

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Tuesday, September 8, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS:

Anthony Serna, President
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President
Valda Lewis, Secretary
Gilberto Cantu
Eugene Austin

STAFF:

Ateria Allen
Dawn Dawkins, Legal
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

Reported by: Trixie L. Schuzer, CSR
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 5:07 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: Anthony Serna, Eugene Austin
Zoom: Valda Lewis, Gilberto Cantu

CHIEF SERNA: We have four out five members. We do have a quorum. So we're going to move on to administrative matter.

First item under administrative matters is approval of the August 25th 2020 meeting minutes. I'll entertain a motion to approve the August 25th 2020 minutes.

MR. AUSTIN: So second.

CHIEF SERNA: Motion by Mr. Austin.
Is there a second?

MS. LEWIS: Second.

CHIEF SERNA: Second by Ms. Lewis.
All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

CHIEF SERNA: Motion carries.

Next we have approval of the payroll dated September 4th 2020. I'll entertain a motion to approve the payroll dated September 4th 2020.

MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the September 4th payroll.

MR. AUSTIN: I second it.

1 CHIEF SERNA: Move by Ms. Lewis, second my
Mr. Cantu[sic].

2 All those in favor of the motion signify by
saying aye.

3 (All signify aye.)

4 CHIEF SERNA: Opposed? (None) Abstentions?
(None) Motion carries.

5 Next, we have approval of warrant report 082820PB
6 in the amount of \$29.50. I'll entertain a motion to
approve warrant report 082820PB.

7 MR. AUSTIN: I'll make a motion.

8 MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the warrant.

9 MR. AUSTIN: I second.

10 CHIEF SERNA: Motion made by Ms. Lewis, second
11 by Mr. Austin. All those in favor of the motion signify
by saying aye.

12 (All signify aye.)

13 Opposed? (None) Abstentions? (None) Motion
carries.

14 Next, we have approval of the warrant report
090820PB in the amount of \$31,678.03. I'll entertain a
15 motion to approve warrant report 090820PB.

16 MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the warrant.

17 MR. AUSTIN: I second it.

18 CHIEF SERNA: Motion made by Ms. Lewis, second
19 by Mr. Austin. All those in favor of the motion signify
by saying aye.

20 (All signify aye.)

21 Opposed? (None) Abstentions? (None) Motion
carries.

22 Next item on the agenda is old business. Madam
Secretary, do we have any old business?

23 MS. ALLEN: No, we do not.

24 CHIEF SERNA: No business. All right.

25 Next, we'll move on to new business with Vanessa
Hernandez-Orange.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening, ya'll.

MR. AUSTIN: Hello.

1 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Hello. So today I am
2 coming before you first off to -- in regards to two
3 quotes that I have for geese waste prevention.

4 Basically what's happening is, at our golf course
5 we have a geese problem. They are actually allotting the
6 wastes all throughout the golf course. At first we
7 thought it was oil from one of our trucks, because they
8 would come and cut it and then they would just step --
9 the wheels would go over all waste. We cannot keep up
10 with what is happening at the golf course in regards to
11 the waste.

12 So I know this is an issue throughout East
13 Chicago. I know we've seen an infestation of these
14 geese. They are just around. And you could be right
15 next to it and the geese will not be scared so we have to
16 find ways to prevent it. I know earlier we were talking
17 in regards to using the dogs to come and kind of shoo
18 them off, and I know I also gave an idea of lights.

19 So I had my staff actually go and get two quotes
20 from two companies that actually do lights. So what
21 we're going to do is -- I'm sorry.

22 CHIEF SERNA: No, it's your echo.

23 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So what we're going to
24 do is put the lights at the pond at MacArthur. So
25 actually on your map that you received inside your
packets it shows different areas -- different pond areas,
because what it is with the geese, they end up going near
water.

