



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 9, 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., with a quorum present.

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

Absent: None

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

Planning and Zoning Director Jon Oliphant introduced a new employee, Joe Boyer who was hired three weeks prior to fill the role of Building and Zoning Coordinator. Mr. Oliphant shared that Mr. Boyer held a similar position in East Peoria and that he enjoys code enforcement.

1. ALDERPERSONS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Alderperson Blundy expressed frustration that Council is having the Phase 2B presentation but there was nothing on agenda to review ahead of time. He added that it's been over two years since they've had a presentation from Strand and felt it was difficult to prepare for the evening's discussion and think about questions to ask in order to make a voting decision at the Special Council Meeting.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alderperson Brownfield motioned to approve minutes of the September 11, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting; seconded by Alderperson Smith. Approved by voice vote.
3. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD: Washington resident Kris Hasten addressed Council reading a statement on behalf of her son-in-law Joe Arnold and said she was also speaking for their entire family, whose property is being brought back into discussion for the trunk sewer project. They support the Strand proposed path which Hamilton also confirmed was the best route to serve the City and Council approved unanimously years ago. They can't believe Council allowed the Pudik family and their hired engineers to string the issue along for so long. She reminded that not only was the route already approved but the beginning stages of staking out and planning had already begun before it was halted because a family member took issue with the way they were notified. She said that Hamilton Engineering was already hired as a second third-party firm to reevaluate Strand's analysis because Pudik's engineers made a couple Council members question Strand's proposal. Hamilton cost the City thousands of dollars on top of the hundreds of thousands spent with Strand yet still came to same conclusion as Strand, which was articulated to Council. She feels the hiring of Hamilton was a waste of money but at the very least they should have taken solace in knowing it confirmed and validated the thorough analysis the people of Washington paid for. She noted that Pudik's engineer didn't have access to the measurements Strand and Hamilton did and was hired by one family, the most vocal in opposition to the already voted on approved route. She said that of course their engineer disagreed with the findings. He had private claims to serve the family that hired him. Strand and Hamilton have compliance to serve all, the same people Council serves- the entire City and its residents. She doesn't understand why a couple members insist on questioning both reputable firms approved to do the work and allowing this to drag on. She says it is disrespectful to question the aptitude and certifications of both Strand and Hamilton in addition to the City Engineer, Public Works Department, City Administrator, and Council members who all agree on the approved path forward. She asks if the few who insist on allowing a family to prevent the project from proceeding really think a family hired engineer knows better than everyone else? She feels the indecisiveness of a few Council members has delayed this project for years allowing the environmental impact to continue the whole time. She says that by letting this drag on, they're contributing to human waste spreading downstream in Farm Creek from Washington to the Illinois River. She understands it's an extremely expensive project and they've been put in a pressure cooker by a very vocal family. However, if they continue to let it drag on or worse, the result will be a more costly alternative impacting both natural and improved property. It will impact many more residents who don't even know about the possibilities yet. Strand's path avoids impacting residents, buildings, yards, gardens, driveways etc. by staying along the railroad tracks and unusable recreational property. If these expert recommendations are ignored and Council decides to pay more and disrupt people's homes, they can expect far more criticism than they've gotten when it's found they've ignored hired firms. What would the IEPA say about this when presented with the facts? Just because the right answer isn't convenient, doesn't make it wrong. The longer they wait, the more risk missing out on IEPA support and increased costs of material and inflation. She encouraged them to keep this in mind while listening to the facts presented in the report the community paid for from Strand. She's disappointed they've been persuaded to delay progress but said

they can still make the right decision continuing with a plan that has already unanimously been voted in favor of and closed by advising them to protect the residents from financial and environmental harm.

Jeannie Herbst spoke in support of the Grist Mill restaurant/brewpub and the company developing it. She shared that Washington Square has been her life for sixty-six years and feels this is needed. People coming from other towns tell her they don't come at lunch, because there's no place to eat and they must leave the square. They're surprised that with the size of Washington, there's no place to eat. She says Washington may be a small town but we don't have to be small minded and feels this is a great project she's excited to hear about. She says the notes she has reviewed were well written. As an owner of two TIF properties, she is proud to give her money to whatever projects are needed to make that side of the square look great.

Jewel Ward, current President of the Washington Historical Society spoke to clear up misinformation regarding their organization and the developers. She shared that they repaired their building's foundation and painted it with seal coat after it was damaged during the demolition. She explained this was paid for by the Washington Historical Society and not their insurance. They have every reason to believe they will be reimbursed for the cost by the developers since their contractors were responsible. They proceeded with the repairs with concern about the timing of winter approaching. She said the second misconception is there is a lack of communication between neighboring parties and the developers and reassured this is not true since as recent as last Friday, October 6 she and Marlene were both present for a call from the developer's attorney. She shared the plans for further discussion in the upcoming week as the settlement and easement agreement is still being reviewed. She said that as an owner of a construction company that has built fast food restaurants across the Midwest, Florida, and Georgia it's recommended that neighboring property owners get an agreement in writing prior to construction. She believes the status of the project is 1. The development pays for repairs and 2. An easement agreement needs to be signed. She concluded by saying that the Washington Historical Society is waiting for final approved prints from the developer to see how the buildings will be tied together and made cohesive. She thanked Council and encouraged anyone with questions to call her.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. *Proposed 120 and 126 Walnut Street Redevelopment Project Financial Assistance Consideration –* Nathan Watson, CL Real Estate Development introduced Carmen Gratace, CEO of Global Builders and contractor for the project to present plans for the properties and development of the remainder of the block along with clearing the air about communications with neighboring owners, Marlene Miller and the Washington Historical Society. Mr. Gratace shared that they've worked on \$40,000,000 and \$50,000,000 projects in Chicago and any time you demolish a building between two other buildings there will be challenges. He explained that when they removed two foundation walls, one was attached to Marlene Miller's property and one was attached to the Washington Historical building. The foundation was poured up against two existing masonry walls with no break and on the existing basement of the historical society some bricks came loose. He shared that the foundation was in fairly good shape. He referenced pictures of two three-foot holes and explained that the historical society fixed one side and there's still the back. He explained that conversely, Marlene's foundation was in extremely bad condition. He said they have advised Marlene that they will work to fix or repair anything they have damaged, and that the developer's legal team has been working on an easement agreement. He addressed a water main running to Marlene's building that was damaged, causing the water to be down for a few hours and said it was repaired. He said they have an amazing team in place with leading architects and he's looking forward to the project. He said the ladies have always been nice to him and they will do whatever it takes to satisfy concerns and ensure everyone is happy. He reinforced the project is going to be a great accent to the area and expressed understanding about the neighbors' concerns. He said with similar urban type projects, this is normal, and his job is to build the building in such a way to not impact everyone's lives. He noted that his phone number is on the Global Builder's sign. Nathan Watson of CL Real Estate expressed excitement to have Global Builders because of their experience with urban areas. They're excited about opportunities to develop in Washington and saw a need for a first-class restaurant and bar downtown, but also a significant demand for a high quality unique authentic event space. They've been fortunate to acquire the former Knights of Columbus building, the vacant lot next to it, and the corner Prep Freeze Cook building. Mr. Watson said their proposal is to develop the remainder of block on the side across from the service station with exception to Ms. Miller's property. He described a new facade that blends in with the corner redevelopment that respects the architecture and restores it to its original elevation with lots of windows facing the street. They would like to incorporate an outdoor courtyard with a parking lot and another retail tenant in the corner building. He showed photos of the existing building and mentioned restoration that is needed including brick tuckpointing and window repair along with parking lot and roof repair. He said they would be working along with Tangled Roots Brewing Company to develop an upscale event space for private use, hosting reunions, wedding receptions, corporate events. The restaurant would bring people downtown during the day and evening, but this event space would bring people for the weekend and for short-term stays. He explained that for every person that stays overnight and pays \$100 for a hotel room, they spend another \$200 in the community shopping and restaurant industries. The pairing of the two companies, Tangled Roots and CL Real Estate drives additional revenue with a total investment of \$10,000,000 for the two projects to develop a strong diversified income stream. Mr. Watson showed a layout for reception or dining uses, four hospitality spaces, an ADA compliant restroom facility, bar, and exposed ceiling space for 130 people plus the exterior outdoor event space, a large kitchen and storage area, a retail building at the corner, and five off-street parking spaces.

