



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 2, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
Banquet Room A at Five Points - 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Gary W. Manier called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Roll Call *Present:* Council Members Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

Also Present Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Mike McCoy, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Derek Schryer and Press

Pledge of Allegiance All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Manier.

Agenda Council Member Blundy motioned to remove Item B from the consent agenda; Council Member Stevens seconded.

6 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, McIntyre, Stevens

2 Nays: Martin, Smith

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Audience Comments Washington resident Luke Sawicki shared that Mayor Manier said that Jim Hengst would like to gift the City of Washington an amphitheater. He provided the City's organizational chart and shared that it was from the 2024 Budget Book. He noted that citizens are at the top of the chart. He feels Council should approve the advisory referendum on the next ballot. He feels the Hengst Foundation should trust their feasibility study.

Washington resident Simon Patrobick lives near the proposed Amphitheatre. He expressed concern because he can already hear the high school band. He asked why the Amphitheatre was not included in the budget and noted the fiscal year 24/25 budget asked for an increase and he feels it is unreasonable to ask for more. He wonders if other projects need to be cut and asked about a conflict of interest because the mayor's wife is on the foundation board.

Washington resident Steve Vander Naalt from Dallas Road shared that his rezoning request is up for a second reading. They would like it rezoned to have a very small hobby farm. His property meets and exceeds all requirements to have AG zoning. They are not making changes that will alter property values and would appreciate council's support.

Washington resident Carol Bersin expressed concerns for the amphitheater. Her comments are attached and made part of these minutes.

Consent Agenda Mayor Manier presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:

A. Approve Minutes of the November 18, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting

~~B. Approve 2025 Meeting Schedules~~

C. Catherine Street Phase 1 Pay Request #4

Council Member Adams motioned to approve; Council Member Smith seconded.

Council Member Stevens asked about Item C and the fiscal impact. She expressed that she didn't see where the water fund is used. She feels sewer and capital fund projects are fine. City Engineer Carr explained that they installed a new watermain for the entire length of the Catherine Street Project and the change order is a small amount of the total which was \$364,723.57.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communications / Requested Actions Mayor Manier introduced Council Member Adams who provided an update on the Tournament of Champions event. He shared that families and fans came from nine different states. He feels it showcased great basketball, and great money went into the community. He also shared that many visitors expressed that they enjoyed visiting places in community. They raised \$103,000 for glioblastoma.

City Administrator Communication City Engineer Carr opened the floor for any questions about the Council Report, no questions were provided. He shared that stop signs are being installed on Cruger and Dallas and a message board will be placed as well. They are hoping to turn on the Dallas and IL24 intersection signals the week of December 16th. They are going to have a meeting to discuss the Park Berm Project. They have requested that dirt not be hauled in until storm structures are installed.

*Discussion Regarding
Advisory Referendum
Pertaining to
Infrastructure
for the Proposed
Amphitheater Project*

Council Member Brownfield expressed that he was surprised to see this on the agenda after Council was told it's coming back for discussion at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. He feels this is premature because we haven't heard from staff to see if they can come up with funding without using taxing. He is disappointed that someone would push this without transparency, and he would like to get all the information before making a decision. Council Member Stevens feels she is experienced with referendums and the date to get the item on the ballot is coming soon. She feels there is plenty of time before the April election to get answers. Council Member Adams agreed with Council Member Brownfield and feels certain council members have claimed to be blindsided but now they are doing it. He feels they don't have enough information for this. He shared that he has received many emails with varying opinions. The messages are saying there will be a vote in December, but Council has not been told this. He further stated that council members are voted in to make hard decisions. Council Member Adams explained that Council Member Stevens wanted to put the winery on this property but they couldn't do that without infrastructure. He also explained that the City is not paying for an amphitheater or giving them money. He looks forward to hearing more information and hearing from constituents but does not approve of this forced vote that was placed on the agenda. Council Member Blundy shared that he wanted this advisory referendum and we are not bound to it. He noted the deadline is December 9th. He feels we are not close to having the information we need and he would like the public's input. He doesn't feel the numbers that he has seen match. He feels the City has millions in infrastructure projects with no way to pay for them. He wonders about placing the amphitheater on the new Freedom Parkway. Council Member McIntyre feels that he understands both sides but expressed concern that the referendum is related to the amphitheater while the discussion should be for the infrastructure for other properties as well. He questioned if council members are only concerned with the amphitheater or developing the whole 223 property. He feels the request is to develop the property with the opportunity that there be an amphitheater and other future businesses. He also noted that the City doesn't own property on Freedom Parkway. He feels a referendum needs to be specific on what to ask and why. Council Member Martin agreed as well. He is not opposed to having something on the ballot but it would need to be clearer. He feels this is premature and we have more questions to answer. He questioned the wording used in the proposed referendum. Council Member Martin explained that if \$3 million is invested in infrastructure, it would be hard to put a value on an anchor as well as the added tax revenue from this project and other businesses that will purchase in the area then. He feels this could generate tens of millions of dollars and this is why we need more information. He also would like to know what kind of grants would be available and how revenue could come back to the City. He wonders how the amphitheater will be managed and if native plants and trees will be placed in the area. Council Member Blundy understands the gap in information and would like the public involved at a high level. He would like a feasibility study given to the public. He feels the infrastructure wouldn't be considered without the amphitheater. Mayor Manier noted that questions have been asked about the referendum but no one asked questions about the \$6 million provided for the infrastructure for Freedom Parkway. He shared that he was contacted by a gentleman who expressed concern about the new brick streets that he will never drive on. Mayor Manier noted that staff will bring more information including ideas for funding. Council Member Stevens explained that she and Council Member Blundy want an advisory referendum. She said the language for the referendum came from a memo that they received in 2022. She questions if Council wants tax payer money to go specifically to the amphitheater. Council Member McIntyre expressed that he doesn't disagree with a referendum and getting input but feels it is not transparent to say they are only getting an amphitheater for the \$3 million. He noted that they could get information in a week and her question on the ballot won't be relevant. He feels the amphitheater is a catalyst for potential future growth. He shared his concerned with sound, noting that this is in his ward and it would be selfish of him not to research it. Council Member Stevens asked how many people want a special meeting this week to discuss this referendum. No responses were provided. Council Member Butler said he is not interested in a special meeting or a referendum. He feels these types of questions on a ballot are crafted by someone in order to get a specific answer. He also feels it is improper for a majority of a quorum to discuss projects outside of Council Chambers. He feels a significant number of people would vote on this without ever hearing the information behind it. He feels a better solution would be a public meeting to present the entire story and get public input. Council Member Adams is not in favor of the language that is being presented tonight but he is open to hosting townhall meetings. Council Member Brownfield would like to get community input, is also against the referendum question but would like townhall meetings to get public input. Council Member McIntyre agreed and feels it wouldn't be transparent to put the question on the ballot without the facts. He feels the current question is too widespread and is also in favor of having as many townhalls as needed. Council Member Martin is also in favor of townhall meetings.

Resolution:
*R-1424 (24-24) Final
Plat Protea Place*

City Engineer Carr presented the following resolution for consideration:

Synopsis: Adoption of this resolution would approve the final plat for Protea Place Subdivision, an 11.67-acre property bordered by US Business Route 24 on the north, Lakeshore Drive on the west, and S. Cummings Lane on the east.

Title: Resolution Approving the Final Plat Protea Place

Council Member Brownfield motioned to approve; Council Member Stevens seconded. Council Member Blundy expressed concern. He feels this is a connector between Lakeshore and Cummings and it will create more issues with people complaining if others drive down the private road. He wonders how long it will take to develop and thinks pedestrians and residents will want to use the road. He shared that he doesn't see sidewalks in the plan but feels the comprehensive plan would want to include them. He feels a sidewalk will help get people get to

Cherry Tree and with no sidewalks, people will walk in the street. He is not a fan of private roads.

Council Member Brownfield motioned to approve; Council Member Smith seconded.

6 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

2 Nays: Blundy, Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote.

First Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:
Abating the 2024 Tax Levy in Connection with the \$4,735,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2024
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would abate the levy for the year 2024, made in connection with the \$4,735,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023, of the City of Washington, Tazewell County, Illinois.
Title: First Reading Ordinance: Abating the 2024 Tax Levy in Connection with the \$4,735,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023

Council Member Blundy asked how much money is received from the 0.51% sales tax from water bonds. Finance Director Baxter said about \$1.2 million. Council Member Blundy expressed concern with the surplus noting that he previously asked about alternative funding sources. He feels the City is home rule to help minimize impact on property tax. He is not in favor of raising the levy. Finance Director Baxter explained that home rule sales tax is specific for storm water management. Council Member Blundy said since we are coming in above what we need for the bond, we can drop the sales tax to a quarter percent.

First Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:
Levying the Annual 2024 Municipal Property Tax
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would levy the annual 2024 Municipal Property Tax for the City of Washington, County of Tazewell, State of Illinois (Taxes paid in 2025).
Title: First Reading Ordinance: Levying the Annual 2024 Municipal Property Tax

First Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:
Rescinding Ordinance 3551 and Approving an Amendment to the Use Agreement with the Washington Area Community Center
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would rescind Ordinance 3551 and enter into an amendment to the use agreement with the Washington Area Community Center, allowing for additional revisions including some minor language changes and including the use of the Miller/Senior Room for Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.
Title: First Reading Ordinance: Rescinding Ordinance 3551 Adopted on October 21, 2024 and Approving an Amendment to the Use Agreement with the Washington Area Community Center

City Engineer Carr explained that if this is approved, we will want to amend the approved date on the use agreement. Council Member Stevens noted that City Engineer Carr used the words "senior room", but she did not see it in the ordinance. City Engineer Carr noted that the language is in the agreement itself. City Engineer Carr further explained that the previous October agreement used only "Banquet Room A" in the language, but the smaller commission meetings would be held in the senior room because less space is needed for them. Larger meetings could be moved to a banquet room if needed. He also noted that previous language referred to something in return for restructuring the deal, but that isn't correct so they asked for it to be pulled out of the ordinance because it was a separately approved item. Council Member Stevens shared that she didn't see the edits attached to the agenda packet. She noted additional language regarding cameras, a TV screen and monitor, and a permanent installation of an AV box on the wall which she didn't see. She does not care for the TV screen being used. City Engineer Carr clarified that we had a different agreement in place and between the two readings, Nicole returned from vacation and made a few changes. City Engineer Carr further explained that they had signed the agreement, but it wasn't what was discussed. He noted the document includes the strike-outs in the language regarding the TV. Council Member Blundy thought all city meetings were in Banquet Room A and all meetings would be recorded live. City Engineer Carr explained that our IT contract does not include additional meetings. Council Member Stevens requested that the second reading ordinance title and synopsis match what is read aloud and that the changes are noted. She feels she was blindsided. City Engineer Carr asked if she would like to make a motion and Council Member Stevens said no. She feels it is staff's duty to make the language match. City Engineer Carr explained that this will rescind the previous agreement and accept the new agreement. She wants what City Engineer Carr reads to match what is voted on. She feels the changes are not clear. Council Member Blundy also expressed that he did not see the strike-outs that were attached to the agenda. Attorney Schryer shared that it is normal to just rescind an ordinance and that the staff memo can provide the redline draft to show the changes.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:
3558(39-24): Proposed request of Steve and Alissa Vander Naalt to rezone 926 Dallas Rd., from R-1 to AG-1.
Synopsis: Adoption of this ordinance would annex a parcel at 1123 Dallas Road totaling 1.17 acres into the City of Washington corporate limits and zone it to R-1A.
Title: First Reading Ordinance: Request by Joshua and Shealah Biagioni to Annex 1123 Dallas Road
Council Member Stevens motioned to approve; Council Member McIntyre seconded.
8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens
0 Nays:
Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:
3559(40-24) Short-Term Rental Zoning Code Text Amendment
Synopsis: Proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, for the purpose of adding or deleting text. Specifically:
a) Old Section 154.830; New Section 56-453 "Purpose"

- b) Old Section 154.831; New Section 56-454 "Definitions"
- c) Old Section 154.832; New Section 56-455 "Short-Term Rental Permitting/Certificate of Registration Requirements"
- d) Old Section 154.833; New Section 56-456 "Special Use Permit Required"
- e) Old Section 154.834; New Section 56-457 "Certificate of Registration in Commercial Districts and Owner-Occupied Short-Term Rentals in Residential Districts"
- f) Old Section 154.835; New Section 56-458 "Regulations Applicable to All Short-Term Rentals"

Title: Approve Short-Term Rental Zoning Code Text Amendment

Council Member Brownfield motioned to approve; Council Member Smith seconded. Council Member Martin said he agrees with this for homes that are used for sole purpose of a rental but if it is just someone who wants to rent their house short term, he doesn't agree. He will vote no. Council Member Blundy agreed with Council Member Martin. Council Member Stevens asked for the motion to be amended. Council Member Brownfield did not amend his motion.

6 Ayes: Adams, Brownfield, Butler, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

2 Nays: Blundy, Martin

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:

3560(41-24) Amend Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.727; New Section 6-59 "Ground Mount and Roof Mount Solar Energy Systems"

Synopsis: Approval of this ordinance would allow for the consideration of properties in the city limits zoned AG-1 that have residential uses to have ground mount solar energy systems.

Title: Approve proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.727; New Section 6-59 "Ground Mount and Roof Mount Solar Energy Systems", for the purpose of adding or deleting text

Council Member McIntyre motioned to approve; Council Member Smith seconded.

Council Member Martin shared he is against ground mount solar arrays but he is in favor of property rights so he will vote yes.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:

3561(42-24) Amend Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.156; New Section 56-273 "Variances"

Synopsis: Approval of this ordinance would establish the process for the consideration of sign variance requests and to identify the City Council as the authoritative jurisdiction for such matters.

Title: Proposed amendment to the Washington City Zoning Code, specifically, Old Section 154.156; New Section 56-273 "Variances", for the purpose of adding or deleting text

Council Member Brownfield motioned to approve; Council Member Adams seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Second Reading Ord: City Engineer Carr presented the following ordinance for consideration:

3562(43-24) Codification Revisions

Synopsis: Approval of this ordinance would transfer the mentioned zoning regulations back into Chapter 56 of the Municipal Code.

Title: Codification Revisions

Council Member McIntyre motioned to approve; Council Member Smith seconded.

8 Ayes: Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, Stevens

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Aldersperson Comments

Council Member Brownfield reported that on November 27, 2024, the WACC board held a public meeting to fulfill its obligation. Only two private citizens and two library board members attended. He had hoped members of Council would have attended and recommended they attend in the future. Council Member Stevens stated that she didn't recall hearing the time of the meeting. She saw the notice but didn't see the location. Council Member Brownfield clarified that it was posted and there was public comment at the meeting. Council Member Brownfield also clarified that the board would not discuss items with those present as to not violate OMA. He noted that the information is public. Council Member Blundy asked that when Council Member Brownfield gives feedback to the WACC board regarding attendance, he explained that the meeting was held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at 7:00 a.m. Council Member Brownfield explained that the WACC meeting was held when the financials were done and the board is comprised of all volunteers, many of whom came before work. The library board expressed that they were disappointed in the lack of attendance. Council Member McIntyre expressed appreciation for the decorations on the Square. He also feels the completed bricks on Catherine Street look great.

Adjournment At 7:59 p.m. Council Member Martin moved to adjourn; Council Member McIntyre seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.


Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

Good evening

My name is Carol Bersin. I have been a resident of Washington for 18 years. I am here to have some questions and concerns addressed regarding the proposed amphitheater project. I have been made aware that there will be a discussion on Monday December 9, 2024 at the Committee of the Whole meeting. I'm hoping that my questions and concerns will be addressed at that time.

As of right now, I feel that I can not be for or against this project. There has not been enough information to make an informed decision.

13 days ago, I requested a copy of a feasibility study and have not received an answer. That being said, I am wondering if the city has conducted an independent study...or are you taking the Foundation's study at face value? When were any studies done? Are they current or from 2022? I would like to see this plan in detail. These details would include – security costs, payroll, utility bills, day to day operations, projected revenue, etc. Also, has the city done an independent business plan/study? The most important concern to me is when the facility will turn a profit. When the former Fast Stop gas station/convenient/fast food store was built (located at Route 24 and Village Drive across from ICC), I was hired by Ad-Land FS and Peoria County Services to be the general manager. I was involved from the ground up. Our business plan was to turn a profit in 5 years. Who will be paying for the short fall on the amphitheater project until a profit has been realized? Again, who will be paying the short fall on the amphitheater project a profit has been realized?

There is also a concern about exactly what the city will have to pay out in order to get the project off the ground or should I say in the ground. Who will be paying for infrastructure and where will this money come from? According to interviews, the Mayor had indicated taxes will not be raised.

Another concern would be impact studies that have or have not been done. They would include environmental studies such as soil testing and water drainage. Has a noise study been done for the residential area directly across Cruger Road? What about the traffic impact on existing roads. Also ADA compliance?

I have emailed these concerns and questions to each of the council members. I plan on attending the meeting on December 9, 2024 and I hope that these can be addressed at that meeting.

I am providing a written copy of my comments to be included as part of the public record of tonight's meeting.

In conclusion, I would like to quote Jose Diaz-Balart from NBC news -----
"Thank you for the privilege of your time"

Carol A. Bersin
12-2-24