CITY OF URBANA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: **Monday, October 5, 2026**
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, October 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: DeShawn Williams, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Christopher Evans, CM Verdell Jones III, CM Stephanie Cockrell, CM James Quisenberry

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: CM Maryalice Wu, CM Shirese Hursey

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Darius White, Matt Roeschley, Olivia Jovine, Steven Doggett, Larry Boone, Roy Lane, Craig Dilley, Ryan McCarty

OTHERS PRESENT: Courtney Bainbridge, Ward 6 Applicant; Dylan Blaha, Ward 6 Applicant; Ashley Withers, Ward 6 Applicant; Patrick Singer, Managing Partner of Race Street Ventures

Chair: *Stephanie Cockrell, Ward 5*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. 09-21-2026 City Council Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Jones.

Voice Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. Public Input

Christopher Hansen requested City Council repeal Section 15-72 of the Urbana City Code regarding the regulation of the use of air guns and slingshots. Stated the free use of air guns in private areas will promote gun safety practices. Affirmed the right to privately own firearms. Stated the Urbana Police Department's (UPD) response to calls reporting people brandishing firearms infringes on the right to own firearms and questioned the City's law enforcement practices. Recalled an aerial drone being present during the UPD's response to his neighbor reporting him as wandering with a firearm, requested clarification on UPD's drone use. Requested the City cease harassing firearm owners unless a law has been explicitly broken.

a. Public Input (Continued)

Esther Patt spoke on how the 2019 amendment to City Code to explicitly codify the practice of considering the mayor a non-voting member of Committee of the Whole was undone by an overlooked typo in a later 2019 amendment. Stated a need for correction was noticed when Mayor Williams cast a tie-breaking vote on an item regarding a Planned Unit Development. Requested Council approve Ordinance No. 2026-10-027 and deliberate on any additional changes they seek to implement afterward. Expressed appreciation for Council's dedication and service to the community.

b. Fire Department Promotions and Recognitions

Roy Lane, Deputy Fire Chief introduced and recognized Craig Dilley, Captain and Austin Upton, Engineer, for their actions during the response to a working fire at 1902 East Harding Drive on January 19, 2021. Emphasized the need to celebrate positive outcomes of responses due to the dangerous and unpredictable conditions of fire responses. Stated their training, courage, and actions during the response rescued an individual from the fire. Recounted the events from the day of the response to the working fire at 1902 East Harding Drive. Noted Austin Upton is currently responding to a working fire and unable to attend.

Steven Doggett, Fire Chief awarded Craig Dilley and the family of Austin Upton with the Urbana Fire Department Medal of Honor.

Steven Doggett presented and spoke on the promotions of Roy Lane to Deputy Chief, Craig Dilley to Captain, Ryan McCarty to Battalion Chief, and himself to Fire Chief. Stated the promotions point to a strengthening of the team and leadership structure of the Urbana Fire Department (UFD). Stated the badge pinning recognizes each individual's devotion to serving the community and supporting each other within the UFD.

Introduced Craig Dilley for his badge pinning in recognition of his recent promotion to the position of Captain. Shared highlights and accomplishments from his career with the UFD and spoke on his familial connections to the UFD through his father, Mike Dilley and his grandfather, Duke Goodwin. Craig Dilley was pinned by his wife, Kristen Dilley, after being sworn in by Mayor Williams.

Introduced Ryan McCarty for his badge pinning in recognition of his recent promotion to the position of Battalion Chief. Spoke on his years of service and achievements with the UFD and the mentorship he provides to the team as the currently longest serving member of the UFD. Ryan McCarty was pinned by his son, Keegan Dilley, after being sworn in by Mayor Williams.

Introduced Roy Lane for his badge pinning in recognition of his recent promotion to the position of Deputy Fire Chief. Detailed Roy's career and accomplishments with the UFD and as an instructor at the Illinois Fire Service Institute. Roy Lane was pinned by his wife, Lisle Lane, after being sworn in by Mayor Williams.

Expressed gratitude for being selected to serve as the Fire Chief by the City and optimism for the future to come. Steven Dogget was pinned by his wife, Shanna Doggett, after being sworn in by Mayor Williams.

Shared thanks and appreciation for the City leadership; the Urbana community for their trust and support; the families of fire service members for their sacrifices; and the members of the UFD themselves for the opportunity to serve alongside them as their new Fire Chief.

c. Ward 6 Council Seat Vacancy Applicants

Mayor Williams welcomed the applicants and stated they can provide a brief introduction before the questions are presented. Dylan Blaha, Courtney Bainbridge, and Ashley Withers introduced themselves and spoke on their relationship to Urbana before answering the following questions provided by Council.

i. **Question 1:** Why do you want to serve the City through representing Ward 6?

Dylan Blaha (DB) shared his civil service began with joining the military in 2012 due to being unable to afford college tuition and his desire to be of service led to conducting cancer research at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and independent journalism. Stated he seeks to address the feeling of public safety and the issue of equity.

Courtney Bainbridge (CB) stated her work in conducting mutual aid has led her to apply for the vacant Ward 6 position to begin to push for larger scale impacts and represent marginalized voices in the community.

Ashley Withers (AW) stated her involvement with Urbana Boards and Commissions; Urbana Park District Commissions; local nonprofit organizations; and her work in disability services demonstrate both her dedication to serving the community and her preparedness to serve as the Ward 6 Council Member.

ii. **Question 2:** What are two concerns you have for your Ward and why?

CB stated the issues of economic development and public transportation are focuses for her as the community wants to see Philo Road revitalized and have their public transit improved to better their access to food, healthcare, and employment.

AW stated the economic development of the Philo Road area and the challenge of fairly representing the residents despite the large diversity in socioeconomic status are her priorities.

DB stated his concerns are on economic development, without displacement of current residents, and supporting housing affordability through various initiatives.

iii. **Question 3:** How do you communicate with community members when requests are popular, but not financially feasible or legal within the City's authority?

AW shared her approach is through educating constituents on the processes that can better serve their issues and working alongside them to ensure their concerns are heard and directed to productive channels.

DB emphasized the importance of considering public feedback and fostering civic engagement; using it as an opportunity to educate on why those processes and boundaries exist, while also reconsidering their appropriateness in current contexts.

CB stressed the importance of making residents feel heard, furthering their education on how they can advocate for change, and having conversations on how money can be reprioritized and legislation can be revised to advance a larger goal.

c. Ward 6 Council Seat Vacancy Applicants (Continued)

iv. Question 4: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing Urbana over the next two to three years?

DB identified the issue of affordability as the largest issue for both the City and for residents in Urbana. Expressed support for programs that can assist residents with utility costs; programs that can provide businesses assistance with grant writing; and finding ways to assist local businesses in accessing subsidies that larger corporations often take advantage of. Stated assistance should be directed toward supporting the material needs of residents.

CB spoke on the need to address the cost-of-living crisis in Urbana by finding solutions to improve access to housing, utilities, food, and healthcare. Stated the affordability issue will worsen in the upcoming years, and the City should help residents with methods to alleviate or mitigate increases to costs-of-living.

AW stated Urbana must address the vacant commercial properties in the area, beginning with hiring for the Economic Development Supervisor position at the City. Proposed creating additional incentives for businesses considering establishing themselves in Urbana and reducing "red tape" for development. Hoped for the City to become more involved in the local business community; using community minded economic development to improve public safety.

v. Closing Remarks:

DB emphasized the importance of local politics and directly communicating with residents to listen to their needs. Thanked Council for the opportunity and for their service to the community.

CB thanked Council for their consideration and the opportunity. Shared optimism in Council's judgement as the candidates all hope to positively impact Urbana.

AW voiced appreciation for Council and their service to the community. Stated she hopes to continue the positive changes in Urbana as a Council Member.

Mayor Williams thanked the applicants for their responses and stated they will receive an update from the City regarding their decision soon.

5. Staff Report

None.

6. New Business

a. Resolution No. 2026-10-054R: A Resolution Approving an Amendment to Extend a Redevelopment Agreement Project Completion Date (Race Street Ventures, LLC, 118-120 South Race Street) – CD

Presented by Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services and Patrick Singer, Managing Partner of Race Street Ventures. The Resolution extends the project completion date for the Redevelopment Agreement with Race Street Ventures, LLC from October 31, 2026 to December 31, 2026 for Fernie's High Horse. Olivia Jovine provided background on the redevelopment agreement, the unforeseen delays, and the request for extension.

Patrick Singer spoke on the construction at 118-120 South Race Street and shared images of the redevelopment and improvements. Stated the extension was recommended after a building inspection from the Building Safety Division within Community Development Services. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Evans.

Voice Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.

b. Resolution No. 2026-10-055R: A Resolution Approving an Increase in the Number of Liquor Licenses in the Class R&T-1 Designation for Eighty Three Vietnamese Cuisine LLC d/b/a Eighty Three Vietnamese, 201 North Broadway Avenue, Urbana, Ill. – Exec

Presented by Mayor Williams. The Resolution increases the number of Class R&T-1 (Restaurant and Tavern) liquor licenses to accommodate the application from Eighty Three Vietnamese Cuisine LLC for a Class R&T-1 liquor license for their establishment at 201 North Broadway Avenue in Urbana. Mayor Williams stated the restaurant is located at the building previously occupied by Black Dog Smoke & Ale. Discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Evans.

Voice Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.

c. Resolution No. 2026-10-056R: A Resolution Approving an Increase in the Number of Liquor Licenses in the Class INC Designation for SP II LLC d/b/a Soccer Planet, 2310 Willow Road, Urbana, Ill. – Exec

Presented by Mayor Williams. The Resolution increases the number of Class INC (Incubator) liquor licenses to accommodate the application from SP II LLC for a Class INC liquor license for their establishment at 2310 Willow Road in Urbana. Mayor Williams stated the soccer venue seeks to sell beer. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Evans.

Voice Vote:
AYE: Evans, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: Jones

d. **Ordinance No. 2026-10-027:** An Ordinance Amending Urbana City Code Article II – Elected Officials, Chapter 2 – Administration, Section 28 – Committee – CM Evans

Presented by CM Evans. The Ordinance revises Section 2-28 of the City Code to explicitly state the mayor's role as a nonvoting member of the Committee of the Whole that does not count toward the quorum of the Committee of the Whole. CM Evans spoke on the original implementation of the language in 2019 that was mistakenly removed later in the same year. Stated the amendment addresses the typo and does not impact prior decisions made. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the regular agenda by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Evans.

Voice Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.

7. Council Input and Communications

CM Evans shared the Folk and Roots Festival will begin on October 8th and end on October 10th, showcasing music across venues in downtown Urbana. Shared the Fall Fusion Festival will be held in downtown Urbana on October 10th from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., featuring art, performances, and activities. Announced the Champaign-Urbana Reparations Coalition will be hosting a panel discussion on reparations at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 15th at 124 West White Street in the City of Champaign. ***CM Jones*** thanked the applicants for the Ward 6 Council Vacancy for their time and for enduring the stress from the application process. Expressed appreciation for Mayor Williams attending the Project Sadaqah food distribution event at the Central Illinois Mosque last Friday. Apologized for a remark he made last week regarding "speaking for the people" and clarified he did not intend to imply he was more representative of the Urbana community than anyone else. ***CM Quisenberry*** thanked the applicants for the Ward 6 Council Vacancy and expressed that the position comes with unexpected challenges but can be rewarding to be a representative for the Urbana community. Raised awareness on the availability of flu shots and COVID shots, recommended the public to consider getting vaccinated in advance of the flu and COVID season. ***Chair Cockrell*** expressed appreciation to Council for making her second time chairing the meeting more pleasant than her first Committee of the Whole.

8. Closed Session per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3) – Appointment to a Vacancy in a Public Office

Motion to enter closed session by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Jones.

Roll Call Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.
Entered closed session at 8:40 p.m.

Motion to return to open session by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Jones.

Roll Call Vote:
AYE: Evans, Jones, Cockrell, Quisenberry
NAY: None.
Returned to open session at 9:05 p.m.

9. Adjournment

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Cockrell adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho
Deputy City Clerk
This meeting was video recorded and is viewable on-demand HERE. **Minutes approved: 10/26/26**