

Central Lake Village Council accepts resignation

BY LINDA GALLAGHER

CENTRAL LAKE - The Central Lake Village Council's issues with their new president continued Monday night, and much to the surprise of many of those in the audience, the resignation of longtime Council member and president pro-tem Brian Patton was accepted during a lengthy monthly meeting that included a number of other actions.

Objections to the new president, Walter Russell, as well as calls for his resignation, were also once again heard from several members of the large audience, which packed the Central Lake Government Center meeting room, during public comment as well as throughout the meeting.

A motion to refuse the resignation of Patton, a member of the Council for 20 years and a longtime village business owner, came midway through a meeting which included remarks from the former temporary campground

caretaker, Deb Hopp, who was not hired fulltime, the hiring of a part-time seasonal DPW employee, a decision to begin the legal process to renew a leased portion of Thurston Park, and a decision to begin the process to regulate medical marijuana as a business in the village, as well as discussion surrounding the recent suspension by Russell of the Village Clerk.

Patton had submitted a letter to Council members as well as others in late April, noting his intent to resign his position April 22 if Russell did not "step up and do the job" that Patton maintained he had been forced to deal with since Russell's election to the detriment of both his business and his personal life.

Proposed by Lela Clark, seconded by Ken Kruse, the motion to keep Patton on the Council failed by a vote of 4-2, with Kruse and Clark in favor of refusing Patton's resignation, Chapman, Green, Batterbee and Russell opposed.

A subsequent motion to accept his resignation, proposed by Green, seconded by Batterbee, was approved, with Batterbee, Chapman, Green, and Russell in favor, Kruse and Clark opposed.

New Village Council member Bill Chapman, who was appointed two months ago to fill the position vacated by Harry Pletcher, was then appointed President Pro-Tem of the group, also by a vote of 4-2 .

Asked if he would accept the position, Chapman inquired as to what would be required of him.

"Nothing, you just have to show up," replied Russell, which drew more catcalls from the audience. After a short explanation of the duties of President Pro-Tem from Clark, Chapman accepted the appointment, saying, "I appreciate the vote of confidence and will try to do my best."

Village legal counsel Bryan Graham, present throughout the

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meeting, advised the Council on the need to begin negotiations and a title search in order to renew a lease on a portion of Thurston Park property that has been leased to the village for more than 80 years, as well as the village's options regarding the regulation of medical marijuana.

It was agreed that Graham should proceed with the work to renew the lease, and an outline explaining Michigan's medical marijuana law and options available to local units of government

in order to regulate use was referred to the village's planning commission.

Graham noted that, in his opinion, a temporary moratorium was not necessary in light of the village's zoning ordinance.

"Medical marijuana as a business is not an approved use in your zoning ordinance, so if anyone were to open a business right now in the village it would be a non-conforming use, and a violation of your zoning ordinance," Graham said.

Graham also advised the Council that Village Clerk Pat Marshall, who was suspended

without pay by Russell last week, should be notified, in writing, of the reasons for her dismissal, and that she should continue to be paid until the entire Village Council makes a decision to dismiss her.

"If the Council, as a group, doesn't decide to remove her, then she must be re-instated. Graham said. "Not doing so is denying her due process. It's not fair to leave her in limbo."

A motion to have Judy Kosloski appointed as clerk was approved unanimously. Lyle Collins has been installed as Thurston Park Campground caretaker.