So what happened is, there's two types of lights
that were going to be given to us. One being where you
could actually post inside the ground. It would have to
be dug up, go a little -- couple feet in, or you could
put it inside the water. And basically it's like a --
it's not harmful to the geese or it's not going to mess
with anything health wise with the geese. It just kind
of shoos them away throughout the night time.

And in the morning is when the solar -- is
basically solar powered so it doesn't have any
electrical. It's all solar powered. So how we're going
to keep it in the water, because it's a floating device,
is you basically are going to anchor it with a fishing
line or something to the end part of the area next to the
pond.

So the good thing with these two companies, once
we told one company that, the shipping was going to be
waived, the other company did because of the fact that we
explained to them, we're going to have to be the ones to
install this. We're going to have to be the ones to put
it inside the pond.

1 We're going to have to be the ones that do the
2 fishing rod from the actual device into the area where
3 it's -- the ground. So -- and we have to do it
strategically because we don't want to mess with the
integrity of the golf course.

4 So we at -- I'm requesting that we actually go
with geese problem solved, and they are offering 356 per
5 light. We're getting seven lights all together, and the
total for the geese problem solved will be \$2,492. The
6 other company which was Away with Geese was \$2,653.

7 Is there any questions?

8 CHIEF SERNA: Are there any questions, board
members, on the two proposals the Director is
9 recommending: The proposal from Geese Problem Solved,
10 which again where is the price. I'm trying to find the
11 price. Must be on the front page.

12 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: The price has it --
13 it's at the bottom where it says, water units at 356
14 each.

15 CHIEF SERNA: Okay. But they didn't do a
16 total?

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: They did not do the
18 total but it says on there, you require seven of the
19 water units.

20 CHIEF SERNA: So we have to do the math. So
21 let's see. Let me pull out the calculator so 355 times
22 seven, 2555; is that --

23 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Well, it's actually
24 356.

25 CHIEF SERNA: Oh, I'm sorry. Seven times 356.
2,492.

26 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct that's what I
27 came up with.

28 CHIEF SERNA: 2,492 as opposed to 2,653.

29 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

30 CHIEF SERNA: So that's a couple hundred
31 dollars difference.

32 And any questions on this, board members?

33 MS. LEWIS: Yes. You said we were going to
34 purchase them but we will to install the lights.

35 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. And basically
it's not really a lot of installations. Just kind of --
it's a floating device. So we will have to install it
22 into the area, because if we wanted to put it on our golf
23 course, we'd have to dig. We'd have to make sure that it
24 wouldn't touch anything. So we felt that the best route
25 would be to take it and put it in the water as a floating
device.

1 MS. LEWIS: Okay.

2 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: And also the light
3 would shine in different directions if need be with the
4 wind. That's how they explained it to me, the company
5 did.

6 CHIEF SERNA: Any other questions, board
7 members?

8 I have a question. Do they have a number you can
9 call, or do they have any references? Because I'm having
10 a hard time believing that lights are going to keep geese
11 away. Dogs I can understand and even cut out dogs,
12 coyotes or something.

13 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct, the owls.

14 CHIEF SERNA: But lights?

15 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes.

16 CHIEF SERNA: This is something -- like how did
17 you find out about them.

18 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So I actually found out
19 about different option because I was on the Marina Board
20 previously. And we -- they have an even worse problem
21 than we did so -- we started seeing that the marina
22 probably about three or four years ago. I made my staff
23 contact the Marina Board and ask them for options that's
24 they used there.

25 Because I know at one point they were using the
fishing lines and they just had it around the area
because that was cost effective. I also did know -- I
talked to Service Gape. Service Gape is actually the
company that does our -- the MacArthur Golf Course, and
they gave me the option of the dogs. I just knew because
of what we previously went through at the Marina that,
that is way too costly which it was.

And then the other option that I know the Marina,
if I'm not mistaken, has used or was in the process of
using are the lights. And the only reason it will work
for us is because we don't have an area where, you know,
there's the boats or anything like that. It's just an
area where you're able to -- where the geese kind of go
to is attracted -- you'll be able to see from different
angles.

So this is the reason why we're going with the
lights. Also, Service Gape did mention about the lights,
too. It's not something that, you know, I, kind of, just
came up with. I had to ask the experts because I know
they deal with it and Service Gape does a couple golf
courses. And like they said in Northwest Indiana, geese
are coming here for what reason they're not -- we're not
sure, but it's all over.

1 CHIEF SERNA: Well, I just -- I'm from
Missouri. I guess you're going to have to show me.
2 We'll see about fall -- or November, December, if it
works. I'm just -- we'll see.

3 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: No, so from my
understanding when I've talked to these companies, we can
4 see geese stay around until late October so -- and that's
why, they'll continue to come -- like I was saying
5 earlier, once you end up having a hatch -- so once they
end up having their babies in this area, they'll continue
6 to come back. And then those babies know that this is
where they're at so they come back.

7 Again, I -- if you ask the Marina -- and I know
they have the same issues only because I was on the board
8 and they were trying to come up with solutions that was
cost effective. This for us, for our area that we have
9 to deal with, it is cost effective. But if we had a
bigger area, it would -- I don't know what we'd do at
10 this point.

CHIEF SERNA: Okay.

11 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: But I can get you the
number. I can have them reach out to you if you'd like.

12 CHIEF SERNA: Well, I just ... lights. I can't
see how lights are going to keep geese away but hey.

13 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I think it's the motion
of -- so the other options, like you said, the owl.
14 There's owl cutouts that I guess at one point the Marina
did use back in the day, and it's the reflection of the
15 lights on to the owl eyes. So that reflection of the
lights is -- being on is like a continuous bother to the
16 animal but it's not like detrimental in a sense.

CHIEF SERNA: So it's a humane way --

17 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct, yes.

18 CHIEF SERNA: -- rather than extermination or
something.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Right.

19 CHIEF SERNA: Yes, Mr. Austin, do you have a
question?

20 MR. AUSTIN: Yeah. That's kind of a tough
question because them geese, you know, you set something
21 up around it, they can always fly anywhere, you know.

22 CHIEF SERNA: Right. Yeah, they might use the
lights as landing pad there. It might attract them.

23 MR. AUSTIN: I'm just thinking that maybe that
you could put something out there to -- you know, the
light come on, that it have some kind of a noise to it.
24 Maybe some kind of noises sensitive just like you have in
your -- they say in your house, it is a smell that go out
25 that run them away. You know what I'm saying?

1 CHIEF SERNA: You know, I will have to co-sign
2 with Mr. Austin on that. I just visited a family member
3 who lives out in Michigan City has about an acre. And
4 they bought something online -- and I don't know if they
5 sell it at Menards -- but they bought something that is
6 solar powered -- he bought four of them to put on each
7 side of his house that send some kind of frequency, some
8 kind of noise but you don't hear it. He got rid of
9 squirrels but he also got rid of birds. They used to get
10 a lot of wildlife that used to come in their back yard,
11 they get nothing now. But they solved their problem with
12 the squirrels, and possum, they don't come around. So
13 maybe that's something we could look at, too. But again,
14 it -- if that was effective, it might drive everything
15 away but I don't know what -- we got to do something. I
16 agree we have to do something. So let's give it a try
17 with these lights.

18 All right. So you're recommending geese problem
19 solve for \$2,492, and we would own these lights and we
20 would put them out there and leave them out until the
21 weather -- until the lake froze over.

22 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So the lake can
23 actually freeze over on these lights and we can leave
24 them in there.

25 CHIEF SERNA: Okay. And we just have to
maintain them. Is it a battery or something we have to
maintain.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: It's all solar powered.

CHIEF SERNA: Oh, all solar. Okay. And they
have -- you're satisfied with their warranty? They
warranty for a year.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So their warranty is
different, that's the only issue. One has a warranty and
one does not. The one that we're going with has a
warranty. It's only for a year so that's another reason
why we went with them.

