

REGULAR MEETING – January 2, 2008

The Common Council of the City of Michigan City, Indiana, met in regular session on Wednesday evening, January 2, 2008, at the hour of 7:30 p.m., local time, in the Common Council Chambers, located in the lower level of the City Hall Building, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by City Clerk Thomas F. Fedder.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a short period of silent prayer for Police Officer Chris Smith was observed.

Roll call was authorized and the following were noted present and/or absent:

PRESENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS Patricia Boy, Joseph Doyle, Marc Espar, Phillip Jankowski, Robert McKee, Ron Meer, Willie Milsap, Richard Murphy, Angela Starks (9).

ABSENT: None (0).

A QUORUM WAS NOTED PRESENT.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Current President Councilman Milsap nominated Ron Meer for President, which was seconded by Councilwoman Boy. Tom Fedder, City Clerk asked if there were any other nominations (repeating three times), there being none, nominations were closed. Mr. Fedder directed Gale Neulieb, Deputy Clerk to call for the following vote for Ron Meer: **AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS Boy, Doyle, Espar, Jankowski, McKee, Meer, Milsap, Murphy, and Starks (9). NAYS: None (0).**

President Ron Meer opened nominations for Vice President of the Council. Councilwoman Boy nominated Willie Milsap, seconded by Councilman Doyle. President Meer asked if there were any other nominations (repeating three times), there being none, and nominations were closed. The motion carried and Mr. Milsap was elected as follows: **AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS Doyle, Espar, Jankowski, McKee, Meer, Milsap, Murphy, Starks, and Boy (9). NAYS: (0).**

Council President Meer opened nominations for Council Representation on the Plan Commission. Councilwoman Starks nominated Mrs. Boy and was seconded by Councilman Milsap. President Meer asked if there were any other nominations for the Plan Commission (repeating three times), there being none, nominations were closed. the Motion carried and Mrs. Boy was elected **AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS Espar, Jankowski, McKee, Meer, Milsap, Murphy, Starks, Boy, and Doyle (9). NAYS: None (0).**

Council President Meer stated that Councilman McKee will be the Parliamentarian and appointed Councilman Milsap to the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County. President Meer advised that all additional standing and special committees along with liaisons will be named at the January 15, 2008 Council meeting.

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Council President Meer gave the floor to the Honorable Mayor Oberlie which he presented the **"The State of the City Address."**

2008 State of the City: A Unified Vision for Michigan City

Charles E. Oberlie, Mayor, City of Michigan City, Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for attending the first meeting of our new City Council and this year's State of the City address.

First of all, I wish to congratulate all of the members of the 2008 Common Council. I look forward to the next four years of progress with a diverse mix of seasoned legislative veterans, and several newcomers who bring with them substantial experience and expertise that will prove beneficial for our city.

The question before us tonight as we begin this shared journey over the next four years is this: will this year, the year of 2008, be the year when our city's North End potential starts to become a reality? I stand before you tonight and answer unequivocally: yes it is!

As I begin my address this evening, we all acknowledge that our North End is not pedestrian friendly; the North End is not visually pleasing; and the area has lacked a unified vision. However, I am pleased to report tonight that because of the effort of hundreds of dedicated citizens who came out repeatedly to provide critical input to our consultants, we now have a unified, world-class vision that will be the catalyst for a new North End.

I firmly believe that our concentrated efforts in 2007 will now pay dividends as our vision will begin to come alive. I believe that the area of the North End will become the neighborhood of choice for new residents and for people who either want to live near the waters of Trail Creek and Lake Michigan, or who want to live in the emerging urban core of our city; a place close to the library, museums, Washington Park and extensive services. Residents of the new North End will live within walking distance of practically anything one would ever need. A spirit of liveliness and numerous open spaces, which will be filled with public art created by local artists, will attract new commercial activity.

And undergirding our vision will be open public access along a Trail Creek riverwalk to invite citizens and visitors alike to fully enjoy the Trail Creek waterway as an amenity and treasured resource. For many decades, we have talked of the unlimited development possibilities in Michigan City's North End. It is time to turn these conversations... into construction and begin the creation of the new North End!

