
DATE: Monday, April 15, 2024
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council Committee of the Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, April 15, 2024, at 7:01 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Chaundra Bishop, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Jaya Kolisetty

STAFF PRESENT: Seok Hyun Cho, Bourema Ouedraogo, Carol Mitten, William Kolschowsky, Breaden Belcher, Richard Surles, Dave Wesner, Nick Olsen, Elizabeth Hannan

OTHERS PRESENT: Fiona Munro, Outreach/Education Coordinator at Sola Gratia Farm; Brittany Tuten, MSW, Case Manager at Cunningham Township; Soop Kish, Food Equity and Events Coordinator at Cunningham Township

Chair: *James Quisenberry, Ward 7*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Chair Quisenberry called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. 02-26-2024 Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Hursey.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. Sustainable Food Access Through Community Gardening with Solidarity Gardens - CM Wilken, Fiona Munro, Brittany Tuten, and Soop Kish

Introduced by CM Wilken, providing context for the presentation. Presented by Fiona Munro, Outreach and Education Coordinator for Sola Gratia Farm; Brittany Tuten, MSW, Case Manager at Cunningham Township; and Soop Kish, Coordinator for Solidarity Gardens and the Food Equity and Events Coordinator at Cunningham Township. Fiona

Munro provided background on Solidarity Gardens and its sponsoring organizations. Spoke on how it was formed due to the COVID-19 pandemic as a means to address food insecurity and build community. Shared successes from 2023. Brittany Tuten elaborated on the community impact of food assistance being provided by Solidarity Gardens and the national need shown for food assistance. Detailed how produce from Solidarity Gardens is distributed and how people can access the program. Stated how people rely on produce deliveries from Solidarity Gardens and the positive community feedback the program has received. Spoke on inconsistencies in resources directing people toward food resources. Fiona Munro detailed how the Affiliate Garden Network is structured and how it works to mutually support gardens within the network. Spoke on the recently piloted Free Plot Program that helps low-income and immigrant gardeners in accessing garden spaces and growing culturally-relevant foods. Stated the program initially began with 10 plots in 2023 and is expected to grow to 50 plots in 2024 with support from grants. Touched on Home Gardener Donation Sites where home gardeners can donate their excess produce to contribute toward food donations within the community, in 2023 the program saw around 500 pounds of produce at the Sola Gratia Farm donation site. Provided background on the Volunteer Program for Affiliate Gardens to help expand their capacity while also providing access to different gardening techniques and styles to volunteers. Shared how funding is sourced for Solidarity Gardens, how it is implemented, and future prospects for expansion in programming and resource access. Urged City Council to expedite development of the program to access the Sustainable Development Funding. Questions and discussion followed.

b. Public Input

Ben Joselyn asked for clarification on what falls under “Obligated Workload”, as referred to in the BerryDunn study, and clarification on the recommendations being made regarding staffing in the first stage of the study. Asked which other cities follow the 30/30/40 model referred to by BerryDunn and if those cities are demonstrably safer than the City of Urbana. Stated that an increase in staffing of 15 for the Urbana Police Department seems sizable, citing average total costs of supporting a single officer and the costs that will be incurred by having to support 15 more staff. Stated the average total cost for the Urbana Police Department is roughly \$200,000, potentially totaling to an increase of \$3,000,000 in the City budget and that the increase could be better utilized within the community. Questioned how the implementation of alternative responders does not equate to a decrease in officer workload, as stated during the BerryDunn presentation. Hoped for further alternatives to police officers to be further discussed and introduced within the BerryDunn study. Requested City Council consider alternative response models before the hiring of 15 additional staff for the Urbana Police Department. *Angel* voiced concerns regarding traffic in East Urbana, citing incidents on Lierman Avenue and Washington Street due to a lack of stop signs at the intersections there. Stated how children frequently play in that area and drivers not respecting the stop signs there are a danger to them. Spoke on how tinted windows on cars are enabling reckless drivers and driving through red lights. Expressed concern for the danger that tinted windows pose to community and how there should be regulation on tinted windows. Requested City Council and Mayor Marlin quickly address this issue before it further develops. Spoke in support of police and gun regulation, but voiced concerns regarding lack of communication from the Urbana Police Department regarding incidents as well as a lack of relationship building within the community. ***Public input was received from the following individual in support of alternative response models for the Urbana Police Department: Lilah Leopold.***

5. Staff Report

Carol Mitten, City Administrator informed City Council that the City of Urbana has finalized the purchase of the property on 205 North Race Street and will be looking into further developing it.

6. New Business

- a. **Resolution No. 2024-04-018R:** A Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board FY24 Officer Recruitment and Retention Grant - PD

Presented by Richard Surles, Deputy Chief of Police. The resolution requests City Council to approve the acceptance of a grant award of \$264,707.82 from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) with the appropriation of the award to be included in the FY25 City Budget. The funds would be used by the Urbana Police Department to pay a portion of expected costs for retention payments that will be made to sworn officers in February 2025, using the entirety of the \$264,707.82 to offset the cost of the expected payments. Questions and discussion ensued.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Hursey.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- b. **Ordinance No. 2024-04-018:** An Ordinance Amending the Urbana City Code Chapter 14, Section 14-7, Regarding the Schedule of Fees (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) - HRF

Presented by Elizabeth Hannan, HR & Finance Director. Elizabeth Hannan noted that the work was primarily completed by Robert Kouzmanoff, Deputy Finance Director and Laquita Hodges, Customer Service Account Coordinator; but is being presented by herself due to Robert Kouzmanoff not being able to attend. Requested City Council forward the Ordinance for final action on 05-28-2024 as the proposed Schedule of Fees is required to be available for public inspection and comment for at least 30 days prior to final action. Provided background on the purpose of fees and stated that the general increase seen across fees is around 4.25%. Stated no new fees are proposed, a general 4.25% increase in fees has been seen, and a 10% increase in the Stormwater Utility Fee is included as per the Stormwater Asset Management Plan. Noted no increase has been seen in some areas such as building safety fees, liquor license fees, and parking meter fees. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda on 05-28-24 by CM Wu, seconded by CM Bishop.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- c. **Resolution No. 2024-04-019R:** A Resolution Approving the Transfer of Volume Cap in Connection with Private Activity Bond Issues, Single-Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds, and Related Matters (Private Bond Cap Allocation - EIEDA, Series 2024) - CD

Presented by Breaden Belcher, Grants Division Manager and Nick Olsen, Community Development Coordinator. Resolution No. 2024-04-019R and Resolution No. 2024-04-020R were presented together. The resolution seeks to approve the transfer of the City's 2024 Private Activity Bond Cap to the Eastern Illinois Economic Development Authority (EIEDA). The allocation of bond cap for EIEDA would be for developing, constructing, acquiring, or improving affordable housing. Nick Olsen provided background on tax-exempt private activity bond issuance and the process for local governments to allocate them. Stated the formula for determining the 2024 bond cap [$\$125 \times 38,468$ (Population of Urbana) = \$4,808,500]. Shared how IHDA and EIEDA would use the private activity bonds, noting that City Council has previously approved issuances for IHDA and EIEDA in 2023. Stated the bond cap would be split between IHDA and EIEDA, providing both with \$2,404,250. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Wu.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

- d. **Resolution No. 2024-04-020R:** A Resolution Approving the Transfer of Volume Cap in Connection with Private Activity Bond Issues, Single-Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds, and Related Matters (Private Bond Cap Allocation - IHDA, Series 2024) - CD

Presented by Breaden Belcher, Grants Division Manager and Nick Olsen, Community Development Coordinator. Resolution No. 2024-04-019R and Resolution No. 2024-04-020R were presented together. The resolution seeks to approve the transfer of the City's 2024 Private Activity Bond Cap to the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA). The allocation of bond cap for IHDA would be for affordable housing initiatives through IHDA.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Bishop.

Voice Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

NAY: None.

7. Discussion

- a. **Ward Maps Continuing Discussion**

Mayor Marlin began by touching on the two new maps submitted by Councilmembers that have undergone legal review to ensure that all legal requirements were met. Noted an issue with Map 9's Ward 2 low Compactness score due to a disconnect in contiguousness there. Proposed that the discussion centered on identifying statistics and criteria to be used in selecting favored maps, stating that a rubric could be formed using the results of the discussion. Council discussed identifying statistics and criteria to be used in forming a rubric. CM Hursey raised the question of whether an eighth ward could be introduced. Mayor Marlin provided a history on Wards, noting that there used to be two Councilmembers per Ward and that the criteria to increase the number of Wards is a population of 50,000. CM Wu shared the process and perspective behind drafting Ward Map 8. Council discussed the potential for growth within Wards and considering that in

moderation as to not overestimate future populations. CM Wilken shared the reasoning and considerations made during the drafting of Ward Map 9 and asked how fellow Councilmembers felt about their respective Wards. Council discussed future steps on narrowing the map selection down, the potential for a rubric to be developed, and the goals for next week's continued Ward Map discussion. Mayor Marlin summarized that the Council consensus on rubric categories would include Population Deviation, Minority Representation, and Compact & Contiguous. Council continued discussion on the methods of ranking or selecting preferred maps to move closer toward selection.

8. Council Input and Communications

Mayor Marlin confirmed that all Councilmembers received an invitation from the Urbana Park District for the preview and floor signing of the Health and Wellness Center at 10:00AM on 04-20-2024. Shared that the annual Boneyard Creek Community Clean-up event is at 9:00AM on 04-20-2024 which was coordinated by Carmen Franks, Assistant City Engineer. Extended congratulations to the Urbana High School Band program for their 100th anniversary being celebrated on the night of 04-20-2024. **CM Quisenberry** passed the Chair to CM Wu before expressing condolences to the family of Dr. William Patterson who had recently passed away. Shared that the celebration of his life on 04-14-2024 had an amazing turnout and community support.

9. Adjournment

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#). **Minutes approved:** 05-20-24

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Lilah Leopold <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 5:53 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public Comment April 15 2024

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Members of the City Council of Urbana,

My name is Lilah Leopold, I am an Urbana resident, and I would like to add my voice to those calling for us to consider alternative responses to calls for service made to our police force rather than the hiring of additional officers.

As over sixty percent of police calls are not criminal, we are in much greater need of a Community Service Response Unit to answer such calls and alleviate existing officer workload. Hiring more officers outright, without the creation of such a response unit, would only multiple the inefficiencies documented about our Police Department in the BerryDunn report presented to City Council on March 25th and which will be reviewed again this evening.

We have here a very real opportunity to instead invest in much needed mental health, housing, reentry programs, and poverty-alleviating and opportunity-creating programs for the neediest members of our community that would provide the material and social building blocks for actual community safety. Adding more officers to potentially incarcerate them is simply not the answer—let the hard-earned money of our citizens go toward systems and units that will actually lead to real and lasting community transformation.

Thank you,

Lilah Leopold