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, one email encouraged public comments. One email reported a streetlight was taken out during the Azelea construction. Five emails support leaving Ridge Road as it is currently configured.

Three emails requested a public forum to discuss the Ridge Road project. One email expressed concern about the impact of the construction equipment on recently improved Chestnut. Finally, an email had questions about Resolution 1958 and the improper use of the bike paths, e-bikes, electronic scooters, and minibikes.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of a regular meeting held on June 17, 2024

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHER REGISTERS

Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-5M dated 05/31/24 totaling \$63,276.73
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-5N dated 05/31/24 totaling \$172,948.61
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-6I dated 06/20/24 totaling \$94,453.95
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-6J dated 06/27/24 totaling \$591,831.69
Confirmation of Voucher Register #24-6K dated 06/28/24 totaling \$504,571.57
Approval of Voucher Register #24-7A dated 07/01/24 totaling \$96,992.70

TREASURER'S REPORT

May 2024 Treasurer's Report was presented.

SIDEWALK WAIVER OF FEES

At the October 16, 2023, meeting, the Council adopted Ordinance 1920 to provide financial relief from the costs of the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program. Under the ordinance, homeowners with a household median income equal to or less than 40% of the most recent United States Census Bureau Household Median Income can have the sidewalk replacement fees waived. As of June 2024, the median income was listed as \$101,851.00 with 40% equaling \$40,740.40.

Staff received one request for a waiver under this policy. The homeowner completed the Request for Waiver of Costs form, presented the required income tax returns, and was found to have met the income threshold. The full cost of sidewalk replacement was \$1,220.00 with the homeowner portion to be waived being \$610.00.

Councilor Gardiner moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to suspend the rules, waive the readings, and adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCES 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959: CODE ENFORCEMENT AND SCHEDULE A

Council held the first reading on Ordinances 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959 at the June 17, 2024, meeting and scheduled for second reading and adoption this evening. These ordinances are to correct issues discovered while implementing certain parts of the Town Code.

1. Ordinance 1956 amends Chapter 54: Traffic and Vehicles
2. Ordinance 1957 amends Chapter 12: Weeds and Rank Vegetation
3. Ordinance 1958 amends Chapter 1: Ordinance Violations Bureau
4. Ordinance 1959 amends Schedule A

Councilor Hofferth moved, with a second by Councilor Shinkan, to adopt Ordinance 1956, and Ordinance 1957, and Ordinance 1958, and Ordinance 1959, as presented. Attorney Westland clarified a play street is either a temporary or permanently Town closed roadway which would allow for children to play. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2134: MEETING CONDUCT

Proposed RESOLUTION 2134 is A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, INDIANA ADOPTING AND ESTABLISHING RULES AND POLICIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR ALL GOVERNING BODIES OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER. The Indiana General Assembly has recently adopted IC 5-14-1.5-3.3 which is effective July 1, 2024. This new legislation addresses public participation in meetings of a governing body and allows for the adoption of rules and policies regarding conduct.

Council deems it in the best interest of the Town to create uniform rules and policies regarding the conduct of public meetings. The resolution formally adopts the long-held practices of limiting the amount of time an individual may speak and the total time allowed for public comments at a meeting. The resolution mirrors the statute in regards to issuing warnings for disruptive behavior of an attendee including possible removal from the meeting.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, to adopt Resolution 2134 as presented. Councilor Hofferth read the resolution. A brief discussion ensued regarding the first amendment speech rights. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, Petersen, and Nellans voted in favor of Resolution 2134. Motion carried.

NORTHCOTE TRAFFIC CALMING

This matter was tabled at the last Council meeting. On April 26, 2024, quotes were received for the Northcote Traffic Calming project. The project includes installation of speed

humps on Northcote Avenue between Ridge Road and South River Drive. The quotes were reviewed and tabulated by SEH. The Engineer's Estimate for the work was \$33,632.00.

Site Services	\$29,900.50
Rieth-Riley Construction, Inc.	\$29,989.80
Milestone Contractors North, LLC	\$42,700.00

The project will be paid for from the Municipal Surtax Fund.

Councilor Shinkan moved, with a second by Councilor Hofferth, approve Site Services for a total cost of \$29,900.50. Councilor Petersen expressed concerns that the neighbors need to buy in to traffic calming measures and the need for scientific evidence and diagnostics before installing traffic calming. Councilor Petersen motioned to table and failed to get a second. Councilors Shinkan, Hofferth, Gardiner, and Nellans voted in favor; none voted against, Councilor Petersen voted present. Motion carried.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Clerk-Treasurer Mis reported from the June 20 Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) meeting that a Resolution was passed which asks the State Board of Accounts to itemize the invoices to government units and to assist government units with the costs of required audits. Mis also shared NIRPC will be looking for projects this fall, and the Town should begin planning now for the project they would like to see funded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings of the Town Council begin at 7:00 p.m. at Munster Town Hall.)

The Town Council will hold a regular meeting on Monday, July 15, 2024. The Redevelopment Commission will hold a regular meeting immediately following.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, and upon a motion by Councilor Shinkan and seconded by Councilor Hofferth, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m. by voice vote.

David B. Nellans, President

ATTEST:

Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer