



## Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 8, 2024, at 6:30 P.M.

Wilmor Fire Station, 200 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

Mayor Manier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., in the training room with a quorum present.

*Present:* Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre and Stevens

*Absent:* Alderperson Smith

*Also Present:* City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Schryer

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: None
2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Washington resident Jim Bremner commented regarding the evidence building. He shared that the social security building was built by another entity and leased back to the Social Security Administration. He wondered if the City could find a similar situation. Washington resident Luke Sawicki commented regarding how the zoom account registration name is displayed on the meeting videos. He also commented regarding current Ameren rates. Jeff Giebelhausen, owner of The Peak in Washington, commented regarding agenda Item D. He shared that they are open and feels they offer services to community that weren't available before. He asked Council to consider hardships they experienced when redoing their building and the plight of small businesses. He noted revenue streams are needed. Robert Lee from Avon Court shared issues he has regarding water in his basement since Hilldale and Lawndale were redone. He contacted a plumber and they told him it is the storm sewer. He had new lines put in 30 years ago. His neighbor had the same problem. He talked with the City Administrator and City Engineer and noted that it is backing up with heavy rain. He has a pump to pull out the water. He would like the city to help repair the situation and was told a \$4,000-\$5,000 sump pump would correct it. He said drains have been moved in front of his house that are causing a wet spot. Sabastian Whiting, shared that he is a co-owner of a local Airbnb that is partially owned by his mom who uses it as income. She is from the area and has provided this information to neighbors. They also owned a short-term rental in NY state. He shared that neighbors have repeatedly come on to their property to address issues with guests. They do not pose a threat to residential homes available and this keeps travel to the area affordable. This accommodates services that hotels don't allow, like pets. He feels these are almost always kept up better than local residents because of requirements and not allowing these could hinder the local economy.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Brownfield motioned to accept the June 10, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes; Alderperson McIntyre seconded. Passed by voice vote.
4. NEW BUSINESS:
  - A. *Short-term Rental Amendment Discussion* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that this was requested to bring to Council. This is a proposal for new language in our short-term rental code. He shared that R-2 allows permitted uses such as bed and breakfasts and these are in most communities. He shared that other area municipalities have them as a special use or permitted use and Peoria differentiates if the owner is present or not, noting that more often than not, the owner is not on the property. He noted that this wouldn't prohibit them but regulate them so that properties are held to a specific standard. He noted, as the citizen shared, that having these can give visitors options that we might not already have. He feels this could help create an even playing field between short-term rentals and hotels, and it can help capture revenue. Planning and Development Director Oliphant believes there are about half dozen short-term rentals including the Cornerstone Building which has a permitted use. Alderperson Stevens stated that she found four, she would like to know how many, their locations and noted differences between locations on a main street versus in a neighborhood. Planning and Development Director Oliphant noted the challenge locating them. Alderperson Stevens approached her neighbors about them and thinks they are more positive than negative. They are big money makers for property owners. Alderperson Adams agreed but feels we should proceed, noting the need to provide taxes like hotels. He asked about managing complaints and thinks a registration would be helpful. Alderperson Stevens and Alderperson Brownfield agreed. Alderperson Brownfield suggested limiting to certain parts of town and would like to move forward. Alderperson Martin agreed. He noted the difference between someone who rents their property while they are gone versus full time rentals and would also favor a tax and registration process. Alderperson McIntyre agreed. He noted other cities have had life safety issues with them and would like to know their locations. It will also allow police to do a better job. Alderperson Blundy agreed. He thinks registration would be helpful as well as creating a tax structure for full time property rental businesses. Alderperson Butler agreed with amending the code and noted the quantity of them can change. Mayor Manier clarified that the consensus is to look into a registry, tax, how to handle noise, and police can handle some complaints. Consensus is to start on an outline. Planning and Development Director Oliphant noted that we have home occupation businesses.
  - B. *Supervisor Selection Committee Discussion* – Chief McCoy shared that after a promotion had taken place, they reviewed the supervisor selection committee and noted that Council approved that the mayor is to appoint two Council people to the committee along with the City Administrator. The second language change would eliminate anyone outside of Washington Police Department to be promoted to sergeant.

