

Elmhurst City Council meeting

Sept. 6, 2016

Steven M. Morley, Mayor

Attendance: City Mgr. Grabowski, Clerk Spencer, Treasurer Libovicz, 2 Press; approx. 5 first responders, approx. 35 public including ~15 Virginia Townhomes residents.
LWV observer: B. Lipton

1. Executive Session - Conf #2 - 6:30 pm

2. Call to Order 7:45 pm Pledge of Allegiance; Roll Call – No Aldermen absent

3. Public Hearing - Special Service Area #16 - Virginia Lane Townhomes – Its purpose is to take public comment on renewing the special service area (SSA). This will replace the current SSA which is set to expire. The development doesn't have a chartered homeowners association so this takes its place: City to provide services for maintenance, improvements, parking.

- No written comments; No comments from City Staff.

- Three public comments:

I. Donna Carone – was 1st treasurer for the townhouse board, so she may have information others may not have:

She has 4 concerns:

1) The area was formed already as a SSA#3 since April 1997; Will this new action impose additional requirements for maintenance of the privately-owned areas of the development?

2) How was the dollar amt. determined?

3) How will they determine how the money will be used?

4) No follow-up when association meetings are held – it is not clear why decisions are taken – residents need feedback. Especially now that the City wants to tax us even more; she certainly wants a monthly financial statement.

5) How, and whether, this will change how the association board is formed. Originally board elections were to be held each year, but it is not being done.

II. Carlos Rivera – A resident of the townhomes. Has nothing to say; just wanted to find out what was going on.

III. Matthew Mackay – Fully supports Ms. Carone; came to the meeting tonight because they have no inkling of what is going on.

Ald. Bram asks for clarification regarding the \$4/\$100 estimated assessed valuation amount to tax the residents, if that was requested by the association board? Mayor Morley explains that there is no official townhouse assoc. so there is a pseudo-board (unofficial), so Council has no say in what they decide on the fees. The money is to cover the costs of maintaining the common areas, repairs to common structures (e.g. roof), mowing, etc.

Ald York explains: The tax amount is the same as what they have now; increases reflect only the increase in assessed valuation over the years. Mr. Tataglia is the Board liaison to Council and has met with the Finance Committee – Ald. York will ask him about the homeowners' questions. This new SSA is basically identical to the current one; just a replacement for a new 10 year's period.

Ald. Talludo encourages residents to attend the upcoming finance committee meeting and join the discussion.

4. Receipt of Written Communication from the Public None

5. Public Forum

Dr. George Geis: expresses grave concerns regarding the safety of City residents. He has been an ER doctor for 30 years here in Elmhurst, much of the time as the head of the emergency services committee. Recent events have revealed a gap in the emergency system, specifically a) Trained paramedics on fire vehicles are not able to administer life-saving measures due to contractual issues. Other municipalities can offer these services, but not Elmhurst. This is a huge waste as a large proportion of Elmhurst Fire Dept. personnel have advanced life-support training as certified paramedics. b) Elmhurst is the only local municipality without ALS and the required equipment available on firefighting vehicles. This appears to be due to a misguided concern for cost-saving.

Donna Geis: Feels responsible to share her thoughts as a 30 yr resident with kids and grandkids in Elmhurst. She feels strongly that Council should be doing everything to protect residents, recognizing that just a few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. On Nov. 22, 2014 there was an incident for their family at Midwest Rd. and Butterfield when Dr. Geis was hit and unable to get out of the vehicle. An ALS –equipped vehicle came to the scene and Jaws-of-life were used to extract him. He spent 10 days in intensive care and 2 months in rehab. If the accident

had occurred in Elmhurst and an unequipped vehicle had responded instead there would not have been such a positive outcome. She urges Council to provide this lifesaving resource.

Kathy Sullivan: Encourages Council to adopt all stormwater remedies. She is concerned about trees to be installed in the median as part of the new N York streetscape: they will block vision just precisely at the busy entrance to a strip mall across from the Mariano's.

Claude Pagacz: Objects to City buying property again at high prices and then it can't sell it. He urges the City to get out of the real estate business. He objects again to including Berens Park in the new TIF5.

6. Announcements

Ald. Dunn: a) New evangelical Catholic Church moving here from Chicago rededication mass at the old Masonic Lodge to celebrate first responders. b) He thanks teams for the Churchville PTA event two weeks ago which raised \$12,000.

