

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.
3. Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Michael V. Radtke Jr., Maria G. Schmidt, Liz Sierawski, Michael C. Taylor, Henry Yanez, Barbara A. Ziarko.

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, City Attorney; Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk; Judy McHale, Recording Secretary.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the agenda as presented.

Yes: All. The motion carried.
5. **REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER**
Mr. Vanderpool began his report by reminding everyone of the holiday schedule in observance of Labor Day, noting the City offices will be closed on Monday, September 6 and will reopen on Tuesday, September 7. There will be no refuse collection on Monday, September 6, and it will resume on Tuesday but be delayed one day throughout the week, with Friday's collection taking place on Saturday. He suggested anyone with questions on the refuse schedule can visit the City's website or call Public Works at (586) 446-2440.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Luke Bonner, Senior Economic Development Advisor, to give an update on the exciting economic development projects that are ongoing throughout the City.

Mr. Bonner began his presentation by speaking about the active role that the economic development group has on projects. This role includes making a business case about doing an investment in the City of Sterling Heights, helping a company locally expand by finding other options in terms of real estate or space, by coming up with creative ideas and solutions for redeveloping underutilized properties into something more productive. Since 2015, the impact of economic development projects in the City have totaled \$176,540,424 in total investments, 745 new jobs, and \$11 million in new City tax revenue.

These projects include the Sunnybrook golf course redevelopment that leading to Mitchell Plastics, a tier 1 supplier to FCA, being the lead anchor company there, redevelopment of the Liberty Park softball complex into the Amazon distribution center, and working with Utec that started their company in a 1,000 square foot space in Sterling Heights and grew to a facility on Center Drive, and ultimately built a 100,000 square foot facility in the corridor improvement authority district on Van Dyke. Mr. Bonner spoke about more recent projects that include the Aperam expansion on 18 ½ Mile Road, the Mag Industrial expansion on Mound and Center Drive, and the RicMan headquarters building at 18 ½ Mile and Mound Rd.

Mr. Bonner stated that total capital investment in Sterling Heights that includes residential, commercial and industrial asset classes has increased over the past years. This is based on total value of building permits pulled. Since 2018 \$773 million building permits have been pulled. The surprising year was 2020 which was a very difficult year but still continued to have a lot of expansions, new

constructions and renovation projects, and had \$358 million in building permits pulled that year.

Mr. Bonner spoke about some of the other strategic initiatives and projects they are working on. They are working with the Lakeside Mall ownership to actively put together a plan and proposal for the future of the mall and they hope to present this in the next 60 day. The Chaldean Community Foundation which has already been officially approved for all of their funding and tax credits from the Michigan Housing and State Development Authority. He also spoke about the Element co-working space at Velocity that has a ribbon cutting ceremony planned for September 20th and has signed two new tenants in the software development field.

Mr. Bonner next spoke about the new retail projects coming forward that include Total Wine, Mission BBQ, Shake Shack, and Jollibee which is an Asian based fast food chicken restaurant that is becoming a very popular restaurant and will draw fans from all over.

Mr. Bonner gave an update on the new housing options coming to Sterling Heights. Single family home prices have been on the rise over the past year with developers looking for any possible piece of land to build houses because the demand to live in Sterling Heights is so high. There is also an overall demand for multi-family housing including apartments and rentals. There was not any new multi-family housing being built for about ten years, until Tony Gallo built the very successful Sterling Landings at 15 Mile and Van Dyke a few years ago. Mr. Bonner

stated that the kinds of new residential multi-family housing that are being developed are very different and are more of an urban style rather than traditional suburban apartments. The former Sterling Inn/Wyndham hotel has been approved for a conversion into smaller apartments that will cater active professionals who spend the majority of their time at work, traveling, or out with friends. Next, Mr. Bonner spoke about the new proposed Tony Gallo project on Schoenherr that will be built in the underutilized land that is currently the parking lot area to build a four-story housing product. Lastly he described the Chaldean Community Foundation which is again more of an urban style development with ground floor retail, street-facing, and walkability of Van Dyke and the proximity to Dodge Park and downtown Utica.

Mr. Bonner said it has been a very active couple of years, and he looks forward to continuing to work on more new exciting projects in the future.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that these developments help to continue the synergy that's been underway in the City for a number of years. It also helps to fuel the City's growth and keep property values very strong, not only in the commercial and manufacturing areas, but most importantly in the residential areas.

Mr. Vanderpool thanked the Economic Development Team lead by Mr. Bonner for their hard work.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Stephen Downing, from Macomb County Public Works for an update and overview of the forthcoming Macomb Interceptor Drain

Rehabilitation Project. This is a significant project that is being coordinated by the Macomb County Public Works office and will entail some major traffic control.

Construction Manager Stephen Downing provided an update on the MIDDD Interceptor project through the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, and began with the Segment 5 Rehabilitation project which extends from the ITC Corridor east along 15 Mile Road to just east of Hayes Road. The project will include cleaning and removal of sediment from the interceptor, installing new control structure and dewatering pump station, slip-lining 7,000 lineal feet with glass fiber reinforced polymer pipe, and spray-lining 1,300 lineal feet of pipe and manhole risers. Mr. Downing went over the current schedule of the project and noted that they are now approaching the part of the project that will have a noticeable public impact, with a completion of the project in September 2022. The impact to the public is due to the location of the interceptor which is under 15 Mile Road. Mr. Downing stated that they have tried to limit the public impact by placing the access shaft at the extreme end of interceptor. A letter was mailed to the residents of the Villa Fontana subdivision that will be impacted by a lane closure at the entrance to their subdivision, and businesses along 15 Mile Road.

Mr. Downing then gave an update on the Segment 6 Rehabilitation of the MIDDD Interceptor project on Garfield along the border of Clinton Township and Fraser. Although this project does not take place in Sterling

Heights, Mr Downing stated that because Sterling Heights is the largest MIDD community member it was important to keep them informed on this project.

This portion of the project will be rehabilitating a section of pipe at the intersection of 15 Mile Road and Garfield and will involve extended closure of multiple lanes on 15 Mile Road with an expected completion date of February 2023.

Mr. Downing invited Chief Deputy Public Works Commissioner Brian Baker to speak about the MIDD Interceptor projects. Mr. Baker stated that these two large MIDD projects will extend the life of the pipes by decades and prevent another collapse. They will coordinate with the City on a traffic plan and signage. The costs of these projects will be funded by the districts use of \$12.5 million recovered from lawsuits and insurance related to the 2016 sinkhole, State and County American Rescue Plan Funds, and they have also been approved for a low interest rate loan from the State it needed. Mr. Baker noted that in the past six years the annual sewer rate increases averaged between 10% and 15%, but in the last four years the annual charges to Sterling Heights has been 3% and this year less than 1%. Mr. Baker stated that all of the information is available on the County's website

And expressed his appreciation for everyone's cooperation and patience during this process.

Mr. Vanderpool thanked Mr. Baker and Mr. Downing for the update and said a link to the County's page will be provided on the City's Cone Zone page for the latest updates.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for questions from the Council members.

Councilwoman Schmidt expressed concern for the continuing odor problem in the ITC corridor area across from the high school that has a new subdivision nearby, and inquired about any plans for future odor mitigation.

Mr. Downing stated that there are certain components within the Segment 5 Rehabilitation project that will help alleviate some of the odor issues, and they have also just completed a full odor and corrosion study within both the MIDDD and OMIDDD systems. This area in the ITC corridor is the confluence of the MIDDD and OMIDDD interceptors which is why there have been historical odor issues in that area. An odor control facility that will be located in the corridor is going out for design and will anticipated to be awarded at the October drain board meeting. Mr. Downing is hopeful that this facility along with others will help to greatly reduce the odor issues.

