

Observer: Betty Hayford

Council members present: Eight. Suffredin absent.

Meeting began: 6:05 pm

Meeting ended: 9:45 pm

Announcements. The Mayor announced that April is Fair Housing Month. This week is National Public Safety Telecommunications Week. The City Clerk reported several public comments sent to her and noted the recent Spanish Language Police Academy, a valuable community link.

Public comment. 22 comments. Many spoke about the Church/Darrow development; 9 opposed it and 7 supported it. 2 spoke against authorizing more General Obligation Bonds; 2 criticized the Mayor for endorsing candidates; 1 criticized the Redistricting Committee for only proposing one map; 1 opposed moving the Farmers' Market to Fountain Square; and 1 congratulated the two successful newly elected council members.

Special Orders of Business. (SP1) Discussion of the Proposed New Ward Map. Council member Nieuwsma led a discussion on the work of the Redistricting Committee. He reviewed the meetings of the committee, including 2 town halls and 6 ward meetings. The committee agreed to aim for minimal changes and create a map similar to the current one. The proposed map has a population deviation of 3.4%, compared with the current map deviation of 20.4% (*The presentation and maps are available with the Council agenda.*) There was limited discussion of the presentation and no opposition. Mayor Biss concluded the maps were based on principles, not political interests.

Consent agenda. Items A4, A14, P3, P4, and ED1 were removed from the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda passed 7-0. Suffredin was absent; Reid was away from the dais.

A4. Approval of Contract for the Oakton Street Corridor Improvement Project, to be funded with G.O.Bonds of \$2.85 million, Cook Country grant funds of \$500,000 and General Fund expenditure of \$806,960.10. Council Member Kelly said she supported the project but objected to issuing bonds. She moved to amend the motion to eliminate the bonds and use surplus funds. City Engineer Lara Biggs explained the project has been planned for years to ease traffic on Oakton and construction costs have risen. CFO Hitash Desai said there currently is a substantial surplus, but much will be used to cover various projects which will be over budget as well as wage increases. Reid supported Kelly's amendment as a first step in reducing bonds. Nieuwsma expressed his support for the project and his agreement that issuing bonds should be limited. But he explained that this measure did not actually issue bonds, and only authorized them. When bonds were issued in late summer, these bonds and others could be examined, the actual surplus would be known, and an informed decision about issuing bonds could be made. He opposed the amendment because it was preferable to make the decision about bonds in a comprehensive way. Harris and Reville agreed and opposed making any change to the current measure at this time.

The amendment to reduce the role of bonds for the project failed 6-2. Reid and Kelly voted yes.

The motion, without amendment, passed, 6-2. Reid and Kelly voted no.

A14. Approval of a Contract to Worxbee to provide a shared pool of 80 hours a month of Virtual Executive Assistant Service to Council Members. This has been amended to cost \$6240 per month,

reduced from \$7800 per month, and to run for nine months with cancellation possible from month to month. Discussion took place reiterating points made in previous meetings. Nieuwsma argued it would be preferable to hire someone in the Civic Center. Burns agreed, but said it was important to get started with this experienced firm. Council members agreed there was need for this service and starting with this virtual service would allow evaluation of what service was needed and how it might be provided.

The motion passed 6-2. Kelly and Nieuwsma voted no.

P3. Approving a Special Use for a religious institution at 1801-1805 Church Street. This would allow Mt. Pisgah Church to build a new church and swap land with the Housing Opportunity Development Corporation(HODC). Kelly objected that the Church did not own the land. Counsel Cummings explained that the Special Use must be approved before the land swap can take place. Sarah Flax explained that the City is not providing any funds and does not plan to question the Church about whether its funds are sufficient. She repeated that the projects had to be approved before the land swap could take place. Kelly continued to oppose, saying the plan was too vague and the environmental issues had not been addressed. Burns said it is necessary to provide approval so 33 units of affordable housing can be built.

The measure was approved 7-1. Kelly voted no.

P4. Approving variations for the construction of a 4 story mixed use building at 1811-1818 Church Street. Burns reviewed the opportunities for community engagement and the modifications of the original plan to meet community concerns. Kelly expressed opposition to the motion because of her opposition to HODC. She described in great detail horrible conditions at 319 Dempster which HODC manages and the need to force HODC to do better. The motion passed 7-1. Kelly voted no.

E1. Recommendation to Purchase Meridian Barricades to protect City Special Events. The proposal would use \$612,821.84 to purchase 60 barriers. Nieuwsma expressed support for purchasing these barriers but asked whether this number is needed. Wynne said these barriers will be easier to manage than the currently used large trucks and moved to amend the motion to purchase 30 barriers instead of 60. Police spokesman Sophir said 18 barriers would be sufficient for Fountain Square events. Audrey Thompson, Director of Parks and Recreation said it would be sufficient to purchase 24 barriers and 2 trailers. Wynne modified her amendment to purchase 24 barriers and 2 trailers. The amendment passed 6-0. Burns and Kelly were out of the room. The motion as amended passed 6-0.

Call of the wards. Several meetings were announced.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45.