

Observer: Betty Hayford

Councilmembers present: Eight. Peter Braithwaite was absent.

Meeting started: 6:20pm

Meeting ended: 10:55pm

Roll call. It was moved and seconded to suspend the Rules to allow participation in a hybrid of in-person and remote participation. The motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING. Five Fifths TIF Overview and Summary of TIF Plan. Illinois Law requires a public hearing be held prior to the consideration of the creation of a TIF district. A summary of the plan is in the packet and available on the City website. A representative of the consulting firm, Kane McKenna, made a presentation to Council. He explained that the firm has done other work for Evanston and other cities. A first required step is a meeting of the Joint Review Board, other taxing districts, which was held in June. There were no objections raised. The presentation provided 1) an overview; 2) factors necessary for a TIF designation; and 3) key elements of the plan.

The TIF area is residential, industrial and commercial, and the historic home of the Black community in Evanston. There is a need to improve and redevelop the area. One uncertain element is the inclusion of the Civic Center. The future of the Civic Center is not clear, particularly since the life of a TIF is 23 years. Sale of the Civic Center could provide an infusion of funds. A TIF designation requires at least 3 factors and this area includes 5. Key elements of this plan are to provide affordable housing, housing repairs, infrastructure, parks. The proposed budget is \$89.2 million over 23 years.

Council members asked many questions. They expressed appreciation that Ingram Park and the Nature Garden would not be impacted; urged that adherence to CARP goals be articulated; expressed concern that residents, not developers would benefit; asked how success would be evaluated (EAV growth and number of projects); expressed concern that tax payers would be burdened by TIF retention of EAV tax increases.

At 7:45, public comment began. There were 7 comments in person and 12 over Zoom. After several comments, Council member Burns said that commenters deserved answers to their questions. Several agreed and others felt time was insufficient. Eventually Mayor Biss articulated a plan that others had suggested. If commenters had questions, they would be answered by City staff and posted on the City website within 2 weeks. Biss ruled that comments would be limited to 2 minutes because of the number, comparable to Council rules, although several Council members disagreed.

Most comments were opposed to the TIF. They argued that it would not benefit the community. They criticized the public hearing format at a Council meeting as having insufficient time and no opportunity to get answers to questions. Many asked for a separate hearing and additional meetings. They asked for real improvements immediately without waiting for 23 years. They feared the TIF would harm and/or displace the Black community. This plan will benefit developers and harm the Black community. They feared that taxpayers would have to pay higher taxes because of the TIF.

One speaker praised the TIF goal of providing more affordable housing, and said it could be one of many steps to achieve more affordable housing.

Several Council members expressed a commitment to having more public discussion. City Manager Storlie pointed out that this was the same process of public hearing that had been used for previous TIFs. It was moved and seconded to close the public hearing. The motion passed 8-0.

Announcements. The Mayor said he had no announcements, but he pointed out that the hearing reflected public distrust of government and the hearing process. He was committed to reducing the distrust and looking for a better mechanism for public dialogue that was robust and inclusive.

The City Manager and the Clerk had no announcements.

Public comment. 12 citizens made comments for the Council meeting. 3 criticized Council and asked for more information and dialogue; 3 asked to preserve the Lakefront plan: not allow food trucks, not charge for parking, and provide better maintenance; 3 opposed the TIF; others asked to reduce City debt, opposed sale of the Civic Center, asked for better job training, and complained about excessive noise at the Veterans' Post.

Consent agenda. At 9:50pm, Council turned to the consent agenda. Five items were removed. It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 8-0.

Item (A1), Approval of City of Evanston Payroll and Bills. Administration and Public Works had amended the Bills payment to add payment of \$3185 for an invoice for work in the Clerk's Office from several years ago. This amendment was proposed by Councilmember Reid. Fleming asked where funds would come from. Reid said funds could come from the General Fund or the Clerk's Office. Clerk Mendoza said there were no surplus funds in her budget. Wynne pointed out that a previous Council had refused to pay the invoice because the hire had been barred by the HR office. Mayor Biss provided background on the previous decision not to pay the invoice. The vote on the motion to approve the amended bills list was tied 4-4. Reid, Fleming, Burns and Kelly voted yes; Suffredin, Revelle, Wynne, Nieuwsma voted no. Mayor Biss voted no to defeat the motion 5-4.

Councilmember Reid voted to hold the item. Wynne moved to override the hold. The motion to override passed 6-2, Reid and Kelly voted no.

It was moved to approve the original bills list of \$3,104,301.32. The motion passed 6-2, Reid and Kelly voting no.

Then Reid moved to approve payment of an invoice of \$3185 for work in the Clerks Office, Kelly seconded. The vote was tied 4-4, Reid, Kelly, Burns, Fleming voting yes. Biss voted no and the motion failed 5-4.

Item (A7) Authorizing 2021 General Obligation Bond Issues. This provides for the issuance of up to \$18,500,000 G.O. Bonds to finance capital improvements and refund certain bonds for a bond sale in August. Kelly moved to hold, Reid seconded. The motion was held.

Item (A9) establishing a pilot program for parking fees for streets along the lakefront for non-residents. Councilmember Suffredin amended the motion to change the proposed dates to July 19 to October 31. The vote was tied, with Revelle, Reid, Kelly and Wynne voting no. Mayor Biss voted aye and the motion passed 5-4. Wynne moved to hold the motion, Kelly seconded, and the motion was held.

Item (E1) Approval of Funding for Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau. Fleming said she would vote no and Reid asked for more information about evaluating the work of the Bureau. A representative of the Bureau said their regular report provided measures of the work. The motion passed 5-3, with Reid, Fleming and Suffredin voting no.

Item (H2) amending the City Code to lift restrictions on Food and Drink Vendors at City Beaches and Parks. Reid had asked to suspend the Rules for Introduction and Action, but he rescinded this request. The item is for introduction. Reid amended the item to continue the ban on food trucks and only allow food carts or similar vendors. Burns agreed that food trucks should be banned, but liked bicycle or push cart food vendors, and expressed concern about trash. Health Director Ogbo pointed out that currently two food trucks and one push cart are licensed to operate in Evanston. Revelle said she would vote no because of concern about litter. Nieuwsma said he would support this for introduction but wanted more details about how it would be managed. The motion passed 6-2, Revelle and Wynne voting no.

Call of the wards. Several Councilmembers announced meetings. Burns made a reference to support efforts to create an urban farm in the area near Twiggs Park near Simpson and Dodge.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55pm.