Alderson Blundy disagrees with only hiring internal candidates which could eliminate good candidates. Alderson Brownfield is all in favor of promoting internal first. He feels some officers stay here because they can move up when someone retires. He is good with both suggestions. Alderson Butler shared that this was crafted when Chief Papis was here. He has no issues with the first suggestion but the second part was only to take place in the event if there wasn't an internal candidate available. He noted the candidates are brought to this committee by the Chief of Police and the language can be crafted saying they seek internal first. Alderson Stevens agrees with Alderson Butler. She expressed confusion with the memo versus what they voted on in 2023. Her interpretation is that the mayor appoints two members then appoints a chair from those two members but this says the City Administrator is the chair. Chief McCoy said when they did the original draft, he didn't know about the June 13, 2023 item. The mayor can appoint who he likes and this discussion is to get the committee selected because there is a current opening. He disagrees with Alderson Butler. He thinks they should be promoted from within. Alderson Stevens agrees since we have such a young department. She noted it says the Chief of Police will bring forth names with his discretion. Alderson Butler shared that this committee has always worked under the City Administrator as the chair and he has the authority to publish minutes and partake in confidential communications. Alderson Adams doesn't mind the changes. He has faith and trust in our staff and feels if the Chief didn't have faith in a candidate, he wouldn't bring them forward. Alderson Martin asked about look outside the department if an internal candidate wasn't available. Chief McCoy can't imagine that happening. Alderson Stevens would like punctuation clarified. Attorney Schryer asked for Council's preference between the City Administrator serving as chair or should the mayor appoint the chair. Alderson Butler favors keeping the City Administrator and clarifying the language. Regarding bringing outside department employees, if the police chief didn't feel there was an internal candidate, then, he could seek outside the department. Chief McCoy disagrees. Alderson Butler noted that there is no minimum service requirement and we are stuck if no one applies. Mayor Manier asked if Council agrees with including language allowing outside candidates if no internal candidate is available or applies. Chief McCoy clarified that a list of candidates can be provided but it does not say they need to be recommended by the Chief of Police. Alderson Butler would like it clarified that the Chief bring the list. The selection committee should not recruit. Chief McCoy said he would be okay with the changes to language.

