

Ottawa, Illinois
May 13, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Special meeting of the Council of the City of Ottawa, Illinois

Present: Commissioners Dan Aussem, Wayne Eichelkraut, Dale Baxter, James Less, and Mayor Eschbach.

Absent: None.

Commissioner Eichelkraut added New Business relating to the NCAT program. Jaime Blatti's contract expires on June 30, 2015, and Eichelkraut stated he would like to bid that out and not automatically renew it. He also updated the Council on the \$120,000.00 that we possibly might have to pay back to the State of Illinois. This is due to the first few months we started the program without it being signed off on. He also didn't like that all service contracts weren't coming to Council for approval.

Commissioner Aussem wanted the Council to have a part in the selection of abandoned/demolition/nuisance properties as far priority on the list. He wants adjoining property owners to have first chance at buying one of these properties. Mayor Eschbach noted that Jeff Torricelli called IHDA and met with them regarding the grant program. Criteria used to create the list was as follows;

1. Properties with the most complaints
2. Properties the City could acquire
3. Properties that fit into the grant & priority

Commissioner Aussem requested a copy of that list. Under his New Business, Aussem talked about the Field's Hill Subdivision and the CDAP Grant being administrated by NCICG. One of the grant conditions involves an income survey with 75% submittal rate needed. As of now, we are at 47% and the majority are in favor of annexing. It was noted that we might need to go door to door to meet the 75% threshold for the grant.

Commissioner Less initiated a discussion regarding the Reddick Mansion Association lease renewal. The proposal submitted by the RMA includes a request for \$45,000.00 a year funding from the City, a start date of July 1, 2015, and exterior and interior repairs. It was noted that the current lease is in effect until November of 2015. Commissioner Ganiere asked how the association was formed. The Mayor responded that it is a non for profit and was started after the library moved out. The Association managed the facility according to the adaptive use study. Aussem added that the current lease is poorly written. The Mayor has met with the RMA Board and said that the City is committed to \$25,000.00 a year for 10 years. He also compared their proposed remodeling projects to the St. Columba Church remodel. The LaSalle County Historical Society received the same gift as the RMA, only they have spent 2/3 of theirs updating their building. The City does not have an ordinary landlord/tenant relationship with the RMA. We need a new lease both sides can agree on. Aussem requested that everyone read the adaptive use study. Under New Business, Less reminded of the Starved Rock Country Marathon this weekend and added that the curb replacement project is in full swing.

Mayor Eschbach discussed the proposed adjudication hearing process and said that we have come across a few glitches, but we are moving forward. He expects to have the process set up in the next 60 days. City Engineer, Dave Noble, explained the resiliency grant projects. This grant is available because of the one billion dollars left from the Hurricane Sandy disaster and is available for projects more resilient to natural disasters and to fix these problems permanently. 67 different entities can apply and IDNR thru Senator Rezin will be putting together an application. There are 2 phases of the grant with one being area and the second being funds. 3 tests are in place to see if the project qualifies;

1. Areas most impacted by a disaster (ex. City flooding in 2013 with 597 basements affected)
2. Over 2 million in public infrastructure damage
3. Most distressed areas with high unemployment or low to moderate income with needs that are not met

Proposed City projects include saving houses from flooding, building a flood wall around the YMCA and the Wastewater Treatment Plant wall. Currently, erosion exists on our berm around the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

One of the grant provisions is a citywide low to moderate income survey. A certain percentage needs to be done and these surveys could possibly go out in City water bills. Aussem asked about grant restrictions and wondered if we made the first cut and what we are allowed to do in advance.

The next discussion involved the downtown waterfront plan. Staff has been working with the Hitchcock Design Group and Gingko. We need more info to provide a grading plan. Aussem is concerned with the environmental problem. Ganiere stated that the harbor should be half of the size as proposed. Other Council members agreed. Less cited the updated Comprehensive Plan and that the current drawing is conceptual only. The Mayor added that we need a market analysis to proceed and Eichelkraut wondered if the Port District could help. Aussem questioned the status of the environmental issue. Noble replied that Nicor is close to finding a final plan for removal of the cold tar. Nancy Houston of Nicor told Noble that excavation is expected this Fall. Aussem added that Rockford had a similar problem and they have been working on it for 14 years. Ganiere added that the buzz on the street is excitement over the entertainment and event venue. The NFR letter for the site needs to say that the parcel is safe to walk on and build up the ground so it doesn't flood. The IKE and Brownsfield grants expire between 1 and 1-1/2 years from now.

Commissioner Aussem would to renew the consulting agreement the City has with Etscheid Duttlinger & Associates. When Duttlinger was first hired the price per hour was low and he would like to bump up his rate by 10% or \$10.00 an hour. He commented that everyone has been very happy with his engineering on public works projects including former Commissioner Dale Baxter. It was agreed that a new agreement include the increase.

Mayor Eschbach presented motion to recess.

Moved by Mayor Eschbach that this Council recess into Closed Session to discuss matters of the real estate acquisition and personnel.

Second by Ganiere.

Ayes: Aussem, Ganiere, Eichelkraut, Less, and Mayor Eschbach.

Nays: None. Motion carried. Council recessed at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Eschbach presented motion to reconvene.

Moved by Mayor Eschbach that this Council reconvene from Closed Session.

Second by Less.

Ayes: Aussem, Ganiere, Eichelkraut, Less, and Mayor Eschbach.

Nays: None. Motion carried. Council reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Eschbach presented motion to adjourn.

Moved by Mayor Eschbach that this special meeting be adjourned.

Second by Less.

Ayes: Aussem, Ganiere, Eichelkraut, Less, and Mayor Eschbach.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Council adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly L. Munks