



Agenda: Battle Creek City Commission

Meeting Date: September 1, 2026 - 7:00 PM
Location: City Commission Chambers
Chair: Mayor Mark A. Behnke
Title: Battle Creek City Hall - City Commission Chambers - 3rd Floor

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Comm. O'Donnell.

ROLL CALL

City Commission

Mayor Mark Behnke	Commissioner Paige Katsarsky-Smith
Commissioner Jessica LaCosse	Commissioner Jim Lance (7:04)
Commissioner Jenasia Morris	Commissioner Carla Reynolds
Comm. Patrick O'Donnell	Vice Mayor Sherry Sofia
Commissioner Christopher Simmons, attending remotely	

City Staff

Amanda Zimmerlin, City Manager	William Kim, City Attorney
Marcie Gillette, Assistant City Manager	Victoria Houser, City Clerk
Shannon Bagley, Police Chief	Bush McCarthy, Fire Chief
Helen Guzzo, Community Development Mng.	Steve Skalski, Public Works Director
Jason Francisco, Community Services Director	

CHAIR NOTES ADDED OR DELETED RESOLUTIONS

There were no added or deleted resolutions.

PETITIONS COMMUNICATIONS REPORTS

Clerk Houser noted a communication from Sallie Meyer regarding the public hearing, which was forwarded to the City Commission.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A Public Hearing to receive public comment on the Brownfield Plan for "The Fields at Battle Creek" development.

Mayor Behnke declared the public hearing open, inviting attendees to provide public comment.

The City Commission listened to concerns and opposition from the following residents during public comment.

John Salyers, 14953, 14963, and 14995 S Helmer Rd.: James Barnes, 214 Jacaranda: Dave Walters, 262 Jacaranda: Joe Harris, 243 Eldred: Chris Herron, 244 Blackhawk: Dominic Oo, 181 Woodhaven: Venkata Chintalapati, 212 Black Cherry Lane: Christine Wentworth, 119 Barrington Circle: Jenny Peavy, 135 Barrington Circle: Tim Cowles, 206 Apple Blossom Lane: Kara and Carter Black, 176 Apple Blossom Ln.: Michael Moakley, 226 Jacaranda: Autumn Smith, 66 Massachusetts: John Kenefick, 204 South Avenue: Lori Vanryswyk, 173 Jacaranda: Sanddy Stankeiwicz, 193 Jacaranda Drive: John Kenefick, 204 South Avenue: Lee Oliver, 146 Jacaranda: Tom Beuchler, 256 Jacaranda

Kathy Antaya, 117 Parkridge Drive, expressed support of the Brownfield Plan for "The Fields at Battle Creek."

David Moore, 102 Taylor, requested additional information as he was unsure what the public hearing was for.

John Hughes, Battle Creek Unlimited, noted the project was income restricted, based on 100 - 120% AMI, not subsidized housing. Mr. Hughes also noted PA 381 allows developers to use TIF as a tool, and that the existing value of the property would still have taxes assessed.

Joe Sobieralski, Battle Creek Unlimited, gave examples of professions that would qualify for the 100 - 120% AMI requirements, stating the AMI for Calhoun County is \$58,600, and 120% AMI is \$72,300, neither of which is low income. Mr. Sobieralski shared the local salaries of school employees and local municipal employees.

Hearing no additional public comments, Mayor Behnke adjourned the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ANY REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS

Joe Harris commented on resolution 457 regarding a FOIA denial.

Autumn Smith also commented on resolution 457.

John Kenefick commented on resolution 456 regarding the Brownfield development.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

#17-2026 - A Proposed Ordinance, #17-2026, amending Section 26 of Chapter 882, Real Estate Taxation, authorizing a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for the Liberty Commons Apartments and Townhomes project.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

COMMISSION COMMENT REGARDING MEETING BUSINESS

There were no Commission comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

Minutes

Minutes for the August 18, 2026 City Commission Regular Meeting

Petitions, Communications, Reports

City Manager's Report for September 1, 2026

Resolutions

452 - A Resolution seeking acceptance of the lowest responsive, responsible bid for Sidewalk Repair Program from Hunter-Prell Company in an estimated amount of \$92,551.00, with unit prices prevailing.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

RESOLUTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THE CONSENT AGENDA

453 - A Resolution seeking acceptance of the proposals of best value for environmental assessment services from Analytical Testing and Consulting Services Inc., Environmental Testing and Consulting, Inc., and Materials Testing Consultants Inc. in an estimated four-year amount of \$516,760.33 with unit prices prevailing.

Comm. O'Donnell expressed support of the City's Lead Abatement program, also supporting the contracting of multiple companies.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

454 - A Resolution seeking acceptance of the proposal of best value for radon testing and mitigation for HUD lead hazard reduction projects from Advanced Environmental Management Group, LLC in the estimated four-year amount of \$107,500.00 with unit prices prevailing.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse
Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

455 - A Resolution seeking authorization to enter into a contract and issue a purchase order for (1) Screen Machine 612W Trommel Screen, including a Remote Tipping Grizzly and Pintle Hitch, from Company Wrench, LTD in a not-to-exceed amount of \$274,400.00.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Jenasia Morris, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: None

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

456 - A Resolution approving a Brownfield Plan for the proposed "The Fields at Battle Creek" development.

Comm. Katsarky-Smith asked why the City's recent housing study was not included in the informational documents, also asking if the assessed property values would be based on neighboring properties.

Amanda Zimmerlin, City Manager, stated the assessed values were not based on neighboring properties, confirming assessed values on all properties in the City are based upon the improvements to each specific parcel.

John Hughes, BCU, noted the State requires a 3rd party independent consultant to complete the housing study, and the City is not an independent 3rd party, therefore the 2024 study data was used, not the 2026 data completed by the City.

Marcie Gillette, Assistant City Manager, noted the City completed a Housing Strategy Plan in 2026 which addressed modifications to zoning and land use plans. Ms Gillette clarified the 2024 Housing Study was conducted by an independent 3rd party consultant, as required by the State for development projects.

Comm. Katsarky Smith questioned if this location was part of the housing strategy, stating she agrees with the attendees that there are other areas of the city that want additional

housing.

Comm. LaCosse reiterated the brownfield plan was not a low income housing project, that it was based upon residents at 120% AMI, which is \$60,700 for one person, and \$80,000 or more for a family of 4 people.

Comm. O'Donnell expressed support for builders who want to create additional housing in our community, noting they should use the tools available from the state to ensure the sustainability of the project. Comm. O'Donnell stated the captured money does not go to the developer, it is captured for the costs of infrastructure, such as streets and water/sewer installation. Comm. O'Donnell stated additional housing would benefit people who currently drive long distances to work at the local businesses in the City.

Ms. Zimmerlin noted a prior traffic study demonstrated an average of 12,000 cars per day near this location, with an additional 1,400 trips per day anticipated upon project completion, stating her belief Helmer Road could handle this.

Vice Mayor Sofia reminded everyone a traffic study does not tell people everything, stating the City is already aware of traffic numbers, where vehicles are going to or coming from, and an assumption could be made the project might bring another 1,400 trips, possibly 2,000 per day. Vice Mayor Sofia stated the City could implement additional traffic controls in the future if needed.

John Hughes, responding to Comm. Katsarsky Smith, confirmed the captured taxes would go to city services, reminding everyone the entire project would still need to go to the City for site plan review.

Comm. Simmons, noting the City's current zoning already allows this type of project, and absent TIF funding, a project would not need to hold a public hearing, they could proceed with their project as long as it meets the zoning requirements. Comm. Simmons agreed traffic concerns in this area already exist.

Ms. Zimmerlin confirmed the Housing Commission has not dedicated any housing subsidies for this project, and absent brownfield approval, the project could still proceed.

The developer stated the brownfield was necessary for the capital stack, stating they are seeking state funds to ensure the project is financially viable.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Jessica Lacosse, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Christopher Simmons, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jenasia Morris

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

457 - A Resolution affirming the partial grant / partial denial of FOIA Request 26-1592.

Comm. LaCrosse asked if there were any supplemental reports.

Attorney Kim confirmed all records located were provided to the requestor, with some information redacted, resulting in a partial denial.

Motion/Vote 1

Motion to Approve

Moved By: Jessica Lacosse

Supported By: Sherry Sofia

Ayes: Paige Katsarky-Smith, Jessica Lacosse, Mark Behnke, Patrick O'Donnell, Carla Reynolds, Sherry Sofia, James Lance

Nays: Jenasia Morris

Abstain: None

MOTION Passed

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

(Limited to three minutes per individual)

Laura Garbrech expressed concern with the City's use of Flock cameras, asking the City not to renew future contracts, stating it violates residents' privacy.

Autumn Smith agreed, stating the City should terminate the contract for Flock cameras.

Jonathan Barnes thanked everyone for supporting the Wall that Heals. Mr. Barnes also asked the City to consider postponing the brownfield project, expressing disagreement with the approval of the resolution.

David Moore requested the agenda be published 2 weeks prior to the commission meeting.

Tom Beuchler acknowledged residents' concerns about increased traffic due to the brownfield development, while also challenging everyone to try to find a solution to current and future traffic issues.

Sharlene Van Luven spoke about several items, thanking BCPD for coming to her home at 3:00 am, inviting the public to the police academy meeting, and a lack of follow-up to her property

tax concerns.

Katherine La Valley recommended residents consider attending a BCU meeting, stating she learned a lot and received answers to many questions.

Joe Harris stated his opinion the Commission could have postponed their decision on The Fields of Battle Creek resolution.

Hal Longman expressed his disagreement with the commission's approval of the resolution.

John Harper discussed the prior Community Leadership Academy, starting in 1980, which taught leadership effectiveness, also commenting on the merger of the City and Township of Battle Creek.

John Kenefick commented on the public hearing, Flock cameras and block grant funds to New Level Sports for their childcare facility.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Comm. LaCosse, referencing concerns expressed at prior meetings, noted the bid for the sidewalk repairs was approved in the Consent Agenda.

Comm. Katsarsky-Smith thanked everyone for attending and sharing their concerns.

Comm. O'Donnell also thanked everyone for voicing their opinions, particularly regarding traffic issues, stating all drivers need to be very alert when driving.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Behnke adjourned the meeting at 9:08 pm.