

OTTAWA PORT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 18, 2016

ROLL CALL

Katie Troccoli called a regular meeting of the Port District to order at City Hall on March 18, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. with the following board members present: Katie Troccoli, William Franklin, Jr., Mark Stoudt, Charles Sheridan and John Stone. Also present were Boyd Palmer, Reed Wilson, Dave Noble, and Rich Burton.

MINUTES

Minutes from February 19, 2016 meeting were presented and approved by unanimous vote following a motion by William Franklin, Jr. and second by Mark Stoudt

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

TREASURERS REPORT

Katie Troccoli advised that account balances were \$217.14 in checking and \$10,546.39 in money market. Discussion took place about possible expense cutting. At some point perhaps the website can be shared with the City of Ottawa if the city revises their website.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Boyd Palmer reported hiring taking place with MBL and Fairmont Minerals. Boyd met with the Kroger south side owner. The business is doing well and only one vacant space exists in the building complex. The South side still does not appear to support retail sales which are dominated by activity North of the River.

Boyd spoke about a recent task force at the hospital about health care and issues relevant to drawing medical professions to Ottawa. Quality education is a major drawing factor and our schools do not have good testing report cards. Relations between the hospital and schools are further jeopardized by the hospital obtaining some property tax relief.

Downtown occupancy is good. Reed and Boyd commented on several business interests including the Hope Center and a wine bar. The Lone Buffalo is doing well and drawing people to other restaurants and retail establishments in the downtown.

Reed commented about the upcoming Wine Festival. Event Brite will be utilized for ticket sales. Reed spoke about pending efforts to continue to promote the Starved Rock Marketing Program which includes Ottawa and other nearby communities. The Times will no longer sponsor a number of Starved Rock events but will likely continue with publications. Reed spoke about MCAT public transportation which provides about 300 rides a day in Ottawa. Work is being undertaken to get the service Medicaid qualified.

Reed commented on an anticipated mural on the old First National Bank facade facing Madison Street. Reed advised that the new regional Economic Development Corporation will open next week and an executor director search will be started.

David Noble spoke about the City's work on abandoned properties and grant applications relevant to blighted property. Grant work includes requests for brownfield funds and flood protection for the wastewater treatment plant. David also commented on levy improvements desired by the high school, LaSalle County and possibly SABIC. David also commented on possible grant funding for a wetlands project at Harpers Farm. Such a project could provide compensatory storage of other regional development. David also spoke about options being considered for control of storm water. Website information is now available for illustration of

flooding at various river flood levels. David also commented on the possibility of dam failure studies for our area. David spoke about the possibility of an I-fiber project which would use City infrastructure to make available increased bandwidth within the City.

MEMBER REPORTS

Charles Sheridan and John Stone lead discussion about the Great Lakes Basin Railroad Project designed to bypass the Chicago congestion. Part of the proposed track will be within the port district. Reed commented on challenges to get the project financed and approved. John spoke about the costs of track construction and the possibility of use of retired railroad beds.

John reported on some slowing of our local economy with the drop in energy costs and the moving of some industry to Mexico.

Mark commented about the availability of the Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority.

NEW BUSINESS

A resolution was adopted to set our budget hearing for May on motion of William Franklin, second by Mark Stoudt and unanimous oral vote. A resolution was adopted to renew our SAM registration on motion of William Franklin, second by Mark Stoudt and unanimous oral vote.

ADJOURN

There being no further reports or business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m. upon motion of Charles Sheridan second by Mark Stoudt and unanimous oral vote. The next regular meeting of the district will be April 15, 2016.