Councilwoman Ziarko expressed her concerns about the Sterling Relief Drain and that although the plantings there are for different reasons including the Monarch butterflies and the absorption of the rainwater the water level never comes up to where the plantings are, and they get a lot of complaints from residents along the drain. She expressed that if this took place in a vacant lot or a homeowner's

property it would be considered a property maintenance violation, and would appreciate it if Mr. Baker could consider at least mowing the area at the top of the drain that is flat.

Mr. Baker addressed Councilwoman Ziarko's concern. He noted that the Sterling Relief Drain project was done through a \$2 million grant from the federal government, and that it will also include additional plantings in the invert east of Schoenherr next year. He explained that if the plantings on the bank are mowed by a lawn mower then the grass will die in the summer, which will cause the dirt to harden and crack and not allow for the infiltration that is needed. He noted that it is not going to look like a lawn because it is designed to absorb the rainwater and create a habitat. He also stated that although it does get mowed by a County tractor once a month in the summer and every two weeks during the active growing season, it cannot be mowed less than 5 or 6 inches, otherwise the grass will die. He said this would cause soil to flow down into the drain and not maintaining the water quality.

Councilwoman Ziarko responded that maintaining the 5 or 6 inch height would make it look more appealing from the road. She stated that in an established City we want it to be appealing to people who drive through the City. She said she would appreciate it if Mr. Baker could look into it.

Councilwoman Ziarko next expressed another concern of residents east of Schoenherr who have complained about four-wheelers entering from the Freedom Hill property along the drain where homes don't have fences.

Mr. Baker said they did receive a grant for a 1.3 mile maintenance trail along the Sterling Relief east of Schoenherr to Freedom Hill, and they are working with the City to decide who is going to maintain the trail. As part of the bank erosion project of the Red Run and the Sterling Relief with additional plantings there will be a maintenance trail on the north side, not the south side.

Councilwoman Ziarko inquired about what could be done about vehicles that should not be there.

Mr. Baker explained that part of the Sterling Relief is City property and perhaps that is something they could enforce. Mr. Baker stated that their concern for the Sterling Relief is the mowing into the habitat that is taking place on the west side of the drain. They have received better compliance with people who were placing sheds and trampolines on property that was not theirs, but the letters were mailed and signs were posted to address the issue of mowing the habitat. As people understand that it is a natural wild habitat designed for conveying the drain better they will come to appreciate it. He said they have seen this in the Clinton River Spillway where people initially complained.

Councilwoman Ziarko asked if Mr. Baker could provide a time limit of when the plantings will be mature enough to look as nice as the pictures originally.

Mr. Baker said that it will take some time, and that they have also received a grant for the noxious weeds to address the invasive weeds that are not preferred.

Mayor Taylor spoke next about the closure of the eastbound lanes on 15 Mile Road and asked for clarification of whether the eastbound lanes would be closed and have two westbound lanes and the turn lane open.

Mr. Downing confirmed that the plan is to close one of the eastbound lanes and to keep the other eastbound lane open along with two westbound lanes and the center turn lane.

Mayor Taylor asked if it would be possible to have two lanes each way with the inside lanes being the turn lanes in order to maintain two-way traffic. He also asked if that would be up to the City because 15 Mile Road is a City street.

Mr. Downing confirmed that it would be up to the City to make that decision.

Mayor Taylor asked for confirmation that the western boundary of the lane closure is going to be near the high school and the eastern boundary will be Hayes Road and what the timeframe for the closure would be.

Mr. Downing stated that the closure on 15 Mile Road between Fontana and Hayes will likely be in effect for the next six months. When the spray-lining work is completed at that location there will be a subsequent lane closure

on 15 Mile Road that will move to varying locations and there will be an updated plan issued when that lane closure changes. He said they only have access to the interceptor about every 1500 to 2000 feet, and they will work to get as much done as they can efficiently through the manhole at Fontana and address the need for moving traffic control if necessary.

Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Downing and Mr. Baker for the information and for their presentation.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski for a presentation on some exciting news about the police department.

Chief Dwojakowski proudly announced that the Sterling Heights Police Department has completed the two-year accreditation process and is now officially a state accredited police department, one of only 38 departments in the state. He introduced retired chief Neal Rossow, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Director of Professional Development and the Accreditation Program Director as well as Ronald Wiles, the Chief of Police in Grand Blanc and the MACP President.

Mr. Rossow stated he was honored to be here tonight and he knows that Sterling Heights has a great police department. He has known Chief Dwojakowski for many years, and he was able to meet many of the Sterling Heights officers who came through the academy while he was an instructor. Mr. Rossow said he is familiar with this police department and its reputation in the area.

Mr. Rossow said the police department voluntarily entered the very difficult accreditation process that involves 108 standards of national and state best practices set by the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission that include bias based police training and de-escalation. The process involved taking their written directives and policies and procedures and weaving them through the 108 standards in addition to creating proofs to show that they are following the standards. Mr. Rossow emphasized that this accreditation process involved a lot of work and that it is not given, it is truly earned.

Mr. Rossow introduced Chief Wiles who stated he was proud to be here on this very special day for the Sterling Heights, the Sterling Heights Police Department and residents that are served. He congratulated Chief Dwojakowski on this significant personal and professional accomplishment as it is not something everyone can do. Chief Wiles emphasized that the accreditation makes great departments better and will certainly better serve the residents of Sterling Heights and the officers under Chief Dwojakowski's command. He then presented a certificate that read, "To all who see this certificate, know that Sterling Heights Police Department, having voluntarily complied with the standards established by the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission deemed essential for the delivery of professional police services and the protection

of their community is hereby awarded this certificate of accreditation.

Effective on this first day of July in the year of 2021 for a term of three years.”

Chief Dwojakowski thanked everyone and then introduced his executive command staff of Captain Pappas and Captain Hopper who were present, and Captain Lucas is away at a conference. He elaborated on the long process of not only changing hundreds of policies and general orders but actually living by these rules and practices.

Chief Dwojakowski stated they are a much more professional organization because of the accreditation process and thanked MACP for providing the scaffolding for accreditation, the executive command staff, Captain Pappas for his role as the accreditation manager for the last two years, and Captain Hopper for making sure all officers are in compliance with the new rules.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for comments or questions from the Council members.

Councilwoman Schmidt congratulated the department for their accomplishment and for going above and beyond in making this a transparent department who has embraced the community. She appreciates everyone in the department both civilian and uniformed sworn officers, this is proof that they are the best of the best, and she is very proud.

Councilman Radtke congratulated Chief Dwojakowski, Captain Pappas and Captain Hopper. He said they have shown a willingness to embrace change, it's tremendous for the department and makes them a stronger, better department

because of all of the work they have done. Councilman Radtke said he is proud that they can say they are the best police department in the state, and they now have paper to back up all of the hard work they have done.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski echoed her colleagues' congratulations and can appreciate how difficult changing policies and procedures is. She thanked Mr. Rossow and Chief Wiles for coming to present the certificate, they knew they had the best and now have the proof.

Councilwoman Koski praised Chief Dwojakowski, and his Captains as fantastic and this proves what a great department they have. She asked Chief Dwojakowski if they start working tomorrow on the next three years. He said there is a standard and proofs that must be submitted each year and a full recertification in the third year. Councilwoman Koski again stated how proud she is of all of them.

Councilwoman Ziarko expressed her pride for the great job they did on obtaining the accreditation, and she knows they are doing their best every day. She believes Captain Pappas was the perfect person for the position of accreditation manager. She thanked them all for voluntarily taking this on and for making Sterling Heights a better City.

Councilman Yanez complimented the police department for doing a fantastic job and upholding the model of being a progressive community by showing that the police department can and did change for the positive. He stated that the training officers deserve accolades because it's important to make sure everyone is trained to the new standard. Chief Dwojakowski identified Sergeant Hakim as running the

training along with Jason Pollock. Councilman Yanez said he is proud of all of the hard work they all did.