Mr. Watson went over the financial portion of the proposal and said it would be a \$2,250,000 investment for the two properties and the courtyard, including the CL RED investment, whose portion he said is a little over \$1,000,000. Tangled Roots will complement this with the additional tenant investment and buildout of \$250,000 and with furniture, equipment etc. another \$750,000. The total package is \$1,900,000 on their side and they're asking \$350,000 from the City in TIF funds. The overall investment being \$8,400,000 with \$10,640,000 being invested in downtown Washington that will have a tremendous positive impact. They are asking the city for sixteen percent of the total project cost for the Walnut Street portion of the development. Mayor invited questions from the council. Alderperson Butler asked for clarification that the action requested is that the first seventy-five percent of TIF is to be paid within sixty days after completion of the project and a little different than restaurant project. Mr. Watson confirmed this is how the City proposed it. Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained the remaining 25% would come a year after that point. He said the recommendation was based on policy council decided last year for use of TIF that it would be paid sixty days after completion of a project with the remaining twenty-five percent a year after that point. He discussed available funding saying we have \$200,000 in TIF funds, which includes all possible funds for the remaining fiscal year. There is \$380,000 that hasn't currently been paid for the brewpub project and the \$200,000 is reflective of remaining funds as well as any other outstanding obligations. He pointed out that during the budget process \$350,000 was included through the ED tourism fund to be used towards any general redevelopment projects within or outside the square and that money is available as well. Alderperson Brownfield asked if this second project would overlap with the first project to which Mr. Watson confirmed that it would, and they want to open the even space as soon as possible. Alderperson Adams feels this is an exciting piece of the development. He liked that Mr. Watson explained it's a separate project because the community thinks they're coming back to ask for more money in regard to brewpub, which isn't the case. He likes that any additional expenditure would occur after the project is completed, which eases concerns of paying more money without a finished product. He feels that bringing people to town and the sales tax revenue that would result is a benefit for the City. Alderperson Blundy expressed concern over parking availability for an event space that occupies 130 people. Planning and Development Director Oliphant shared that his personal philosophy when considering parking for a downtown square is you can't use the same parking ratios as you would for a single use site since you can't provide the same supply of parking. He said they are always looking for other off-street parking opportunities and owe that consideration to the businesses on the square. Mayor shared that when Marshall's Tavern, Knights of Columbus, Tally Ho, and Marcy's were active and open, there was never a problem finding a place to park. He referred to Peoria Heights and said people will find a place to park for good food and a quality atmosphere. Alderperson Blundy feels that parking needs to be addressed at some point. He thinks the project is interesting and is glad they want to develop here but feels it competes with other event spaces. He provided the example of The Blend and said they didn't receive economic development money to for their event space. He can see using TIF money for renovations and what is projected in the matrix and feels that would be more comfortable than \$350,000. He does like how the payment of funding is set up with 75% sixty days after completion of the project and 25% a year later compared to being upfront as with the brewpub. Alderperson Adams said that he spent time at the Knights of Columbus with weddings and receptions and there was never an issue with parking, even when areas were closed off to parking. He said people will park along the streets and pointed out there can be a challenge with winter and snow but people will find a way. It would be great to consider more parking opportunities in the future, but parking shouldn't be an issue. Alderperson Butler said what caught his eye were the photographs of the former Knights of Columbus and the corner building exterior. He said they can't pass up this opportunity and can't imagine the deterioration of these buildings in the future. He can't believe there's any question when there's a firm interested in investing another \$2,000,000. The percent of investment is attractive, but these buildings are going to potentially have a higher assessed valuation, which is going to bring money back into TIF opposed to paying plumbing and electric repairs that do nothing for valuation and provide nothing in return. He can't imagine not moving forward with the opportunity. Administrator Snider asked for consensus to move forward with a development agreement to work with the developer to have a draft ready for the first meeting in November. Alderpersons McIntyre and Martin expressed their support. Alderperson Smith feels it's a great idea, but she's concerned that there are other event spaces in town. She would consider moving forward if Marlene Miller's issues were resolved and an easement agreement is signed along with a decision to reimburse the historical society. Alderperson Stevens has a few concerns including eligibility screening questions answered by staff, whether the project would continue without TIF assistance which she said it wouldn't. She said this is a complementary project, going on at the same time and that the first project hasn't even started. She expressed concern with agreeing to anything without the first project off the ground. She said the only plus is that they don't have to give money upfront. Additionally, she said she's heard for many years the need for a restaurant on the square and they thought the answer was when the Heiders bought the Danforth Building and that didn't work out. Until she sees the Grist Mill get started, she has many concerns. Consensus was to move forward with the development agreement.

- B. *Review of Meeting Online Streaming Options* – City Administrator Snider shared that he presented options for meeting streaming in June and understands the budget amendment was tabled last week at the second reading. He said he provided the highest and best opportunity to cover council meetings; the most cost efficient for permanent remote viewing and recording of meetings. He reiterated that the Granicus and Swagit software combination is state of art and used in local government, has excellent audio and video, includes the agenda, closed captioning, 24/7 viewing, and search capability within the video. He acknowledged that state of art is a moving target and provided the example that in 1981 it was a VHS recorder demonstrating that all technology eventually becomes obsolete. Normal, Galesburg, Decatur, and Bloomington use this type of program which provides a

great service with a higher level of HD and with that comes cost. He said that his task was to provide the best option and if Council is concerned about cost and wishes to go another direction, that's their prerogative. Alderperson Stevens asked for clarification that last Monday's vote was only to release money from reserves and not necessarily spend it. City Administrator Snider confirmed it's like transferring money from savings to checking, but there is no budgeted amount in the operating budget to spend this money. Mr. Snider included that since the City owns the building, there may be value in creating a horseshoe setup and microphone stands that could be permanently fixed. He has concerns with spending the money and then moving things around for meeting setup. Alderperson Stevens is concerned about ordering furniture to be housed at the fire station training room and feels they are a Council with no home, having moved from the library meeting room. She feels the description of the livestreaming software sounds great. She offered the suggestion of placing the fixed furniture and the end of a Five Points banquet room with a partition that could close off the area but open to allow for large groups of people. City Administrator Snider pointed out that the City doesn't own Five Points but does own the fire station. He referenced the City of Peoria meeting in their chamber who've never had to move outside the meeting area. The fire station has enough room to seat fifty people, which would cover 99% of meetings and if something is beyond that the meeting can be moved to another venue. His perspective based on his experience is since the City owns the building, they can decide how they'd like the room to be used for a council meeting. Alderperson Martin shared that from his research it would cost \$800 to get ten to twelve microphones and have them all run to one feed such as a laptop connected to a website like Webex where people can watch. He said the downside would be the setup with all the wires going to one place, but it does have closed captioning capabilities, a live view, and recording. He feels this would be less professional but might be enough to band aid the situation. Alderperson Martin feels the livestreaming proposal is a lot of money. Alderperson McIntyre agreed that the price tag was concerning, but it would be nice to have. He agreed with Alderperson Stevens about finding a permanent home and working with the fire department to see if something could be arranged. He feels we owe it to the citizens to provide them the ability to be able to go back and review meetings. His preference with the more expensive platform is that it's all encompassing and includes electronic voting, microphones, and streaming. He feels the citizens are expecting this since we've gone through a pandemic and understand the need for the ability to operate remotely. He doesn't necessarily like the option presented because of the high price but feels we need to continue to explore the possibility. He recommended the topic be readdressed when budgeting for the next fiscal year. Alderperson Adams likes the livestreaming idea. He said we're seeing more citizens involved and wanting information about how taxpayer dollars are spent. People are expressing appreciation for information shared on elected officials' Facebook pages and news pages. It would be great to direct them straight to the source where they may see it for themselves. Citizens would better understand their reasoning and decisions. He loves the electronic voting system and the fact the same system is used by the City of Decatur with no additional in-house cost. He understands it's a decent chunk of change at \$130,000 but it's a product the City and Council can be proud of, a worthwhile investment to provide a full understanding of what goes on at meetings. Alderperson Brownfield inquired about the location of microphones purchased during the pandemic. City Clerk Brod explained they're in the library storage room with one microphone broken, leaving three that are operational. She explained the risk is the cords are strung out creating a trip hazard, which is in part why an upgrade is being considered. Alderperson Brownfield suggested using those to get through until they can budget for next year but doesn't feel a non-budgeted item is a great idea now. Alderperson Blundy supports doing something because more citizens are interested but don't want to come to meetings. This will allow them to watch from home and get information directly. He feels cost is an issue but thinks they'll get value with more community engagement having something high quality. He suggested utilizing the microphones and YouTube Live as a trial to see how people respond. Administrator Snider requested guidance to which Alderperson Martin motioned to table the topic indefinitely. Mayor mentioned looking for a temporary fix until the next budget cycle. Administrator Snider explained there are only so many ports for microphones with the current system and the cost increases exponentially for the larger sound board required. He referenced Galesburg who has multiple internal IT staff in comparison to our City, who has a volunteer assisting with meeting recordings and sound. His concern is if the council chooses the a more conservative financial approach, who will operate it and what will happen if the volunteer is unable to help. It's not as easy as buying enough mics and connecting to Zoom. He provided an example of a new setup with seventeen board members where a sound person was running around the room turning cameras to each speaker and said it's a reflection upon the City. His perspective is that the community expects the meetings to be accessible and welcomed recommendations.

- C. *Discussion of Possible Council Policy on FOIA Information* – Mayor Manier called upon City Clerk, Valeri Brod to provide her perspective on the FOIA process. Clerk Brod read a statement explaining the purpose of the FOIA process and pointed out concerns and the balance between transparency and privacy that could be problematic if FOIA requests were to be made public. She encouraged Council members to visit her office if they have questions or are seeking details or the status of FOIA requests. Her statement is attached and made part of these minutes.

Alderperson Stevens said her request had nothing to do with the Clerk's office and she brought it up because she kept hearing how expensive it is to fulfill FOIA requests, the time it takes and voluminous requests. She said that recently a FOIA request broke privacy by asking a superior to talk to a person to revoke it. She feels that it's sometimes hard to know what's going on in this body. She provided examples of Monticello and the City of Chicago maintaining FOIA request logs. She explained that a FOIA is public information and said she's not here to make more work for people or make people feel their privacy is being infringed upon. Alderperson Stevens feels it would be nice to

