
DATE: Monday, February 19, 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, February 19, 2024, at 7:03 p.m.

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: CM Jaya Kolisetty

STAFF PRESENT: Andrea Ruedi, Bourema Ouedraogo, Breaden Belcher, Bryan Heaton, Dave Wesner, Kevin Garcia, Kimberly Smith, Marcus Ricci, William Kolschowsky

OTHERS PRESENT: Carly McCrory-McKay, Executive Director of Champaign County Economic Development Corporation; Tim Bannon, Executive Director for Willard Airport; Marlon Mitchell, Executive Director of First Followers; Chad Hoffman, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County; Rick Manner, Executive Director of the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District; Haaris Pervaiz, Icon Hospitality, LLC; Joseph Prior, Icon Hospitality, LLC

Chair: Shirese Hursey, *Ward 3*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, CM Hursey called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. 12-04-2023 Public Hearing Minutes

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Bishop

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

4. Public Input and Presentations

a. Public Input

Julie Watkins thanked everyone who contributed to public input. Thanked CM Quisenberry and CM Wilken for their comments last week regarding a process for a resolution on Gaza. Hoped for Israel to not invade the City of Rafah. Decried governmental inaction on ending conflict between Israel and Palestine and politicians supporting the continued funding of military aid for Israel. Stated continued military action by Israel will

only continue an unending cycle of violence. Hoped for collective action resulting in the end of mass death. **Stav Ashur** addressed statements made by Councilmembers last week regarding public input turnout by stating there should be a ceasefire, Hamas should not be in charge of Palestinian lives, and hostages held by terrorist organizations should be released. Spoke about how a new resolution should be put forward that more people can agree with. Invited City Council and general public to contact him at stav.sh1@gmail.com regarding the writing of a new ceasefire resolution. **Lee DeVille** spoke regarding the question of whether City Council should concern themselves with foreign policy, stated it is unusual business as it only has appeared one other time in the past. Stated that City Council has lost sight of the rules dictating City Council business. Voiced that although many support the proposed resolution, even more are against the resolution and the language surrounding it. **Andrew Valentine** voiced that the Champaign-Urbana skate community has been ready to present their case since they were told they would have an opportunity to do so in January 2024. Urged City Council to set a date for them to present regarding a space for skaters. **John DeRobinson** echoed statements made by Andrew Valentine. Stated reasons for founding Positive Push, a skating organization to develop community among skaters and hold meetings to create a space solely for skaters. Reminded City Council of the excitement around the development of a public skating space. **Imran** shared a story regarding a patient, a young woman who sustained a fracture and dislocation of the bones in her wrist, he had treated as an E.R. physician. Stated that her comments on access to anesthesia, unlike people living in Palestine have haunted him since they occurred 2 months ago. Stated that due to the lack of a ceasefire, Palestinians do not have access to medical supplies and are undergoing surgeries without anesthetics as a result. Quoted a statement from Dr. Irfan Galaria, published in the Los Angeles Times, regarding his recent visit to Gaza. Shared death statistics published by the Middle East Monitor. Stated that the mass killing of innocent children falls under collective punishment and genocide. Pleaded City Council to advocate on the behalf of Palestinian people to cease human suffering. **Skylar Rifesteck** cited that Champaign-Urbana's progressive nature and population gives him hope for the future. Expressed strong support for a ceasefire resolution, echoing the calls from Palestinian neighbors and friends. Stated material conditions in Palestine, created by Israel, give rise to militant groups who oppose Israel and the only way to peace is to grant Palestinians the right to return, full freedom of movement, cessation of Israeli settlers encroaching on Palestinian land, and to prove Israel does not seek the destruction of the Palestinian people. Stated Israel is undoubtably the dominant power between Israel and Palestine, citing their ability to control the power, water, and flow of goods to Palestine. **Caite** voiced support for the ceasefire resolution. Echoed previous pleas to recognize the Palestinians' right to survive, return to the land they were displaced from, and to freely move. Refuted statements made that said civilian casualties are an unavoidable byproduct of the conflict by pointing out that children have been targeted intentionally by Israeli snipers just for being Palestinian. Stated that these comments have not been a waste of time as any efforts fighting for human rights is an important use of time. Raised concern for continued military actions taken by Israel against Palestinian hospitals where doctors and patients still inhabit. Stated the military actions by Israel is done with the intent of genocide, citing statements made by Israeli officials calling for the death of Palestinians. Urged City Council to vote for and support a ceasefire with urgency due to the ongoing deaths of Palestinians. **Karen Medina** stated public input during City Council has been a great space to discuss the war between Israel and Palestine. Stated the impossibility of completely annihilating Hamas through war, citing the various negative effects of war. Thanked everyone in their participation of public input surrounding the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Stated that a clause to cease the United States bombing Yemen, Syria, and Iraq for same reasons for Israel to stop bombing Palestine should be added. **Lee-Anne Smith** spoke in support of a ceasefire on behalf of requests made by Palestinians. Asked City Council to do what it can in its capacity to support Palestinians. Stated local, community support for a ceasefire resolution to be

