

Observer: Kristine Lofquist

Aldermen present: All.

Meeting started: 6:50 pm

Meeting ended: 9:15 pm

Alderman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to allow having a virtual meeting following emergency guidelines from Governor Pritzker because of the pandemic. The motion was seconded and passed 7-0. Aldermen Fiske and Braithwaite joined late.

Announcements

Mayor Hagerty noted that May 10, 2021 will be the last meeting of the current council and that the new mayor and council members would be sworn in at that meeting.

Mayor Hagerty introduced Pastor Webb who gave a presentation on the Evanston Own It program. The Pastor indicated that last year, \$39,000 in donations went to the Mayor's Summer Youth Program and \$2,000 to the Officer and a Gentleman program. He thanked the contributors and read a hymn. The Pastor noted that another \$9,000 had been contributed so far this year, with \$8,000 going to the at-risk youth program and \$1,000 to Officer and a Gentleman.

Mayor Hagerty made an Arbor Day proclamation for April 30, 2021 and encouraged citizens to plant a tree. He noted that Evanston has been a Tree City USA since 1985 and he thanked the forestry department.

Mayor Hagerty then made a second proclamation regarding Evanston Public Service recognition week.

Mayor Hagerty referred to the Reparations Committee and indicated that he had received calls from all over country. He thanked the over 30 citizens who applied for the Committee and noted that he could unfortunately only select four, who will be put forward later in the meeting. He also noted that Alderman Braithwaite will chair the committee.

Mayor Hagerty provided an update on the status of COVID-19 vaccinations, stating that 100% of residents 65 and over have received at least one shot and that 76% residents over 45 have received at least one shot, which are high percentages compared to the State of Illinois and the rest of Cook County. He noted that the City will be holding several vaccine events soon, including one for those 16 and older. He also noted that the City has been busy providing vaccines for home-bound residents over the past month using EMTs. The Mayor stated that NorthShore University Health System received a direct allocation of vaccines so that residents will soon be able to get vaccines directly from their physician. He thanked all of the volunteers for these programs.

The City Manager introduced the City Engineer who reported on an award the City received for the Main Street improvement project. It was also noted that a national award was received in the City category for the new Crown Center and that the award will be given in September. It was noted that there would most likely be an official opening party for the new center in late 2021 or 2022.

City Clerk Reid noted that the new Council will be sworn in next month on May 10, and that the newly elected individuals will need to complete a few forms and pay fees owed prior to that date.

Public comment. It was noted that there were ten comments. One comment requested a committee to address the digital divide in Illinois. There were four comments concerning abolishing the Ethics Committee and five comments regarding the Northwestern agreement for the Crown Center. Several citizens commented for and against the alternative special use process. Several citizens indicated their concern regarding relocating the Civic Center without discussion with nearby residents. There was also one objection to the leaf blower ban as it would affect minority employment, a concern regarding the sale of salt to neighboring communities and a request for Alderman Rue-Simmons to recuse herself from the vote on Sunshine Enterprises. Finally, several citizens expressed concern regarding changes in links for online meeting without notification of citizens.

Special orders of business. SP1. Authorizing a lease agreement for the Harley Clark Mansion with Artists Book House. Alderman Rainey moved to approve the agreement for a 40-year lease with the term beginning May 10, 2021. The Motion was seconded. Alderman Fleming asked several questions regarding the City's involvement in the maintenance costs during the capital raising period, as well a question regarding the building's insurance. The City attorney responded to these questions and indicated how they are addressed in the agreement. The Motion passed 9-0 on a roll call vote.

SP2 – it was noted that SP2 would be part of the consent agenda

Consent Agenda. A Motion was made and seconded to remove the following items from the consent agenda: A2, A4, A5, A6, P4, P8, R1, AP1 and A27. The Motion passed 9-0.

(A2) A Motion was made and seconded to approve the BMO Harris credit card activity. The Motion passed 8-0, with Alderman Suffredin recusing himself.

(A4) A Motion was made and seconded to approve special events in the city, based on COVID-19 guidelines. It was noted there had been a movement in committee to change the dates for the events to the period June 4-September 17, 2021. The Motion passed 9-0.

(A5) A Motion was made to approve the Crown Center agreement with Northwestern at \$1 million over a 3-year period. City Manager Storlie updated the members on how the payment will work. She noted that Northwestern had made one payment of \$300,000 in 2017 and that the remaining balance of \$700,000 will be paid over next two years. She noted that the funds are not considered a donation and that the monies would be going to Friends of Robert Crown, not the City. She noted that Northwestern would not receive dedicated class space. She stated that the money is not a contribution but a fee for use. Aldermen Suffredin and Fleming noted their concerns regarding the number of unanswered questions regarding the arrangement. Alderman Wilson stated that the money should be accepted and that it should be considered as a prepayment for ice time. A Motion was made and seconded to put a hold on the vote. It was noted that six votes would be needed to overrule the hold to the next meeting. Discussion followed regarding procedures in this situation. A Motion was then made and seconded to overrule the request to hold debate to the next council meeting. The Motion to overrule the hold was approved 7-2 on a roll call vote, with Aldermen Fleming and Suffredin voting against. A Motion was then made and seconded to approve A5. The Motion passed 7-2 on a roll call vote, with Alderman Fleming and Suffredin voting against.

(A6) A Motion was made and seconded to approve buying an LED Screen for use at events held outdoors due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The Motion passed 8-1, with Alderman Suffredin voting against.

(P8) A Motion was made and seconded to approve a special use permit for the Sunshine Enterprises vocational school. The Motion passed 8-0 with Alderman Rue Simmons abstaining.

(P4)– A Motion was made and seconded to introduce an alteration of the City’s special use permit process, which if passed would be revisited and reviewed in two years. The Motion to introduce passed 9-0.

(R1) – A Motion was made and seconded to introduce an amendment to the City Code of Ethics. Discussion followed regarding the change. It was suggested that the committee look at models used by other surrounding communities. In response to community concerns regarding incorrect state code references, it was noted that these sections would be revised. It was also noted that the Motion was to introduce the change and that amendments can be made before it is taken up for action. The Motion passed 8-1 on a roll call vote, with Alderman Suffredin voting against.

(AP1) – A Motion was made and seconded to appoint and reappoint members to committees. Alderman Rue Simmons abstained. The Motion passed 7-1 on a roll call vote, with Alderman Rue Simmons abstaining and Alderman Fleming voting against.

(A27) – A Motion was made and seconded to make parking revisions on Sheridan. Alderman Fleming inquired whether these revisions were modeled after other lakefront areas, to which the response was yes. Alderman Suffredin suggested a plan that would allow citizens who pay the Evanston wheel tax to park for free by the lake and that other users be required to pay a fee. Per the City parking director, it was noted that this option is being studied. The Motion passed 9-0.

Call of the wards.

Alderman Wynne– Thanked Third Ward residents who came to the last meeting and noted that the next meeting will be in July.

Alderman Wilson – Thanked everyone involved in getting the Crown project completed. He noted he wants a one-year extension of a funding district in his Ward which will be added at next meeting.

Alderman Rue Simmons – Invited everyone to the final ward meeting of this council to be held on May 5 at 7 pm via Zoom.

Alderman Suffredin – no report

Alderman Revelle – Stated that in celebration of Earth Month and Arbor Day, many community volunteers planted 150 native saplings at Canal Shores via the MWRD.

Alderman Rainey – Reported that the Howard Street project is underway, and that the Chicago Howard project has new financial partners and that groundbreaking is imminent.

Alderman Fleming – Noted that she would be asking for the Parks and Recreation Board to provide an update on assigning community garden plots, and that she will be asking the Rules Committee about establishing a Budget Committee.

Alderman Fiske – no report

Alderman Braithwaite – Offered condolences to the Vincent family. He also referred to a recent flyer from CL Niehoff, indicating that the company is not planning on increasing the building’s footprint and that this issue will be discussed at the next neighborhood meeting scheduled for May 13, 2021.

City Manager Storlie stated that the City will try to keep the calendar updated and that she was unaware of any meeting links that were changed intentionally, but that she will look into the matter and provide feedback and ask for commentary at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm. There was no Executive Session.