- C. *Square Streetscape Sidewalk Discussion* – City Engineer Carr shared that Council directed staff to apply for the RDMS grant and the project is the northern section of the downtown square. He shared that we have stamped and stained concrete. The concept created by Hutchison Engineering calls for all sidewalk to be scored concrete which does not match what we already have. The brewpub will replace the sidewalk in front of the business and asked for City input. Would it be the stamped concrete like what is there or scored concrete. He shared that the stamped brick concrete would cost more for the City. Alderson McIntyre asked if it will be removed when they redo this intersection. City Engineer Carr clarified that IDOT will likely specify plain concrete. City Engineer Carr shared that this concept is for five parking spots that will change the curb line and sidewalk. Alderson McIntyre would hate for the brewpub to have it torn out. He is okay with the scored concrete. City Engineer Carr clarified that he thinks IDOT would pay for the scored concrete when they redo BUS24. He thinks it will look nice and doesn't see the need for stamping. Planning and Development Director Oliphant clarified that the grant will be submitted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month. Alderson Stevens feels there is no reason to change the sidewalk now because they are still working and it should wait until the project is done. City Engineer Carr said they must pull out some sidewalk to put in support beams and once done, there will not be a lot of traffic in that area. City Engineer Carr clarified that IDOT will further study the area and there are bigger issues in the square like the interior wall that keeps getting strikes. Alderson Stevens said she has seen semis come into the oncoming lane. City Engineer Carr shared that medians are placed to reduce traffic going down the center of the road. Alderson Brownfield said he is in favor of the plain concrete and he is glad they are asking now. He feels giving them information now allows them not to have to come back later to ask again. General consensus is to move forward with scored concrete.
- D. *Discussion Involving The Peak, Owned by J. Giebelhausen* – Chief McCoy shared a memo regarding Mr. Giebelhausen's request and shared that they met with Mr. Giebelhausen before he purchased the previous establishment. The liquor and gaming requirements were explained to him at that time. Mr. Giebelhausen asked for the gaming waiting period to be reduced from two years to one year at that time. Chief McCoy read the schedule of the project including that Mr. Giebelhausen first put in a laundromat then the bar. He was granted a liquor license and is now asking the City to not hold him to the ordinance. Chief McCoy also shared that two years ago a large company invested about \$10,000 in an establishment and didn't know about the waiting period. They then threatened a lawsuit. Alderson Blundy shared this is not just for The Peak, it is for the general ordinance. He understands making businesses wait deflects gaming parlors which he agrees with. He feels this will help restaurants and bars with revenue. He shared that Peoria has reduced their waiting period to six months. Alderson Adams clarified that this was requested by Council. Alderson Adams feels that the waiting period protects the businesses that are already established. He personally loves gaming, but expressed caution about having an open-door policy. It could negatively affect current businesses. Alderson Blundy feels that it is in violation of the ordinance if gaming is a big source of revenue noting that gaming is only 20% of their revenue. He feels it is not Council's job to protect businesses by restricting others. Alderson Stevens shared that the business is in Washington Plaza and is not competing with businesses on the square. She noted the trend with following Peoria and noted the establishment replaced what was there. Alderson Brownfield appreciates Mr. Giebelhausen choice of location, but he thinks that the extra revenue is to make improvements. He shared that he toured the building and feels they did a good job. He considers the laundromat as a different business. He fears changing the ordinance will create problems. Mayor Manier shared that the City met with liquor licenses holders and they expressed the need to limit gaming. Mayor Manier also noted that Mr. Giebelhausen didn't purchase the previous business, he purchased a vacant building which is different than W Down Under and Blue Ox because they purchased existing businesses. Alderson Butler shared that the City deliberated months to develop the two-year waiting time and he doesn't favor making it easy for businesses to come in for the purpose of gaming. Alderson McIntyre is torn on this. He feels one-year was reasonable and if we change it, why have any rules. He noted this should be a small portion of their business. He is favor of keeping the one-year waiting period.

Aldersperson Martin is grateful for Mr. Giebelhausen and wants to support him but agrees that we can't just change it for him. He does not favor reducing it. Mayor Manier confirmed that the greater consensus is to keep the one-year waiting period. Mr. Giebelhausen, who was in the audience, stood and addressed Council upon his departure. Aldersperson Blundy expressed confusion with the ordinance stating that 80% of revenue must come from food or beverages so that protects against gaming parlors, yet people need the money to invest in their business. Mayor Manier shared that the Blue Ox has applied for their gaming and is waiting on the State.

