



Approved

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
YPSILANTI FREIGHT HOUSE – 100 MARKET PLACE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Bashert	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Brown	Present	Council Member Vogt	Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Edmonds	Present
Council Member Richardson	Present		

III. INVOCATION –

Mayor Edmonds asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. AGENDA APPROVAL-

Council Member Vogt moved, seconded by Council Member Richardson to approve the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved as submitted.

VI. PRESENTATIONS –

— Housing Affordability Presentation – Amber Fellows, Ka’Ron Gaines, and Kyle Hunter members of the Human Relations Commission.

Amber Fellows, Ka’Ron Gaines, and Kyle Hunter provided a presentation regarding housing affordability.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION -

1. Jerri Dodge, no address, thanked Council for their dedicated work to the city, however does not feel represented. She asked for the International Development to contain affordable housing elements as well as alternative housing.
2. Ari Allyn-Feuer, 986 Madison, stated the International Village Development should not be derailed because of the absence of rent control. The development will not hurt the city’s attempts to keep housing affordable but will help the city in many other areas by expanding the rate, create jobs, and bringing the issue of Water Street to an end.

3. Jeff Yoder, 1625 Prospect, stated he understands the city needs greater revenue and has for some time but does not think this development is the right answer.
4. Mark Higbee, 704 Hemphill, stated years ago he was a tenant organizer in New York fighting gentrification. Water Street is an empty thirty acre lot purchased foolishly by the city and if a new development is built there it isn't really gentrification. He understands that too much economic growth can lead to displacement, but building new housing is not actually gentrification. If the purchase agreement is approved there is still a great possibility the International Village will not be built.
5. Jordan Solano-Reed, 905 E. Cross, stated he is a lifelong resident and is a City and Regional Planner by trade and would not classify this development as gentrification. However, the city does need to create policy for affordable housing just not on this development.
6. Quinn Phillips, 414 Emmet St., understands the city is in a financial crisis but it hurts to hear the mayor state Ypsilanti is affordable. Many people campaigned to pass the millage and were told it would be enough to solve the Water Street issue only to find out it won't.
7. Alex Husted, 430 S. Adams St., stated solving economic disparities caused capitalism will not be solved by more capitalism. She added there is also a possibility Water Street contains a Native American burial ground, which must be addressed prior to any development.
8. Bryan Foley, 425 Ainsworth, stated gentrification is very real. He said Ypsilanti's motto is Pride, Diversity, and Heritage. He said in Council Chamber hangs a Black Lives Matter banner and if black lives actually matter Council needs to address affordable housing.
9. Bee Roll, 317 South Street, believes Ypsilanti has the power to do things differently and Council needs to listen to the people in their community. This city could be a Mecca for housing affordability and for racial equality.
10. Nathanael Romero, 413 W. Cross, stated he is in favor of creating greater housing affordability in Ypsilanti.
11. Adam Gainsley, 409 N. Adams, stated he appreciates the community engagement. Housing affordability should be at the forefront of everyone's mind but the city needs to do something positive with Water Street. However, he does not believe housing affordability should be a part of this development. Asked that Council and city staff be better at disseminating information to the community.
12. Isaac Levine, 600 S. Hamilton, stated gentrification is a threat to the diversity of the city. He added City Council has tried to suppress a public input period regarding the most important developments to occur in this city. He urged City Council members to vote no, or abstain from voting on this purchase agreement until an affordability component has been added to the purchase agreement.
13. Michael Bodary, stated he disagrees with the characterization of council for not being responsive to the public. He said he does not believe landlords are increasing rents simply to get rich they also must cover costs of being a property owner. The International Village development will be positive for the diversity of the city.
14. Shane McParland, [REDACTED], stated he is a homeowner and encourages other homeowners to be skeptical of the International Village Development. He is also a

landlord and has witnessed firsthand how rents have increased through Ann Arbor residents moving to Ypsilanti. He said the City does not need to subsidize millionaires for a development to occur on Water Street.

15. Brett Zeuner, stated he is a member of the Sustainability Commission, which is attempting to develop a decision making tool Council could employ to decide on what developments would be most sustainable. He is not here to discuss if gentrification will be furthered by this development, but what the HRC has shown is that Ypsilanti residents are vulnerable. He said an issue he finds is the use of public land without the broad support of the community. If development disenfranchises residents, displaces people, or does not represents the views of the majority of citizens council should not approve it. He does not think citizens voted to fund Water Street so it could be sold to wealthy investors.
16. Katy Clark, 430 S. Adams #2, stated she is very unclear what the Police Chief's role is for going to China as a part of this development. She does not believe if the developers find anything from the suspected Native American burial ground they would stop. What she is hearing from Council is it does not care about black people, young people, home insecure people, and indigenous people.
17. Zac Fosler, 601 Fosler, Executive Director of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission, provided an overview of Housing Commission properties. He explained the resources available to assist in pulling residents out of poverty. He has dedicated his life to serving populations this city clearly cares about, and he wants to be clear this City Council cares very much for Housing Commission projects. He added Water Street is not the site for affordable housing, Council has already tried that and it failed. The site is too contaminated and MSHDA would not allow the development to happen. Some speakers have suggested including affordable housing in the International Village Development and he is in support of inclusionary zoning unfortunately it is illegal in the state of Michigan.
18. Deva Madhava Das, 108 N. Adams, stated the Harmony Collective is offering a paradigm outside of the capitalism perspective. Offered the collective as a warming station during the winter so long as their prayer is not interrupted. Suggested Council establish a living wage for the 400 permanent jobs created by the proposed development, including any further developments.
19. Kira Berman, 1122 Pearl St., stated affordable housing is a real problem in Ypsilanti. Council has been working to keep housing affordable but do need to hear from the public of the extent of the city. She asked the public to assist and collaborate with Council to protect housing affordability.
20. James Arnoldi, 201 E. Cross St. #1, stated gentrification is a real issue and needs to be addressed. The fear and pain caused by the possibility of being pushed out of your home should not cause xenophobia. The Water Street property is not a home for anyone at this time, it is an empty lot. The city cannot not let this development slip through, however, it can address housing affordability through other strategies.
21. Frankie Konieczki, 160 N. Washington, urged Council to vote no for this purchase agreement. Asked for more time to inform the marginalized community about this project.
22. Alicia Rasario, 211 Ferris St., spoke out against the International Village Development. She asked there should be more thought into development.

23. Heather Charles, 160 N. Washington St., stated the city purchased the Water Street site because it provides a chance to input to what will be developed on that site.
24. Emmanuel Lewis, 911 Grant St., stated he is a professor at Eastern Michigan University and has taught many Chinese students through the years and is proud of that exchange. He feels many details about this development are unknown and it appears very rushed. He asked if the loss of income for student housing and current landlords already operating in the city has been discussed. He stated it is best to have international students immerse themselves in the local culture rather than be separated from the community. He feels it is a bad deal and urged Council to vote no.
25. Stephen Silverberg, 1455 Roosevelt, stated he has been poor and is concerned with affordable housing because he could again be poor. There are two different things being discussed; Water Street and affordable housing. A developer will not be willing to perform the scope of work required for the development of Water Street and include affordable housing.
26. Amanda Gaytan, 56 N. Huron, asked the city to find a different development and to not fall into this trap. She asked if this development occurs will the millage be void. Since the millage passed it should allow the city more time to find a more suitable development.
27. Audience Member, stated as a child of Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants she is against the International Village Development. She recognizes this issue as not one of diversity or xenophobia but one of gentrification.
28. Joy Lange, 1939 Roosevelt, stated she feels this development happening too quickly. She said almost all of the people she has spoken with have not heard of this development. If this concern is going to happen the community needs to be made aware in order to provide input.
29. Annie Somerville, 40 E. Cross, stated there are EMU signs around town that say "you are welcome here". However, the university has done little to help international students. She voted for a Water Street debt millage twice and is angry to hear about the International Village.
30. Eve Floly, 509 W. Forest, stated it was strange the location of this event was changed. It seems City Council did not want people to attend this meeting.
31. Liz Dahl MacGregor, 103 N. Lincoln St., stated an International Village being developed on Water Street does not seem like a bad. However, the idea of selling citizenship to the highest bidder while neighbors are being deported is terrible. The approval of the Water Street millage should allow more time to find better developments.
32. Amy Shrodes, 713 N. River St., stated she decided to move to Ypsilanti because of the diversity. She asked for this development to be slowed down because if the city is rushed it could cause greater issues in the city. She sees the fact some of Council and city staff are going to China is a big issue.
33. Sue Melke, 330 Chidester #409, stated she understands the threat of gentrification and lives in subsidized housing. However, she attends many Council meetings and has witnessed Council debate \$1,000 during budget approval. A city that needs to argue over \$1,000 is not solvent and the approval of the millage does not solve the Water Street problem. She encouraged residents to attend Council meetings and read the minutes and Council packets. Not taking this development would be a mistake.

34. Zachary Harding, 916 Pearl St., stated this is not a new issue in Ypsilanti and there is not development out there the city is not soliciting. However, there is no market for contaminated land and the city needs to move forward with the development.
35. Sara Scherbert stated she attended tonight to learn more about this issue and wanted to be convinced that the International Village is a viable development. However, the concerns of the community need to be listened to and the city should not act out of fear.

VIII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

- Mayor Edmonds explained tomorrow the regular scheduled Council Meeting will be held in which there will be a public hearing regarding the International Village Development purchase agreement.

IX. MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS, DISCUSSIONS -

- Discussion on the International Village Development specific to housing affordability.

X. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Sue Melke, 330 Chidester #409, stated this development will preserve the Border to Border Trail and the access to the river.
2. Ari Allyn-Feuer, 986 Madison, stated it is not clear how long this discussion will last but he hopes in future discussion people are not vilified based on where they come from and members of Council.
3. Audience Member asked if the Council meeting will be at the Freighthouse because the flier she received and the city's website state it will be in Council Chambers.

Mayor Edmonds explained the change was made in order that all who wanted to attend this meeting would have space.

4. Julia Bayha, 401 W. Michigan, stated she is appalled every time an issue affecting the African American community there is very little effort to reach out to that community to be at meetings that include decisions that would affect them. There are no ways forward for an equitable society unless we include everyone in these conversations.
5. Nathanael Romero, 413 W. Cross, condemned any xenophobic language that has come from this crowd but this is not about xenophobia. The only people that are claiming this is an issue of xenophobia are white males.
6. Brett Zuener, stated Council needs to heed the demand from the public and take this development slow. He asked the information on how Council's and staff trip to China is being financed should be made public.
7. Annie Somerville, 40 E. Cross, stated many in the audience are confused why the trip to China is planned for the day after Council votes on the purchase agreement.
8. Alicia Rasario, 211 Ferris St., stated her mother chose to live in Ypsilanti because of its diversity. She has had the opportunity to go to Asia and understands how African Americans are treated there. She asked Mayor Pro-Tem Brown to take note of that treatment.

9. Veronica Irving, 1564 Village Ln., stated she is a veteran and is having trouble affording rent in Ypsilanti. It is incorrect to say gentrification is not occurring in Ypsilanti.
10. Jerri Dodge stated she is proud for how City Council has graciously taken the comments made tonight. She thanked them for their hard work.

XI. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

— She asked the public to review the documents for tomorrow’s meeting.

XII. ADJOURNMENT -

Resolution No. 2017-207, adjourning the City Council Meeting

OFFERED BY: Council Member Bashert

SECONDED BY: Council Member Richardson

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.