

**ZOOM MEETING**

**Observer:** Betty Hayford

**Aldermen present:** All

**Meeting started:** 6:05 pm, following A & PW and P & D

**Meeting ended:** 9:10

After the Mayor called the meeting to order, Alderman Wilson moved to suspend the rules and allow the meeting to take place virtually. The motion passed.

**Announcements.** The Mayor provided an update on developments. The City is still very much focused on dealing with the Covid-19 epidemic, but has also been concerned with issues of racial justice following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and nation-wide demonstrations demanding police reform. March in Evanston last week and rally yesterday, both widely attended and peaceful. He outlined steps that Council has taken in recent years to address systemic racism and vowed the efforts would continue. The recent police take-down and arrest is being investigated. A Q & A about the arrest is on the city web site. He is in the process of making appointments to the Police Review Board, considering 90 strong applicants and working for a diverse group.

He introduced a group of young women who were the organizers of the May 30 March for the Evanston Fight for Black Lives. They spoke eloquently for about 10 minutes describing how Evanston is failing its black families, outlining disparities and problems: Black Evanston is overpoliced; housing, education, employment and health disparities are unacceptable. The city budget shows over reliance on police and under funding of social services. The Mayor thanked them for coming and agreed to meet with them to discuss these points further.

The Mayor reported that Coronavirus cases and deaths are declining, but guidelines for prevention need to be followed. He announced that June is Juneteenth Month and planned celebrations were being modified. June is also Pride Month. He noted the death of Jessica Feldman, long time activist and a force to improve Evanston.

The City Manager announced that Evanston is beginning to reopen, including restaurants, some community centers and the enforcement of parking regulations. More information about reopening will be provided for the June 22 meeting. She also said she supported a public process for the City Manager search.

The City Clerk said he has received communications for Council, most supporting the public process for City Manager and some supporting Interim City Manager Storlie. He is sponsoring a June 16 meeting on policing issues at 6:00 pm. He provided a report on FOIA activity, noting that FOIA requests have declined in the past year, and the time for responses has increased since the Council changed the procedure. 32% of requests go to the Police Department which is slow to respond. The Mayor said he will ask the Rules Committee to review the FOIA issue.

Alderman Wilson moved to withdraw SP2 regarding the appointment of a City Manager in response to Storlie's comment. Alderman Rainey suggested the search process be considered by the Rules

Committee. The motion passed. It was agreed to schedule a Rules Committee meeting for Monday June 15.

**Public comment.** 15 comments. 10 spoke in favor of a public city manager search process; 2 spoke against racism; 1 each for Elm trees, police oversight, and budget reductions.

**Special Orders of Business. (SP1) Approval of Evanston CARES Act Amendments.** These amendments allow CDBG-CV and ESG-CV funding from the CARES Act to support efforts to fight coronavirus. The motion to approve passed 9-0.

**(SP2) Appointment of City Manager.** This issue was referred to Rules Committee.

**(SP3) Approval of Funding for Dutch Elm Injection Program.** This reflected an interest in reversing the previous vote to spread the program and the expense over two years, injecting only half the elms this year. The City Manager had identified \$290,000 unallocated interest from the Capital Improvement Fund that would make up most of the remaining cost of doing all trees this year. Fleming and others said the money should be spent on higher priorities. Rainey, Fiske and others said not injecting all trees would result in greater costs for taking down and a loss of valuable trees. The motion to fully fund the injection program passed 6-3, Fleming, Suffredin and Braithwaite voting no.

**Consent agenda.** Aldermen were asked to remove items from the consent agenda that they wished to discuss. Then it was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda. Passed 9-0.

From **Administration and Public Works** Alderman Fleming presented (A4) to approve engineering for Improvements in the Pedestrian and Bicycle passage on Church Street. Suffredin proposed postponing the project to next year. Storlie pointed out that this use of capital improvement funds would have no impact on the operating fund. Wilson supported the improvements as a safety issue. The motion passed 6-3, Suffredin, Fleming, Braithwaite voting no.

(A7) to approve funding for the demotion of a vacant structurally unsafe building at 2012 Maple Avenue was held in committee and not discussed here.

(A12) Authorizing a contract to Reconstruct the Fleetwood-Jourdain Gym Floor raised concern from Aldermen whether the proposed contract would effectively rectify the problem of water damage. City Engineer Lara Briggs explained the various sources of water damage and plans to prevent re-occurrence. The motion passed 9-0.

(A13) Amending City Code to include a four way stop at Hastings Avenue and Colfax Street. Suffredin moved to suspend the rules for Introduction and Action. The motion to suspend passed. The motion to install a four way stop sign passed 9-0.

(A14) Amending the Amusement Tax to include on-line streaming services and increase the amusement tax on venues with capacity over 1500 audience members. Alderman Wynne reported that a constituent had raised questions about the tax on large venues and she would like more discussion. She moved to amend the ordinance to remove the section related to audience capacity to be addressed after more discussion. Some aldermen wondered if this was necessary, but the motion to amend passed 8-1, Wilson voting no. The motion as amended passed 6-3, Fleming, Suffredin, Rue Simmons voting no.

From **Planning and Development** item (P1) to amend the Zoning Ordinance to modify currently permitted ground floor uses in the downtown corridor D2 Retail Core District was tabled until the November meeting at the request of staff. In light of the retail uncertainties and limits to consultation with the business community because of the Coronavirus staff recommended the discussion be postponed.

Item (P7) to accept and place on file an ordinance amending the Tree Preservation Ordinance. There is no ability to implement the revised ordinance and further amendments can be considered if there are other changes that are desired that do not require additional staffing. The motion to place on file was approved 9-0.

From **Rules Committee** an amendment to the City Code amending the council votes required to fire a City Manager reflected the fact that the City Code and the Council Rules established different votes for hiring or firing a City Manager, either a majority or 6 votes. The City Attorney explained that there was no state statute on the process, and the two city guidelines were different. There was discussion among aldermen about how to proceed and Fleming announced her opposition. It was proposed to vote to approve this measure for Introduction and continue the discussion before the next vote. The motion to introduce passed 7-2, Fleming and Suffredin voting no.

**Call of the wards.** Alderman Fleming expressed appreciation for the presentation from the group of young women starting the meeting with a plea to address racism and inequality in Evanston. She expressed interest in learning about the appointments to the police review board and made a referral to the Arts Council to plan an arts installation to acknowledge equity issues and Black Lives Matter. Other aldermen thanked the women for their presentation. Alderman Revelle praised the work of Jessie Feldman to make Evanston stronger and lead the League of Women Voters to engage with city government. Wilson, Fiske and Wynne also expressed appreciation for Jessie's devotion to the city.

The meeting adjourned into executive session at 9:10 pm.