know monthly what's going on. Alderperson Blundy said he understands someone may have concern that their name would be out for requesting information, but the reality is that someone could submit a FOIA to request the names of those who requested information. He said transparency is what's important to him and this would give Council insight as to concerns. He said schools supply information as well as several cities. He expressed that he supports having this information provided to them and doesn't understand the challenge and when done well, basic information such as when and what was requested along with when it was responded to and the cost associated is provided. Alderperson Martin said that while he understands and appreciates them wanting to have the information for Council's knowledge, he's one hundred percent opposed to releasing someone's name and what information they were seeking. Alderperson Martin asked if someone requested a FOIA and government officials told them to retract a FOIA request, wouldn't that be illegal. He said that Alderperson Stevens seemed to infer something illegal was happening. City Administrator Snider clarified that the matter Alderperson Stevens was referencing did not involve City employees asking someone to withdraw an email and that it occurred outside the operation of the City of Washington. He noted that we have a constant challenge to see where the line is between legislative and administrative. His perspective is that Council members are legislative with the job to set policy and the administrative role is the responsibility of staff. He explained that many times information comes through that may be public and we can provide the general scope of it, but most FOIA requests are police related and cannot be disclosed even when requested. As a professional administrator he's curious why this request is being driven forward. He added that some type of information can be provided in a broad report for legislators and shared that the city attorney provided a legal opinion with caution as to how they may proceed with it. Attorney Braskich explained the broad exemption from FOIA requests for records related to police investigations. He asked if Council's concern is to receive information about requests made or the responses given. He's hearing now that they want a summary of requests that are received and not information that is going out. Alderperson Martin agreed that would be more appropriate and inquired about Alderperson Stevens statement and asked if her intention was to insinuate something bad happened because it felt weird. Alderperson Stevens explained her intention was that they keep hearing about the expense and how many FOIA requests are received which precipitated her original request. She again referenced the City of Monticello website, along with schools and townships that provide the information. Alderperson McIntyre shared that as a Council person it would be nice to know the number of FOIAs, but not necessarily the names or other information. He said if there were 17 FOIAs one month and 47 the next, he would be led to approach staff for more information. He feels a count would provide transparency to understand the scope of what staff is doing. Administrator Snider referenced the previous year when Council received more than a dozen reports from him regarding voluminous FOIA requests received from the Pudik family involving the Strand project. He noted that the City spent well over \$80,000 in legal fees addressing these requests. He feels that Council was kept well informed of that, which is not the rule but an exception. He reinforced most requests are police related, but many ask obscure things such as how many people work at the City of Washington, the number of police officers, or information for a survey. He said that administratively, he has kept Council informed when FOIA requests are costly. The \$80,000 expense is significant and, in his experience, the greatest amount a City has had to pay for FOIA requests and he sees the value of Council knowing that. He would like to see Council's request honed down and specific, such as the number of requests received. Alderperson Butler shared his feeling that if the concern is the high cost of FOIA responses, that this request would drive costs into the roof. He said that after Council is adjourned, Council members are private citizens with no authority and have no business going to staff and feels the City Clerk, who is the FOIA officer did a wonderful job of explaining the issues. He feels the request is overly inquisitive and wants nothing to do with it. Alderperson Brownfield agrees with Alderperson Butler's statement. He said in this form of government, their role is to make policy and not to know everything going on inside. If there's a question or concern, he suggests asking Administrator Snider or City Clerk Brod. He doesn't want to see FOIA requests advertised or broadcasted. Alderperson Adams sees all sides and feels it would be useful to know how many requests there were in a month to know if there are fluctuations demanding more hours and time. He doesn't feel he needs to know the details, as long as we're promptly responding to them. Alderperson Smith agreed with Alderperson Adams. Consensus was to provide the number of FOIAs per month. Alderperson Blundy asked to include a topic of each request such as "20- Police". Administrator Snider said he'll work with the City Clerk and attorneys to see what they're comfortable with and do the best to provide some type of abbreviated response.

- D. *2024 223 Property Farm Lease Discussion* – Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that staff is looking for consensus on direction to proceed with a 2024 farm lease agreement for the 223 property. He explained that since 2018, the City has had an agreement with Aaron Vercler and this is the last year. Therefore, if there's a desire to proceed with farming activities for next year, it's time to go out for a new bid. He said staff recommends a structure similar to what's currently in place, a base per acreage fee plus an additional variable profit-sharing formula beneficial for both parties. Mr. Oliphant pointed out that with Nofsinger construction underway, the amount of tillable property is reduced and makes development difficult. The recommendation is if Council wants to seek bids for next year, one one-year mutual option for 2025 is included that will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Alderperson Stevens asked if other farmers have expressed interest. Mr. Oliphant said there are farmers who would like to be included in the bids. Alderperson Stevens recommended we continue with the same process we've been using but start earlier next year. Farmers get a deal when purchasing seed for the following year by a certain time. She would like the conversation to occur a month earlier next year but would like to continue with Mr. Vercler. Consensus was that all agree to proceed with bids.

- E. *Phase 2B Trunkline Presentation* – City Engineer Carr provided background that this project has been going on since he's been here, and he feels we're right back where we started. He said Mike Waldron with Strand will present. Strand has done most upgrade design work for plants STP1 and STP2, the original facilities plan, as well as amendments. In his experience, once you have a facilities plan you keep the same engineering firm because the general concept moves forward with you rather than repaying for the same design over and over. It's typical to maintain the engineering knowledge of the system as well as moving forward and building that relationship. Most cities have an engineer for their water system and a different or same engineer for the sanitary sewer system. Engineer Carr addressed a comment saying that the QBS procedure is only required when state grant money or IDOT is involved.

Mike Waldron introduced himself as Strand's Senior Associate with 32 years of experience as a municipal engineer. His experience includes sanitary sewer systems, large diameter interceptor or trunk sewers, Farm Creek trunk sewer, inflow and infiltration evaluations. He was last here in July 2021 to give an in-depth presentation on the project and has returned to provide some background and to address issues regarding the Phase 2B Trunkline and questions stemming from the Goat Springs presentation. The presentation may be seen at the link below. The following information was shared during his presentation:

https://www.ci.washington.il.us/egov/documents/1696954817_98248.pdf

- He provided a brief outline of the alternate route analysis. The City looked at various routes in 2021. His presentation will cover route characteristics and clarifications, environmental impact, project costs, and a final comparison of the recommended route.
- He showed an aerial view of the existing Farm Creek trunk sewer from STP1 to STP2 saying one of the problems with the trunk sewer is that it is influenced by the creek and the railroad runs through the location also.
- He showed the National Wetland Survey saying it's an evaluation of soil conditions and potential characteristics that may make areas wetlands but it's unknown until delineation is performed. They determined there were unexpected impacts. Other routes will have to go through this process as well.
- He showed the floodplain. Elevation goes uphill and requires discernment.
- Evaluation of Route A- An effort to determine if the route was viable to install new sewer in or near the same footprint as existing sewer because there are already easements there. Lots of issues, still close to creek, trying to get manholes above the creek is difficult, long runs of sewer without manholes as a result, it's not maintainable. Accessibility issues where creek meanders and easements not being wide enough ruled out Route A. Eighty feet would be comfortable for a contractor to do their work.
- Route B is recommended. It follows the railroad. Would be putting in an interceptor following a corridor that's already been cleared and disturbed and is up against a utility. It's unobtrusive to everyone involved in the project.
- Route C is not quite A, is down closer to the creek and takes advantage of elevation. Route D is located way south and is not a good route. Route E has some similarities to the route brought by Goat Springs, not completely but there are a few similarities.
- Looked at the Goat Springs Route in 2021. They have tweaked it to reduce impact, but it's very similar.
- L1 and L2 are similar, they're trying to get around an oxbow. Unfortunately, these weren't around in 2021. There are some positives and negatives to each but every route will hit on something.
- Mr. Waldron will focus on Route B, which is the preferred route and profile laid out in 2021 compared to Route E3, the other front runner.
 - A graph was displayed showing trenchless construction and depths were discussed.
 - Another methodology is open excavation, depending on soil they must cut back edges, so it doesn't fall in. Contractors can use a trench box, allowing a narrower trench.
 - Depths of Route B and E3 sewer are similar across the routes.
 - He shared that the numbers presented last month by Goat Springs included all sewers, not just this one. He provided the length of local sewer estimates. He discussed the discrepancy with numbers of trenchless construction length and locations, including wetlands.
 - He shared the contractor's discretion on lengths of open and trenchless options.
 - Noted maximum manhole depth. Strand is at 46 feet compared to their plan showing 44 feet, which he has a problem with. Timber Ridge would have a manhole in a ravine, which isn't recommended. Average number and depth of manholes was comparable between both plans.
 - They say we have six crossings; we only have four. Their route doesn't have any because they're missing Farm Creek but they didn't show the ravines along the route, which have significant crossing issues just like Farm Creek. They have four crossings.
 - He pointed out wetland areas and the number of easements required between the two routes.
 - He discussed two railroad crossings, one is 18" wide and one is 12". Their route has two crossings also, but significantly different at 42".
 - He addressed accessibility with creek crossings.
 - He discussed stabilizing banks with riffles under the waterway, which are large stones placed to reduce velocity. It doesn't decrease capacity and prevents erosion.

- He showed pictures of Ameren's site access. They placed a 24" culvert across and concreted over it, which has to be reconstructed every couple years. The proposal is to reengineer this by putting in three 3x2 foot box culverts that will provide significantly more flow capacity and be lower profile.
- He showed an ariel view of Route E3 which has four ravine crossings, banks will need to be stabilized throughout, elevation to get under. They are trying to maintain a five-foot cover. This has the most formidable crossing of Farm Creek.
- He referenced a map and explained that on our side there are six easements. It's inconvenient to have sewer winding through certain properties and advantageous to run it along the railroad which is already a cleared corridor. He discussed which easements are still needed. There are three significant easements to get and two that already have an easement that possibly just need modified. Six easements on the north part.
- Service area on the north side. Comprehensive plan shows hot spots. Potential development within the planning boundary south of the creek. Twenty years from now, someone could ask why they weren't provided with an outlet. If on the north, they can't get to those. Elevations on the north require a mechanical system to pump.
- Environmental impacts include a floodplain on the property. Don't need permits to cross a floodplain, for an underground utility because there are national and regional permits that cover the work. Need to ensure manholes are out of the floodplain. Mr. Waldron showed a map of the wetlands and said he doesn't need to bore through them. He's close to securing the permit from the Army Corp and has documentation. The only thing outstanding for their permit is the archaeological study which was performed on the parts of the property they were allowed. New regulations will remove some of the wetland areas from evaluation. The route was designed to be able to impact the wetlands. The environmental impacts brought up last month are not of concern. It is 75% engineered. The same things are unknown on the north side. He cannot question the impact on trees, but the benefit of running through railroad is better than going through peoples' properties.
- Cost comparison- They added a line item of work shaft, a drill machine that sits down in the trench which added \$160,000 to the cost. Our linear foot estimate included the work shaft. Both plans will have this. We have 43 manholes overall; their count was 38 which throws him off. They stretched length in some locations. Mr. Waldron did not; 400 feet is what's optimal for operations. They can go to 500 feet but it's not as great, 600 feet is verified but not recommended and they try to avoid. Mr. Waldron's goal was to stay within 400-500 feet. Strand's cost is \$5,962,000 and their cost is estimated to be \$5,844,000 which is less. He argued that Strand is at 75% engineered and has a pretty good idea of quantities carrying just a 25% contingency. He would argue that he could drop the contingency and his cost would be less than theirs. Most of the permits have been spoken for, no survey to start over. There is no cost for wetland mitigation. The undetermined cost list includes forest removal and preservation/restoration which he recommends, decommissioning of existing sewer, easements, operation and management.

Alderson Martin referenced a map and asked about an alternate route to which Waldron said the floodplains and access would be worse. Mr. Waldron said that was Route A, which they had looked at. Alderson Martin referenced the trench map and clarified with Mr. Waldron the railroad location and eighty feet around it and asked if all the trees would be cut down. Waldron said no, they're working within the footprint of twenty-five feet off the railroad to allow the contractor to dig and get materials in and out. He said it was indicated that pre-construction, they plan to walk the route with the contractor and determine all locations they can save trees. He doesn't want to take down any more trees than he must. Alderson Martin asked if there was no I and I, would he recommend replacing the trunkline. Mr. Waldron said, if I and I wasn't part of the equation they wouldn't need the size of sewer they need and confirmed with Alderson Martin that the design they created would be able to handle the flow of heavy rain events to eliminate overflow. Riffles, the need to raise manholes, lining, bypass pumping and the length of time it takes were discussed. Alderson Martin asked about it being impossible to remove I and I and Mr. Waldron said you've had a successful program if you've removed ten percent.

Alderson Stevens asked about STP1 being decommissioned and the related overflow and possibility of having a backup lagoon. Mr. Waldron said this idea was before him and before the flow study was completed. City Engineer Carr shared there's a large heated storage facility they just redid in the area she's referencing, a feasibility study would be needed to determine sizing and he's confident once you get into 10,000,000 gallons of storage, a pump station, lining and protecting the sanitary sewer you're going to get into the same price. Alderson Blundy and Mr. Waldron discussed the maintenance access points being between the railroad and pipe in the 25-foot space. Mr. Waldron said this can be talked about with the property owner. Alderson Blundy discussed areas that are difficult to maintain. Mr. Waldron provided an example where Ameren uses access to get through a difficult to navigate area and said there would be sharing. The railroad has said they will allow the City to use their right of way to access the sewer. He said those are the only two areas that concern him. Alderson Blundy asked about depth and elevation of the two areas in relation to STP2 and Mr. Waldron said they come in lower and talked about flow and the pumping station, saying he wants the sewer to drain and not back up. Alderson Blundy asked if the E3 Route comes in higher and Mr. Waldron said it's about the same or higher. Alderson Blundy asked about the cost impact for improvements of STP2 and Mr. Waldron said the pumping station is a need regardless of the sewer. Engineer Carr talked about the maintenance of the system if the trunkline is replaced. He said the sewer would be jet

washed every time they get rain and maintenance would involve popping the lid, won't have to worry about backups and the need for a vac truck. Maintenance would include televising the trunkline by float, which would be contracted given the 42" pipe. Not a lot of access is needed for this, every other year or every third year for maintenance of a new trunkline of this size. Alderperson McIntyre is concerned about the current system, which should have lasted 100 years and we're only at year 50. He mentioned manholes that can't be located with the current system. Mr. Carr said if the path is along the southern corridor they would work with property owners for location of manholes, buried or sticking out of the ground. Losing the structure along a straight line 50 feet off the railroad track isn't an issue compared to the route along the north side where they would be buried through the fields, with a good chance you would lose them despite GPS. Most of the issue with manholes now is because they're located directly in the bank of the creek itself and they can't get to it. Alderperson Stevens asked if there's currently an IEPA consent order saying they're obligated for a new sewer trunkline. Mr. Carr said no, they've addressed all the current consent orders but trying to avoid getting one from the SSOs at Plant 1. He mentioned the IEPA loan with a low interest rate and sometimes forgiveness, which is possible if they address the issue before they receive a consent order. Alderperson Adams asked if a consent order is received can they not get an IEPA loan. Mr. Carr said that if a consent order is received, they must show how they can fund it. Mr. Carr does not believe they could secure a loan in the competitive IEPA market if this happens. Additionally, it would be forced upon them and there would be no time. He referenced Peoria's combined sewer overflows and negotiations with the IEPA. Alderperson Adams said this goes back to 2005 with the initial three phase plan which didn't involve a trunkline, which arose in 2011. He asked what had changed. Mr. Waldron said this was prior to his involvement with the project. Alderperson Adams asked if the archaeological study is done. Engineer Carr said it's complete on two of the three properties. That report will be built with the outlier that they were not allowed on the third property. Alderperson Martin asked if an overflow lagoon is standard and normal for sewer systems to which Mr. Waldron said it's not abnormal but is generally done for plants and said the downside is you're still allowing wastewater to be located on the surface. He can't say it's never been done. Alderpersons Martin, Stevens, and Engineer Carr discussed relief valves and bottlenecks. Alderperson Blundy and Mr. Waldron further discussed I and I and possibilities as to why it's high. Alderperson Blundy expressed confusion with the costs being similar between the two routes. Engineer Carr said the difference between the presentation last month and this one is how it was presented. He said as an engineer you group items together and call it "pipe" but they're different sizes, 42" or 12". If you do that for an entire project, an engineer can make any project look the way they want by manipulating that number and some unit costs. The unit costs at the last meeting were extremely different from the unit costs from Strand. When we start adjusting and grouping pay items and unit costs, the focus can be shifted to make some projects look better than others. The one thing you can't ignore is that Strand is 75-80% done with their plans so their unit cost and quantities are in better shape and with a higher level of confidence their design will come close to cost. Alderperson Butler said this is basically the four-year anniversary from the recommendation of Route B and they're no closer to having easements. He said they can't go another four years; it would affect construction costs. Alderperson Butler asked Mr. Waldron to eliminate the relief sewer and lagoon area concept as not something to be pursued. He said our goal is to avoid the consent decree and control costs. He said Council has no vision right now to start construction. Mr. Waldron said he can't say it's a bad idea, but it would require evaluation. He confirmed his recommendation is still Route B. Alderperson Adams asked what timeline would be required for evaluation of the concept and Mr. Waldron said half a year to complete a study. Alderperson Blundy asked if it can be studied during winter and Mr. Waldron said it can be done anytime but spring and summer are the best meters for long hard rains. Alderperson Martin asked if everyone worked perfectly with Route B, how far out are they for construction. Mr. Waldron said they will have to start over looking at a loan because five years is outdated. They still have three years on the permits. The Army Corp is good for a couple years. They need to get a funding application submitted fairly quickly because March is when the decision is made who will be funded in June. He doubts June 2024 would be an option, but possibly June 2025. Alderperson Martin asked about equipment size. Mr. Carr mentioned an easement that will be required if they go with a relief sewer. Alderperson Martin and Mr. Waldron discussed decommissioning the original sewer.

5. OTHER BUSINESS: Alderperson Stevens asked how TIF funds are replenished and how they differ from tax revenue. Planning and Development Director Oliphant explained that TIF works with a base increment from the time it's established, our Square being 1986. Any of the property taxes which are part of the boundary at the time go to the taxing bodies proportionally based upon their share. He went on to explain that as the years go on and new properties are reassessed the increase in value goes into TIF funds to pay for any improvements within those geographic boundaries. Alderperson Stevens asked for clarification whether tax revenue is just sales tax. Mr. Oliphant responded that our TIF does not have a sales tax provision and is based on the property tax increment.
6. ADJOURNMENT: At 9:24 p.m. Alderperson Butler moved, and Alderperson Martin seconded to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.


Lisa Anderson, Deputy Clerk


Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk

Dear City Council,

As you consider creating a process that would make details from Freedom of Information Act requests public, I wanted to share a few important points;

The primary function of the Freedom of Information Act is to provide the public a tool for transparency and accountability in government. FOIA requests are typically subject to certain exemptions and restrictions to protect sensitive information, however, making FOIA requests public can be problematic for several reasons:

1. FOIA requests often seek information about individuals, businesses, or organizations. It can expose sensitive personal information, trade secrets, or proprietary data to the public.
2. Publicizing FOIA requests may deter individuals from submitting legitimate requests. People may fear that their inquiries will be subject to public scrutiny or backlash, discouraging them from seeking information that is essential for accountability and transparency.
3. Making FOIA requests public can open the door to misuse. Requesters may be subjected to public criticism for seeking government records, even when their requests are lawful and well-intentioned. This could deter individuals from engaging in the FOIA process.
4. FOIA requests are often part of ongoing investigations or legal proceedings. Publicizing these requests can provide an incomplete or biased view of the situation, as it may only reveal one side of the story. This can lead to misinformation.
5. Those completing the FOIA process can sometimes face challenges in handling the volume of requests. Creating new and special reposts would only add to the burden, potentially taking time away from FOIA fulfillment and causing the additional burden of creating new records retention requirements.
6. The primary purpose of FOIA is to provide transparency and accountability by allowing access to government records. Making FOIA requests public merely to create agenda content can shift the focus away from this purpose, as public attention may be directed towards the requests themselves rather than the information contained in the documents.

It's important to strike a balance between transparency and privacy when considering whether to make FOIA requests public. While transparency is necessary to ensure accountability, we also have an obligation to protect privacy. This balance can better be achieved by creating a searchable database accessible through our City website, allowing our community to access the information they seek without requiring a FOIA submission. I propose the City move forward with the concept of purchasing database software, such as Laserfishe, if the intent of the request is to provide transparency to our community.

In conclusion, as I have stated in the past, you are welcome to visit my office should you have any questions regarding the FOIAs received by the City. I am more than happy to provide those details to you. Also, I want to thank Alderpersons Brownfield, Butler and Adams who have taken time in the past to visit my office to obtain the status of FOIA requests.

Sincerely,
Valeri Brod
City Clerk