Mayor Taylor thanked the police department on behalf of the all of the residents, business owners, and visitors of Sterling Heights. He acknowledged that most people's interactions with the police department are often not under the best circumstances and to know that we have a police department that is accredited and following the most rigorous standards to treat every person fairly, honestly, with dignity and respect based on the best practices is incredibly important. Mayor Taylor stated that not every community has a population that loves and respects its police department and wants the department to flourish or have a good working relationship between council, police chief, and the police department Sterling Heights has. He said this is reflected in our crime statistics, property values, and why people want to make Sterling Heights the place to live or relocate. He is proud to of serve alongside the men and women of the police department and they deserve all of the credit for the accreditation. He thanked them for everything they do in keeping our City the great City that it is.

Mr Vanderpool gave an update on the power outages that included 5,000 parcels in Sterling Heights without power for up to 3 to 5 days, and 700,000 outages across the metro area. He reminded residents that they can go to the DTE website for information on the credit/rebate program. He stated that residents who are eligible will automatically receive the credit on their bill in the next 45 days.

Mr. Vanderpool concluded his report by requesting that, at the conclusion of tonight's agenda, the City Council convene in Closed Session pursuant to Section 8-E of the Open Meetings Act, for Council to consult with the City Attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with Macomb County Circuit Court Case number 20-308-NI and case number 2019-1606-NI.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Taylor stated this item is consideration of the Consent Agenda. He opened the floor for public comments.

- Paul Manni – regarding item 6-I; asked if the City may consider removing cottonwood trees; regarding item 6-J; thanked the City for doing something about the roads, requested consideration of more street lights.
- Benjamin Orjada – regarding item 6-E; asked what the selection process was for the model of the 3-D printer selected.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that while it would be difficult to remove all of the cottonwood trees in the City, they are not on the approved list of trees so they would not be allowed in any new developments. In addition, any cottonwood trees in the right-of-way that are diseased, dead, or dying are scheduled for removal as quickly as possible.

Mr. Vanderpool addressed the question about street lights as part of the 19 Mile Road resurfacing. He said he will review with the City engineer to see if there are planned lights or the ability of adding any other street lights. He also noted that there will be a pedestrian crossing midway, connecting the nature trail where it crosses 19 Mile Road that will have a strobe light similar to the one on 17 Mile Road that is very bright.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that there was a team of library staff that looked at a number of different 3D printer models and made the selection. He said the library director could give more details.

Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- A. To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 04, 2021.
- B. To approve payment of the bills as presented: General Fund - \$1,574,389.66, Water & Sewer Fund - \$5,368,493.34, Other Funds - \$2,397,565.90, Total Checks - \$9,340,448.90.
- C. **RESOLVED**, to purchase one (1) LIFEPAK 15 V4 cardiac monitor/defibrillator, with accessories, one (1) LIFEPAK 15 upgrade kit, eight (8) LIFEPAK CR2 AEDs, and fifteen (15) LIFEPAK 15 Lithium batteries from Stryker Medical, PO Box 93308, Chicago, IL 60673-3308, in the cumulative net amount of \$58,161.38.
- D. **RESOLVED**, to purchase sixteen (16) Scott self-contained breathing apparatus and thirty-two (32) Scott air cylinders from West Shore Fire, Inc. 6620 Lake Michigan Drive, Allendale, MI 49401-0188, at unit prices bid for a total cost of \$111,600.
- E. **RESOLVED**, to approve the purchase of two (2) MakerBot Sketch Classroom 3D printers, including guide, supplies and technical support and maintenance, from MakerBot, One MetroTech Center, 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY, 11201, pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of Sale at a cost of \$3,083.39, and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents required in conjunction with this approval.
- F. **RESOLVED**, to approve the Service and License Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Pivot Point Partners LLC, 4235 Scioto Parkway, Powell, Ohio, 43065 for a one-year term and authorize the City Manager to extend the term for one additional year on the same terms and conditions and execute all required documentation on behalf of the City.
- G. **RESOLVED**, to approve the Settlement Agreement and Release in resolution of a pre-litigation personal injury claim and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents required in conjunction with this approval.
- H. **RESOLVED**, to approve the purchase of natural gas from Constellation NewEnergy – Gas Division, LLC, 2211 Old Earhart Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, at pricing available through the State of Michigan’s MiDeal cooperative purchasing contract, #171180000000214, for the period October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2024, at a unit price of \$3.49 per MCF and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents required in conjunction with this approval on behalf of the City.

- I. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for tree and stump removal, inclusive of storm damage removal services, to Wonsey Tree Service, Inc., PO Box 1142, Alma, MI 48801, for a two-year period at unit prices bid.
- J. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for 19 Mile Road Resurfacing, Dequindre Road to Ryan Road, City Project #21-376, to James P. Contracting Inc., 67222 Van Dyke, Washington, MI 48095, in the amount of \$722,365 and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the project contract on behalf of the City.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

8. **CONSIDERATION**

A. Mayor Taylor stated this is to consider approval of a memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and MAPE Professional and Technical Employees. He invited City Manager Mark Vanderpool to give a presentation.

Mr. Vanderpool explained that an increasing percentage of police and fire responses involve individuals who are affected by drug, alcohol, or mental health issues, and in addition, the City is experiencing an increase in code enforcement cases that involve serious health, safety, and welfare conditions directly attributed to mental health issues. While police, fire, and code enforcement personnel do their very best, they are not trained or equipped to deal with these incredibly difficult situations, or have access to the resources needed to benefit these individuals. He stated that many municipalities across the United States are recognizing that police, fire, and code enforcement responses are not always the most cost effective means in dealing with these cases, and are hiring licensed social workers to provide their needed expertise, critical resources and assistance to achieve positive outcomes. Mr. Vanderpool stated that the hiring of the City's first social worker was proposed at the 2021 strategic planning session and

approved by the City council in the recent budget. He explained that the social worker will help multiple disciplines within the Sterling Heights organization, and listed some of the noteworthy job duties that include providing social services through crisis intervention, diagnostic evaluation, emergency response, and response for criminal cases, domestic disputes, traumatic incidents, indigent populations, victims of violent crimes, mental health and substance abuse cases. Mr. Vanderpool indicated that the City was required to negotiate with the MAPE professional and technical employee's bargaining unit to create the social worker position and job classification, and the memorandum of understanding and job description has been approved by that unit. He respectfully requested that the Mayor and City Council approve the memorandum of understanding so they can forge ahead with filling the position as quickly as possible.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments.

- Benjamin Orjada – thanked the council for taking this topic seriously and that it is very important.

Moved by Sierawski, Seconded by Radtke, **RESOLVED**, to approve the memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and MAPE Professional and Technical Employees creating the Social Worker job classification and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it on behalf of the City.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski asked Mr. Vanderpool to confirm that this is a full-time position.

Mr. Vanderpool replied that it is a full-time position that will be based out of the police department but collaborate with a number of City disciplines.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski commented that social worker can be very helpful in providing options other than arrest, and dealing with the true issues. She commented that social work is not a highly paid profession and feels that the City will get a lot of benefit for the cost.

Councilman Yanez stated that social workers are incredibly important and are underpaid. He asked Mr. Vanderpool to clarify who in the police department the social worker will be reporting to directly.

Mr. Vanderpool answered that it has not been decided yet, but that a position of this type would normally report to a lieutenant. Chief Dwojakowski will finalize this before the position starts.

