

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
April 25, 2022 - 5:30 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

4/25/2022 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AUDIO AND VIDEO CONFERENCE WITHOUT A PHYSICALLY PRESENT QUORUM OF THE ROCK ISLAND CITY COUNCIL DUE TO THE DISASTER DECLARATION ISSUED BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Thoms asked City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Alderpeople Moses Robinson, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Bill Healy, and Mayor Mike Thoms.

Aldersperson Randy Hurt joined the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Absent: Aldersperson Mark Poulos.

Staff: Interim City Manager John Gripp, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Thoms asked if anyone in the public wished to speak. No one volunteered in person or via online connection.

PRESENTATION FROM MIKE BARTELS, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS ON THE DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE

Public Works Director Mike Bartels addressed Council regarding an update to the downtown parking garage project proposal. He remarked on a previous Council study session in 2020, where an explicit request for a recommendation was not asked for, but an update was given. He noted the presence of Amanda Wood and Kelly Young, both representatives from Russell Construction that could answer or clarify Council questions.

Mr. Bartels reviewed the previous 2020 discussion and provided background on the history of the parking garage. This included photos from the 2019 condition assessment report from Desmond Engineering, as well as recent photos to see the subsequent wear. The assessment stated the garage was in fair to poor condition at the time, as the damaged portion's rate of deterioration has begun to accelerate. He said there were three options at the time of the 2020 presentation, including a full rehabilitation, a partial rehabilitation, and a teardown. The full rehabilitation cost is estimated at \$5.2 million. The partial rehabilitation option would provide a five-year 'useful' life at a cost of \$1,588,150. Option three would be to demolish the parking garage to build a new one at a cost of approximately \$1 million, which has since changed to \$2.1 million due to changes to the proposed larger lot.

Mr. Bartels referenced the discussion from the 2020 presentation, and reviewed some questions from that time. He said the last parking study done in the downtown area was completed in the mid-1990s, and it mentioned that the parking was adequate but not strategic. He noted that the location of the Federal Building was unknown at the time of the 2020 meeting, but now it has been determined that it will be adjacent to the current parking lot. Staff was also asked if it would be possible to have a developer build retail on the first floor and have parking on the second, but Mr. Bartels was unaware of any developer to do that.

Mr. Bartels discussed updates to the parking garage project since that 2020 meeting. He noted that the Federal Building will be built where the former Bituminous Insurance building had been. Meetings with the Community and Economic Development (CED) Department and Russell Construction were held to determine how many parking spots would be needed for the Federal Building, which they estimated at 200 to 250 visitors, not all at once. He said representatives from that building wished to move forward with what the City decides. Ms. Wood of Russell Construction came to the podium, and noted that feedback received on the parking garage indicated a preference of the U.S. Marshals and the Federal Protective Service to have a direct line of sight on all sides of their building. A flat parking lot would provide that with no interferences.

Mr. Bartels said \$1 million from the Downtown TIF (Tax Increment Financing) has been budgeted for the parking garage project in 2022. He noted a March 15, 2022 meeting for the Downtown Steering Committee in which Public Works and CED attended, and received feedback. The committee stated that a renovation did not make fiscal sense, was an eyesore, and also unsafe. They recommended having an open surface lot with lighting, signage, greenspace, and potentially the inclusion of electronic vehicle (EV) charging stations. Holiday Inn, also located nearby, said a service lot would help reduce vandalism and vehicle break-ins. Mr. Bartels also noted the presence of the public parking lot located at the former Modern Woodmen building. He added that with the move of the YWCA to a separate location, they would no longer be utilizing the current parking garage.

Mr. Bartels next discussed the current concerns separate from the condition of the garage. He noted vehicle vandalism, other security issues, and frequent cleanliness issues in the stairwells. He said the useful life for a parking structure is 35 to 40 years, and the current garage is on year 46. Ongoing maintenance costs and liability are additional concerns.

Mr. Bartels discussed the staff recommendation of demolishing the current garage and replacing it with the proposed surface lot. He recognized the current shortage of funds to complete this task, but hoped to find some additional funding, including American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to cover additional costs. He noted the main reason for the recommendation was the prohibitive cost of extending the life of the garage. The additional cost of repairing the garage would far exceed the cost to demolish and build the surface lot. He pointed to the \$75,000 yearly maintenance cost of the garage as is compared to the \$15,000 estimated cost of a surface lot. The Downtown Steering Committee also shared the same recommendation. He noted the possibility of providing solar power to the lot as a way to provide power to electronic

vehicle charging stations and offset City Hall electrical expenditures.

Mr. Bartels pointed to a design of the proposed parking lot and discussed the various options and amenities it would include. He said the cost for the surface lot project is \$1.6 million, which includes a 15 percent contingency for overrun, as well as engineering, design, construction, and administration. It would have concrete and not asphalt pavement.

Mr. Bartels asked for questions from Council members. Alderperson Hurt said he fully supported the lot instead of the other options. He inquired about the solar panel roof structure. Mr. Bartels replied it would be a roof structure build over the top of the lot. Alderperson Hurt asked if City staff would have parking, and if there was a plan in place to accommodate all parties that would park in the lot. Mr. Bartels replied that their observation is that no more than 60 to 70 cars have parked in the garage on a daily basis. Mayor Thoms asked if Holiday Inn could reserve any spaces that would be closest to their building. Mr. Bartels said Holiday Inn has expressed interest in leasing the spots closest to them. Alderperson Hurt asked if a discussion had taken place regarding the number of EV charging stations. Mr. Bartels said they had not yet looked into the amount until Council provided additional direction.

Mayor Thoms asked about the total time needed for the project. Mr. Bartels said if there would be Council consensus to move forward, Public Works would move forward with a demolition design in-house, as well as putting the project out for bid. The project could be completed in a year, and would not start until 2023 for construction. Alderperson Gilbert asked where City staff would park during the construction. Mr. Bartels said there is street parking available, and could issue all-day passes. Alderperson Healy said the numbers make sense for demolition, and expressed concern that everyone is asking for ARPA dollars. He noted the problems he has had with the garage and would love to see a complete open lot as a business owner. He asked if security cameras were built in to the cost estimate. Mr. Bartels replied those were not in the proposal, but would work with the Information Technology Department to implement them.

Alderperson Gilbert asked if Mr. Bartels was aware of any additional funding sources. Mr. Bartels said he was not, and the issue is that there are not enough funds in the budget for rehabilitation, so funding would be needed for any option. Alderperson Gilbert asked if there was lease information for what Holiday Inn had paid in the past. Economic Development Manager Tarah Sipes came to the podium and referenced a July 2020 invoice with an amount due of \$1,225. Alderperson Gilbert asked if any Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars were available. Community and Economic Development Director Miles Brainard said all TIF dollars had been allocated. Alderperson Gilbert asked if some of the downtown ARPA dollars that have been allocated could be used. Mr. Bartels said that would be a discussion for Council. Alderperson Gilbert asked how many spaces would need to be cut if full funding was not available. Mr. Bartels said he would not recommend cutting spaces to arrive at an affordable option, as future needs may dictate more. He added that demolition would cost approximately \$500,000.

Interim City Manager Gripp asked if the City was the only one in the area not charging for parking in the garage. Mr. Bartels said he was not sure, but knows that Davenport, Iowa does. Alderperson Parker said he was fine with the demolition and a new surface lot using ARPA funds. Mayor Thoms, Alderperson Swanson, and Alderperson Hurt concurred. Alderperson Robinson cautioned against piecemealing ARPA funds prior to a plan of what needs to be done, but offered support for staff's recommendation. Alderperson Gilbert said she would like to have feedback from Finance Director Linda Barnes on different options to fund the project aside from ARPA dollars. She asked ARPA Program Manager and City Clerk Gange if the parking lot was eligible under the program or if it would come under the City's \$10 million lost revenue allowance. Ms. Gange recommended the project come under the lost revenue category, and if it can be demonstrated with data that it is a negatively impacted area and could be revitalized, another category could be found.

Alderson Healy said whatever proposal is brought to Council regarding the \$2.5 allocated funds for the downtown, the parking lot funding could come from that. Alderson Gilbert said until Council hears how much the City may receive from that grant, the whole plan may need to be reimagined. Alderson Robinson asked if funds were available now to demolish the garage. Mr. Bartels said there is enough to demolish but not construct. Alderson Healy asked if that could begin with approval. Mr. Bartels said staff would want to bid both projects together, as it would save on mobilization. Alderson Robinson asked how far the garage could continue in the current condition as a measure of safety concerns. Mr. Bartels said there are no immediate hazards, but action would be needed soon. Alderson Gilbert asked if Ms. Barnes could provide an updated financial report regarding the performance of revenues. Mayor Thoms said it seemed there was consensus on the direction, but funding sources still needed to be determined.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

MOTION:

Alderson Parker moved to adjourn; Alderson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 6-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson, and Parker. Nay: None. Absent: Poulos.

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Josh Adams, Deputy Clerk