

CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island IL

City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor

8/22/2022 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. This meeting will also be conducted by audio and video conference without the requirement of a physically present quorum of the Rock Island City Council due to the disaster declaration issued by Governor Pritzker.

3. Roll Call

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

Present: Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos, Bill Healy, and Mayor Mike Thoms.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thoms led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Moment of Silence

Mayor Thoms called for a moment of silence. A moment of silence was observed.

6. Public Comment

Quad Cities Chamber of Chamber of Commerce Downtown Director Jack Cullen addressed Council regarding the proposed downtown Special Service Area (SSA) and partnership with the City. He noted that the downtown has seen many recent events that indicate the revitalization is taking shape with successes, including the receipt of a \$3 million grant. He thanked Council for their leadership and efforts in getting the submission of the grant completed. He looked forward to finalizing the scope of work for the downtown and noted a current total of \$7 million in funding

to do so.

Matt Pappas discussed the SSA, and expressed pride in the proposed action that will bring excitement to the downtown. He discussed misinformation regarding the proposal, and that his group of four business owners had over two months of meetings with Mr. Cullen. All four of them voted unanimously in favor of the SSA, which he said would stabilize investment and enhance marketability. He thanked Council for reaching out to him regarding the SSA.

Mayor Thoms called Samuel Tiah to the front. Mr. Tiah did not wish to take a turn.

Mayor Thoms called Betty Martin to the front. Ms. Martin did not wish to speak.

Downtown business owner Brett Hitchcock expressed concern to Council regarding the SSA and its leadership. He said something should be done with the downtown, as it is a shell of what it used to be, and is headed in the wrong direction. He noted his long history and involvement with the downtown area. He said security must be the top priority, and the Chamber's proposal does not address the issue properly.

Mr. Hitchcock said outreach regarding the downtown was not done properly in the past year, and City leadership did not get what they paid for with the Chamber. He questioned Mr. Cullen's ability to lead the revitalization project and noted his inexperience. He noted issues with truthfulness regarding meetings he had with Mr. Cullen, and possible deals with Modern Woodmen. He suggested the Development Association of Rock Island (DARI) as a preferred partner for the downtown as opposed to the Chamber. He encouraged the City to explore the option of utilizing DARI and consider changing SSA leadership.

Rock Island resident Robert Burke addressed Council regarding the SSA. He identified himself as a downtown resident, where he said is the lowest-income Census block in the City and County. He noted that Mr. Cullen had no answer at the July 25th Study Session regarding the number of renters or low-to-moderate income households in the downtown, and had not consulted Census or sociodemographic data. He discussed recent societal events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and housing crisis as having an affect on the lives of downtown residents. He said the proposed SSA would not only tax business owners, but the poorest residents of the City. He added that his landlord had already provided letters to residents that their rent would be increasing, and if he had not done his own research, he would not have known about this proposal.

Mr. Burke said the tax rate and other decisions surrounding the downtown have been done behind closed doors with mostly business owners, and without much input from residents. He noted that a 1.15% tax may not seem like much, but is for those in poverty, and that Modern Woodmen properties are excluded from the proposal. He calculated that Modern Woodmen would be paying less than half the rate of everyone else in the SSA should their proposed \$50,000 contribution be accepted. He opined that asking Modern Woodmen to be included in the SSA would be an equitable first step, and other methods of taxation should be considered. He said it is unnecessary to outsource management of the SSA, as other local municipalities do so in-house. He concluded that the SSA will definitely benefit the downtown, but the current proposed funding mechanism stands to knock down those it should lift up.

David Ramacitti, Rock Island resident of the DuMarche condominiums, addressed Council regarding the proposed SSA. He echoed Mr. Hitchcock's sentiments regarding the previous state of the downtown. He urged Council to do something, be it through the SSA or otherwise, or the area would become a ghost town.

Rock Island Brewing Company and Second Avenue Dance Club owner Terry Tilka addressed

Council regarding the proposed SSA. He said he supported what the previous two speakers had said completely. He referenced the previous meeting regarding the SSA, and said he fielded questions from visitors about why there was no Ya Maka My Weekend festival. He noted that the downtown owners ran the festival for some time, but the City was now in charge. He said the downtown arts and entertainment community is still alive, and the City is a part of it, but it has survived because of assistance from the federal government. He said giving the money to the SSA is ridiculous at the proposed percentage. He added that other owners have left the area because they saw no plans for the future from the City aside from older architectural drawings.

Bonnie Ballard of the Rock Island County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) addressed Council. She was disappointed that no Council member was present at their recent banquet to read the approved proclamation. She said the NAACP is about race, justice, education, innovation, environmental and climate justice, an inclusive economy, health and well-being, and next generation leadership. Ms. Ballard requested apologies from Council. Alderperson Hurt apologized for not being present at the banquet to read the proclamation.

Rock Island resident and business owner Jeff Lam addressed Council regarding the proposed SSA. He said he is glad Council put the proposal in motion, as something needs to be done. He noted that it appears to be a good idea.

QC Coffee and Pancake House owners Sarah and Jose Zepeda addressed Council regarding the proposed SSA. Ms. Zepeda did not understand why their concerns were not being considered and action not taken. She said 44 percent of the proposed budget going to labor and Chamber fees is unacceptable. She added that business owners need a strong advocate on their behalf in the downtown area. She expressed concern that the spreadsheet presented by the Chamber marked their business and Circa '21 as unknown regarding SSA approval or disapproval. She noted that safety remains their top concern, and did not understand why it was not at the forefront of the discussion. She recalled being told that once the SSA was approved, business owners would be able to participate and choose a different downtown manager, but that does not appear to be the case. She recommended working with DARI instead of the Chamber. Mr. Zepeda added that he did not believe in the leadership of the Chamber, and no action is being taken.

7. Minutes from the August 8, 2022 City Council meeting.

MOTION:

Alderperson Swanson moved to approve the minutes as printed; Alderperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

8. Minutes from the August 8, 2022 Closed Session.

MOTION:

Alderperson Swanson moved to approve the minutes as printed; Alderperson Robinson

seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

9. Update Rock Island

The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center will host its 35th Annual Family Fun Day this Saturday, August 27, 2022. The fun starts at 10:00 a.m. with a parade on 9th Street followed by a family fun day full of activities. For more information, visit their website.

The 38th Annual Labor Day Parade will be held on Monday, September 5th, 2022. This year's theme is Marvelous Rock Island. The parade line will be at 8:30 a.m. and the parade starts at 9:30 a.m. For more information, including the parade route, visit the City's website.

Thursday Night Groove Concert Series in Schwiebert Park is back! The concert series will run every Thursday through October 13, 2022 featuring a different band each week. Concessions from Bent River Brewing Co. and Happy Joe's Pizza will be available starting at 6:00 p.m. with live music from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Visit the Rock Island Parks & Recreation website for more information.

Guided walks at Black Hawk State Historic Site – Back by popular demand this event will be held on September 4th from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Choose either the Cultural Historic Walk or the Natural History Walk through the Forest Preserve. For more information, visit their website.

Now accepting applications for the City's Police Community Relations Commission. Visit the City's website for an application and requirements to serve on this Committee.

10. An Ordinance approving a downtown special services area (SSA). (Second Reading)

Agenda item 10 was swapped with item 11

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

Aldersperson Robinson said resident and business concerns are being heard by Council, and the process is not yet complete. He said there will be opportunity for public voices to be heard. He noted that something like security is not simple, and requires time and effort. This proposal is not set in stone, and there is still time to hear from residents and businesses.

Aldersperson Gilbert read a prepared statement regarding the SSA. She said that since July 25th, she made a concerted effort to reach out and talk to residents and businesses about their views and concerns regarding the proposed SSA. She also received emails and phone calls every day, and is listening to their concerns about how the SSA will operate.

She said they deserve to get real answers, as simple questions about services and the governing board have not been answered. She noted that Rock Island needs a unique approach to solve downtown issues, not a cookie cutter approach designed to provide a revenue stream for the managing organization. She said businesses, residents, and property owners are being left out of the process because they do not agree with it. Less than 41% of the property owners were contacted personally, and of those, 42% have not come out in support.

She said several property owners have changed their minds, or the names were on the list of supporters, yet they are not in support of the SSA. She has spoken to many City institutions and landmark businesses that are not in support of the process. She noted the previous Council meeting when Ms. Williams of DuMarche said she represented four of the six condo owners; however, within two days Alderperson Gilbert was contacted by four of the six DuMarche property owners, stating they were opposed to the SSA.

She pointed to the letter from a resident regarding the additional tax burden for lower-income residents within the proposed SSA borders. She asked the Chamber of Commerce on July 25th certain questions regarding the lower income residents who live in the downtown, but received no response. She said for many of these reasons cited, and because City administration supports the deliberate, non-transparent, and biased process in creating an SSA, she was voting no on the ordinance.

Alderperson Healy recused himself from the vote due to the nature of his employment. He said he owned a business downtown and that it was evident help was needed to make the downtown flourish again. He challenged everyone to make sure that whatever is done with regards to the downtown, that it is done correctly.

City Manager Todd Thompson echoed Alderperson Robinson's remarks and said the process is still ongoing and public input will be considered before making any final decisions. He noted the formation of a SSA and the decision on how it will be structured and organized are two separate processes.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 5-1-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Robinson, and Hurt. Nay: Gilbert. Absent: None.

11. Presentation of the 2022 Rock Island Citizen of the Year Award Winners.

Alderperson Healy thanked everyone in the crowd who was present for the awards celebration.

Deputy City Clerk Naomi Sanderson introduced the Business category winner, McDonald's on 30th Street, and owner Austin Smith. Alderperson Healy introduced the Professional category winner, Judge Carol Pentuic. Other presenters included Project NOW Director Dr. Dwight Ford for Celebrate Recovery in the Organization category, Grace Shirk for Vicki Hess in the Individual category, Edna Sowards for Quincy Davis in the Youth category, Thurgood Brooks for Michelle Greenwood in the Honorary category, and Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride (retired) for James Kerr in the Veteran category. Presenters gave a brief speech summarizing the accomplishments and contributions of each winner. Recipients Mr. Smith, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Greenwood gave speeches of thanks. Communications Specialist Sarah Hayden photographed the winners as a group with Alderperson Healy and Mayor Thoms.

12. Presentation of the CY2022 Second Quarter Financial Management Report.

Finance Director Linda Barnes presented the Financial Management Report for the period ending June 30, 2022. She noted that the report would provide a review of revenues, expenditures, net position for all funds, as well as an analysis of major local and state tax revenues, and a monthly investment report. She pointed to the presentation documents showing a summary and brief analysis of each fund. The General Fund showed revenue reported at 52 percent, and expenditures at 42 percent of the targeted benchmark.

Ms. Barnes discussed potential access funds over the 90-day quarterly period. This amounted to \$1.7 million that can be used for General Fund operations for the next fiscal year, or can be transferred to the capital improvement fund for the 2023 budget. She reviewed other funds, such as Riverboat Gaming, for which revenue was reported at 41 percent, and expenditures at 28 percent of the targeted benchmark. Projected revenue was expected to surpass budgeted amounts. Gaming revenues should be able to eliminate the 2021 deficit.

Capital and Street Funds, including Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) had revenues at 53 percent of the targeted benchmark. Expenditures were at 1 percent due to pending projects. The Motor Fuel Tax Funds had revenue reported at 42 percent of the benchmark. The Motor Fuel Rebuild Illinois Fund reported receipts of \$428,000, a portion of which was recorded in the prior year during the audit.

Ms. Barnes next highlighted the Community and Economic Development Fund. Revenue was reported at 41 percent, the majority representing transfers from the General Fund, and expenses are at 42 percent. Next is the Debt Services Fund, with revenues reported at 28 percent and expenditures at 28 percent.

Ms. Barnes discussed Proprietary and Enterprise Funds. All had revenues reporting at 50 percent, while expenses for water and wastewater are slightly below 40 percent, and solid waste expenses are 49 percent. She then discussed the Parks and Recreation Fund, with a reported revenue of 42 percent and expenses of 37 percent of the budget. The Equipment Maintenance Fund has a reported revenue of 63 percent and expenses at 30 percent for the quarter due to pending vehicle purchases. The Self-Insurance Fund reported revenue at 61 percent and expenses at 55 percent. She showed a slide regarding General Fund expenses by department, which currently are reported at 42 percent of budget.

Ms. Barnes discussed the state and local revenue analysis. The Local Government Distributed Fund is budgeted at \$4.27 million for CY 2022, which is close to the five-year average. Revenue recorded is \$3.6 million, and projected annual is \$5.7 million. She said the sales tax revenue is reported at 59 percent, and the annual projection is expected to be slightly above the budgeted amount. The local option sales tax is at 61 percent of the budget, and is also expected to be higher than the budgeted amount. The home rule impulse tax rate is 1.25 percent.

Ms. Barnes discussed the use tax revenue, reported at 49 percent, which is on-target. The annual projection is slightly below budget. The municipal utility tax is reported at 77 percent of budget, and has expected an annual receipt above \$2 million. The telecommunications tax revenue is at 41 percent of budget, with annual projections slightly below expectation. The local food and beverage tax is on-target at 50 percent of the budget, with a tax rate of 1.5 percent. The gaming tax is on-target at 50 percent and expected to reach projections and end on a positive note.

Ms. Barnes pointed to the City's investment portfolio, which totals \$61 million, 43 percent of which is the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. She then entertained questions from

Council. Alderperson Gilbert asked if ARPA funds have continued to lose investment. Ms. Barnes said the market is beginning to turn upward, but the federal government does not look at losses and gains with ARPA funds, as it is on the City to lose if the market loses and gain if the market gains.

13. Claims

- a. Report from the Public Works Department regarding payment in the amount of \$31,472.51 to McClintock Trucking & Excavating, Inc., Silvis Illinois for Water Service and Sewer Lateral Repairs, projects 2526 and 2564.
- b. Report from the Public Works Department regarding payment in the amount of \$12,506.18 to Valley Construction, Rock Island, IL. for the removal of a fire hydrant and relocation of a new fire hydrant.

MOTION:

Alderperson Robinson moved to approve claims items a and b; Alderperson Healy seconded.

Alderperson Parker recused himself from the vote due to the nature of his employment.

VOTE:

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

14. Claims for the week of July 29 through August 4, 2022 in the amount of \$700,968.29; the week of August 5 through August 11, 2022 in the amount of \$529,004.02; and payroll for the weeks of July 25 through August 7, 2022 in the amount of \$1,629,972.16.

MOTION:

Alderperson Healy moved to allow the claims and payroll; Alderperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

15. Report from the Public Works Department regarding the purchase of four (4) Mobile Column Lifts, recommending purchase from Stertil-Koni, Stevensville, Maryland, in the amount of \$70,255.62.

MOTION:

Alderperson Poulos moved to approve the purchase as recommended; Alderperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

16. Report from the Finance Department regarding an adjustment to the CY 2022 budget, increasing the Park and Recreation Fund revenue and expense budget by \$20,000.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the budget adjustment as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

17. Report from the Finance Department regarding an adjustment to the CY 2022 budget, increasing the Community/Economic Development Fund (207) expenditures by \$200.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the budget adjustment as recommended; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

18. Report from the Community and Economic Department requesting the designation of a subdivision plat as a parking lot for the Library's main branch.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to approve the final plat, subject to final purchase by the Library Board to create a single sellable parcel to provide additional parking for the Library; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

19. Report from Public Works Department regarding a resolution declaring the City of Rock Island's support for the submittal of an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant application.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the resolution; approve the addition of design services for the IMEG contract; and authorize the City Manager to sign on behalf of the City; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

20. Report from the Traffic and Engineering Committee regarding a request from Kristal Kaiser to give 25th Avenue between 9th and 17th Street the honorary name of Louis Kaiser Way.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the request for 25th Avenue between 12th and 16th Streets; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

21. Report from the Traffic and Engineering Committee regarding a request from Marilyn Ryan to install residential parking (Type A) on the east and west side of 10th Street north of 25th Avenue to the dead end.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the request as recommended; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

22. Report from Traffic and Engineering Committee regarding a request from Debbie Brooks to install 4-way stop signs on 25th Street at the intersection of 21st Avenue.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to approve the request and execute the agreement; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

Aldersperson Swanson said this is in her Ward near her house, and there are no sidewalks for children to walk to school, which makes this beneficial. She noted that the petition had 70 resident signatures, and this was a safety precaution.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

23. Report from the Mayor's Office regarding amendments to Chapter 3, Alcoholic Liquor, sections 3-1 and 3-8(a) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Rock Island. (First Reading)

MOTION:

Aldersperson Healy moved to consider, suspend the rules, and pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

24. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding an application for the 38th annual Rock Island Labor Day Parade to be held on Monday September 5, 2022 from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to approve the event as recommended; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

25. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from Armando Calderon to use sound amplification at his home, located at 3522 16th Street Court, on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at for a wedding reception.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the sound amplification permit as recommended; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

26. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from Rock Island High School to hold their annual Homecoming Parade on Friday, September 16, 2022 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the event as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

27. Other Business

Aldersperson Swanson said she is having a Ward Meeting at Hodge Park on Tuesday, August 23rd beginning at 6:00 p.m. for any 4th Ward residents wishing to attend.

Aldersperson Healy thanked the Citizen of the Year Committee, as well as Deputy Clerk Naomi Sanderson for her work during the process.

ARPA Program Manager and City Clerk Gange reminded everyone about the ARPA Special Council Meeting on Wednesday, August 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Survey results and project funding recommendations will be provided.

28. Closed Session

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to go into Closed Session for the exception cited; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

29. Motion to adjourn.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.



Josh Adams, Deputy City Clerk