

Observer: Betty Hayford

Council Members present: All in beginning. Suffredin left at some point. Luke Stowe sat in for City Manager.

Meeting started: 7:45 pm

Meeting ended: 12:20 am

Announcements. The Mayor announced that the City has released the Report on misconduct at the lakefront. The Report includes recommendations for making the city safe for all. There is much work to be done to respond to the abusive conduct. He said that many Covid requirements, including many for masking, are lifted today. The schools will lift requirements on their own schedule. Residents should be respectful of each other's choices about masking. He expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and pointed out that Evanston established a sister-city relationship with Kyiv in 1988.

Luke Stowe, sitting in for the City Manager, announced that Audrey Thompson has been appointed Interim Director of Parks and Recreation.

Public comment. 14 comments. 2 praised appointment of 9th ward council member Juan Geracaris. 2 supported ARPA funds for environmental goals; 2 supported South Boulevard project and 4 opposed it and asked for more community input; 2 expressed support for bird ordinances and more trees; 1 expressed appreciation for beach front report.

AP1. Appointment of Juan Geracaris as new 9th ward Council Member. The motion passed 7-0. Braithwaite abstained because he and Geracaris are both Northwestern employees. The Mayor and the Clerk swore in the new member.

At 8:40, Council went into Executive Session. The Mayor predicted it would last about an hour, but Council resumed at 10:35.

SP2. Authorization to Proceed with PIRHL Development for Mixed Income Housing at 504-514 South Boulevard. Paul Zalmezak, Economic Development Manager, made a presentation on the proposal. Planning for the site started in 2017, and an extensive review process has been going on since July. It is a mixed income development with significant affordable units, including 2 and 3 bedroom family units. Staff are asking Council for permission to proceed with working with the PIRHL group to expand and approve the proposal. The developer is working with the Cook County Housing Authority which currently provides two affordable units on the site, and with the current residents. Residents will be relocated, and will have priority for the new project. The model provides townhouses of 3 to 5 stories, compatible with the neighborhood. There are outdoor and indoor playrooms. The building will provide support services for residents and will be sustainable. There was extensive discussion about the process for evaluating the responses to the RFP. There were four proposals, and staff ranked them in several categories. The Reba Place proposal ranked close to this one, and some Council members wanted a local developer to get priority.

Wynne explained that many discussions had taken place with residents and some of the comments at public comment were not true. She urged support for this strong proposal. Braithwaite asked if the financial proposal was still feasible with current inflation and was told it was. Burns asked for more information about rents and subsidies. Many tenants will be subsidized.

The motion to move forward passed 7-1. Kelly voted no. Suffredin was not in the meeting.

SP1. ARPA Plan Update. Zalmezak provided an overview of the more fully developed ARPA plan and referred to the extensive memo in the packet which provided explanations of the “buckets” discussed in City Council and how they aligned with the categories approved by the government. He asked Council to validate the plan, including the general allocations. Sarah Flax explained that the federal categories had to be observed and how they fit with previous Council discussions and decisions.

Reid asked for a specific bucket for the participatory budgeting funds. After some discussion, Biss said he was skeptical about this line of discussion and suggested ending it. Reid moved to table the motion to March 14 so Council members could send memos to staff. The motion to table failed. It was agreed that members should send suggestions for change to staff. The main motion passed 8-1, Suffredin absent.

Consent agenda. Item A4 was removed from the consent agenda. The consent agenda passed 8-0. (At 12:05)

A4, Approval of the Renewal of the Axon Police Body Camera Integration System. Staff recommends approval of a five year contract for an integrated body, in car and investigative room camera system as well as conductive electric weapons (Tasers). The contract also includes a new drone, used by police and fire. The current drone has been used mostly by the fire department. Reid asked many questions to Chief Eddington, who answered them clearly and thoroughly. State law regulates use of drones, and at one point Mayor Biss said he had written the law and explained what it meant. Reid said he supported body cameras but he was opposed to using a drone. Braithwaite moved to call the question. The motion passed, 6-2, Reid and Kelly voting no. The vote on the motion passed 7-1, Reid voting no.

Brief call of the wards.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20.