Councilman Yanez asked Mr. Vanderpool if there were going to be policies and procedures developed and inquired how other departments would have access to the social worker if they are working under the direction of the police chief or lieutenant.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that these incidents are dealt with in a collaborative team approach where city departments meet regularly such as the Safe Homes Initiative, and the social worker would be joining that team. Mr. Vanderpool also clarified that there were no plans to develop specific standard operating guidelines or administrative procedure and policy order as it relates to the position itself, but there may be some orders written related to specific issues such as drug abuse, pan handling, excessive animal hoarding, etc.

Councilman Yanez expressed concern about what role the social worker will have when dealing with these cases, and asked if it would simply be a referral to county, state, or area agencies, or would there be follow-up involved. He acknowledges there is a lot of room for growth and potential, but would like to see some boundaries. He said he would like to see the social worker help develop some standard operating guidelines.

Councilman Schmidt asked Mr. Vanderpool if the social worker would have set working hours.

Mr. Vanderpool answered that the social worker would have normal hours, but understands that the employee and the City will need to be flexible when emergencies happen during off hours, or depending on the caseload. This occurs currently when the Safe Homes Taskforce is called in for an emergency during their non-working hours.

Councilman Schmidt stated that having a social worker is a tremendous tool to add to the team, and it's important for the public to know that the Safe Homes Taskforce already deals with the issue of afterhours work.

Councilwoman Koski inquired if we would be lending the social worker to other communities or agencies.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that because of the workload there will not be that opportunity, but there will be instances where the social worker will need to collaborate with other communities on cases. He said they anticipate that given

the trends in society, not only in Sterling Heights, there is likely going to be a need for additional support services in the future.

Councilwoman Koski inquired whether there are any other local communities that have social workers.

Mr. Vanderpool answered that Livonia has a social worker position, and most likely Grand Rapids and Detroit do as well. He is not aware of any other municipalities in Macomb County employing a social worker, and he anticipates that may be changing in the future.

Councilwoman Ziarko expressed that she wants this position to be successful and voiced her concern that the salary that is budgeted may not draw the best candidate needed for a large community like Sterling Heights. She believes there needs to be some flexibility in the salary range in order to find best person for the job.

Councilman Radtke fully supports the social worker position and it will be believes it is excellent for the police department and the City as a whole, but he did echo Councilwoman Ziarko concerns about the salary being too low.

Mayor Taylor requested that Mr. Vanderpool explain how the salary set for this position was achieved.

Mr. Vanderpool reported that a salary survey was done that looked at other communities and the state system to develop the salary for the position. He noted that the salary is slightly above the average that social workers are earning in the market at this time with a top salary of over \$70,000 in addition to the excellent

benefits offered by the City. He appreciated the concerns and will monitor it closely to see if it needs to be adjusted in the future.

Mayor Taylor stated that the most important thing is the creation of this new position and his hope is that this will allow the City to continue to provide even better services to residents. He emphasized that the mental health crises going on must not be ignored. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Vanderpool for bringing this to Council and to the union for negotiating the position.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

B. Mayor Taylor stated this is to consider a nomination to the City of Sterling Heights Planning Commission.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comment, but no one spoke.

Mayor Taylor explained this is a mayoral nomination.

Moved by Schmidt, Seconded by Radtke, **RESOLVED**, to postpone the nomination to the Planning Commission to the September 07, 2021 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

C. Mayor Taylor stated this is to consider appointments to City of Sterling Heights Youth Advisory Board. He opened the floor for public comments, but no one spoke.

Mayor Taylor explained this is a council appointment.

Moved by Radtke, Seconded by Sierawski, **RESOLVED**, to appoint Merna Baqa to the Youth Advisory Board to a term ending June 30, 2022, subject to the appointee meeting the qualifications set forth in Charter §4.03 and taking the oath of office within two weeks.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Schmidt, Seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to postpone the appointment to the Youth Advisory Board to the September 07, 2021 regular City Council meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

9. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for comments from the audience.

- Paul Manni – pothole in road; Viceroy & Tarry, and the pond behind Trillium Drive
- Unidentified woman – social worker; will they have subordinates

10. **REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor Taylor requested that Mr. Vanderpool provide an update.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that he believes there will be a need in the future to provide additional resources to this area that may include subordinates to the social worker but there are no plans at this time.

Mr. Vanderpool spoke about the issue with the road at Viceroy & Tarry, and will have it inspected right away and get it scheduled for improvement.

Mr. Vanderpool next responded that the Trillium pond is within a conservation easement controlled by EGLE and stated that the growth on top of the pond is normal.

11. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Taylor asked if there was any new business.

Councilwoman Ziarko explained that many of the council have been out to Trillium pond and understand that unlike the natural habitat at Sterling Relief, a conservation area it must be left untouched.

Councilwoman Schmidt asked Mr. Vanderpool to address how the change from quarterly to monthly water billing will work and answer resident's concerns about the administration fee that will be charged each month.

Mr. Vanderpool explained the move to monthly billing will have a new water rate structure that will have benefits to the residents. He invited residents to go to the DPW page on the City's website to see the new water rate structure and to see an estimated amount of their new monthly bill will be, and in many cases there will be a reduction. Mr. Vanderpool said the new water rate structure will provide benefits to the residents that the ability to use water at non-peak times at a lower rate, being able to detect water leaks quicker, and the ability to use a phone app that tracks daily usage to be able to identify problems. He clarified that the administration fee is a fixed amount that is currently \$39 quarterly, and the new water bill will have 1/3 of that amount, or \$13 each month. The transition to monthly billing won't take place until the installation of the new readers is completed, sometime next year.

Councilwoman Schmidt described the excitement around Jollibee coming to Sterling Heights, and the elation by people who will soon be able to go to Jollibee here in Sterling Heights.

Councilman Radtke reiterated the excitement people have about Jollibee and he is happy to say we have one more interesting new restaurant in Sterling Heights. He spoke about the ribbon cutting ceremony attended by City Council earlier in the day for the new mural at Ventimiglia's Restaurant and it shows how far public art can bring the community together.

Councilwoman Koski asked Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski to show her scarf that has the image of the mural on it. She said the scarf is available for purchase through Community Relations and the money goes towards the arts program.

Councilwoman Koski also inquired if cottonwood trees that were counted in the tree preservation could still be counted, but not kept.

Mr. Vanderpool said he would need to check with the City Planner for more information on that.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski wanted to mention that the mural at Ventimiglia's Restaurant by Wendy Popko uses technology through a phone app that allows the mural to become interactive.

Councilman Yanez inquired if a synopsis of the census results for Sterling Heights would be presented.

Mr. Vanderpool was pleased to announce that the population has grown to 134,346 people. The City is collaborating with SEMCOG on the format to keep it consistent with other communities and a summary will be posted on the website soon.

Councilman Yanez stated he is interested in the demographics especially in the age of the population.

Mayor Taylor spoke about Jollibee being the first location in Michigan, and along with Portillo's and Shake Shack on Hall Road it will draw retailers to that area. He expressed his excitement to be part of the mural presentation at Ventimiglia's and praised Wendy Popko for the tremendous job she did.

Mayor Taylor spoke with Marty Walsh, U.S. Labor Secretary about businesses across the United States, including Sterling Heights, struggle in finding access to talented employees. He had a productive conversation with Secretary Walsh about ways the City of Sterling Heights can partner with the federal government to find opportunities to get employees workplace training and workforce development.

13. **CLOSED SESSION PERMITTED UNDER ACT 267 OF 1976**

Mr. Kaszubski stated there are two items for closed session this evening.

Moved by Ziarko, Seconded by Schmidt, **RESOLVED**, to adjourn into closed session.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Taylor, Yanez, Ziarko, Koski, Radtke, Schmidt, Sierawski

No: None

The motion carried 7/0. The meeting recessed into Closed Session at 8:46 p.m.

14. **ADJOURN**

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Sierawski, **RESOLVED**, to adjourn the meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

MELANIE D. RYSKA, City Clerk