

Elmhurst City Council Meeting

13 Council members present, 1 absent

7:39pm—9:40pm

Student Observer: Jacob Kehrer, Elmhurst College

- I. Call to order at 7:39pm by Mayor Morley
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
 - a. Alderman Honquest absent
- IV. Receipt of Written Communication from the Public
 - a. No written communication from the public
- V. Public Forum
 - a. 15 citizen speakers, of which no less than 10 were speaking against item 6.14 of the Consent Agenda, concerning an amendment to a city ordinance allowing electronic signage use by institutions in residential areas
 - b. One of the speakers was a lawyer, another a real estate agent, and several of different occupations who simply lived in the affected areas who had very strong words against the measure
 - c. A few speakers (though definitely a minority of those there Monday night) were there instead to complain about the Thornton's gas station in Elmhurst—which is also near residential areas—and the persistent flooding problem and lack of response to it over the years
 - d. Of those residents who spoke against the electronic signage, many were critical of the process used to get the amendment to the Council in the first place, alleging that the typical committee process had been sidestepped and the amendment to allow electronic signs appeared to be “fast-tracked,” allegations which were not addressed even later when the measure was formally discussed by the Council.
 - e. One resident specifically mentioned the discrimination possibly inherent to denying certain church institutions access to the signs when others were allowed them, but said that: “if you want to see religious discrimination, you can talk to any Jewish members of the community about the past or any current Muslim American”.
 - f. One particularly irate older man was frustrated, if not yelling, about the lack of public engagement in real issues (such as flooding, Thornton's gas station) but who suddenly turned up to decry electronic signs in their neighborhoods, ending his rant with: “there are 15,000 houses in Elmhurst, and not all of them are built around York and St. Charles”.
 - i. It did seem that so much citizen outrage was focused on such a relatively minor issue such as electronic signs (including mentioning the potential

impact to property values) while ignoring far more detrimental (to property values) problems like flooding and 24-hour gas stations in residential areas.

VI. Announcements

- a. Aldermen Sabatino and Deuter are holding their First Ward town hall meeting on Thursday, November 5, at 7pm at Elmhurst College in Circle Hall
- b. The Public Works and Building Committee is still meeting on Monday at 6:30pm even though it is a public holiday
- c. ECAF Oktoberfest is Thursday, October 8 at Wilder Mansion for \$30 per person, available at ecaf4kids.com or at the door

VII. Consent Agenda

- a. All items approved at once except 6.10 and 6.14
- b. 6.10 Report – Consultant Services (DP&Z)
 - i. Alderman Bram had objections raised
 - ii. Raising the hourly wage of two consultant positions through DP&Z by \$10 per hour (or 10%), Ald. Bram wondering why it was necessary and if even the positions themselves were necessary.
 - iii. Alderman Levin explained that performance reviews and the like had determined a price increase was necessary and the measure passed with Ald. Bram being the sole ‘no’ vote.
- c. 6.14 ZO-13-2015
 - i. This is the ordinance change concerning an amendment which would allow the usage of electronic signs in areas zoned residential (such as churches near houses).
 - ii. The City Attorney was asked if denying newer institutions the same access to the signs would put the city in any kind of trouble legally and the answer was no, not if the ordinance were to be properly amended
 - iii. The motion to allow the electronic signs in certain arterial roadways was passed by a margin of 10-3 (and one absence) and as soon as it did virtually every resident who had come to speak stood up and walked out at once.
- d. Committee Reports
 - i. 7.1 – Sales Tax Incentive Request for Ed Napleton Elmhurst Imports, Inc.
 1. Napleton Elmhurst Imports, Inc. originally requested \$750,000 for tax incentives in several new investments and upgrades to its locations in Elmhurst (Acura dealership).
 2. Alderman York believes it important that the city invest how it can with the Napleton group as far as tax incentives because of the long-term financial benefits to the city as a whole.

3. Alderman Bram feels that the sales tax incentives for car dealerships have been somewhat more money than he would like to see.
4. Incentive allowance passes with 10 yes, 3 no, 1 absent.
- ii. 7.2 – Case Number 15 ZBA 04/Paragon Variations and Subdivision (DP&Z)
 1. Report that was originally sent back to committee but returning now
 2. New language includes that L.A. Fitness would not require as many parking spaces as the initial report had indicated.
 3. 13 yes, 0 no, 1 absent to allow the new ordinance for L.A. Fitness new building parking.
- e. Reports and Recommendations of Appointed and Elected Officials
 - i. Mayor Morley
 1. Senior Committee hosting a housing tour Oct. 17 at the Concord for all elected officials
 2. Congressman Quigley meeting constituents at City Hall on Oct. 21
 3. Stormwater Committee meeting on Sep. 30 reports that District 205 approved a IGA for the council to consider the Madison Project and will soon be coming before the council to decide on it.
 4. IGA sent to the parks for their discussion and consideration; they will next meet on Oct. 29.
 5. Mayor Morley met with the FAA concerning air traffic over Elmhurst and they will be coming to city hall to have a public meeting at some point to discuss similar issues.
 - ii. City Manager Grabowski
 1. Police Chief retiring, retirement party plan to be announced. Promotions to be considered for the position were considered and two ultimate promotions made to Deputy, along with two more to Commander.
 2. New communications manager Cassandra Shreth introduced a new Elmhurst marketing video.
- f. Ordinances
 - i. Two properties on Geneva Ave. purchased to do work on flood mitigation there
 1. Purchases passed by the council unanimously
- g. Adjournment