

## **VILLAGE OF BERRIEN SPRINGS COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

Minutes of the Village of Berrien Springs Council Workshop held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022.

President Barry Gravitt called the council workshop to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: President Barry Gravitt, President Pro-Tem Jack Davis; Trustees: Zach Fedoruk, Lonna Johnson, Sheila Snyder, Sandy Swartz, Kristin von Maur, Clerk Sheri Kesterke and “Clerk in Training” Rachael Kuzda.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Public Works Superintendent Dave Kunde.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

This workshop was called for discussion of the following:

To discuss the Council and Department Head’s top projects they would like to see the Village consider.

Barry explained the draft ordinances that are being considered by committees, which will be helpful in several of the areas mentioned.

### **DOWNTOWN:**

\*Lighting downtown - Dave would like to see light posts added at the downtown corners. AJs side and Journal Era side to flood that corner. Discussion held. Light downward instead of upward. Dave – checked and downward globe glass over \$800.00 each.

\*Downtown Sidewalks - Dave explained the process for residential sidewalk replacement. Also need to redo stamped concrete downtown.

\*Better, safer crosswalks in the downtown area. Signs to have people stop for pedestrians, similar to Bridgman would be helpful.

\*Flowers along walking path in town – maintain like adopt a highway. M-139 committee is looking into this, waiting for contact information. Pathfinders or other groups might be interested, put in little signs that they volunteered.

Make Berrien Springs a destination not a drive thru town. Fish and pickles on the corners!!! Fish holding a pickle would be great! Bridgman has banners of student’s artwork. Good hometown feel.

### **EMPTY BUILDINGS/ HOMES**

\*Be pro-active about people who own empty buildings in the Historic District.

\*Be pro-active on abandoned homes and homes that need to be cleaned up & taken care of or condemned.

Draft ordinances being considered by committees pertaining to the above.

### **BRING IN BUSINESSES**

\*Bring businesses to Ferry St. storefronts. Historic District can help.

\*Stop the use of storefronts as “storage”. Prospective business owners ask what is available, and there isn’t anything due to this issue.

### **FESTIVALS AND ACTIVITIES**

\*Pursue a Farmer’s Market. Shamrock park perfect location. Or a craft fair, consider a French market which includes a little bit of everything.

\*Add more smaller events such as cars and coffee, street dance. Working on these areas. Monday night council meeting will be approving cars and coffee request.

\*Have more festivals like the Pickle Festival and Kindle Your Christmas Spirit in Downtown Berrien Springs.

\*Combine efforts with Berrien and Oronoko Townships to promote the 49103 area as a whole. How to be able to? Possibly a budget in which all three share the cost. Have a weekly page of what is happening etc.

\*More participation by Council members. A working council outside Village Hall will help increase the public’s willingness to help in events. It would also allow the public the opportunity to get to know the council members. PMC has great involvement in community

projects, other churches should get involved.

\*Encourage the township to go forward with plans for a dog park.

### **TREES:**

\*Fill in the gaps in the street trees. Dave is checking on trees available to plant in the fall again.

Trees are needed especially the North side of town. Tackle a few trees at a time.

Start saying no to corporations that come in and mark and remove trees for example: AEP, Comcast, etc.

Land Use Plan refers to trees many times, so is reasonable to work on this. Do something we can do that is manageable.

### **M-139 CORRIDOR**

\*Work with MDOT on slowing traffic along M-139 thru traffic calming design measures (not signage and striping). 1) Make the Village more welcoming and beautiful and not seen as just a thoroughfare; 2) safety for school children who need to cross this terrible road. This is part of our VBS Land Use Plan which could help with leverage.

### **ACCALODES**

\*Give awards & send thank you notes to people who fix up homes.

\*Have a contest for best landscaping, best looking house, most improved home in town.

Atlanta GA does this, they put a banner in the front yard for beautification winner(s).

\*Home & Garden tour, the council would like to see this as an annual event. Can't have a one-time event, have to be consistent and have them annually, etc.

### **PARKS-**

\*Do more with Memorial Park. Landscaping, appearance and visibility is everything.

\*Grove Park

-Update playground

-Band shell – flat bed could be used or consider building a platform by the big rock for the musicians and people can bring their own chairs, beautiful background with Lake Chapin.

-Additional paved or gravel parking at Grove Park.

-Basketball Hoop and volleyball court near pavilions.

-Build a walking trail around the perimeter of the park. Mark the distances from point to point.

-Build an elevated observation desk at the East end of the Park overlooking Lake Chapin.

-Keep riverbank trimmed for visitors and residents to enjoy our beautiful views.

-Add a kayak and canoe launch at the end of South Main St.

-Outdoor exercise equipment, if not cost prohibitive.

-Repair playground equipment, power wash, paint towers.

\*Police Memorial Park – add picnic tables and benches to make it more appealing.

-Cut out brush along riverbank.

-Add trash barrel(s).

-Trim or cut down bushes along fence by highways.

\*Platforms for families to safely access the water for fishing that could be covered by grants and working with the DNR.

\*Shamrock Park Formal expansion plans with Viridis.

\*Additional park benches and swings in all Village-owned parks.

### **VILLAGE HALL**

\*Make more secure by turning the conference room into the lobby with a counter and glass with a couple of slider windows.

\*Buzzer system on the interior door to buzz in those who require access.

\*Update surveillance camera system.

### **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

\*Consider Body Camera

\*Hold yearly Q/A time with scheduled appointments with Ordinance Officer/Village President and PPO Committee to help with concerns or misunderstanding.

\*Hold a yearly presentation to the council to cover and describe the process of the code enforcement officer.

- \*Have a stronger conversation between the Village and the Police Chief re: street and yard parking.
- \*Continue to identify infractions and enforce them. Consider either more trustee involvement, additional enforcement personnel (outsourcing) or other measures if necessary to achieve fair and equitable enforcement.
- \*Workshop with protocol in writing for council members to have. Warnings, citations and tickets are different notices Explain the process.

**OTHER:**

- \*Review the information being handed out to new residents.
- \*Study or consider ways to make the Village appealing to Senior Citizens, and create conditions that would make a better, safer environment. Consider River Springs Estates use for Senior Citizens, etc.

President Gravitt asked the council to narrow the list down to 4 items they want to see get accomplished this year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- \*Moved by Shelia Snyder seconded by Zach Fedoruk to adjourn at 6:57 p.m. Ayes, 7, Nays, 0. Motion carried.

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Sheri Kesterke, MMC/MiPC  
Village Clerk

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Barry Gravitt  
Village President