What happened in 2007 that now has us poised for success? Four separate, yet interconnected grass-roots planning efforts helped us turn the corner and we are now prepared to move forward. A critical piece of the planning puzzle was the creation of the Michigan City North End Advocacy Team, or MCNEAT. With the leadership of the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with our city government, over a hundred citizens have become energized under the MCNEAT initiative. These volunteers have defined the mission of our North End planning efforts as follows: "A dynamic Cultural and Civic Center with a thriving retail corridor, surrounded by friendly, historic neighborhoods

with easy access to beautiful Lake Michigan, Trail Creek and Washington Park."

The citizens focused on six Zones of Opportunities: the Beachway; the Trail Creek waterfront; Elston Grove; Franklin Street; Washington Street; and Washington Park. Each of the six Zone Team committees have selected team leaders; they have met regularly; they have identified both liabilities and opportunities; and they have begun making positive changes in these critical zones. They have sought advice on developing new city standards that, if implemented, would bring positive changes in landscaping, building standards, traffic patterns and land use.

However, the benefits from these efforts do not just accrue in the North End. MCNEAT believes that "well- planned, ecologically and culturally sensitive development could be the key driver of economic vitality for the **entire community**." Specifically, MCNEAT has documented that city-wide benefits would include:

- "An **improved quality** of life for current residents in the way of new job opportunities, new and improved housing options and new, higher quality leisure attractions;
- A substantial new tax base that will positively impact all Michigan City taxpayers;
- Increased tourism revenues that again will positively impact Michigan City taxpayers; and,
- An improved Michigan City development climate."

Building upon the momentum of the MCNEAT efforts, the Redevelopment Commission hired Lohan Anderson of Chicago to engage with Michigan City residents and prepare a Trail Creek Corridor Re-Use Plan that could help guide the desired high quality and coordinated development envisioned for the nearly 50-acres of contiguous land assembled by the Redevelopment Commission and City. Lohan Anderson began their work on this effort in May and their final draft recommendations were presented to the community in October.

The Trail Creek Re-Use Plan was developed within the context of seven overriding principles:

1. Create a Trail Creek Re-Use Plan to fit with the **broader** North End Vision;
2. Be **realistic** about proposed land uses;
3. **Optimize**, not **maximize** the scale of redevelopment;
4. Keep infrastructure costs to a **minimum**;
5. Take **full advantage** of Trail Creek as an amenity;
6. **Coordinate** with other local planning efforts; and,
7. The Re-Use **Plan** must be able to attract quality developers.

With the Lohan Anderson report, we now have development guidelines that encompass land uses, streetscapes, pedestrian friendliness, the Trail Creek riverfront, parking and building design. Depending on market conditions, the plan can accommodate 986 new residential units covering over 1,000,000 square feet of new building area, along with 55,000 square feet of retail space. As Lohan Anderson noted in the introduction of the report, the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan should be viewed as "a living plan that will be modified and updated to meet evolving conditions."

Immediately adjacent to the Trail Creek Corridor evaluated by Lohan Anderson, we have the Elston Grove Historic District. Last January, the Michigan City Redevelopment Commission hired JJR to seek input from Elston Grove residents and create Streetscape Design Guidelines that would enhance the historic nature of this neighborhood. The guiding principles for LIR in this effort included:

- Establishing a **distinctive**, positive image and identity;
- **Reinforcing** a downtown lifestyle; and,
- Integrating the **functional** needs of residents and visitors.

JJR defined their overarching design concept as 'embracing history for the future.' They write as follows: "Reflective of Elston Grove's and Michigan City's historic nature, the streetscape guidelines will look towards the future while recognizing its connection to the past. The design philosophy is neoclassical, embracing the Victorian age in which the neighborhood originated, with the use of era resemblant materials while retaining the existing character of the neighborhood. This philosophy will complement the existing architecture and neighborhood to promote the historic nature of Elston Grove throughout the 21st century."

Thus, whether it's the city constructing infrastructure or a private developer building a new project within Elston Grove, the JJR Streetscape Design Guidelines provide the framework to ensure high quality and consistent streetscape elements that will improve livability within the neighborhood and enhance Michigan City's image throughout the region. The guidelines encompass many aspects such as pedestrian enhancements, intersection designs, street lighting, benches, trash receptacles, pocket parks, gateway entrances, tree plantings and signage. We **look** forward to our upcoming projects that will begin the implementation of these neighborhood-specific streetscape principles.

In addition to MCNEAT, the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan and the Elston Grove Streetscape Design Guidelines report, there was one other critical grass-roots planning effort that was conducted in 2007: the Andrews University North End Plan.

Starting **in** September, architectural students from the Andrews University 5th Year Urban Design Studio conducted a series of five meetings over seven days to engage our local citizens in an open and inviting process that sought out ideas and information regarding urban design issues for the North End. Armed with this local input, the architectural students provided immediate feedback for possible site-specific solutions that could enhance and strengthen North End development.

The students engaged professional consultants to assist in the creation of well-thought out proposals that would unify and coordinate multiple, concurrent development projects throughout the entire North End region, within a consistent and quality-driven **design** philosophy. The critical outcome of the Andrews University students' effort will be the recommended "SmartCode" zoning recommendations to be submitted to the city in their upcoming presentation on January 17th. These series of recommendations could provide the structural and legal framework with which the city can manage and control the quality and consistency of the North End development that we seek to have happen in the coming years.

So, the four key planning pieces of the puzzle are in place... what do we do now to turn these conversations into construction?

First of all, the Redevelopment Commission is in the final stages of property acquisition for two properties at the 8th Street and Michigan Boulevard intersection. We believe that the acquisition process will be far enough along in the next three months, that we have asked the Sanitary District to complete the design engineering for the Lafayette/Barker Storm Sewer Outfall Project and seek bids in order to award a construction contract in the early part of the 2nd Quarter of this year.

As the storm sewer design and bidding is being completed, the Redevelopment Commission will be the lead agency seeking the adoption of the Lohan Anderson Trail Creek Re-Use Plan. I have asked the Redevelopment Director to achieve the approval of the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan no later than the end of the 2nd Quarter; which includes approval by the Michigan City Plan Commission and approval by the Michigan City Common Council.

Upon adoption, we must all work together to establish a realistic schedule for implementation. Working together, we can achieve what is so vitally important to the health and survival of our city: a unified, world-class vision that will be the catalyst for a new North End!

Again, I ask all City Boards and Commissions, and I reach out directly to the leadership of the City Council seated here before us tonight, to achieve an approved Trail Creek Re-Use Plan by the end of the 2nd Quarter... by June 30, 2008! We cannot waver on this timeline as we must turn our many significant and forward-thinking conversations into construction!

As the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan is being approved, the City Administration will be finalizing the Blocksom property relocation/acquisition process and I have instructed my staff to complete this effort by the end of the 2nd Quarter also. Thus, the integrated strategy for City Departments and the City Council aimed at turning these North End planning conversations into construction envisions two critical achievements: the completion of property acquisition along the Trail Creek corridor between the Highway 12 and E street bridges and the approval of the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan by June 30, 2008. This will then lead us into the next phase: initiating environmental remediation as we move into marketing the 50 acres of properties within the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan corridor and selecting a Master Developer.

As defined by our planning consultants, "The master developer's role will be to plan, design and finance the overall development." And along with this concept, the Redevelopment Commission will seek to enter into a partnership with the Master Developer to provide financial incentives and to ensure that the forthcoming development will be of a high quality and consistent with the overall approved Trail Creek Re-Use Plan.

More specifically, the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan has preliminarily identified twelve individual parcels with defined redevelopment uses. The Master Developer will be responsible to seek investors and other developers that wish to take on and construct the designated redevelopment project identified for each particular parcel. If a potential builder desired to construct low-rise townhomes for example, they can negotiate the right to develop one of the several parcels targeted for low-rise townhome development. If a potential builder desired to construct a high-rise residential tower, they could similarly negotiate the right to develop one of the three parcels, P I, P5 or P9, targeted for high-rise residential towers. The Master Developer concept allows for the maximum number of developers to become involved, whether they be local or regionally- based, yet still provide control by the City to ensure that high-quality and consistent work will be done. We will begin to seek a Master Developer partner in the 2nd Quarter of this year.

Critical to the implementation of the Trail Creek ReUse Plan will be a formal Market Conditions assessment that documents the strength of local market conditions and will provide the data for determining which parcels are developed first and in what subsequent order. The Market Conditions assessment is also required to help evaluate the scope and pace of the Riverwalk construction and the financial viability of the tram proposal. We seek to work with a potential Master Developer to complete the Market Conditions assessment in order to establish a viable construction sequence and schedule for the Trail Creek ReUse Plan.

As the Master Developer search is being conducted and finalized, the City will move forward with Elston Grove revitalization efforts. Using the already approved Elston Grove Streetscape Design Guidelines as our defined vision, the City will seek to retain an architectural/engineering consulting firm to begin preparing detailed construction drawings and bid specifications for public infrastructure replacement projects within Elston Grove. The firm selected will be required to complete the drawings and bid specifications in a timeframe to allow for the public's participation in this process and to achieve the bidding and awarding of construction contracts no later than the 2009 construction season. Included in this process will be an analysis of financing mechanisms to fund maintenance of the proposed parks and lighting improvements.

A critical aspect of the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan is the inclusion of significant open-space and public access areas throughout the 50-acre site and along the water's edge of Trail Creek itself. This year, we will jumpstart the creation of this public access open space by seeking a consultant to engage the public and design appropriate public amenities for the open space that is

the former site of Harborside Homes. This area will provide a gateway entrance to the north end of the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan area. We will design this gateway park in 2008 for construction in 2009. As part of the design process, we must consider ways in which to honor the memory and contributions of Charlie Wescott, the Elite Youth Center and Harborside Homes.

Several significant transportation issues impact the North End relating to roadways, waterways and bikeways. First of all, we face the question of should Franklin Street be converted to two-way traffic? I have instructed our City staff to work with the Mainstreet organization and complete an analysis of this issue by the end of the 1st Quarter, and, if feasible, I repeat, if feasible, implement any recommended changes immediately thereafter.

We face the question of the asphalt behemoth of Michigan Boulevard. We can all agree that this main roadway artery is presently an insurmountable barrier. Not one single shovel of dirt for the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan will likely be moved until the City resolves the issue of Michigan Boulevard. In the 1st Quarter of this year, I will request that the Common Council meet with me in Executive Session to discuss a proposal for right-of-way street reconstruction rights, enabling the demolition of this asphalt barrier and the emergence of a pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically-engaging true "boulevard". This street is a "boulevard" in name only and 2008 is the time to bring in the bulldozers and build the kind of true "Michigan Boulevard" that the citizens of Michigan City deserve!

A third North End roadway transportation item is the extension of Lake Avenue to U.S. Hwy. 12. The City Team has examined several options at achieving this critical roadway extension. We will complete the Lake Avenue Extension Plan in the 2nd Quarter of this year and take the plans before the Indiana Regulatory Commission in the fall. If we receive a timely ruling from the IRC, we will be prepared to seek construction bids for the Lake Avenue Project in the 4th Quarter of 2008 for construction in 2009.

As shown in the Trail Creek Re-Use Plan, the Trail Creek waterway is the focal point of the plan. With respect to boat traffic on Trail Creek, the United States Army Corps of Engineers enforces regulations that define the number of boat slips along the river's edge. For several months, the Port Authority has been actively working with a consultant to review launch ramp locations and their impact on Trail Creek dock capacity. One conclusion determined thus far is that without boat launch ramp consolidation, we cannot create additional boat slips along the Trail Creek waterway. Thus, the Port Authority has been evaluating options for consolidating and relocating our existing boat launch ramps and we expect final recommendations on this effort in the 1st Quarter. As part of this evaluation, we have asked the Port Authority to define the costs associated with their recommended plan and potential revenue sources of aid for the construction costs. These results will be presented to the City Council for consideration.

Part of the overall Trail Creek waterway upgrade strategy is the ongoing land exchange between Michigan City and the Department of Natural Resources. We are fortunate to have state officials, both locally here at the Michigan City DNR office on Water Street and downstate in Indianapolis, who have been willing to discuss the best use of the former the Goerg property. The proposed land trade of the Goerg and ACE properties will provide the Port Authority with the flexibility to consider the relocation of existing boating support services to different areas of Trail Creek.

Also related to waterway issues, the Port Authority has been aggressively pursuing both outer basin and creek dredging activities in order to maintain a proper channel depth for boat traffic. And we thank our Congressman, Joe Donnelly, for his critical support of these efforts.

Along with roadways and waterways, a third component of the North End transportation plan is the extension of the Michigan City Trailways system. A portion of the Trail Creek Greenways system has been completed from a rejuvenated Hansen Park to Winding Creek Cove and Peanut Bridge. This year, we will be completing land acquisition for four trail extensions, two of which

will enhance the North End: the Peanut Trail extension from Peanut Bridge into Washington Park; and the Singing Sands Phase 1 trail from County Line Road to Washington Park.

Related to the Singing Sands Phase 1 Trail, I have instructed City staff to determine the feasibility of a pedestrian connection from the Singing Sands trail to Crescent Dune. We fully realize there are several challenges with this desired pedestrian connection, especially with respect to elevated walkways and security issues. However, we expect to have the evaluation and cost estimate completed by the end of the 2nd Quarter, in order that we can then have informed discussions and dialogue on this potential pedestrian connection to Lake Michigan on the west side of our City's North End.

Improvements to existing attractions in the North End have been ongoing for the past few years and one stunning example of success has been the Washington Park Zoo. After frank discussions about closing the zoo, a transformation has occurred and this historical landmark has once again risen to the level of prominence that it deserves. Through this remarkable resurgence, we have witnessed the creation of a new grand entrance; a new North American Carnivore Exhibit; and a focused effort on attention to detail that has helped redefine our zoo.

Not only have we witnessed the physical transformation of zoo exhibits, but our highly talented zoo staff has been able to bring an expanded animal collection to the zoo and create a more rewarding experience for zoo visitors, both young and old. This commitment to excellence will be on display once again as the remodeled Primate House will be completed and reopened for zoo visitors during this year's zoo season. We commend and applaud the Park Department for their outstanding achievement at saving and restoring our beloved Washington Park Zoo.

This spirit of enhancing our North End attractions will be also be extended into Washington Park this year with two projects. The design of needed repairs to the Washington Park Rock Garden will be engineered in the 1st Quarter of this year, with the rehabilitation work to be performed in the 2nd Quarter. Additionally, the design of a Splash Pad for Washington Park will begin within the 1st Quarter, with construction to follow. These activities demonstrate an annual commitment of consistent forward progress in the enhancement of our one-of-a-kind Washington Park.

Lastly in our North End, we face a decision regarding two public facilities that are in dire need of attention: the Michigan City Police Building and the Michigan City Park Office. Within the Quarter of this year, I will seek funding to begin addressing these two longstanding needs that cannot be deferred any longer. First, I will seek to retain an architect/engineering firm to design a Police Administration building that will take the department out of its current bomb-shelter type building and into an efficient 21st Century Police and Public Safety facility. And second, I will seek to retain an architect/engineering firm to design a new multipurpose Park Office facility that could provide much needed amenities for local beachgoers.

As communities around us begin developing their own Lake Michigan waterfronts, we must invest in our public lakefront land or else we will be left behind. This year, we will begin this crucial effort by designing a facility that will ensure that Washington Park remains one of the great destination points along the southern shore of Lake Michigan for our citizens and our visitors. We cannot seek anything less.

So far tonight, I have spoken of 21 specific initiatives aimed at jumpstarting our critical North End development in 2008. What else is happening in Michigan City? There is plenty happening.

We continue to focus on job creation as a key component of our regional economy and I am pleased with the progress we made last year assisting two companies, Vanair and Sullivan Palatek, with business relocations into LaPorte County. These companies were faced with business expansion challenges and they allowed our county-wide economic development specialists to work with each business and create a successful solution to their needs.

In 2007, we witnessed the groundbreaking of the new Vanair manufacturing facility on 300 North and the groundbreaking for the new Sullivan-Palatek manufacturing facility on West U.S. Hwy. 20. Vanair will employ fifty people; Sullivan-Palatek will add fifty new employees to their current workforce of 47. And I know of a Purdue University engineering graduate who has already moved back to the region from Illinois to join Vanair and help make their business expansion a success. We thank both Vanair and Sullivan Palatek for their vision and for their confidence in our region and our workforce.

Just as businesses like Vanair and Sullivan Palatek have made a commitment to us, we are making a commitment back to all the businesses in LaPorte County. The City of Michigan City has entered into a compact with the Michigan City Area Schools, Purdue North Central University, Ivy Tech and the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce to establish a vocational career program for our local youth. We must provide our youth with an opportunity to learn and become proficient in the skill sets required by 21st Century businesses. By training our youth in these areas, we can have profound impacts in establishing lifelong careers for our high school graduates, and we can provide a ready-to-work job force that will help companies such as Vanair and Sullivan-Palatek succeed.

As we develop the specific criteria and implementation steps for this groundbreaking vocational education training compact, we must not shy away from our responsibility to provide some level of funding to help initiate this program. While we will continue to invest in our physical infrastructure that supports growing companies, this investment would represent a commitment in our human resources, the heart and soul of our regional economy.

Taking this commitment towards our human development needs a step further, there are three crucial building blocks that we must continue to support for the benefit of our youth and our collective future. The first ongoing initiative is our Early Learning Center program. Next, for elementary and middle school children, we must continue to support the Safe Harbor program. Lastly, for high school and college age students, we will continue to implement a summer work program to help our youth gain valuable work experience. We cannot waver on supporting our youth; we must prepare them for future success after graduation.

And for that reason, the Board of Public Works and Safety will pursue a contract with the Indiana Plan to provide pre-apprentice training in our city. The program includes 120 hours of classroom education and program graduates will be able to work up to 2,000 hours while pursuing entry into their preferred apprentice program.

To assure all residents, especially the citizens of the minority communities, an equal employment opportunity, I will request City Council action at your next meeting on an ordinance establishing the position and salary of an Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for the City of Michigan City, pursuant to Ordinance 2297. With this position, I believe we can develop a unique opportunity to extend outreach into all segments of our community.

We have a significant number of projects taking place throughout many areas of the city, such as: a new terminal building at Michigan City Airport; Phase IV of the Water Intake Project; Krueger Memorial Hall building renovations; construction of an Emergency Operations Center in City Hall; the Lake Hills Storm Sewer Project; Freyer Ditch and White Oak Drainage improvements; improvements at Adams Park; a new entrance at Swan Lake Cemetery and the development and dedication of a Veteran's area at Swan Lake; new fencing at Oak Hills park; the first time paving of the remaining gravel roads in South Shore Acres; and the reconstruction of Coolspring Avenue. Additionally, our 2008 City Budget includes \$300,000 for sidewalk replacement and \$1.5 million for street paving.

Along with physical and visible improvement projects throughout the city, we remain committed to providing quality services. One initiative that combines maintaining a high level of service with reducing injuries to our workers is the implementation of a mechanized

assisted tipping system for our Refuse Department. This program enhancement will require some additional equipment for the Refuse trucks and revised ordinances to be approved by the City Council that will define the implementation process for this system that should result in a cleaner Michigan City.

At the urging of News-Dispatch Publisher Rick Welch, the city has assembled a group of volunteers and city staff to participate in the America in Bloom beautification program. This is a highly regarded national program that requires focused attention on several areas ranging from heritage preservation, to urban forestry, turf and ground covers, floral displays, tidiness and community involvement. The basic theory seeks quality of life improvements through the use of flowers, plantings and other structured enhancements. The program has the potential to help us address some of the vacant lots and distressed areas that have proven to be difficult to solve in the past.

As America in Bloom will provide opportunities to help the environment, I pledge tonight the City's commitment to continue our participation in IDEM's CLEAN Community Challenge program. Through the CLEAN Community Challenge, we have been implementing the use of bio-diesel and E-85 fuels for our city trucks, as well as many other energy saving and environmental initiatives.

Earlier I spoke of the job creation successes we had with Vanair and Sullivan-Palatek. Those successes would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of our LaPorte County officials. As a county, we have been fortunate to have a spirit of collaboration amongst elected officials and I will work to maintain and build upon these relationships in 2008.

Currently, we are completing joint projects with the county on Meer Road and 400 north. Our water and sewer utilities are also working with the county to extend services south of I-94, to the critical US 421 and 300 North intersection.

Considerable work has also been accomplished on the LaPorte County Land Use Plan. Key city officials and volunteers have been involved in the development of this plan from the beginning. I have met with and asked City Planner John Pugh to spearhead the adoption of the County Master Plan by the City of Michigan City in the 1st Quarter of this year.

We will also work with all County governmental units to build upon our collaborative successes, such as the consolidation of our 911 services and offers to save money through bulk purchasing opportunities.

In this spirit of collaboration, we also need to develop new and successful ways to market Michigan City. At the urging of some of our new City Council members, I will convene a task force in the 1st Quarter comprised of representatives from the LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Michigan City Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce and the City Council to consider a bona fide joint Marketing Plan and the possibility of utilizing a Special Events Director.

In 2007, we succeeded because of the involvement of many citizen volunteers. We were blessed with many volunteers who participated in the MCNEAT, Lohan Anderson, JJR and Andrews University efforts. And a hands-on project that I was fortunate to be involved with was the cleanup of debris under Peanut Bridge in Trail Creek. As a result of the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, Indiana State Prison, Tonn & Blank, Ironworkers Local 395, Michigan City Police Department, Sanitary District, DNR and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, numerous citizens came out and removed, by hand, one hand-full of junk at a time; over **15 tons** of steel and iron debris from Trail Creek.

I wish to personally thank each and every citizen that volunteered their time to help our community in 2007. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed and I urge you to continue your

participation in 2008. Our City Team will continue to develop meaningful ways for citizens to make a difference.

Success over the next four years begins today. We will not be able to achieve anything significant unless we achieve consensus among us and approval to move forward within the next 100 days. I would like to be able to stand before you and say that we can pick and choose from these many initiatives. But I cannot say that. They are all part of an integrated, consolidated, comprehensive, multifaceted strategy to seek the greatest improvement in the quality of life of all citizens in Michigan City. To seek anything less, would be a betrayal of our oath of office.

I close with a quote from an unknown author regarding how we can shape our future:

"When we dream alone, it is only a dream. But when we dream together, it is the beginning of a new reality."

Ladies and gentlemen of the 2008 Michigan City Common Council, I believe the next 100 days will define our term in office. I am ready, willing and able to get to work with you.

Thank you for your time and attention here tonight.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

President Meer inquired whether there were any corrections, deletions, or additions to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 18, 2007 or Executive Session of December 18, 2007 and hearing none, the minutes were approved as printed.

REPORTS of STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no standing committee reports

REPORTS OF SPECIAL OR SELECT COMMITTEES

Councilman Jankowski reported on the Redevelopment Commission Public Hearing held on December 10, 2007 regarding the North End re-use plan.

REPORTS of OTHER CITY OFFICERS and DEPARTMENTS

There were no reports of other city officers or departments

PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications

RESOLUTIONS

There were no Resolutions

ORDINANCES

There were no Ordinances

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

President Meer requested the Clerks Office to schedule a Work Shop for January 15, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. before the next Council meeting.

Mayor Oberlie has requested advice and consent for the following appointments:

Ms. Jonita Davis as a member of the Michigan City Port Authority, with a term to expire March 31, 2012.

Councilman Jankowski moved to give the requested advice and consent, seconded by Councilmen Milsap and McKee. The motion carried by the following vote: **AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS Jankowski, McKee, Meer, Milsap, Murphy, Starks, Boy, Doyle, and Espar (9). NAYS: None (0).**

Ms. Tyra Robinson-Walker a member of the Michigan City Human Rights Commission, with a term to expire November 11, 2011.

Councilwoman Starks moved to give the requested advice and consent, seconded by Councilmen McKee and Doyle. The motion carried by the following vote: **AYES: COUCIL MEMBERS McKee, Meer, Milsap, Murphy, Starks, Boy, Doyle, Espar and Jankowski (9). NAYS: None (0).**

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL

Councilman Murphy stated his opinion on the Elston Grove streetscape and Lohan Anderson projects regarding the final daft of the Andrew University Study. Mr. Murphy stated that you could contact him if you would like a digital copy and would work with the Mayor's Offices to have this study put on line.

Councilman McKee thanked Mayor Oberlie for presenting his visions and plans in the "State of the City Address". Mr. McKee stated he is looking forward to positive things happening in the next four (4) years and addressed the Department Heads in regards to their daily efforts and being appreciated.

Council President Meer stated his and the entire Council's deepest sympathy to Police Officer Christopher Allen Smith's Family.

President Meer thanked the Council for supporting him and Councilman Milsap. Mr. Meer stated there will be several advancements for the City of Michigan City in the near future.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Doyle, supported by the majority of the Council, and there being no further business to transact, President Milsap declared the meeting **ADJOURNED** (approximately 8:26 p.m.).

Thomas F. Fedder, City Clerk