- E. *Evidence Building Update/Dewberry Proposal* – Chief McCoy provided a memo containing the rebidding of the evidence building. He shared that this is a need, and they pared it down to the basics. Administrator Snider shared that they are informing us that the current bid has ended and it will contain a \$4,000 charge to rebid it. Council has asked for them to evaluate how to trim the project and the cost to do that would be \$49,600. This would be an engineering agreement that can be brought to Council for consideration. They provided concerns including the trend of a 10% increase over previous bids. Administrator Snider clarified that the new bid will contain the epoxy. Aldersperson Blundy doesn't see a point in doing it unless another company is bidding. Dewberry shared with staff that some companies might be hesitant to bid again. Aldersperson Blundy would like to explore leasing or the existing building. He thinks staff can help evaluate where to make cuts. Aldersperson Brownfield noted the \$4,000 is because the other bids have expired and exploring other options will cost staff money. He noted that staff will need to be pulled from other jobs in order to do this and they couldn't get their own work done. City Engineer Carr stated that he is not an architect, structural engineer, mechanical engineer, electrical engineer or plumber and is not qualified create the specs for this, which is why we hired Dewberry. Aldersperson Blundy feels that he is qualified to review some of the big items to see what we can live without. He thinks City Engineer Carr could do it. Chief McCoy shared that other locations were considered but having an evidence building by itself would be hard to protect. Chief McCoy shared that hours were spent pairing things down to become basic. Administrator Snider noted Chief McCoy gave his valued opinion and a renowned company gave their valued opinion. Chief McCoy shared that most evidence buildings are built into existing buildings. City Engineer Carr shared that value engineering is Dewberry reaching out to previous bidders to see if they can look for cheaper materials. Because this is a municipal bid, this process can't be done because we must put it out and go with the lowest bid. City Engineer Carr noted the 200 hours of work is communication with the original bidders. City Engineer Carr noted that the only one who can tell you the actual cost is the bidder. Aldersperson Butler appreciates City Engineer Carr's experience but wonders if another firm could help with value engineering. City Engineer Carr noted the cost to recreate the wheel. Aldersperson Butler wondered if reevaluating the engineering could return \$49,000. City Engineer Carr said yes but not the \$500,000 being sought. City Engineer Carr shared the difficulties in getting value engineering after an agreement is reached. Aldersperson Martin noted the importance of epoxy flooring with spills and the EPA could make you rip it out if the wrong thing is spilled. He does not favor spending \$49,000 for rebidding. Aldersperson Stevens mentioned the choice of locations that included behind Connect Church and she would like to hear more details about what Jim Bremner suggested. Aldersperson Adams feels we either spend the money or we are done. He feels the old building will also need to be addressed. Aldersperson Brownfield asked about using the grant money to go to rent. Administrator Snider and Finance Director Baxter will look into rental. Aldersperson Martin suggested moving forward with rebidding. Aldersperson Adams agreed. Aldersperson Blundy did not agree. Aldersperson McIntyre expressed concern with cost increases. He wonders about recouping the \$49,000 and then coming up with \$2.3 million for the building. He feels we clearly need the building but the price has been the concern. He feels we need to try the valued engineering to come up with a lower cost. Aldersperson Butler feels we missed out using the footprint of the current building and if evidence only needs to be stored and not accessed, there are companies that do that. He noted other places to store Public Works storage items. He also wonders about investing \$100,000 in maintenance of the old building and using insurance money. Administrator Snider shared that they received \$125,000 from insurance. Aldersperson Butler said that is in addition to \$100,000 for maintenance. Aldersperson Blundy and Stevens agreed with Aldersperson Butler. Aldersperson Stevens doesn't like the proposed location next to the fire department. Mayor Manier noted further discussion at the August Committee of the Whole meeting.

5. OTHER BUSINESS: Administrator Snider shared that he and Engineer Carr met with Mr. Lee and he will provide a report. City Engineer Carr shared that IDOT plans on doing a mill and overlay on BUS24 from west of Legion Road to the east of Zinser. This will give us a Band-Aid until the reconstruction. The vibrating equipment might create watermain breaks. City Engineer Carr clarified that the reconstruction will not be pushed out because of this and the delay is due to engineering. Aldersperson Martin clarified that the home occupation regulations is for local businesses to operate out of their house. Planning and Development Director Oliphant clarified that the City only enforces what is in our code and it is up to HOA to enforce their code regarding garbage can rules. Aldersperson Brownfield recognized Public Works for recent paving and striping. Public Works Director Rittenhouse noted that the City may need to rent roller for Danforth. Aldersperson Stevens noted the website has road updates on a map. Aldersperson Blundy asked about a meeting with the Five Points Board and was told they did not agree with it. He shared items from the previous agreement, noting the WACC said they will hold a public meeting where interested stakeholders could attend and any failure to have the meeting should result in reduction of relief payment. Aldersperson Brownfield said they meet monthly, and stakeholders are on it. Aldersperson Brownfield shared that they hold meetings every month and it meets the requirement. Attorney Schryer shared that it is his opinion is that they will have an open meeting, but it was not intended to be a joint meeting between Council and WACC. It would be open to all taxing bodies. Finance Director Baxter clarified that there are three different grants. Aldersperson McIntyre asked if we would see stoplights soon on Cummings. City Engineer Carr said they are setting light poles. Aldersperson Stevens asked if City Engineer Carr could put a link on the website about BUS24.

6. ADJOURNMENT: At 8:33 p.m. Aldersperson McIntyre moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Brownfield seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

  
Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk