

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**CITY HALL, PLANNING/ENGINEERING CONFERENCE ROOM (WEST)**  
**Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at 4:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

Present: Alderperson Chris Able, Mary Balte, Grace Brandl, Janet Breuer, Pat Chermak, Linda Hunter, June Kramer, August Krieser

Excused: Mayor Justin Nickels, Anthony Mack

Guest(s): Linda Phillip, Kelly Shariff, Ralph Kramer

Minutes: Submitted by Linda Hunter

- I. Meeting called to order at 4:02pm
- II. City Update from Alderperson Chris Able
  - a. The Committee inquired if there had been any progress on making the Rahr-West Art Museum more accessible. Alder Able informed this project has been postponed due to financing.
  - b. The Committee inquired where the \$2 million dollar cost in taking down the rest of the Mirro building is coming from. Alder Able informed the Committee it may cost more due to required removal of contaminants and a referendum would probably be required to fund this cost.
  - c. The Committee inquired on the status of the mid-city mall project. Alder Able stated the owners seem to plan to demo the building themselves, but a completion bond is needed. It may be down by the end of the year. They will use the asbestos abatement crew that is currently at Hamilton in Two Rivers to help reduce travel costs.
  - d. The Committee inquired on downtown progress. Alder Able informed there has been no consensus on this topic as the Mayor has not yet brought his ideas to Council.
- III. Guest Speaker – Linda Phillip & Kelly Shariff of the Autism Society of the Lakeshore
  - a. It is Autism Awareness month, and the Autism Society was founded in 1996.
  - b. The rate of autism among the population has increased by about a third in the last 20 years or so.
  - c. The mission of the Autism Society is advocacy, education, support, information and acceptance for the individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as well as families.
  - d. Autism is a neurological behavior disorder, best diagnosed before age 3. It involves a wide variety of behavior issues including communication, socialization, behavior, and sensory processing. Many issues may co-exist such as ADHD, eating disorders, seizures, and mental health. Access to early intervention leads to the best outcomes. Manitowoc County provides therapies from birth with different programs, followed by the schools as they get older.
  - e. The major issues with ASD include stigma, misinformation, and lack of early diagnosis. Lack of funding and access to support are an issue in the lakeshore. Parents feel isolated. They also compete with other groups for funding.
  - f. The Society consists of a nine member board and is privately funded. Money raised in the lakeshore stays in the community. One of the primary annual fundraisers is the “Ugly Sweater Run” which is held in November. This past year there were 300 participants and they are anticipating over 600 in 2015 and are working with the Best Western on this upcoming event.
  - g. The Society’s services include monthly support meetings with speakers, monthly family events, a friendship group for teens and young adults, seasonal parties, a newsletter, website and Facebook page. The Society offers \$250 scholarships to high school graduates. They have a lending library, financial assistance for adaptive technology and therapies, as well as offer help

to parents navigating the school systems and IEPs. They network with the various counties they serve.

- h. The Society's goals include further education and employment for the individuals.
- i. The Committee inquired if conditions improve as ASD individuals' age. Linda and Kelly informed that when an individual finishes high school there seem to be fewer social pressures and their life seems to improve.

IV. The Committee stated they would like Greg Vadney of the Rahr-West Art Museum to be a guest speaker at a future meeting. Alder Able informed the Committee he would look into this.

V. Next meeting will be Tuesday, 05.05.15, beginning at 4:00pm at the Domestic Violence Center, 300 East Reed Avenue, Manitowoc, WI 54220.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 4:50pm