

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
April 28, 2025**

Minutes are not verbatim. To Hear Full Comments, Please refer to the – Watch City Meetings Section of the City of Valparaiso's Website (WWW.CI.VALPARAISO.IN.US)

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday, April 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Costas called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Domer, Pupillo, Anderson, Hunt, and Kapitan.

2024 Opioid Grant Recipient Updates

In addition to the recipients of the 2024 Opioid Grant who spoke at the last meeting, Strides Against Suicide and Overdose was a recipient. They had a member present at tonight's meeting. They addressed the Council and reported how they have spent funds received and how it helped their organization.

Councilmember Anderson -They are going to launch this year's applications for the Opioid Grants tomorrow. Applications will be accepted for a couple of months.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – She advised all but four of last year's recipients have received and spent their grant. The unspent total is just over \$100,000. She is not sure when this year's funds will be received. She will be putting just over \$36,000 in Unrestricted Fund and just over \$85,00 goes in Restricted Fund. She has this in spread sheets and will share it with anyone that asks.

Councilmember Anderson – He gave a history of how these funds came to the City. In 2023 the State received settlement money from the big pharmaceutical companies in regard to the opioid epidemic. Those funds are split up between the municipalities and counties. Leadership is left to decide how those funds can help the community.

Councilmember Cotton – The money comes in over 18 years. It is his understanding there are additional dollars from new settlements.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – In 2023 and 2024 the City received additional funds from new settlements.

MINUTES

MOTION: Councilmember Kapitan moved to adopt the April 14, 2025 minutes. Councilmember Cotton seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 6, 2025

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK

Councilmember Kapitan – She advised the Resolution has been changed to a Proclamation recognizing International Compost Awareness Week May 4-10, 2025. The County has already declared this week by Proclamation. She presented a Proclamation that highlights the importance of composting.

Councilmember Cotton – How long has composting existed?

Councilmember Kapitan – The Food Waste started as a pilot program at the end of 2023. They have collected over 15,000 lbs of food waste.

ORDINANCE NO. 7, 2025

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA AMENDING THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO

Councilmember Kapitan moved that Ordinance No. 7, 2025 be read a second time by title and a third time in full and be considered for adoption with the opportunity for the offering of amendments. Councilmember Cotton seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Ordinance No. 7, 2025.

Councilmember Kapitan – Does this require a Public Hearing?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – Legally one is not required. The Plan Commission held a Public Hearing. You can ask for public comment. Tonight the Council has the option to adopt, reject, amend, or table. If it gets brought back to the Council, it has to be republished. If nothing is done within 90 days of when the Plan Commission certified the recommendation, then it is adopted as if the Council had approved the Ordinance.

Jessica Gage – This is a petition by Neighbors Corp. to rezone Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Block 13 of Smith's Addition from Campus (CA) to Residential Transition (RT). Project Neighbors is proposing two units on each of four lots.

Carmen Vincent - Executive Director of Project Neighbors– They are interested in purchasing and developing Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Smith's Addition. There are four lots at the end of Locust Street by VU law school and the railroad. The purpose is to create four duplexes totaling eight living units. Each will have three bedrooms and 1,200 sq ft. These are long time rental homes designed with dignity, safety and attractiveness in mind. By developing this land, they will be improving the appeal of the area while addressing the growing need for cost effective and attainable housing in accordance with the Mission of Project Neighbors. She advised they have supporters in the audience that would like to talk tonight.

Public Comments

Mike Alonzo – 911 Jefferson. He supports this project. Project Neighbors has a proven record.

Martha Ray - 911 Jefferson. She supports Project Neighbors. She thanked them for decades of service. Stable housing is an investment.

Paul Schreiner – 1755 Lawndale. Valpo is desirable. Much of it is not affordable. This is a huge gift to eight families.

Christine Lehmann – 351 McIntyre Ct. Project Neighbors has changed this neighborhood.

Dave Strietelmeier – 816 Short Street. He grew up in this neighborhood and still lives there. He is looking forward to residential development in this neighborhood. When his parents passed, their home was sold to Project Neighbors.

Walt Breiteringer – 608 Academy. He recognized Paul Schreiner, Mayor Costas, Coach Walt Reiner, Robert Cotton and Lois Reiner.

Mayor Costas – He asked that Paul Schreiner be recognized and honored. He hopes he doesn't ever fully retire.

Comments/Questions from the Council

Councilmember Reed – She appreciates and supports Project Neighbors. She does not have a site plan. She supports the plan but she has some issues. She wants to make sure it is sustainable development. This property dead ends into private property. She has concerns about safety with the emergency vehicles, first responders and City trucks. Current property owners let vehicles go through this area. But should the property owners change it might not be allowed. At the Plan Commission meeting, they discussed parking for residents and any visitors. It appears to her that VU has four parking spots in the adjacent parking lot that are in the City's right of way. Constructing a cul-de-sac would encroach on Lot 4 already designed with a unit on it. There could be up to three cars per unit and no space for on street parking. She supports this project. She just wants to make sure it is being done right for future development. This is a great location for attainable housing. She discussed the Lots and abandoned vehicles she has seen on the lots. Before adding more density, the area should be cleaned up. She wants to see this matter move forward. She suggested this matter be tabled until they have been provided with a site plan and her issues are addressed.

Attorney Patrick Lyp – The Council has to act on this before July 1st. Once the property is rezoned, the Council has no further involvement. When Campus zoning is taken out, RT is the appropriate zoning classification.

Councilmember Reed – Has there been any conversation with VU? Is there an agreement with VU regarding through traffic access for first responders?

Councilmember Cotton – This came to the Council with a favorable recommendation. The City has competent staff. They will work with Project Neighbors and make sure issues are taken care of. The Council's only task is to vote on the zoning. The rest is up to the staff.

Mayor Costas – Diana's points are well taken and the Council will not be involved in any of that. That's the way the process is set up. She hopes these issues are thoroughly addressed by the Departments.

Councilmember Reed – She supports the rezone but wants assurance that her issues will be addressed.

Upon roll call Vote the Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 7, 2025 passed with a 7-0 vote.

Redevelopment Commission 2024 Annual Report

George Douglas and Carl Cender presented the RDC 2024 Annual Report. This report was approved by the RDC at their March 13th meeting and uploaded to Gateway prior to the April 15th deadline. The full report is on the City's website.

There was discussion regarding the effect of SB 1 on the RDC and City.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS

Councilmember Hunt – The School Board has had a great conversation about legislative updates. They have determined they are going to have a \$5.7 Million Dollar reduction over the next three years. VCS schools have received several awards. The Council has had an executive session for the school board appointment. There are four candidates Erika Watkins, Curtis Strietelmeier, Brett Miller and Ron Donahue. The two interviews are May 5th at 6:00 pm and May 21st at 6:00 pm.

Councilmember Reed – The Park Board meets April 29th. The RDC meets May 8th at 5:00 pm

Councilmember Cotton – They are still waiting for Intervention and Reconciliation Board appointments. They are looking for recommendations for being more user friendly and will be working to determine what value the Board has.

Councilmember Kapitan- The Plan Commission meets May 6 at 5:30. Environmental Advisory Board meets May 5 at 5:00 pm. Governor Braun has declared Porter County an emergency Disaster Area. An information sheet is on the City's website.

Councilmember Domer – BOW had three bid openings: CCMG, Road Improvements and Sidewalks. Awards will be given at the next meeting. An MOU with the County was approved sharing the cost of road improvements on Bartz Road and Hayes Leonard Road.

Councilmember Pupillo – VPD's 4th Annual DARE Golf Outing is July 31st. There is a Financial Safety Summit for Seniors. VFD is holding a Fire Ops Saturday May 3rd from 9-3 at the MAAC.

Councilmember Anderson – The Utility Board meets next Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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John Sut - 2358 Blarney Stone. May 3rd is the hazardous waste and tire recycling. While considering the school board appointment, the Council should consider verification of residency in some manner. This should be done throughout the term. The Center Township appointment should be someone outside the City limits so they have a voice on the Board also.

The Next Council Meeting will be May 12, 2025

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer