

Call To Order:

The regular meeting of the Lansing City Council was called to order by Mayor Mike Smith at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Mayor Mike Smith called the roll and indicated which Councilmembers were in attendance.

Councilmembers Present:

Ward 1: Gene Kirby and Dave Trinkle

Ward 2: Don Studnicka and Marcus Majure

Ward 3: Jesse Garvey and Kerry Brungardt

Ward 4: Tony McNeill and Gregg Buehler

Councilmembers Absent:

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of Minutes: Councilmember Buehler moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 20, 2020, as presented. Councilmember Garvey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Audience Participation: Mayor Smith called for audience participation and no one came forward.

Presentations

COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEMS:

Request for Cereal Malt Beverage License – Lansing Quike Stop: Councilmember Trinkle moved to approve the Cereal Malt Beverage License for Lansing Quike Stop at 601 South Main Street. Councilmember Buehler seconded the motion.

- Councilmember Studnicka asked is the old Finish Line, this Quike Stop or this the new one.
 - City Clerk Sarah Bodensteiner replied they are going in where Petro is. Where Petro Deli is, that is where they are taking over.
 - Councilmember Studnicka responded they are taking over.
 - City Clerk Sarah Bodensteiner replied yes.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Parks & Recreation Football Program: Mayor Smith asked Kevin, do you want to speak first. Come right on up. Give me your name and your address please.

- Kevin Gardner stated 1012 N 4th Street, Lansing, KS. I was part of the board that made the recommendation to the City Council and I will tell you we had two discussions, they were pretty lengthy and spirited at times. We addressed several issues, not just the fact of football in Lansing. We addressed the safety issues, participation whether it be the decline in participation whether it be for safety or people taking kids to play competitive. We also discussed cost. I know Jason brought that up. Cost is never a deciding factor, but it is one of the things that we discussed during the meetings. Communication, we discussed that which is better than it used to be but not as good as it will be in the future. The issue has been declining, that sport has been declining and instead of waiting for the bottom to fall out and addressing a negative situation, Jason wanted to address it ahead of time and be more proactive and have something good come out of it for the kids. So that is why we're in the state we're in. We're not in a position where there is just nothing there. We're just in a position where we had to make a decision that was best for the kids before it got to a negative situation.
 - Mayor Smith stated thank you Kevin. Any questions for Kevin before I move on to the next one.
 - Councilmember Majure replied I've got one. Kevin have we offered both flag and tackle at the same time. What stats, what numbers, what families, how many kids do we know are going to knock the doors down to want to play flag versus tackle.

- Kevin Gardner responded we don't know that because we're just getting into that. One of the issues that we talked about was during the participation part of it, was some were getting to play a lot, and some weren't. Well in flag football the number of participants is less which means everyone is more involved in the game than just sitting on the bench and getting their minimum playing time. So, in that respect, the children participating will be participating more than just the minimum amount of time.
 - Mayor Smith asked Kevin, we got flag in the younger group though don't we.
 - Kevin Gardner replied we do have flag in the younger group and I also looked into other cities that have flag football for the older ones. They run 6 on 6 or 5 on 5, depending on what it is. And all the kids are involved even the center, he becomes an eligible receiver right after he hikes the ball. So, everybody is involved not just the skilled players.
- Mayor Smith asked anybody else like to address the Council. Yes, sir. Come on up. Name and address please.
 - Darren Olson stated good afternoon Mayor, Councilmember. Darren Olsen, 2386 Tonganoxie Road, Leavenworth. I am your multisport volunteer Parks & Recs coach. I am here talk about the tackle football program tonight. First, I'd like to address the safety concerns that has been brought up by Parks & Recs. They're worried about safety for the kids as I'm sure we all are. I think as discussed at the last meeting, concussions was potentially one of the risks that they were really concerned about. So I'd like to ask Parks & Recs, do you have any statistical data or numbers from your tackle football program compared to your basketball program, soccer programs that says a tackle football program is more dangerous for the kids that are playing in your Parks & Recs program.
 - Kevin Gardner replied I don't know if we do or not but I think the issue was when it was brought up at the NFL level. That is when participation started to drop.
 - Darren Olsen responded so it sounds like were switching from safety to participation because the last meeting seemed like safety was kind of what we were focused on. I was talking to the Parks & Recs after the meeting seems as they have no statistical data on their program. They brought up the fact that there's national statistics. So, I brought some national statistics tonight to share with all of you so we're all on the same page. This is from the journal of Athletic Trainer says a higher portion of head and neck injuries particularly in boys' soccer and girls' basketball. Concussions especially in boys' soccer and girls' basketball. You guys offer boys soccer and girls basketball in Parks & Rec.
 - Kevin Gardner replied we do.
 - Mayor Smith stated listen, let's address this way. If I need to get a response, I'll get it. Direct to the Council if you would please.
 - Darren Olson responded alright. Thank you, sir. So, they have those two programs. They are higher in concussions and injuries yet we're not talking about discontinuing those programs based upon safety issues. There is also research from the Sanford Children Health study that says 50% of head and neck injuries will come from bicycling, skateboarding and skateboard incidents, not football. Another study from the Oxford Journal of Clinical Neuro Pathology, girls' sports are 1.5 times higher

than boys' sports for concussions. The top three that they cited was wrestling, martial arts and cheerleading, not football. They also talk about in that study that it's the bigger, faster athletes just like they said about the NFL players. They're bigger, they're faster, the league that we play in has rules that if they are over 90lbs they can not run the ball. They have those rules for safety reasons. In their study, they used 9 different sports and 100 different schools, and they found soccer and girls basketball that have more head and neck injuries, not football. The last study that I'll quote here is a study that was done by a medical physician, a pediatrician who stated that children's brains are not fully developed when they are younger. They're smaller, they have more fluid in their brain cavity, they can absorb cushions better than a larger, faster adults that are playing in the NFL. It's why they have less concussions than they do in the NFL. Those are the national statistics that I found. Parks and Recs did not bring any statistics for us tonight from within their program or from national statistics. I'm wondering, it seems like Parks & Recs have been thinking about discontinuing the tackle football program for quite some time. Is that correct.

- Mayor Smith stated I've been on the board for years. We've been talking about it for 4-5 years exactly. A lot of it has to do with, you mentioned 1-2 things here and there, and I appreciate you coming out and sharing with the Council but some of the issues are in the league we play in. We've had some real problems getting scheduling and weighing in. That just compounded. We used to have six teams in the league. In fact, I have coached a couple of them. At least one parent up here, well two parents up here I know helped me coach in the tackle football league, so I appreciate you coming out but now we're down to one. It seems like a lot of folks have gone to competitive or they stay in softball and they stay in soccer, so we don't get the turnout. There is no doubt that concussion, the movie that came out with the NFL was concerning to a lot of parents now and I've had some parents talk to me personally about they just don't feel it's safe with that happening. In my twenty-five years, I only had two young men that we know of with concussions. But

you know, days gone by they use to be shake it off and get back in there. Nowadays I think we're a little more sensitive about the young bodies that are having contact. So, I am not here to say yay or nay on the tackle because I enjoyed coaching it for twenty-five years but I think there is more than just one reason and I think Parks & Rec has brought it to our attention.

- Darren Olson replied I appreciate that sir. In your comments on the different reasons, kind of back to my question on if this has been a long time coming. It's not like it just got more dangerous yesterday. So, I am kind of wondering why Parks & Recs decided now and it sound like participation is the key issue. Now that they are in with the league you mentioned so my question is have we looked at other leagues.
- Mayor Smith responded I don't think, almost everybody has gone competitive now and I think that is the problem with that. We've got them down in Basehor and we've got them in St. Joe and a lot of them have done that. The last thing I wanted, speaking just for myself being a coach, the last thing I wanted was these competitive teams coming and playing our kids who we're just trying to teach fundamentals to. That is how you get somebody hurt. We've seen some competitive teams come in, they are oversize, Atchison was one, played for the championship two years ago on that great Lansing field which I'm proud we've got to play on. I had to stop the game in the 3rd quarter. These kids were so much bigger and so much faster that I was afraid of injury. I've only had to do that one other time in the entire league. So that was my reason for doing that. I can give you a lot of issues, but I think it just came together finally when all of it just finally set in. And I know the Parks Department has been talking about this with me when I was the City Manager/Administrator and also, just as a coach. I would say 4-5 years at least. So that is just my two cents on it.

ball and just want to try the sport, out of curiosity or love, either way, up against these kids that they go to school with that got recruited to play for this better team. And we didn't want to do that. But that is the option we had to look at for this year because we weren't sure if NEKKA was going to be viable. This was by far the worst year. Our 5th and 6th grade team only had seventeen registrations. It took us over two months to get seventeen kids. By NEKKA rules and policies, they have to have fifteen to be considered a team. We run registration for every sport for at least a month. So, we had to run late registration all the way to the middle of August to get seventeen kids. Because we didn't want to tell the thirteen that did sign up, sorry if we had three more you could play. So it's a constant stress and as was mentioned by Kevin, this was an effort for us to be proactive instead of having thirty kids out there practicing tackle football for a month and then coming to them and their parents and saying hey guys sorry we don't have any options. We wanted to be ahead of it and instead of creating that bad press, have an option to offer but yet at the same time like Tim mentioned have this out there early enough that the parents that are passionate about continuing with tackle football have those opportunities to go find those.

- Mayor Smith asked Gene, you have a question.
 - Councilmember Kirby stated I don't have a question. I have a couple of comments. I'm on the Park and Rec board so I've been in these meetings. So, let's be clear from my point of view. This isn't injuries or participation or the reliability of the league. It's a whole bunch of things alright. Now as a City sponsor, Parks and Rec, in my opinion, what we need to be doing is putting stuff out there to get as many kids to participate as possible. And if that is flag football, that's flag football. People got wind that it was going to be kickball and were having a fit about kickball. I don't care what it is as long as we are getting kids out in the sun, putting their devices down getting some exercise. I'm trying to get the greater participation. It's not just picking on football and it's just not one thing. We need to be reaching out to a broader audience and football is not the answer.
 - Darren Olson asked do we know flag football is the answer. Have we done any studies to show that?
 - Councilmember Kirby replied we don't know but we won't know if we don't try it. We know what is going on with football. It's going down.
 - Darren Olson responded I just wonder of Parks and Recs have reached out to the players from last year and asked them are they going to play tackle football. Do they anticipate playing tackle football again next year and if it's not offered, are they going to play flag football. Parks and Recs wants to run it internally and play against.
 - Mayor Smith stated I can tell you the last four years, and I coached until 2017, I can tell you the last 5-6 years, we had to go out and get people to play on that 5th and 6th grade team. So, it has been participation. I've been there with them and with the parents trying to keep this league going because I was one of the founding members on the tackle. I loved it but times change and I think Gene and the rest of us have said it's more than just one issue here. So, this is hard for me to hear after doing it all the years. There is more

than one issue. Now does anybody else have a question or comment on this.

- Councilmember Brungardt stated I do. Mike, do you remember when our boys played. We had two Lansing teams full plus we had a waiting list. And we're not there anymore.
 - Darren Olson stated I don't think we'll be at flag football either, but we haven't asked.
 - Councilmember Brungardt replied but we don't know.
- Darren Olson responded we don't know because we haven't asked. And I know Parks and Recs has all the information of all the kids that played. They could've asked those kids. They could've put it out on their Facebook and asked the community, hey is there any interest in flag football over tackle football. But they didn't ask. And that is kind of part of my concern is that we've made the recommendation without going and doing the research. Not only just on safety but also on the community. I know Parks and Recs has mentioned that they are the only Parks and Recs team that offer tackle football. And I think that is great because as they mentioned through Parks and Recs it should be equal playing time. So, it's kids that may not have the skills to be on a competitive team. May not have the money to pay to be on a competitive team but can be on a Parks and Recs team and can get the opportunity to play. And I don't want to take that away from them. I don't know if you do but I don't want to.
 - Councilmember McNeill replied so are you saying there are absolutely no football skills you can learn in flag football. I mean because if you have a good coach, you can teach them how to catch, you can teach them how to block, right. I mean you can teach them to run routes. There's plenty of skill sets you can get from flag football except for tackling.
 - Darren Olson responded there is sir. And I agree with that, however, tackling is a very important part of safety when they get older. So if we can teach them at a younger age how to tackle safely and then when they get into the middle school and high school and hopefully college or whatever, then they will already have known those fundamentals from an early age when they are less susceptible to injuries.
- Councilmember McNeill replied and I understand that. Parents, you know my kids played baseball. They played rec ball for 3,4,5 years and then they went competitive, right and they're traveling all over the world doing it. Because we think they are good enough to play competitively so the rec was to just get them out playing a sport. You know you find out from your kids what they like to do during recreational sports. It's not about overly competitive. It kind of drove me crazy when I was a coach in rec. I'm a little overly competitive but it's about getting them out there

and play. So, I mean tackle football is more competitive than flag football. I got that. If you are a parent who really wants your kid to play tackle football, then you go find a league for them to play in. I mean that's what I would do. If my kids were strongly intent on playing football and I wanted them to go down to Basehor, go down to whatever.

- Darren Olson stated that is what I am saying, some of those kids may not have the finances to play on those competitive teams but do really want to play. It's a little bit cheaper to go through Parks and Recs here in the City than a competitive team, sir. It also gives them the opportunity if they don't have the skill set to be able to get much playing time on a competitive team that they can get some playing time.
- Councilmember McNeill replied if you have enough teams but I'm hearing we don't.
- Councilmember Brungardt stated we don't have enough.
 - Darren Olson responded we don't know. We had twenty-six players on the 3rd and 4th grade team last year. One more and we would have had to have two teams. They talk about that you have to have thirteen players to make a team however, we played against teams that only fielded nine kids. So, I mean, there is a couple of business owners here in the room that I'm sure would sponsor the teams if needed be if it's a money issue. We just, there are a lot of issues like you said, just a lot of things. We're addressing them one by one, safety, participation I feel like is kind of, you know, not a lot of data on that. We're addressing the league. The league came and talked to you at the last meeting.
 - Councilmember McNeill stated in fairness, you're the coach, right, of the team.
 - Darren Olson replied I volunteered. They may not want me as a coach. And I had problems with the last coach.
 - Councilmember McNeill stated since you brought up the last meeting, right. I mean you came and spoke to us.
 - Darren Olson replied yes, sir.
 - Councilmember McNeill stated I have heard absolutely zero, nada, from any constituents about tackle football that we want it. I get it, I appreciate you coming and talking but nobody's knocking. Has anybody gotten any comments?
 - Mayor Smith stated wait, ok, I appreciate you coming up. I think you've made it pretty clear to us. Anybody else in the audience that would like to speak.
 - Darren Olson stated just in closing, one last thing. Some of these kids don't come from the greatest home lives. Sports is where they can excel, they can be safe, they can express themselves freely. Football is a great sport. You know it teaches them leadership, responsibility, like all the other sports, respect, teamwork and I am proud to be their coach and their mentor. Please don't take it away from them.
- Mayor Smith responded I appreciate you coming out tonight. Sir, do you want to give me a name and address please. Then hopefully we won't repeat the same thing but anything new you'd like to share.

- My name is Kevin Asher, 1001 N 3rd Street, Lansing. The rec program in football is to teach kids who are small where they're not big enough to hurt each other, how to properly put their head, how to tackle, that's what it's about. I understand going up against recruited teams and all but I don't think you're going to take away football from the high school level. So, if we don't teach these kids from a young age while they aren't big enough to hurt each other, how to properly tackle somebody, where to put their head. What's going to happen when these kids are grown adults. They're little adults and now they couldn't afford to go play or their parents weren't going to travel to take them to these teams. Now they go play for the high school level and that kid runs out there and gets smacked by some 220lb kid. And now he plays for Lansing and he is paralyzed from the neck down because he didn't know where to properly put his head. That is what teaching these kids at a young age does. It teaches them where to put their head, to how to properly tackle. And I see there is a lot of problems with it about participation and things like that and I don't mean disrespect anybody in this meeting but if it's like this meeting, I found out from some City employee who told me about this. It was one little bitty ad in the paper that said there was this meeting. The paper is what, 10 years ago when we quit advertising. It was 7,000 people on the weekends and 5,000 during the week. You guys have what, 30-40,000 people drive by this building every single day. You could put a simple sign out front or your Facebook page, your internet page. We get far more hits than anything. My kid likes to play every sport. He is by far, if you look, he is probably the smallest kid on the football team. He tries hard. He loves sports but when he wants to play, it's hard for me to figure out what is going on because the only time I see anything for Parks and Rec come out is that quarterly paper. A lot of people throw that away and think its junk mail. I look for that quarterly paper because that is the only time, I know what is going on in Parks and Rec. And I see there is a lot of problems with participation. Has anybody thought about putting it out there more? Try to get that feed out there about more stuff for these kids.
 - Mayor Smith stated one thing that you may not be aware of, every Friday we put out a News release. If you'll give the City your email address, it gives updates every Friday.
 - Kevin Asher responded yeah but there are so many things we can do for free. You, yourself put so many things out there. I see more from the City from you personally than I do anywhere else but there is a lot more ways we can do to try and solve this problem. Besides saying it's too much stress for me, I'm just done with it. One of you said it yourself, this is about getting kids out there. We should try to give them more opportunities, not take opportunities away. And I don't think there is any kid out there that's played tackle football that's going to want to go back and pull a flag and wave it in the air. My kid is the smallest one out there and I know there is a lot of people on our team that complained about participation, but you know my kid was the smallest kid out there, the lightest kid. I actually had to go buy pants for him because we didn't have pants to fit him. He got playing time. It's about effort and trying and the kids that didn't try then you're not going to play. I think any coach is that way whether it's Park and Rec or not. If you're not going to go out there and participate, if you're going to be building dirt piles during practice, I don't think coach is going to put you out there in front of that kid that's twice as small as you but he tries twice as hard. I think a lot of that is effort and I just think taking something away is really not the best thing.
 - Councilmember Garvey stated I would like to point out one thing Kevin said. We do advertise on the sign in the front of the prison any time there is a sport coming up.
 - Kevin Asher replied you do.

- Councilmember Garvey stated any time there is a sport coming up we advertise on that sign, sign up now.
 - Kevin Asher stated but I think there could more done especially with as many people that drive by here every day that wouldn't cost anything. And I don't ever see anything get put out about needing players and needing coaches. And I hear that is a lot of the issue, but I don't ever see that on any Facebook page or any internet site. Yeah, we need coaches, we need help, we need this. I see it for the library people and for other stuff, but I don't ever see it with anything with Parks and Rec. I just think there is other things we can do to try to get these kids, you know, coaches or other teams besides just taking it away.
- Mayor Smith stated I appreciate you coming in sir. Anybody else like to address the governing body on this issue on something that hasn't already been addressed.
 - Councilmember Majure asked Mike.
 - Mayor Smith replied Marcus, go ahead.
 - Councilmember Majure stated so we've hit on some pretty key things here but I could have sworn you addressed the other problem is even if we were to try to do a team or two teams of 3rd and 4th grade team or 5th and 6th grade, there's not a league to play in. Isn't that what you addressed. Even if we fought to try to save tackle football in Lansing, we don't have a league according to this. Is that right.
 - Parks and Recreation Programmer Christina Moberly responded to our knowledge NEKKA still exists. The gentleman came and spoke to you guys at the last meeting. The problem is we don't know if it's a viable league from year to year because they are also dependent on participation.
 - Councilmember Majure replied ok, thank you.
 - Mayor Smith stated alrighty, I need a motion one way or the other.

Councilmember Buehler moved to accept the PRAB recommendation to eliminate tackle football.
Councilmember Kirby seconded the motion.

- Mayor Smith asked is there any more discussion on this.
 - Councilmember Majure replied let me ask you this. These guys that are here, these coaches and they put together their team, what are we going to do with the equipment. Is that something we can do, hand down from team to team. Is that something that could help Mike.
 - Mayor Smith stated one thing we did when Ft. Leavenworth got rid of it, we bought their equipment for, you were there, very little. I think it's something we can discuss. The only thing we have to be careful about is the equipment, you know, these safety measures, insurance.
 - Councilmember Majure responded I mean I don't want to set the City up for a lawsuit for that kind of stuff but if there is an opportunity based on financial considerations.
 - Mayor Smith replied Jason will not be removing that equipment for a while. We've had that conversation because I didn't know what

the Council felt, and I didn't know after one year if maybe we'd look at it again different. So, it's not going anywhere right now Marcus.

- Councilmember Majure stated thank you.
 - Mayor Smith replied thank you Marcus.
 - Councilmember McNeill stated I was just going to say if they did have a couple of teams that needed to be outfitted. I think that is what he's getting at. I mean let them use while they're going in their competitive league.
 - Mayor Smith replied the helmets have to be certified.
 - Councilmember McNeill responded yeah; I know but that's something the City can do.
 - Mayor Smith replied Tony, I don't disagree. I just want to make sure everyone understands that there's a liability thing. I have no problem doing that for anybody that wants to do that. Dave, do you have a question.
- Councilmember Trinkle asked wasn't that an issue with the helmets, how much the rep said to be recertified, the cost, wasn't it.
 - Parks and Recreation Programmer Christina Moberly stated there is. I had Ridell come in and take a look at our equipment and the quote we got is that 26 of our helmets have to be reconditioned and that's at an approximate cost of about \$1,000.
 - Councilmember Majure replied holy crap.
- Mayor Smith responded it's never been, I don't think, some things in PRAB are a quality of life issues and the City has always been good about getting, like people were saying getting their kids out and take care of them and don't break the parents banks. So, I don't think that was the issue. My concern was, I want to make sure everyone knows, if we start issuing equipment out, some of its new in there I'm sure. Christina, there is some that needs to be updated but that is something we can sure have discussions if this is the way the Council is going to go. Ok, Sarah.

The motion was unanimously approved.

- Mayor Smith stated ok we're going to flag. Folks, thank you for coming in. Maybe we can have conversations afterwards on this.

Executive Session – Consultation with Attorney: Councilmember Buehler moved to recess into executive session for the consultation with an attorney for the City which would be deemed privileged in an attorney-client relationship, K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2) for 30 minutes, beginning at 7:31PM and returning to the Council Chambers at 8:01PM. Councilmember Studnicka seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Councilmember McNeill voting against the motion.

Councilmember Buehler moved to return to open session at 8:01PM. Councilmember Kirby seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

REPORTS:

Department Heads: Department Heads had nothing to report.

City Attorney: City Attorney Greg Robinson had nothing to report.

City Engineer: City Engineer Matt Harding had nothing to report.

City Administrator: City Administrator Tim Vandall had nothing to report.

Governing Body: Councilmember Garvey mentioned it is good to see all the improvements going on like Low N Slow moving into a building from the trailer, the old Kinder Care building getting some improvements and working on the landscape building at 110 S Main.

Councilmember Buehler said he is happy QuikTrip has walls up. He also provided a fun fact, on this day in 1770, five Americans including Crispus Attucks were fatally shot by British troops in the event known as the Boston Massacre.

Councilmember Brungardt thanked the gentleman for coming to the meeting and expressing their opinion.

Councilmember Trinkle stated Happy St Patrick's Day.

Councilmember Majure thanked the gentleman for the presentation and they know nothing is impossible. He will work with the Council on the equipment.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Majure moved to adjourn. Councilmember Brungardt seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Councilmember Trinkle voting against the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

Michael W. Smith, Mayor

Sarah Bodensteiner, City Clerk