CHIEF SERNA: Good. So they have a warranty
and they're lower priced?

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes.

CHIEF SERNA: Okay. So I'll entertain a motion
to approve the agreement to purchase from geese problem
solved, the seven lights or water units for \$2,492.

MR. AUSTIN: I make a move.

CHIEF SERNA: Motion by Mr. Austin. Is there a
second?

MS. LEWIS: I second it.

1 CHIEF SERNA: Second by Ms. Lewis. All those
2 in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye.

(All signify aye.)

3 CHIEF SERNA: Opposed? (None) Abstentions?
4 (None) Motion carries.

Go ahead, Vanessa, you have more.

5 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes. I just want to
6 give a couple updates of what's happening within the
7 park. So we did have a walk through like I said I was
8 going to with Ms. Burns in regards to how many people we
9 can have underneath our pavilion, gazebos, and our
10 shelters. Again, because of the fact that COVID numbers
11 are still on the rise within our community, we wanted to
12 put a number in regards to what can happen within our
13 parks. In our walk-through what she stated was that
14 underneath the pavilion at Washington Park, we cannot
15 have no more than 30 individuals underneath the actual
16 shelter -- or actual pavilion.

17 She stated that for the gazebo that is right
18 behind here, we cannot have more than 20 individuals
19 underneath the gazebo. She stated that we cannot have
20 more than 15 individuals underneath the 30 by 30 shelter,
21 and she also stated that we cannot have more than 12
22 under the 24 by 24 shelter. Which means our numbers have
23 gone down extremely from what we usually allow.

24 Again, what we've been doing in our office is if
25 someone says that they're having an event for 50 people,
we say it's more than that then we directly send them to
get an event permit because we're considering that as an
event. Now if they don't fit within our number -- and we
do ask -- that's one of the main things we ask when they
call in is, you know: The date, the name, the amount of
people, event type, and to see if it's an organization or
not.

So today we had someone come in, they said, Well,
we're only going to have nine people there. So obviously
we moved forward with the permit but we let them know
underneath this area cannot have more than this number.
We also explained to them to keep their masks on because
it is regulation because of the ordinance from the City
Counsel as well as the resolution passed by our Park
Board.

MR. AUSTIN: Excuse me.

CHIEF SERNA: Yes, sir, Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Yes, I would like to -- that's a
good idea what you're saying. But I was thinking that we
should maybe as how things is now. You know what I'm
saying?

1 Don't just throw somebody and just say this is
2 what we're going to do until everything come back to
3 normal. You know what I'm saying? To make the people
4 not want to come to our western part, because we spend a
5 lot of money out there. We need people to come in
6 because, you know, they will take this as saying, you
7 know, you make them feel still welcome but you got to
8 understand, we got a Code 19 --

9 CHIEF SERNA: Right.

10 MR. AUSTIN: -- out here. You know, don't just
11 set it up -- just say this is a part-time thing until
12 this is over with and then still I think they would
13 receive it much better.

14 CHIEF SERNA: And I think everybody understands
15 that. I think that we have had the parks -- the
16 amenities that we've had at the parks for a few years
17 now. And anybody who's either heard of a party we've
18 thrown or had a party, they know that the changes that
19 we're making is all because of COVID, and it's all
20 temporary until.

21 So I think people understand that. I think if
22 there's anything more that we could do, I think people
23 understand all these changes are due to COVID, and once
24 we're out from underneath this pandemic whether it's
25 through a vaccine or whatever that may be, that will go
back to normal. Because everybody knows we have very
nice facilities to have parties in.

MR. AUSTIN: Just one thing. I cannot
understand how people is reacting and they see -- and
they still like this. You know what I'm saying?

CHIEF SERNA: Yeah.

MR. AUSTIN: I mean they were showing it on TV,
I just couldn't believe how people were acting.

