

Village of Concord Council Minutes

The Village Council of Concord met on August 8, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Village Commons Meeting Room.

Council Members Present: Jeremiah Bush, J. Jackson, T. Norris, K. George, A. Meeks, and M. Lovitt.

Council Members Absent: T. Thurman.

Public Present: K. Wyatt, B. Raut, J. McCormick, K. Tyler, J. Shirk, N. Shirk, Township Supervisor D. Saenz, County Commissioner E. Poleski, Deputy L. Jacobson and DPW Director J. Blossom.

For their review, Council Members were e-mailed or given: Bills to be Paid in Amount of \$42,103.37; Revenue & Expense Report thru 7/31/2023; Concord Area Police Blotter July 2023; July 2023 Fire Board Minutes; June Fire Run Report; August Village Voice; 7-11-2023 Village Council Meeting Proposed Minutes; 8-8-2023 Council Meeting Agenda.

Motioned by A. Meeks, seconded by J. Jackson, to accept the minutes from the 7/11/2023 meeting. Motion approved by all.

Public Comments:

D. Saenz said the Township's Trash Collection Day held in the Concord School's parking lot went well.

K. Wyatt inquired if J. Bush and D. Saenz had met and discussed the billing services pertaining to the Fire Board Agreement. J. Bush stated they had not met as they both had planned vacations and their schedules hadn't cooperated.

B. Raut brought some paper copies of examples of amendments she would like the Council to explore to add to the Village's Blight Ordinance. J. Bush offered to take the papers and present them to the Planning Committee where they would discuss and investigate her suggestions. M. Lovitt stated the Planning Committee would be happy to look into the matter and bring back their findings to the Council. Raut also informed the meeting that the latest Art on Main Street event would be taking place Saturday with the most vendors they've had yet. Raut said several Art on Main Street events were planned on into the Fall.

J. Shirk and N. Shirk inquired about the status of the Village's plan to relinquish lands where the rights for future roads and alleyways had been planned. The Shirk's stated they were informed by the Village they would be receiving some of this relinquished land behind their home on First Street, J. Blossom stated they should have received some paperwork from Jackson County on the matter. The Shirk's stated they had not received any paperwork and this was why they were in attendance. J. Blossom stated he would contact the Village's Surveyor and Jackson County to see if he could get some information on the matter and contact the Shirks with his findings.

County Supervisor E. Poleski apologized for his absences from the last couple of Council Meetings. Poleski stated the Village should be aware the Act 51 Gas Tax funds the Village receives from the State of Michigan will be less going forward.

K. Tyler stated the new owner of the former Shannon's Building stated they had been busily filling dumpsters by removing almost a century's worth of accumulations found in the Shannon's Building. Tyler also stated they had received an old picture of what the northern part of the building looked like when it was built in the 1880s and intended to remove the brick covered front facade and return this part of the building to its original look. Tyler stated their plan is to hopefully finish renovating the exterior and roof of the building.

The Payment of Bills in the amount of \$42,103.37 was presented. Motioned by A. Meeks, seconded by K. George, to approve the payment of bills in the amount of \$42,103.37. Motion approved by all.

L. Jacobson discussed his July 2023 Blotter. To view a copy of L. Jacobson's Concord Area Police Blotter, go to the Village website at www.villageofconcord.com look on the home page – quick links. A copy may also be picked up in the Village Office.

L. Jacobson informed the Council they are pretty certain the majority of the recent vandalism occurring around town is the work of a group of juveniles, including the most recent destruction of the light sensors in the Gottschalk Park bathrooms. Jacobson stated he had spoken with the subject's parents and was working on collecting more evidence to prove the suspects were behind these recent rash of activities. J. Blossom stated maybe the Village should explore getting Wi-Fi and putting in a security camera system in the park. The Council agreed and asked Blossom to explore options for putting in Wi-Fi and security cameras.

L. Jacobson stated he and Village Clerk J. Lefere had been taking multiple complaints from residents about the outdoor furniture found in front of the Italian Bistro Building. J. Blossom stated he too had received complaints. Jacobson stated they were unsure how the Council wanted them to address the matter and asked the Council to make a decision of the permissibility of the furniture. J. Bush stated, we get asked often what we are doing to try to get businesses to come into town and it was understanding it was the Bistro's eventual goal to have the furniture which is commercial seating serve as outdoor seating for their customers. Bush also stated the ordinance allows bistro seating and the furniture was only slightly different in the space it took up and it had been measured and was allowing ADA compliant spacing for those passing through. B. Raut stated the current ordinance allows bistro seating but for operating businesses and the Italian Bistro is not currently operating. J. McCormick stated the building was home to a business Choice Concepts LLC. McCormick also stated he felt the furniture was a community place as they have invited any public passing by to feel free to stop by and use the furniture and were also using the furniture to meet and greet the neighbors. D. Saenz wanted to reiterate his statement from the last meeting that the type of outdoor seating is the type of seating his family looks for when choosing a restaurant and also stated he had talked to many residents and they liked it as well. Saenz also questioned if maybe the residents complaining were actually talking about the accumulation of items and the bar and seating on the side of the building instead. J. Bush stated it was the furniture in front of the building which was the most common complaint. J. Shirk stated she felt there were more pressing issues such as the large empty blue house on Main Street and the condition of sidewalks in certain areas. Bush stated the blue house in question does not meet the threshold for being out of the blight ordinance compliance and said the Village puts funds aside and fixes sections of the Village sidewalk system yearly. J. Blossom stated the Village hadn't fixed any sections of sidewalks over the last few years as we were focused on the large two phases of street replacement.

J. Blossom stated the Village was able to finally get the Jackson County Street sweeper into town and it would be busy cleaning our streets for the rest of the week.

In Village Clerk Judy Lefere's absence J. Blossom shared with the Council information Lefere left with him. The Village's new website is up and running. There still may be some glitches and things to figure out but in the near future it should be good to go and much more user friendly.

The Village put up a yellow plastic chain between the Clerk's and Treasurer's desks and will be hanging a sign from it reading "Authorized Personnel Only." This was done in response to a group of individuals who are entering public municipal buildings and filming with video camera equipment. Neighboring municipalities have had this happen and as these buildings are public the individuals can walk around and film in any open areas. A neighboring district in the process of hiring a new employee had several potential employee applications complete with personal identity information sitting on their desk and these individuals filmed this. The chain and signage serve as the necessary blockage to keep these individuals from entering space beyond the desk. L. Jacobson stated this group showed up at the Sheriff's Offices the week prior and they are the same type who were in the Village Post Office several years ago. Jacobson continued, these people are looking for a confrontation which could be a violation of their rights to enter a public space and are interested in filming it to generate content for their websites as well as to use for litigation purposes. K. Tyler stated his soon as part of college class studied this phenomenon and the goal of these groups is entrapment. L. Jacobson stated the police have been trained on how to handle these situations and they should be called immediately to deal with these groups if you witness them engaging in these activities.

Council Comments:

M. Lovitt stated the Planning Committee would be happy to look into the ordinance on bistro seating once the lawyer offered their opinion and into B. Raut's suggestions for the blight ordinance.

With no other business to discuss, it was motioned by A. Meeks, seconded by J. Bush, to adjourn at 7:34 pm. Motion approved by all.



Approved by Jeremiah Bush, Village President



Date