discussed by City Council makes it the business of City Council. Stated that a call for a ceasefire is the most humane way forward. Asked if City Council will use their voice to stand up for the sanctity of human life and push for a ceasefire. **Rufni Vanbar** spoke in support of a resolution for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Stated the importance for City Council to address a resolution for a ceasefire that was brought to them by their community. Stated that conflict between Israel and Palestine has been ongoing for 75 years beyond what has occurred on 10-07-2023. Urged City Council to stand up on behalf of the Palestinian people instead of waiting for peace to come. **Shauna Miller** noted that City Council could move forward with City business if the ceasefire resolution was more promptly addressed. Stated that actions here will impact future elections and that she will not be voting for CM Kolisetty in the upcoming election due to the CM's silence regarding the ceasefire. Described effects of Israeli military action on innocent Palestinian population. Stated that Nazis, while still atrocious, fed their prisoners. Stated Israel's military actions and denying aid to Palestine are equivalent to intentional genocide and collective punishment. Questioned how long it will take the City to join the City of Chicago in passing a ceasefire resolution. **Benjamin Theobald** spoke on the importance of the saving and support of local Post Offices. Stated the City of Urbana has a history of commenting on international affairs, citing the resolution opposing the Iraq War and Resolution No. 727-R46 regarding calling for the end of United States military involvement in Southeast Asia due to the effects being felt by people in the local community. Shared story of the killing of Wadea al-Fayoume in Plainfield, Illinois as a hate crime done by his landlord against Palestinians and 2018 Tree of Life shooting as a hate crime against Jewish people, stating those as reasons why discussion regarding Israel and Palestine are relevant at a local level. Read from an article written by Dave Stieber titled "Our Union Called for a Cease-Fire. It's About Our Students.". **Marc Snir** stated individual deaths of Palestinians are horrible and a ceasefire is desired and necessary. Voiced that opposition in public input was regarding the particular ceasefire resolution presented by Ben Joselyn on 01-08-2024 due to the bias that was present in it. Agreed that violence begets violence, raises tensions between Israel and Palestine, and lessens the chance for peace to be achieved. Stated that what is occurring in Gaza is not a genocide, as it has not been declared a genocide by the International Court and that calling what is happening in Gaza a genocide is a vicious lie. Shared anger felt by the comparison drawn between the conflict in Gaza to Nazi actions. Urged City Council to pass a more balanced ceasefire resolution that ameliorates desperation felt by both sides. Stated that the City of Urbana should not endorse language that denounces the existence of Israel and should instead encourage dialogue. **Sana Saboowala** shared disappointment in City Council attempting to shift dialogue outside of public input into an external space. Shared account of being told by a Councilmember that the ceasefire resolution presented by Ben Joselyn does not adequately represent the Israeli narrative and that they do not watch any further videos from Palestine due to them being too heartbreaking. Questioned how one could argue for more representation of the viewpoint of the party committing actions that are too heartbreaking to bear witness to. Stated that the proposed ceasefire resolution does not contain any factually incorrect information. Stated that based on their research as a PhD candidate, with their focus being on studying genocides, that what is occurring in Gaza is a genocide. Shared personal experience as a Pakistani-American working with people who thought she was a terrorist, had an oppressive family, and that Western society has liberated her. Stated that the proposed amendment has already made many compromises in wording and is not as heavily favored toward Palestinian liberation as it could be. **Ben Joselyn** spoke on legal definition of genocide and votes made in the case of plausible genocide in Gaza that South Africa presented for the World Court. Stated that the point of current efforts is to stop violence faced by Palestinians and not to compare traumas. Stated that desecration of graves in search for Hamas tunnels by Israel have been refuted by many, including major American news networks. Voiced support for a resolution that unites people for the liberation of all people through sovereignty and self-determination within their own borders.

Shared fear felt from the rise of antisemitism in the United States and solidarity with the Jewish people. Urged City Council to pass a ceasefire resolution. **Josh** addressed statement made regarding Nazis feeding their prisoners as false and that many feared extended discussions regarding a ceasefire resolution would come to this point. Shared statistics on hate crimes from FBI data stating that Jewish people are 60% of the time victims of reported hate crimes. Stated that CM Wilken last week echoed sentiment from Mayor Marlin's comments on 01-08-2024 regarding avoiding polarization of local community and blamed CM Wilken for rise in tensions due to co-sponsoring a discussion on a ceasefire resolution. Raised concern regarding CM Wilken previously stating inexperience and lack of knowledge on conflict between Israel and Palestine to add detailed input regarding the issue. Quoted CM Evans' News Gazette article pointing out that 93% of Urbana 3rd graders not reading at grade level, and that Council's lack of knowledge on the conflict between Israel and Palestine is an example of those failures. Requested City Council focus on local issues regarding education. Agreed with CM Wilken stating that this conversation could be better conducted outside of City Council. **Stephen Maguire** shared that every country has the right to defend itself through just use of force. Stated that innocent Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans exist, but the United States has repeatedly voted against measures for peace-keeping missions for the Israel and Palestine region. Stated City Council should amplify local voices speaking against genocide. **Paul Weichsel** stated that conflict in Gaza is between Hamas and Israel. Quoted declaration of Hamas, stating its purpose to destroy Israel and kill Jewish people worldwide. Questioned the worth of a ceasefire as it would provide a window for Hamas to rearm before attacking again. Stated that what the intent of the ceasefire is to provide Hamas an opportunity to destroy Israel. Shared personal, familial connections to the Holocaust and stated that Jewish people have learned from the Holocaust and will never let it happen again. Urged City Council to reject a ceasefire. **Vadim Zharnitsky** voiced strong opposition to a ceasefire resolution after seeing the events on 10-07-2023. Described a hypothetical situation where a nearby city is taken over with the intent of annihilating Champaign-Urbana and asked if a ceasefire could be supported in that situation instead of retaliation. Requested City Council to produce resolutions that could have material effect such as a resolution that tackles islamophobia and antisemitism. **Marina Manetti** spoke on lifelong research of violence and shared family history from World War 2. Stated that violence solely serves to perpetuate violence, quoting studies and accounts of academic peers. Stated Palestinians and Jewish people were living peacefully before the British divided them and fomented hatred between them. Shared that she was a Zionist until she protested massacres at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and she found that the counter-protestors were Zionists. Called for an immediate ceasefire. **Yarden Ashur** echoed statements calling for the cessation of trauma, massacres, and pain. Stated that those who wish for a resolution that truly calls for a ceasefire, release of hostages, and international aid, to contact Stav Ashur at stav.sh1@gmail.com. **Carmel Elazar** questioned how someone could draw a comparison between Nazis and Israelis. Questioned how as an Israeli, who supported a two-state solution, could be labelled a fascist. Stated information from mainstream media is more credible than information spread through social media platforms. Stated the International Court did not conclude that Israel's military actions constituted genocide. Stated that the current ceasefire resolution is not a ceasefire resolution, but instead an indictment of Israel's actions that would enable Hamas' victory over Israel. Voiced that the conflict between Israel and Palestine can only be resolved through negotiations and a two-state solution. **David Tiber** expressed dismay with the rezoning of 205 High Cross Road due to the general lack of strategy displayed by City Council. Asked if the zoning of a lot could ever be trusted again. Voiced trouble felt from City of Urbana staff in their ability to address concerns like these. Asked if penalties from Hotel Royer could be diverted to local businesses who were told a hotel would be developed in the area and their business would increase. **Public Input was received from the following 6 individuals who were in support of a ceasefire resolution, and were read by CM Hursey: Julia Boldrick,**

Berry Zhang, Kendra Calhoun, Nick Abboud, Hend Abdelfattah. Public Input was received from the following individual who was in support of a ceasefire resolution, but was not read: Allan. Public Input was received from the following 3 individuals who were in opposition to a ceasefire resolution, but were not read: Ruth Kantorovitz, Iris Band, Inbal Elazar.

5. Staff Report

None.

6. New Business

- a. **Resolution No. 2024-02-004R:** A Resolution Authorizing Contribution to a Community Minimum Revenue Guarantee (MRG) for Leisure Air Service at Willard Airport - Exec

Introduced by Mayor Marlin. Presented by Carly McCrory-McKay, Executive Director of Champaign County Economic Development Corporation; and Tim Bannon, Executive Director for Willard Airport. Resolution seeks to authorize \$50,000 as the City of Urbana's contribution to a Minimum Revenue Guarantee to attract leisure air service to Willard Airport. Touched on necessity of revenue guarantees to attract air service and displayed a graphic which showed other communities that have successfully implemented a minimum revenue guarantee. Provided information on passenger per day each way data to gauge demand for leisure flights. Outlined future steps for the implementation of the minimum revenue guarantee in attracting leisure air service to Willard Airport. Presentation was followed by questions and discussion.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Evans

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- b. **Resolution No. 2024-02-005R:** An Ordinance Approving an Amendment to a Redevelopment Agreement (Icon Hospitality, LLC - Urbana Landmark Hotel) - CD

Presented by Kimberly Smith, Community Services Director; Haaris Pervaiz, and Joseph Prior. Ordinance approves an Amendment that would extend the deadline for the Redevelopment Agreement with Icon Hospitality for the Hotel Royer, and reduce the amount of the incentive in the event that the revised deadline is not met. The original redevelopment agreement was approved 06-2019 with several extensions given since then. General sentiment leaned toward recommending to continue providing extensions and gradually reducing the incentive amount. Recommended a project deadline extension to 12-31-2024 and the inclusion of a \$500,000 reduction per subsequent 3-month period beyond the deadline. Updates on current conditions of Hotel Royer renovations and construction were provided. Before and after pictures were shown to demonstrate the uplifting of the hotel. Provided explanations for reasons for delay, citing unforeseeable global shortage of elevator equipment. Spoke on renovations which covered the entirety of the property. Noted that while typical hotel developments have around 6 to 8 different rooms, Hotel Royer has 37 unique room types. Stated that Hotel Royer intends to open in the 2024 year and it remains a top priority to open as soon as possible once the elevator materials are acquired. Expressed that the recommended \$500,000 penalty every 3 months creates undue hardship onto the developer and has the potential to jeopardize the future success of the hotel. Requested City Council reconsider the penalty amount and refrain from imposing penalties

due to circumstances outside of the developer's control. Stated that every day that the hotel is not open is already a significant penalty to the developer and incentive to try to open as soon as possible. Recommended that the penalty amount be lowered to \$100,000 per 3-month period beyond 12-31-2024. Questions and discussion ensued.

- i. Straw poll: Suggested new penalty rate of every 2 months instead of 3 months

AYE: 3

NAY: 3

Straw poll fails

- ii. Straw poll: Suggested new penalty cost of \$100,000 instead of \$500,000

AYE: 3

NAY: 3

Straw poll fails

- iii. Straw poll: Suggested new penalty cost of \$150,000 instead of \$500,000

AYE: 4

NAY: 2

Straw poll passes

Motion to approve to the regular agenda with the amended penalty amount of \$150,000 by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- c. **Ordinance No. 2024-02-005:** An Ordinance Repealing Urbana City Code Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 5, Section 2-95 (Market at the Square Advisory Board) - CD

Presented by Kimberly Smith, Community Services Director and Bryan Heaton, Market Coordinator. Ordinance requests to repeal City Ordinance No. 2012-07-071 that established Urbana's Market at the Square (UMATS) Advisory Board, in order to dissolve the UMATS Advisory Board due to not meeting for a few years as virtual meetings have been successfully used to more equitably interact with vendors. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Evans

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- d. **Ordinance No. 2024-02-010:** An Ordinance Approving a Major Variance (Bobat Duplex at 408 West Main Street / Case No. ZBA-2023-MAJ-05) - CD

Presented by Marcus Ricci, Planner. Ordinance looks to approve a major variance to reduce the required front yard along McCullough Street from 20 feet, four inches to five feet to allow the construction of a duplex on a small corner lot at 408 West Main Street, in the R-4 (Medium-Density Multiple-Family Residential) Zoning District.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Evans

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- e. **Ordinance No. 2024-02-009:** An Ordinance Amending the Urbana Zoning Map (Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District / Plan Case No. 2482-M-23, Two Lots North of East Park Street Along North Cottage Grove Avenue) - CD

Presented by Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Rick Manner, Executive Director of the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District. Ordinance seeks to approve a zoning map amendment (“rezoning”) for two parcels owned by the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD) to change the zoning district from R-3 (Single and Two-Family Residential) to CRE (Conservation-Recreation-Education). The lots are located along North Cottage Grove Avenue, north of East Park Street. They are already in use by UCSD, and this rezoning would bring the two parcels into conformity with the rest of UCSD’s campus. The two parcels have never been used for residential purposes and have been used by UCSD for decades as part of their campus. Questions and discussion ensued.

Motion to approve to the consent agenda by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry
Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- f. **Resolution No. 2024-02-006R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Agreement (FirstFollowers CHDO Operating PY 2023) - CD

Resolutions No. 2024-02-006R, 2024-02-007R, 2024-02-008R, 2024-02-009R, 2024-02-010R, and 2024-02-011R were presented together by Grants Manager, Breaden Belcher. Marlon Mitchell, Executive Director of First Followers; and Chad Hoffman, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County were present to answer questions. Resolution requests the approval and authorization of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization agreement for First Followers which would pledge \$6,500 in Urbana HOME Consortium funds for the Operating Activities for PY 2023.

Motion to combine Resolutions No. 2024-02-006R, 2024-02-007R, 2024-02-008R, 2024-02-009R, 2024-02-010R, and 2024-02-011R into an omnibus by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Bishop

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to approve the omnibus to the consent agenda by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Wu

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

- g. Resolution No. 2024-02-007R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Agreement (Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County CHDO Developer PY 2023) - CD

Resolution requests the approval and authorization of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization agreement for Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County which would provide \$125,000 in Urbana HOME Consortium funds for the creation of three (4) affordable single-family units. *Moved to the consent agenda in omnibus.*

- h. Resolution No. 2024-02-008R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Agreement (Habitat for Humanity for Champaign County CHDO Operating PY 2023) - CD

Resolution requests the approval and authorization of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization agreement for Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County which would provide \$26,000 in Urbana HOME Consortium funds for administration and operating expenses related to the continued operation and agency capacity expansion. *Moved to the consent agenda in omnibus.*

- i. Resolution No. 2024-02-009R:** A Resolution Certifying a Community Housing Development Organization for the Urbana HOME Consortium (FirstFollowers CHDO Certification 2023) - CD

Resolution seeks to certify First Followers as a Community Housing Development Organization for the Urbana HOME Consortium for the projects described in the Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Developer Agreement in order to be eligible to request specific HOME funds for use. *Moved to the consent agenda in omnibus.*

- j. Resolution No. 2024-02-010R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Agreement (FirstFollowers CHDO Developer PY 2023) - CD

Resolution requests the approval and authorization of an Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization agreement for First Followers which would provide \$30,000 in Urbana HOME Consortium funds for the creation of one (1) affordable single-family unit. *Moved to the consent agenda in omnibus.*

- k. Resolution No. 2024-02-011R:** A Resolution Certifying a Community Housing Development Organization for the Urbana HOME Consortium (Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County CHDO Certification PY 2023) - CD

Resolution seeks to certify Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County as a Community Housing Development Organization for the Urbana HOME Consortium for the projects described in the Urbana HOME Consortium Community Housing Development Organization Developer Agreement in order to be eligible to request specific HOME funds for use. *Moved to the consent agenda in omnibus.*

1. **Resolution No. 2024-02-013R:** A Resolution Adopting Mayor/Council Strategic Goals for 2024-2025 - Exec

Presented by William Kolschowsky, Senior Management Analyst and Assistant to the City Administrator. Resolution seeks to approve the adoption of the Mayor/Council Strategic Goals for 2024-2025. The goals were developed over 3 facilitated discussions with Mayor Marlin, City Council, and City staff. It features 4 strategic areas, 12 strategies, and 30 action items.

Motion to keep in Committee of the Whole by CM Wu, seconded by CM Wilken.

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None

7. **Council Input and Communications**

CM Quisenberry shared that he has been in touch with people at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign who would know facilitators to contact if a neutral, discussion space for the ceasefire resolution would be further developed. Commented on the rezoning of the property on High Cross Road, noting that the property was previously rezoned with a different City Council with a different intent and it is within the City's rights to rezone it back to what it originally was when developers do not follow through with their commitments. *CM Evans* congratulated recipients of awards at the Urbana Police Department Awards Ceremony held on 02-15-2024. *CM Hursey passed the chair to CM Wu.* *CM Hursey* echoed CM Evans' statements regarding the awards ceremony. Thanked Chief Boone for working to recognize the good work that police officers from the Urbana Police Department do. Spoke regarding a story heard on WILL Radio about First Followers and home ownership. Stated full support for home ownership, citing its ability to promote good citizenship, engagement with civic duty, and good property maintenance. Commended First Followers for aiding someone with re-entry into society with the goal of becoming a home-owner and hoped others who take advantage of the resources First Followers provides can follow in his example.

8. **Adjournment**

With no further business before the committee of the whole Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#).

Minutes approved: 04-08-2024

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Kendra Calhoun <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 16, 2024 11:50 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public input: Feb 19 meeting

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my comment out loud during public input.

My name is Kendra Calhoun, and I am a local community member in support of a ceasefire in Gaza.

Every day that the US government continues to fund Israel's war is another day that it condones the dehumanization of Palestinians, the murder of thousands upon thousands of children, the destruction of Palestine's infrastructure and autonomy, and Israel's explicit genocidal mission. As our state representatives continue to ignore our calls to protect Palestinians and call for a ceasefire, the city council has the opportunity to uplift the voices of the Urbana community and add to the growing list of city councils that have done the same for their local communities.

Palestine and Palestinian people have the right to safety and security; access to food, water, healthcare, and education; freedom of movement; joy.

Ceasefire now.

Kendra Calhoun, Ph.D
[REDACTED]

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Nick Abboud <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 3:04 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 02.19.24 Meeting

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my comment out loud during public input.

My name is Nick Abboud and I am a local community member. I support an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. On October 13th, Gio Eiland - [advisor to Defence Minister Gallant, former Head of the National Security Council and former IDF operations chief](#), said: "Israel needs to create a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, compelling tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in Egypt or the Gulf." Israel has already achieved the first part of that statement with the massacre of more than 30,000 Palestinians, the collapse of the medical infrastructure, the destruction of more than 70% of residential buildings, and the collective starvation of the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza. Israeli officials have time and time again clarified their intent for Gaza: genocide, destruction, and ethnic cleansing. I demand a ceasefire, and I urge the Council to adopt the ceasefire resolution that was presented to it on January 8th.

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Boldrick, Julia <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 10:42 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 02.19.24 Meeting

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my comment out loud during public input.

My name is Julia Boldrick, I am a local community member and I support a ceasefire. Justice and equality are always city business.

If we are ignored by our state representatives, one of the ways we can make our voices heard is to petition on local levels, as is our right as constituents, a right also noted in The Resolution Opposing War Against Iraq. When the larger bodies of government fail to represent the will of the people, the people have every right to call on their local governments to recognize the needs of the majority. We call on you now. The City of Urbana might not have control over the war, but the council has complete control over whether they recognize the voices of the people they've been elected to represent.

Stand on the right side of history.

Thank you,
Julia Boldrick

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Hend Abdelfattah <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 11:21 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT 02.12.24 Meeting

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my comment out loud during public input.

My name is Hend Abdelfattah and I am a local community member I support a ceasefire. Like many Americans, I draw a hardline at hostages. Prior to 10/7 there were 5,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, primarily from the West Bank. More than 1,200 of these are hostages being detained without being charged or allowed to stand trial. These numbers are up to >7,500 detained and more than 2,000 held without charge or trial. These Palestinians are often abducted from their homes by Israeli forces during night raids where they terrorize not only the abductees but also their families and sometimes entire neighborhoods.

According to Human Rights Watch, Palestinians held in Israeli prisons are held under inhumane conditions, often with restrictions on food, medicines, and basic hygiene. Palestinians who are returned to their families report physical and mental abuse and often sexual assault. They are put in solitary confinement for months on end. This has been occurring since 1967 and the number of illegally detained hostages has been steadily increasing.

This is not including the gruesome details of the 1,000 Palestinian children who go through military courts every year. "Palestinian children in the military detention system face physical and emotional abuse, with 4 out of 5 (86%) of them being beaten, and 69% of them strip searched according to new research by "Save the Children".

If we are ignored by our state representatives, one of the ways we can make our voices heard is to petition on local levels, as is our right as constituents, a right also noted in The Resolution Opposing War Against Iraq. When the larger bodies of government fail to represent the will of the people, the people have every right to call on their local governments to recognize the needs of the majority. We call on you now. The City of Urbana might not have control over the war, but the council has complete control over whether they recognize the voices of the people they've been elected to represent.

Hend Abdelfattah

Senior Coordinator of Government Costing

OBFS System Government Costing
University of Illinois System

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Ammar Bhutta <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 6:58 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: Public Input 02.19.24 Meeting

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

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

My name is Ammar Bhutta and I am an Urbana business owner and I support a ceasefire. From October 7 until January 30th, 116 days, at least 26,751 Palestinians have been killed including over 10,000 children, this does not include the more than 7,000 missing assumed to be under the rubble.

It is shocking to see that our representatives have turned a blind eye on the sufferings of humans - these are real people who have died because of inaction

Let's demand a ceasefire now by passing a resolution.

Thanks

- Ammar Bhutta

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Allan Max Axelrod <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 10:04 AM
To: !City Council
Subject: Re: PUBLIC COMMENT to read aloud Feb 19

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Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

I noticed my public comment wasn't read. Please let me know if it was a timing issue or an issue of another matter as time allows.

Sincerely,

Allan

On Tue, Feb 13, 2024 at 7:47 PM Allan Max Axelrod <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Please disregard the "and other avenues" towards the end of the comment. My apologies.

On Tue, Feb 13, 2024 at 7:41 PM Allan Max Axelrod <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Good evening, Urbana City Council,

I strongly agree with remarks by Alderpersons Grace and James at the latest city council meeting. With where our community is, the call by Grace and James for a trauma-informed community forum or listening session to help draft a supported ceasefire resolution is the most we can expect. I have called for a compromise resolution in my January 21, 2024 letter to the editor for many reasons, and residents have failed to come together of their own accord despite statements that they would support an amended resolution. This has to be drafted from council or frankly the labor doesn't seem to be there.

In advance of such a meeting, I have some notes that I hope will help people understand how to navigate these conditions in a literate manner.

Firstly, this is entirely a locally relevant issue and not just as a manner of representation. Besides the numerous residents like myself with friends and/or family involved in the current war, the Illinois national guard is readying for deployment to the Middle East. This was reported by ABC 7 on January 28th citing a cohort of over 300 members of the Illinois National Guard. As the war continues to escalate, more of our residents in the state and federal militaries will be deployed to the region. People that enlist in non-combat roles get put in harm's way when there is escalation. The least we could do is try to de-escalate a war that puts our residents at greater risk.

Secondly, calls for Hamas to disarm will not be heeded without international protections and guarantees that are significantly stronger than the Oslo Accords. Their predecessors in Gaza were Fatah. While community members were willing to reference Fatah in citing both factions throwing members off of buildings, during a civil war that had both the U.S. and Israeli foreign intelligences involved in stoking tensions, residents have not told you what has been happening in Fatah-controlled territory in the West Bank since they gave up armed combat with Israel as part of the Oslo Accords.

Before October 7th and since, the Fatah-controlled West Bank has been the site of Israeli-driven home demolitions and repeated mass arrests on a regular basis. This is one of several reasons why Palestinian territory in the West Bank has been shrinking. The Good Shepherd Collective has been diligently maintaining a dataset since January 23rd of

2023 of the home demolitions while groups like the Youth of Samud will show you footage of the Israeli military detaining residents, taking their vehicles and destroying their homes.

The Good Shepherd Collective wrote in their January 22, 2024 demolition report:

"Between October 7, 2023, and January 21, 2024, Israeli state-sanctioned violence has displaced some 198 Palestinian households, comprising 1,208 individuals, including 586 children, as a result of settler violence and access restrictions across the West Bank. These affected households come from at least 15 herding and Bedouin communities. A significant portion of these displacements, more than half, occurred on three specific dates: October 12th, 15th, and 28th, impacting seven communities and affecting a total of 1,539 people, including 756 children. This is a critical reminder that Israel's mechanisms of ethnic cleansing are not a policy response to "Hamas," nor is it contained to the small, isolated enclave of the Gaza Strip."

Hamas knows about the ongoing demolitions in the West Bank and it is why they choose combat. If you want to call for a disarmed Hamas, then you must also call for the housing and land rights of Palestinians to be upheld with active international involvement. Israel's continued undermining of the Oslo Accords agreement with Fatah is why armed combat continues.

Thirdly, Hamas is unintentionally armed by Israel. Just as the Vietnamese used unexploded ordinance to make weapons, so too does Hamas. This was documented by Al Jazeera on January 28th, 2024. The report reads: "Israel has blamed underground smuggling routes for how well-armed Hamas and other Palestinian fighters have become despite a 17-year-old blockade on the Gaza Strip. But recent intelligence shows Hamas has been able to build many of its rockets and anti-tank weaponry from an unlikely source - unexploded Israeli ordinance dropped on Gaza over many years." If we want to cut off the flow of weaponry to Hamas or to disarm them then the bombarding of Gaza by Israel needs to stop and other avenues.

Stay safe and solidarity,

Allan

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Ruth Kantorovitz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 2:15 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT; Committee of the Whole meeting; February 19, 2024

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Dear Urbana City Council Members,

As was pointed out at the last City Council Meeting on February 12 by several community members, the Public Input time is not an appropriate place to discuss the war in Gaza. It escalates tensions in town, spreads disinformation, legitimizes incitement, and normalizes antisemitism. This is not what we want our City Council to encourage.

Two weeks ago, during public input at the Urbana City Council meeting, the former superintendent, Don Owen, implied that in his professional opinion, the Gaza war can be used as an example when teaching the Holocaust and Genocide unit at the upper grades. I expressed my concern to a member of the Urbana Board of Education, saying that using such material for the Holocaust and Genocide unit violates the district's policies. The Board member replied that he supports Don Owen's statement. Is this what we want to be taught in our schools using our property tax money?

On Saturday, during the Jewish Sabbath, a pro-Palestinian protest chanting the genocidal slogan "from the river to the sea" deliberately past by Hillel, the Jewish center on campus, disrupting traffic on John Street in the process. Maybe you are thinking - "this is Champaign", or "what's the big deal?". To answer that - this is for the same reason we don't have a "Bring them Home" protest passing by the mosque on Lincoln street, especially not on a Friday.

I ask that the City Council to please take actions to promote peace and respect in town.

Sincerely,

Ruth Kantorovitz
Urbana

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Iris Band <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 3:04 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] PUBLIC INPUT 02/19/24

Importance: Low

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"As was pointed out at the last City Council Meeting on February 12 by several community members, the Public Input time is not an appropriate place to discuss the war in Gaza. It escalates tensions in town, spreads disinformation, legitimizes incitement, and normalizes antisemitism. This is not what we want our City Council to encourage."

sincerely

Iris Band

Cho, Seok Hyun 'Rafael'

From: Inbal Elazar <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 4:09 PM
To: !City Council
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] PUBLIC INPUT: 2/19

Importance: Low

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After watching the recording from previous Urbana's city meetings and hearing how people are blaming Israel for attacking innocent civilians, I would like to make sure everyone knows and are aware on what Hamas did on 10/7 to Israeli civilians (including kids and even animals) and how they broke the ceasefire again!!!

Please go to <https://www.hamas.com> website and look at the pictures/videos that were shot by Hamas (with Hamas logos on them).

I repeat: **HAMAS.com**

No one has the right to blame Israel or to call for one side ceasefire without watching these pictures/videos.

I'm asking Urbana council **not** to pass the resolution. Israel has the right to defend itself and bring safety to its citizens

Hamas is a terror organization (declared by US, EU and others) that is bad for Gaza civilians and should be dismantled.

All the hostages should be released.

Thanks,
Inbal Elazar