



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 14, 2023, at 6:30 P.M.

Wilmor Fire Station, 320 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, IL 61571

Mayor Manier called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., in the training room, with a quorum present.

Present: Alderpersons Adams, Blundy, Brownfield, Butler, Martin, McIntyre, Smith, and Stevens

Also Present: City Administrator Snider, P & D Director Oliphant, City Engineer Carr, Finance Director Baxter, Public Works Director Rittenhouse, Police Chief McCoy, City Treasurer Abbey Strubhar, City Clerk Brod, Attorney Keith Braskich and Press

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Nothing provided at this time.
2. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: A resident from 302 Candlewood Road noted that the bridge is closed and asked if anyone is going to fix the bridge.

Lori Maddock, who lives on Calvin Drive, was present and representing the Joos family. She stated that she appreciates being able to share background info about the Nofsinger realignment. She shared that she attended an open house in 2016 and she had spoken with Jim Gee. She stated that a realignment would negatively affect their property. Ms. Maddock expressed concerned about a lack of communication and shared that family came to the meetings held in 2022. She also shared that she met with Mayor Manier on June 19, 2023 and she feels there was no effect. Ms. Maddock stated that the loss of their corner lot will cut their land value in half. She feels the development would not be good for the land and shared that they were asked to provide a written proposal, which they provided on July 13, 2023. She stated that they have been talking to the City since 2016 and they were told Council would be presented with their proposal. She has personally seen a lot of dirt movement. She stated that they would like a resolution before the realignment starts.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Stevens motioned to approve minutes; seconded by Alderperson Martin. Alderperson Stevens asked if there have been any changes to the draft minutes provided online and City Clerk Brod replied, no. Approved by voice vote.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- A. *Safe Routes to School Project Application Consideration* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant stated that Central School District Superintendent Dale Heidbreder wanted to attend tonight's meeting but couldn't so he provided comments that were printed and given to Council members. Mr. Oliphant shared that the application cycle opened up last week and will close October 2nd. He noted that this is to do jobs around schools and is 100% funded up to \$250,000. He also noted there is only \$6 million available, which is half the usual funds. Mr. Oliphant shared that the City received funding two years ago for a phase one project in District 50 and a project to finish a gap in District 52. They have identified projects which could be the completion of the Grant Street sidewalk project near District 50, as well as the sidewalk along Eagle Street near District 51. This would likely not be able to start until next summer and funding only covers construction, not engineering. Alderperson Blundy thinks this is a great program but thinks maybe we should focus on Eagle

Avenue. He agrees with Mr. Heidbreder regarding lots of kids going to local businesses, and having a sidewalk that ends into the street. He doesn't think we should wait three years to do that stretch and the City should just pay to do it. Alderperson Martin and Mr. Oliphant clarified that we would find out in the spring of 2024. Alderperson Martin suggested waiting to find out if we don't get this, then we could pursue it ourselves. Alderperson McIntyre asked if we can preemptively get the engineering done because it will not be funded anyway. Engineer Carr noted that we might not have to engineer a stretch like that, unless the Safe Routes program requires engineering. He shared that we can do engineering in-house if we do not use the Safe Routes program. Alderperson Brownfield said if we are giving Mr. Oliphant direction tonight, we should also look at the west side of Elgin which also lacks a sidewalk. He wonders how much Eagle would cost. Engineer Carr estimated it would be about \$200,000. Alderperson Brownfield suggested applying for Elgin. Alderperson Blundy agreed with Alderperson Brownfield stating that it would be nice to connect the sidewalk to the rec trail. Alderperson McIntyre suggested finishing what was started in 2022. Alderperson Stevens noted that last year we focused on Districts 50 and 52, so District 51 is lacking. She stated if we put in a grant for the west side of Elgin to Grandyle, it was referred to during the stormwater discussions. Engineer Carr noted that it would be ideal to get the stormwater work done prior to the side walk. Alderperson Stevens expressed support for the idea. Alderperson Martin thanked staff. Mr. Oliphant clarified that the direction is to do Elgin and Grandyle and not Eagle and the consensus agreed. He asked if we wanted to do phase two on Grant Street phase 2 which would cost about \$300,000 making the City responsible for about \$50,000 for construction plus engineering. Most appeared to agree.

- B. *Possible Residential Ground-mount Solar Array Amendment Discussion* – Mr. Oliphant shared that last week had a first reading ordinance allowing ground mount arrays on properties without residential uses. This is now to discuss amending the ordinance to allow for residential arrays. Alderperson Stevens feels the words “certain residential properties” should be added to the code. The current code says commercial only and she thinks the wording needs to be tweaked. Alderperson Stevens noted a Planning and Zoning meeting to take place on Wednesday to approve a residential ground-mount solar array. Mr. Oliphant clarified the timing of the proposed text amendments. Alderperson Blundy agreed with including residential language for a ¾ acre lots with some setbacks and restrictions. He feels it should be clearer and have acreage requirements. Alderperson Brownfield asked about reflection angles and what can the City do. Mr. Oliphant stated that there is a lot of subjectivity in that. Alderperson Brownfield expressed concern about neighbor against neighbor situations. Mr. Oliphant feels a property size restriction might help minimize that situation. Mr. Oliphant also feels a two-acre minimum would be a good way to ease into it and if it goes well, maybe pursue a one-acre option. He also noted that a lot of smaller cities have a 30-foot setback and many urban cities have the same setback as the primary structure, which he feels is not enough. Alderperson Brownfield wants to review the correct setback. Alderpersons Adams and McIntyre agree with two acres. Mr. Oliphant shared that the case that will be presented on Wednesday is for 2.8 acres and September will be 5 acres and these would both fit in that baseline recommendation. Mayor Manier clarified that we need direction regarding lot size and setback. The general consensus agreed with 2 acres for lot size. Mayor Manier noted that residents can ask for a variance. Mr. Oliphant noted that the second reading will not have this new language and it will only be for commercial properties.
- C. *Review of Chapter 103 of the City Code – Standards for the Operation of Ambulances* – Administrator Snider shared that we have been discussing Stark County Ambulance wanting to host their company in Washington. He shared that it has been reviewed legally and noted that our code states that the fire department has the authority to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. He stated that fire department has asked how they could come to town. Alderperson McIntyre stated that he looked over the code and noted his experience in this line of work. He noted that other cities have code like this and do not allow any other ambulance service in their town. He stated that they claim that they will not respond to calls, but they have a requirement by law to provide their service if someone should be injured in front of them. Alderperson McIntyre stated that all of council supports our fire department and would like to provide something to restrict the proposed business. Alderperson Stevens said the biggest issue is that we have a contract with our fire department and we need to make sure that no other ambulance service may post a station or house in Washington for any reason. She stated that the name Stark County Ambulance Service, will create confusion and we need

to be clear that the fire department is the only ambulance license. Alderperson Blundy agreed with Alderperson Stevens and shared that he would like to see the ordinance changed to reflect what Alderperson Stevens said. Alderperson Admas recited the East Peoria ordinance which he feels is more detailed. He would like to see an amendment that would require a license but then that we would not issue a license so long as we are under contract. Alderperson Brownfield clarified that We Care and AMT brings nursing home patients back to Washington from the hospitals. He asked how we can stop them from responding and can police ticket them or impound their vehicles. Chief McCoy said they would be in violation of the ordinance. Alderperson McIntyre noted that jumping calls is a violation of their medical license and feels that we need more teeth in our ordinance. Alderperson Martin asked why it would be bad for another company to just transport. He also feels that to not let another company come to town so we don't entice our EMTs to be lured by a better package feels weird. Alderperson Martin also feels having more vehicles could be a benefit if in another tornado or pandemic as long as we are strict about not allowing them to do what they are not supposed to do. Mayor Manier stated that East Peoria has this service in their city even with their current code. Alderperson Stevens said the East Peoria allows non-medical transport and they could lose their license if they respond. She stated that this company is coming in saying they are an "ambulance service" and we need to shore up our code that we have a contract. Alderperson McIntyre said in the emergency service world, they have mutual aid agreements that would provide assistance if those situations were to happen. Alderperson Butler stated that he has read the definition of an ambulance service and noted that this company is not looking to operate an ambulance in the City or provide the service. They are looking to headquarter here. He stated that this company transports patients between hospitals, but we don't have hospitals within the City and dispatch would not dispatch this company. He noted concern about denying a company who is not proposing to operate in the city and they get private calls to transport people. He also noted that this company is not seeking a license. Alderperson Butler asked how we prohibit a company that is doing business in another city. Attorney Braskich stated that the ordinance defines an ambulance very specifically. He read the definition. He stated that if a vehicle is doing either things that define an ambulance, it is an ambulance and if they are not doing either of those two things it is not an ambulance. He provided his interpretation of Alderperson Stevens' suggestion to change the ordinance to mean that even if a vehicle is not operating in the City as an ambulance, they should not be allowed to be housed here. He feels this will need to be reviewed legally. Alderperson Stevens re-read her statement that "other than the Washington Fire Department, no ambulance may post, station, house, in Washington for any reason. We only have one ambulance license and that is for the Washington Fire Department." She stated that talking about transporting non-emergency patients is going into the weeds. She noted that Stark County Ambulance wouldn't have a license and we need to shore this up now. Alderperson Butler and Braskich clarified that legal research would need to be done for vehicles not being operated as an ambulance within the City. Mayor Manier shared that he had two calls today that stated he is trying to do away with paramedics in Washington and he disagrees and stated that Clint and Jeremy do an excellent job and thinks the last thing this community wants to see is our volunteers go away. He shared that they will bring something back with new language. Mayor Manier thanked everyone for their show of support and shared that his own life was saved by our paramedics and thanked all the paramedics who were present.

- D. Discussion of a Possible City Council Social Media Policy* – Administrator Snider shared that the Secretary of State has recommended policy changes regarding social media. He shared that direction was given that social media pages are not a two-way forum. Mr. Snider shared that commenting has been removed from the City Facebook page and they looked at removing commenting on the Police Department page, but he has received further education that police should allow comments on their pages. Mr. Snider stated that we have a Facebook policy for employees. Alderperson Martin clarified that a quorum could occur on social media, and it would be in violation of OMA. Attorney Braskich confirmed and stated that interactive communication between a majority of a quorum is covered by OMA. Alderperson Brownfield noted that some members of Council have their own pages and asked for the Secretary of State's recommendation. Attorney Braskich stated that social media is seen as being a person and a modernization of communication. Alderperson Brownfield expressed concern regarding when identifying himself as an alderperson means he is representing the city. He thinks social media can be helpful if not left open ended. Mayor Manier said when people ask him about social media, he directs people to contact the City. Alderperson Martin expressed concern for

violating OMA if multiple alderpersons interact on social media. Alderperson McIntyre noted individuals are responsible for their platforms and said not engaging with other alderpersons. Alderperson Smith asked Alderperson Martin if he wanted to discuss something or just had a question. Alderperson Martin responded that he had a question because he has seen postings but wondered if he can engage or not. Alderperson Smith said she has her own private and public Facebook pages. Alderperson Adams stated that it is a tricky situation because multiple people have pages and if we see something is not accurate, he can't comment or answer it. He shared that he has called people personally to respond. He noted that he doesn't have one because he would rather talk with people personally. He feels it's a great way to share information but they need to be mindful of how answers are provided.

5. OTHER BUSINESS: Mayor Manier shared that he will be providing a proclamation on Saturday night, honoring the 100 years of Panther football. He noted Darrell Crouch is retiring after this year. Administrator Snider noted that they were provided in the Council Report and stated that he can expand on any items Council would like. Police Chief McCoy shared that they met with people from Newberry regarding the evidence building and reviewed sites and they are working on drawings. He will provide more information when he receives it. Alderperson Stevens noted there was money coming from Koehler and asked about the Candlewood Bridge and Catherine Street. Mr. Carr noted that it takes a long time for IDOT and the Candlewood Bridge will need structural engineering firms in the local area who have recent experience with historic masonry of a similar style. He is hoping to get an agreement to bring to the September meeting. Alderperson Stevens noted that we have City reps on Washington fire department and Five Points boards and we don't get regular updates from them. She stated that she would like updates during the Committee of the Whole meetings. Alderperson Blundy noted the spray patching and shared that he was at a neighborhood social event where someone said the roads look like crap and he agrees. He asked if they will have to look at this for a year as it looks horrible and nothing sticks. He expressed concern that plows will push it into yards and driveways. Engineer Carr said when we passed the MFT ordinances, he provided the roads that will be chip sealed. He shared that he gave a map of all the streets that will be spray patched. He stated that what we are seeing is over-rock to help avoid the extra oil and the next process will require everyone to drive slow. He also shared that without doing spray patch, the chip seal will show those cracks in one year. Mr. Carr shared why chip seal is chosen, how the process works and that it is one of the cheapest solutions. He noted that it will be chip sealed in 2-3 weeks and it will look like brand new pavement. He stated that the process is not fun but when it is done everyone will love it. Alderperson Stevens noted driving speeds and that sometimes people think vehicles are going faster than they really are. She wonders about the electronic speed signs. She said people are still calling her about speed concerns and she would like a future conversation.
6. EXECUTIVE SESSION: -5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) - The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) - The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body."
7. ADJOURNMENT: At 8:39 p.m. Alderperson McIntyre moved, and Alderperson Brownfield seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk