

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present: Reid (chair), Kelley Braithwaite, Nieuwsma, Burns, Revelle, Biss, Burns, Wynne, Suffredin (left at some point) and Fleming (left by 7:30 for pre-scheduled ward mtg.)

Staff Present: Francellino, Gandurski and Cummings, plus another attorney.

Meeting - watched video: lasted 1.51 minutes plus there was about an hour of executive session on personnel/city manager.

Public Comment: DeSilko: shouldn't have potential grantees on Reparations Com, no additional compensation for CMs and who are "corporate entities". One spoke about her experience on FOIAs (mostly timely responses) but is waiting for a reply on why Friends of Robert Crown does not have bylaws (included in MOU). Final speaker wanted to know why the "hearing" on TIFs was part of Council—should have been a separate meeting so more public input could have been made and not limited to 30 minutes.

For Discussion

R5 Legal firm provided background on remote and executive meetings: In March 2020 the state legislature allowed for remote meetings during the pandemic, but will likely return to in-person meetings after the pandemic. Controversies: can the whole building be closed, individual committees can still meet in person if small and/or the chair or staff decides it is feasible and if in-person meeting is not practicable. Meeting notes from Exec. Com must be released if it is found that litigation was probable - a threat of litigation is not a plausible reason - and should be used cautiously.

R4 FOIA report by Clerk Mendoza. Reid stated that although only 8 months into her term, this will serve as an annual report. Twenty four % of FOIA requests are generally closed within 5 days; only .6% go beyond 10 days. She has initiated trainings for FOIA officers (PAC— public access counselor) and holds regular meetings so they all function in a like way. She urged CMs to refer their constituents to contact her office directly, rather than try to work with staff on their own for the constituent (too many phone calls and messages on phones slows the process). In many cases, the issue can be resolved immediately with better wording for the FOIA or even staff's direct knowledge of the issue. Evanston is a wealthy community that can afford all this; most others cannot. There have been 103 FOIA requests in the last 19 days; in 2021 there were 1500 - she feels this is good for "democracy".

Then Executive Session

For Action

R1 Amend Code to allow members of Reparations Committee to Receive Benefits from Fund. Under Ethics Code receiving a benefit would be a conflict of interest. Cummings said most on the committee have ancestors or are "ancestors" and if that rule was followed the committee would probably have many whites. Reid recommended looking at state and national law; Kelley suggested a member could recuse their self on voting if they were selected. Motion passed unanimously.

R2 Require the Mayor to explain why a motion was vetoed immediately following veto. Cummings pointed out that this would only be a Council rule and not part of City Code. Reid stated that could be taken up at a later date. Passed unanimously.

For Discussion

R3 Elected official compensation. Reid clarified this was an additional stipend. Burns moved; Reid asked for a second and after 45 seconds, Kelley did not want to second it but had a question, so she seconded.

She wanted to know if this could be moved to be on the agenda at the next meeting. Burns moved to hold it over, Kelly seconded. Four nays (Biss, Reville, Nieuswma and Braithwaite). No announcement if it passed, but there was no vote from Wynne, Suffriden or Fleming so the vote was 3-4.

R6. Filling vacancies of elected officials. Cummings reviewed state law: the chief officer appoints a replacement; if rejected by Council, a second is nominated and if rejected by Council, then more discussion until a concurrence can be reached. The nominee must be a resident of the City and ward for one year and not be in debt to the City. City code also says the candidate cannot have a felony conviction. If the vacancy is more than 130 days, an election must be held at the next municipal election (April, 2023) but there could be a primary in February) and would have to run again in 2025. The Mayor will hold a meeting to encourage people to run, have applications made electronically, and hold a ward meeting to have the people learn more about the candidates; after that he will announce his selection. It was recommended that suggested new ward maps could be drafted during this time, but a final ward map not be adopted until after the election. Reid suggested that this was a good plan but should be made more permanent for future transparency.