

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Aldermen present:** All

**Media present:** Evanston Now, Evanston Review, Roundtable, NU Daily

**Meeting began:** 8:30

**Meeting ended:** 11:00

**Announcements:** The Mayor announced the observance of Earth Day on April 22. The City Clerk read a message from a resident expressing support for the pre-school program at the Robert Crown Center. He announced an LAN meeting on April 23.

**Public comment:** 18 comments. 6 opposed high cost of Robert Crown Center and urged delay of bonds. 6 supported Robert Crown, expanded programs and turf fields. Head of Library Board supported plans for library in Robert Crown Center. 2 urged more means of public comment and better dialogue with public. 1 expressed concern about water tables and 1 supported programs for kids. 1 opposed the proposed car wash on Oakton Street because of damage to James Park and traffic congestion.

**Consent agenda:** Aldermen Suffredin introduced the consent agenda from **Administration and Public Works**. Minutes. Bills. Approval of Contract for 1909 Raw Water Intake Replacement. Contract for the 2019 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Project. Approval of Change Order for Engineering Services for the Treated Water Storage Replacement Project to increase the total amount. Approval of Contract Extension for Material Testing Services. Approval of purchase of 246 trees from the Suburban Tree Consortium. Approval for 2019 Tree Planting Services. Approval of Purchase of 5 PlateScout License Recognition Systems. Approval of Amendment to Agreement for Crossing Guard Services to add one additional Crossing Guard. Approval to Accept and Place on File the 2018 Year End Financial Report. Approval to Increase the Total Fiscal Year 2018 Budget by \$18,641,429 to a New Total of \$354,110,437. Approval to Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Seven Year Cable Television Franchise Agreement with ComCast. Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement with ETHS for the use of 2 EPD Officers at ETHS to provide school resource officers. Approval of Professional Services Agreement to study the expansion of the Howard Ridge Tax Increment Financing District to include additional properties. Approval of ordinance to amend City Code to change the wheel tax deadline to October 1 instead of December 31 (Introduction). Approval of Ordinance to Amend the City Code related to the Encumbrances, Encroachments and Obstructions of the public ways. (Introduction) Approval of Ordinance to Amend the City Code related to the designation of collection sites to require owners to clear snow and ice around trash receptacles (Introduction). Approval of Ordinance Amending City Code regarding the frequency distributions of heavy precipitation in Illinois (Introduction). Approval to allow the paving of the alley north of Simpson Street and east of McDaniel Avenue through the Special Assessment Process. Approval of Ordinance Amending City Code to change payment for parking permits from quarterly to monthly and allowing for stickerless enforcement of City-operated surface parking lots.

Alderman Revelle introduced from **Planning and Development** Granting a special use approval for an Automobile Service Station and Convenience Store at 140 Chicago Avenue (Introduction, Suspension of Rules, Action). Approval of Ordinance amending the Zoning section of City Code to revise the listing of appropriate ground floor uses in the Central Street Overlay District. From the **Human Services Committee**, Alderman Rue Simmons introduced approval to provide financial assistance through the Local Employment Program Workforce Reserve Account to Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse and Minority Business Consortium.

The consent agenda passed 9-0.

Suffredin then presented from **Administration and Public Works** to amend City Code related to the Special Assessment procedures for alley improvements, for Introduction. Alderman Revelle asked for clarification of the language and Director of Public Works Stonebeck explained. The motion was moved and seconded and passed 9-0. He then presented an Ordinance to add to the City Code a section to address Erosion and Sediment Controls for Construction Sites, for Introduction. He noted the number for the ordinance had been changed. It was moved and seconded and approved 9-0. He then presented a resolution to amend Evanston Budget Policy to state that the General Obligation Debt shall not exceed \$160,000,000. CFO Desai explained that the level was set at \$152,000,000 at the last meeting, but the payment to bring the level down below \$152,000,000 would be made in December so the level in May will have to be set at \$160,000,000. Rue Simmons expressed some concern about the change from the discussion at the last meeting. Desai explained that there was a change in the timing but not in the actual levels of debt. It was moved and seconded and passed 8-1, with Rue Simmons voting no.

Suffredin then present (A23) providing for the issuance of General Obligation bonds not to exceed \$18 million to finance the construction of the Robert Crown Center and other capital projects. Alderman Fleming spoke at some length expressing her view that increasing debt is not ideal for the city, but these projects are needed. She understands the concern expressed by residents, but the Robert Crown project will be a great benefit to the city. It is important to have a conversation explaining the decision to the citizens, and she will support the motion. Alderman Rue Simmons said she is very concerned about increasing debt and the prospect of higher taxes. She would like to hold the vote and consider other options. She moved to hold the vote for a week. There was no second. Wilson moved to call the question. The vote to call the question passed 5 – 4, with Rue Simmons, Suffredin, Revelle and Fleming voting no. The vote to approve the issuing of bonds passed 6 – 3, with Rue Simmons, Suffredin and Fleming voting no.

From **Planning and Development**, Alderman Revelle presented an ordinance granting a special use permit for a planned development for a car wash at 2425 Oakton Street. Alderman Rainey presented her concerns primarily about traffic and the proximity of James Park. Several other car washes were nearby. She believed traffic conditions would be a mess. Alderman Fleming said the developers have been cooperative and responsive, and Rue Simmons said it was not the job of Council to decide whether or not this is a good location for a car wash. The motion passed, 8-1, with Rainey voting no.

Clerk Reid said that Robert's Rules required a 2/3 majority to call a question and the 5-4 vote was not sufficient. City Attorney Masoncup agreed. Council returned to the approval of the bond issue for discussion. Rue Simmons moved to hold for a week and Fleming seconded. Extended confused discussion followed about what could be in order and the consequences of holding the vote. Wilson argued that Council had sufficient information and should go ahead. Wynne explained that Council had been planning the Robert Crown Center for a long time.

Mike Vasilko asked to speak but Hagerty would not allow him to speak. He held up a sign saying "Not True."

The City Manager was explaining that delaying the vote could be very damaging. The sale of bonds on May 16 was important to obtain funds for the project. Time was needed to prepare for the sale. If the May 16 sale was cancelled, it would be some time before another sale could be scheduled. A delay would cause concern in the bond market that would cause higher rates. He pointed out that the project and expectations of bond funding had been started in 2011. He said bonds would have to be approved at a regular meeting which would be May 13, too close to the scheduled date to allow the sale to go forward.

Rue Simmons said the project threatens affordability of living in Evanston. Many of her constituents are already stretched financially and increased property taxes would force them to leave. There must be another option for Robert Crown. Suffredin asked if there were other options. Wynne pointed out that

extensive information on the plans and financing of Robert Crown were available on the city web site, providing history of the discussions since 2009. Suffredin said that the Council was not listening to Rue Simmons and was not showing her respect. Fleming said she supported the project and Council should move forward.

Alderman Rue Simmons expressed anger that her concerns are not being heard and not taken seriously and her residents feel the same way. She pleaded with Council to listen to the needs of the residents. Wilson moved to overrule the motion to hold. The motion passed, 6 – 3, with Rue Simmons, Suffredin and someone else voting no.

Council voted on the motion to issue bonds. The motion passed 7-2. Rue Simmons and Suffredin voted no.

Following the vote, Alderman Braithwaite asked the city to hold a meeting to review the plans and the funding for Robert Crown. The City Manager reluctantly agreed, saying previous meetings had only led to acrimonious exchanges by those who didn't want to accept the facts. One city staff member had been verbally assailed. The meeting adjourned to executive session at 11:30.