7. Consent Agenda All approved 14-0 except (starred below) 7.7 and 7.8.

7.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Elmhurst City Council on August 15, 2016

7.2 Minutes of the Executive Session of the City Council on August 15, 2016

7.3 Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Elmhurst City Council on August 23, 2016

7.4 Accounts Payable August 31, 2016 - Total \$ 3,394,802.24

7.5 Appointment of Fire Chief Thomas Freeman (City Manager Grabowski)

7.6 Report - Police Station Column Repairs (PWB)

****7.7 Report - Public Works Facility Salt Storage Structure (PWB). Discussion as follows:**

Ald. Kennedy – This item refers to accepting the low bid from Burns Construction for a new salt storage structure; it has been in the budget for a while – to increase size from 1600 tons to one that can accommodate all the salt thought to be needed in a winter season (5000 tons). This will save having to buy additional salt at higher cost in the middle of winter, but also will eliminate the EPA concern regarding runoff from salt stored outside.

Ald. Dunn is concerned about building something so large when we have a contract to allow buying additional salt at not a greatly increased cost; Why do we need such a big structure? But he understands the EPA issue. Ald. Healy explains that the contract worked well when staff estimated the amount of salt needed correctly within 20%, but the last 2 winters were very severe and Elmhurst had to buy salt on the open market at exorbitant rates. Anyhow, this larger structure is overdue – it will allow the City to store unused salt from year to year.

Ald. Dunn questions whether other taxing bodies will keep salt there, the response is that it will be shared just with the Park District.

Approved 14-0.

****7.8 Report - Harrison Street Stormwater Improvement Project - Construction Bids (PWB) (see item #10.1)**

EvanR Construction \$2,394,078 bid be accepted. Further recommended to suspend rules and accept the contract at the same meeting

Ald. Dunn – has comment – looks like the bid came in higher than the budgeted \$1.9 million to provide relief for 11 homes. This is 220,000 for each home – this is the same as Golden Meadows and he is again concerned at the steep cost of this project. Approved 13 – 1; Dunn voted no.

7.9 Report - Construction Inspection Services Proposal for the Harrison Street Stormwater Improvement Project (PWB)

7.10 Report - Sewer Televising Equipment Purchase (PWB)

7.11 Report - Construction Engineering Services Proposal for the Pine Street/Avon Road Stormwater Improvement Project (PWB)

7.12 Report - Document Imaging Project - File Scanning (FCAAS)

7.13 Report - Furniture Replacement for City Hall Conference Rooms (FCAAS)

7.14 O-55-2016 - An Ordinance Authorizing the Sale by Auction of Personal Property Owned by the City of Elmhurst (Seizure Vehicles)

7.15 R-93-2016 - A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a Professional Construction Engineering Services Agreement in Connection with the Crescent/Cambridge Area Stormwater Improvements Project

8. Committee Reports

8.1 Majority Report - 128-134 N. York Street - Real Estate Purchase Contract (PWB) signed by Ald. Deuter, Kennedy; and

8.2 Minority Report - 128-134 N. York Street - Real Estate Purchase Contract (PWB) signed by Ald. Bram, Wagner

Joint discussion:

Ald. Kennedy This is to widen the Schiller St. walkway by 4 feet to allow for a larger sewer and fire hydrant. There are no issues with foundation fittings because they are below grade. The cost of \$240,000 was negotiated with the owner of the property.

Ald. Bram – 4 ft by 175 ft size of the property – this is a dollar amt from 10 years ago, and this cost would only be an issue if the seller were not willing, but he is. This cost is way above and beyond the price the seller paid for this property only a few months ago. The City’s negotiated amount works out to be \$342 /sf. whereas the price paid by the owner for the entire property INCLUDING a building was \$109/sf in November 2014. The current assessed value is \$8.19/sf by DuPage County Assessor. Another concern is the easement: the underground easement would not impact the walkway, but there is a second easement of 2 ft into the walkway to provide for windows.

Ald. Deuter attempts to explain why this higher price was agreed. The seller was not willing to let go this bit of his property but did agree to talk with the City. City Staff calculated a price from 2000-2001 data, which was considerably lower than it would be today. The easement issue was indeed considered during the negotiations. Urges Council to move forward on this purchase.

Ald. Levin states that the land has considerable value over and above the building. In any case, it is a negotiated price, the seller is willing at that price. The committee understands from the seller that if the Minority Report is adopted there will be no deal.

Ald. Mulliner explains that the window easement is not for street level but just for 2nd or 3rd floors.

Ald. Bram moves to substitute the Minority report for Majority report. Not adopted 1 aye (Bram) – 13 no.

Majority report adopted 13 aye -1 no (Bram) .

8.3 Report - Temporary Construction and Permanent Easement Agreement - Crescent/Cambridge Stormwater Project (PWB) Property at 134 E. Crescent

Ald. Kennedy explains this is to complete the York Commons detention basin. It is to place the 48 inch pipe through the homeowner’s property to go under the railroad tracks to convey water into the basin. The total cost is \$37,000, which is much lower than would have been in the original plan. Approved 14-0. Mayor Morley comments that this is the last piece of the puzzle to get this project under way.

8.4 Report - 2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Related Communication (FCAAS)

Ald. York states this report is online – it is the final report for 2015. Peg Versanian, the finance director, worked tirelessly on this, her last report before she retires. Congratulations to her and the rest of the finance staff. Auditors gave an absolutely clean report on City’s finances. Dan Berg is the auditor from Sikich LLP who worked on this project. It is online for all to review and question. Ald. York notes that the financial statements present unfunded pension liabilities in a different way this year so he would like to allow Mr. Berg to address the Council and explain. These unfunded mandates used to appear in footnotes. The finance committee is discussing how to address future pensions but that is not the issue for tonight.

The rules were suspended for Mr. Berg’s presentation; it showed that in 2015 the pension fund earned much less in interest than was projected due to the continuing low interest rates in the market; that contributes to the net liability. During a discussion among the aldermen Ald. York explains that this is a difference in presentation, not a real difference from last year. Elmhurst is still financially strong – other municipalities have negative balances.

Ald. Levin stated that a plan is in place already for reducing the pension liability from what is now approx. 70% funded to 100% funding in 2033.

Approved 14 – 0.

8.5 Report - North York Streetscape (DPZ) North Ave north to Grand (see K. Sullivan comments above in Public Forum)

Ald. Levin brings the plan forward for approval; rules were suspended so that the consultant, Mr. Delziel of 3D Design Studio, could present the streetscape plan for the N. York corridor from Rte. 64 up to Grand Avenue. He explained the process of evaluation, public input, cost estimates and developing priorities. In part, this includes plans for pedestrian sidewalks, medians, turning lanes, and monumental gateway pylons at the entry to Elmhurst from I-290. An ITEP grant application went in; if this is funded the I-290 interchange enhancement will come first. The total cost of the work is projected at about \$6 million. A discussion follows:

Ald. Polomsky asked about the existing chain link fence near the I-290 interchange and along the bike path.

Ald. Bram thanked the staff and consultants for their hard work. He understands the logistics have not yet been resolved with the engineers.

Ald. Dunn questioned how the impact on existing businesses will be addressed. Also inquired about the time frame. Mr. Dalziel stated that the plan has been constructed to get it done as money becomes available over a number of years.

Ald. Talludo had several questions.

Ald. Levin spoke in favor of taking the power lines out even though to take them out will involve an additional large cost. Mayor Morley explained that this entire streetscape project was an outgrowth of TIF 4. Urban planning takes time. Approved 14-0.

8.6 Report - Case 16 P 09 Elmhurst 255 - Elmhurst Preliminary and Final Plat of Subdivision (DPZ)

Ald. Levin explains this is last piece of the Hahn street development. Zoning changes to make legal descriptions and zoning conform to the new construction that is now in place (public garage; residential condos; retail space). Ald. Bram questions if this would impact the homeowners' association fees. The answer is not known; Ald. Levin will follow up to clarify. Approved 14 – 0.

8.7 Report - Church Rd./Lake St. TIF Ordinances (TIF 5) (DPZ)

Ald. Levin explains that this is the last piece of establishing the new North Elmhurst TIF. It includes 4 related ordinances: 1) Releasing some areas that are now in TIF2; 2) Ordinance establishing the TIF; 3) Setting the actual boundaries of the TIF; 4) setting the TIF financing requirements. Adopting this report sets the stage for the legal dept. to write up the documents to go forward.

Ald. Bram expressed concern about the large size of the TIF. Ald. Levin replied that this has been before the Council many times; now he wants to go forward. Approved 14 – 0.

9. Reports and Recommendations of Appointed and Elected Officials

- Mayor Morley announces that Rock The block will take place this weekend. Sunday there will be a 9/11 memorial ceremony at the memorial on Spring Rd at the Prairie Path. Elmhurst real estate forum will take place on Sept. 15. American Legion military ball will happen on Sat 9/10; the City website has a link for tickets.
- City Manager Grabowski announced that he will attend the O'Hare Commission meeting this Friday with Ald. Dunn.

10. Resolutions

R-94-2016 - A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a Notice of Award for the Harrison Street Stormwater Improvement Project (see item #7.8)

Ald. Kennedy explains that this is just to get the Harrison Street project moving forward. Approved: 13 ayes -1 no (Dunn).

11. Other Business

Ald. Healy announced that there was another accident at the Prairie Path and York: a child was hit. That makes three in three weeks.

12. Adjournment 9:57 pm

Related documents can be accessed online at: <http://www.boarddocs.com/il/coe/Board.nsf/Public> and video recording of the meeting can be found at www.Youtube.com