CHIEF SERNA: Yeah, there was pictures in the
newspaper of a parade in -- I think it was Porter County,
a Labor Day parade. I didn't see not one mask on anybody
in those pictures so it's just how people have to take
care of themselves and respect others.

So that change and everything is effective
immediately?

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Effective after
tonight. We're letting our Park Board know, and then
tomorrow everything will be updated on our website so
they can know my staff is ready to move forward with this
so they actually know that it was coming. And we been
calling all the people back to let them know, while we
understand we said this amount of people could be
underneath and they're fine but now -- and like Ms. Burns
said, there's a big open space.

1 But what she's allowing, what she gave the
2 recommendation for is what's underneath the actual
3 shelter. So for in other words, if there was 12 people
4 outside the shelter then that's something different.

CHIEF SERNA: Right. And as with any of the
5 rules, park rules, rules are only as effective as they
6 are enforced.

MR. AUSTIN: That's right.

CHIEF SERNA: So we can be as restrictive as we
7 want to be, but if there's no enforcement arm, then, you
8 know, not until the police are called or you show up.
9 Because you like to pop in on things and you show up and
10 you usually shut things down which is a good thing when
11 it's necessary so that's good. That's good. I think
12 that's a good thing. We have to protect the community.
13 These are things that we're not choosing to do. These
14 are things by the direction of Diana Garcia Burns our
15 Health Director. Okay.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Also with that being
16 said, because we were receiving so many -- just for the
17 Board to know, we for some reason are getting a lot of
18 softball teams from Chicago come and do practice as well
19 as play games or tournaments at South Park. On Friday we
20 ended up putting a sign stating that it's not in use,
21 it's not available for any game play, or any practices by
22 any organization. Because of the fact that, first off,
23 our league teams or our sports teams here are not able to
24 use it especially if they're not wearing a mask. People
25 are all there no mask, not a coach, not a parent. And
they're within our community, people playing with people
in our community. That's how things spread.

And what we did, we explained to them that if
they had any questions, they could always call and
contact us. We could try to work something out. Once
this COVID pandemic lifts -- if it lifts, if not, then,
you know, we'll have to find a way to do different
restrictions for them or for whomever. So that sign did
go up as long -- also with that being said in our parks,
the porta potties have been picked up as of today at all
of our parks.

What -- I went back to go research, someone said
that they get picked up in October. What I saw was that
they were picked up before Labor Day. So I left them
through Labor Day. We didn't have any issues but they
were picked up today.

CHIEF SERNA: Okay. The only -- I'll say it
though, when board members -- the Director did make me
aware of the issue at Tod Park with softball and not only

1 because of COVID but if people are having tournaments and
2 holding big events on our fields, they need to rent the
3 field. We have a schedule of fees. So they're not only
4 shirting the COVID regulations but they're also not
5 paying to use the field.

6 And so Vanessa, the Director,
7 Mrs. Hernandez-Orange is very well within her right to
8 tell these people that are using these fields, not only
9 because of COVID restriction but because you don't have a
10 permit to use these fields and so I commend you for
11 taking the time to go out there after hours and check on
12 these things on weekends because it's just not right not
13 only because of COVID but because of revenue. They're
14 not paying their fees.

15 Literally, everybody else has to pay some kind of
16 fee and these people from Illinois are coming in and not
17 paying anything. That's not right. So good work on your
18 behalf.

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I have two more things
20 that are an update. The other thing is we have the
21 virtual Monarch Fest that's happening next week for the
22 week. So, basically, the East Chicago Parks and
23 Recreation will partner with the Monarch Fest Group and
24 we would have a big festival at Kosciuszko. This year
25 because of COVID we're not having anything. What we're
going to do is, it's going to be a virtual Monarch Fest.

So they're going to have different classes or
different orientations with individuals from Mexico from
the Field Museum as well as we're going to have a Mexican
folkloric group discuss about the monarchs. We plan to
end on Friday doing a video like a live X on side park
just myself along with some of the group members just so
they can see our monarch statue, and people who haven't
participated with the Monarch Fest are able to see it.

We are also partnering with them by giving out
100 bags to individuals who would like to participate in
a window contest. So they have construction paper,
colored pencils, blue dots, different stencils for
butterflies so that individuals could decorate their
windows. And then we're going to video tape to see, you
know, have them participate. I know when COVID first
hit, we did -- they did the hearts to show love for the
first responders as well as those who were affected by
COVID. So now we're going to do a Monarch Fest.

So if you know of anyone who would like to, make
sure to call and let us know, and we can give them a bag.
All the information is found on Facebook. That's their
main area and I think most people are active on Facebook
but most people received something in the mail

1 in regards to the Monarch Fest.

2 MR. AUSTIN: Facebook is everything now.

3 CHIEF SERNA: You know, that Monarch Festival,
4 my wife and some good friends of ours went both years
5 that it happened and I'm glad. We did receive fliers --
6 or postcards in the mail, and I definitely will be
7 contacting you for one or two of those bags just to show
8 support, because it was a very nice festival. Like all
9 our festivals we do in the City of East Chicago, we do
10 them top notch and that monarch festival was one of them.
11 So yes, that's great to hear.

12 You have one more thing?

13 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I do. So my last thing
14 is in regards to outdoor programming. I have been
15 granted the okay do start a limited number for outdoor
16 programming for the following programs which is yoga,
17 Zumba, line dancing.

18 It will be either under the gazebo here at
19 Veterans or it will be at the pavilion at Washington
20 Park. And every one will have to go through the same
21 rules, you have to wear the mask, you'll have to be six
22 feet apart, and again, it's a limited amount of number.
23 We hope to have classes begin on the 21st. We're trying
24 to get all information out soon just to get some
25 advertisement out.

People have been at our parks this whole entire
time with -- doing classes. At least now we're able to
provide them through Parks and Recreation. And I know
because of COVID it's tricky, but at the same time, we
want to be able to give something back to the community.
And it we stay by our rules, our instructors all know
what we expect at the events that they have the
programming. So we don't foresee any issues.

CHIEF SERNA: All right. Any questions, board
members, for our Director on any of the items mentioned
or any questions for the director?

MS. LEWIS: No.

CHIEF SERNA: All right. Thank you very much,
Vanessa.

We'll move onto the next item on the agenda which
is public comment. Any public comment? (None)

Our next meeting date is Tuesday, September 22nd
2020 right here at City Hall, Council Chambers, 5:00 p.m.
I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

MS. LEWIS: I so move.

MR. AUSTIN: I second it.

1 CHIEF SERNA: Motion by Ms. Lewis, second by
Mr. Austin.

2 All those in favor of the motion, signify by
3 saying aye.


(All signify aye.)

4 CHIEF SERNA: Opposed? (None) Abstentions?
(None) Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

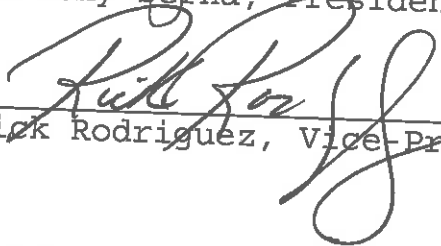
5 *** Meeting Adjourned at 5:36 p.m. ***
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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday
September 8, 2020

Approved and signed September 22, 2020



Anthony Serna, President



Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis, Secretary

Gilberto Cantu, Member



Eugene Austin, Member



Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

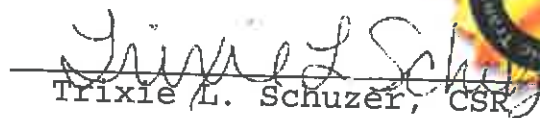
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Trixie L. Schuzer, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Schererville, Indiana, this 17th of September, 2020.


Trixie L. Schuzer, CSR



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