

Observer: Betty Hayford

Council members present: Initially eight, Fleming absent. Suffredin left the meeting at some midpoint.

Meeting began: 6:00 pm (as scheduled!)

Meeting ended: 8:00 pm

On Zoom

Announcements: Mayor Biss announced that Deputy City Manager Kimberly Richardson is leaving Evanston to pursue an exciting opportunity in Peoria. He thanked her for her contributions to Evanston. He also thanked City staff for working effectively to clear the snow.

Public comment. 4 comments. 1 expressed strong concern about signs being planned downtown advising against giving money to panhandlers; needy people should be helped, not scorned. 1 expressed concern about vaccination requirement for restaurants. 1 urged support for bringing more businesses downtown. 1 expressed opposition to allowing members of the Reparations Committee to receive Reparations grants, expressed opposition to hazard pay for grocery workers, and expressed concern about property that the City seemed about to confiscate.

Special orders of business. SP1 Requiring Council members to be Vaccinated or otherwise Test

Negative Before Council meetings. Council member Reid moved to required Council members to be vaccinated or test negative. Then he moved to amend the motion to include the City Clerk and members of Boards and Commissions. City Counsel asked him to hold off on members of Boards and Commissions so an ordinance could be carefully drawn up. Nieuwsma seconded the motion to include the Clerk. City Manager Gandurski explained how the system is working for City staff. The policy is working well and 99% of staff are complying.

Discussion continued on various nuances of the proposal. Wynne suggested moving forward with Council and Clerk and deferring question of members of Boards and Commissions. Burns moved to amend to clarify that this would apply to in-person meetings. The motion to amend passed 8-0.

The motion to approve the amended motion including Council members and Clerk passed 8-0.

Reid moved to consider a similar ordinance covering vaccinations and testing for members of Boards and Commissions at the February 14 meeting. He also mused that he would love to see the City distribute N95 masks. Braithwaite said he was opposed to muddling the discussion with the addition of masks. The motion to consider an ordinance related to members of Boards and Commissions on February 14 passed 7-1, Braithwaite voted no.

SP2. Discussion of Hazard Pay for Grocery Store Workers. Reid moved to discuss. He said this would only affect employees of grocery stores with over 500 employees. This was similar to an ordinance Council declined to adopt over the summer. Similar ordinances have been adopted elsewhere, mainly on the West Coast, and have not been voided by litigation. Braithwaite said he understood the intention to provide bonus pay for some front line workers, but we do not have sufficient information about what stores may have already done. Many grocery stores pay good wages, and it doesn't make sense to legislate for only one type of worker. Wynne agreed with Braithwaite that this should not be passed

without talking to businesses and workers. It would be unwise to adopt this blanket rule for emergencies without more specific definitions and guidelines.

Discussion ensued about what to do next. Should the measure be put on the council agenda for action? Should it go to a committee for closer analysis? Burns moved to refer the item to the Economic Development Committee and invite interested parties to join the discussion. The motion to refer passed 4-3, Wynne, Revelle and Braithwaite voted no. Suffredin had left the meeting.

Consent agenda. Mayor Biss asked what items should be removed from the consent agenda. R1. R2. and HC1 were removed. Item P1, related to a consulting contract, had been sent back for changes by Planning and Development.

The consent agenda passed 7-0.

R1. Requiring the Mayor to Announce a Mayoral Veto at the Council meeting immediately following the veto. This passed without discussion 7-0.

R2. Amending the City Code to Allow Members of the Reparations Committee to Receive Benefits from the Reparations Fund. Counsel Cummings pointed out that Members of the Committee could not vote to give themselves a benefit, but could serve on the committee and recuse themselves from a vote. Burns pointed out that they would have to disclose their connection to any benefit. Kelly said this is a serious issue and Council needs to be careful about such procedures. The motion passed 7-0.

HC1. Renewal of Contract for Landlord-Tenant Services with Metropolitan Tenants Organization and Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing for landlord-tenant services. Burns said he would like more information about the effectiveness of the services. Tenants should be surveyed. Sarah Flax who oversees the contract agreed we could and should get contact information on those who use the service and their evaluation of the service. She said she anticipated she could develop a plan for feedback by February 28, and suggested working with the Housing Committee on a process. Council voted 7-0 to approve the contract.

Call of the wards. Several meetings were announced.

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:00.