



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | **COUNCILWOMAN** ERICA BRAY-PARKER | **COUNCILMAN** SCOTT BROWN

COUNCILMAN BRADLEY CLOUSING | **COUNCILWOMAN** LYNN ROBBINS | **COUNCILMAN** SCOTT WELLER

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, December 11, 2023

I. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Mayor Suess following the conclusion of a public hearing. The following were:

Physically Present: Mayor Suess
Councilman Clousing
Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Weller
Councilwoman Bray-Parker

Absent: Councilman Barbier
Councilman Brown

City Staff Present: Michael G. Dzugan, City Manager
John M. Duguay, Assistant City Manager
Robert Lehnhardt, Director of Finance
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer
Halie Cardinal, Public Relations Coordinator
Andrea Rosedale, City Clerk

II. Approval of Planning Session Minutes – October 23, 2023

The City Council approved the October 23, 2023 City Council Planning Session Minutes.

III. Review of Boards, Commissions, and Committees 2023 Annual Reports

City Manager Dzugan stated that the Boards, Commissions, and Committees have provided the City Council with their 2023 Annual Reports, which include 2024 proposed action items tied to City Code purpose statements.

Regarding the Commission on Aging, City Manager Dzugan stated that the City Council directed commission members to develop a formula for determining the base amount for monthly stipends in the Senior Assistance Program.

In response to Council questions, Chair of the Commission on Aging Kristine Eisenmann stated that there is no formula yet for determining the base monthly stipend and that the commission already completed the updated resource binders, which are used for members to be well-versed in resources available to seniors within the program.

City Manager Dzugan stated that City staff recommends the Commission on Aging have an outside consultant conduct a service gap analysis in 2024. Council members expressed support for having a consultant conduct this type of analysis to aid in gaining a further understanding of seniors' needs within the community.

Regarding the Bicyclist & Pedestrian Commission, City Manager Dzugan stated that staff recommends that initiatives and goals should derive from the Wheaton Bicycle Plan. City staff requests that the commission work closely with the Engineering and Police Departments for the Safe Routes to School program, noting that in 2024, these departments will be completing comprehensive reviews with specific recommendations on pick-up and drop-off plans at each school. This review program will start with middle schools. City Manager Dzugan stated that the Wheaton Bicycle Plan is 13 years old, and staff recommends an outside expert review the plan and suggest options for further evaluation.

Regarding the Community Relations Commission, in response to a staff question, Chair Erica Nelson clarified the commission's special event support for the Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA). As an example, last year, the DWA hosted a tree decorating event that supported community members in need and the Community Relations Commission helped with this program through sponsoring a tree. Ms. Nelson noted that the commission's actions are guided by DWA-related events and happenings.

Regarding the Women of Wheaton program, Ms. Nelson stated that it is a program that highlights women who have made or continue to make a positive impact in the Wheaton community. She stated that the commission intends to meet in January 2024 to discuss the criteria and selection process for nominees and the individuals ultimately selected for recognition which they will share with the Council. Some Council members suggested the program could be refocused with a specific theme, such as recognizing women in business, education, or the arts, as opposed to focusing solely on standalone individuals.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Nelson stated that the commission will discuss broadening the musical entertainment at the Festival of Cultures event. She stated that the commission's anchor events such as Festival of Cultures and Good Citizens Award are spread out to accommodate a reasonable workload for its members in order to successfully execute these types of events.

Regarding the Environmental Improvement Commission, City Manager Dzugan stated that the commission's 2024 action items include executing the No Mow May campaign, investigating the implementation of single-use plastic bag fees, recommending environmentally sustainable leaf blower practices, and recommending environmentally sustainable light pollution practices. City staff sought feedback from the Council on whether they would like the commission to pursue these initiatives.

In response to Council questions, Environmental Improvement Commission Chair Ted Witte stated that the 2024 action items were identified through residents' feedback and initiatives implemented by comparable communities.

Some Council members expressed concern in implementing the suggested programs because they are actions that residents can currently choose to take, and some members expressed reservation in mandating these practices via City ordinance. Other members expressed support for the proposed programs as a way to encourage sustainable practices in the community.

Mr. Witte stated the goal was for the commission to conduct research on these action items and present the findings to the City Council. In response to Council questions, Mr. Witte stated the commission continuously looks for ways to evolve events such as the Recycling Extravaganza.

Some Council members discussed the Sustainability Awards and suggested the potential of discontinuing this recognition, while others expressed their support for this program as a way to highlight residents who

are implementing sustainable practices. Some Council members suggested the commission could highlight sustainability in other ways than the awards program. Mr. Witte will provide revised goals to the City Clerk.

Regarding the Fine & Cultural Arts Commission, City Manager Dzugan stated that staff is suggesting that the Council requests the commission to review options for an art display on the retaining wall in Lot 3. Staff suggests the commission provide ideas and recommendations as to the type of artwork to display.

Council members expressed support for pursuing the art display on the retaining wall in Lot 3. Council members directed the commission to research art displays for both the retaining wall in Lot 3 and the back walls of the businesses near the railroad tracks between Wheaton Avenue and Hale Street.

In response to Council questions, DWA Executive Director Allison Orr stated that the business owners alongside the railroad tracks are interested in an art display on the back walls of the buildings. She stated that the surface prep alone would minimally cost \$30,000 based on an estimate from an artist, and that the DWA is working on grant funding for this project. She stated that utilizing a projector as opposed to a mural may prove to be more expensive.

Regarding the Historic Commission, Chair Louise Ferrebee stated that the commission plans to add additional information and details to key architectural sites on the City's website. The commission is proposing to use the new motto "History Lives in Wheaton" as opposed to "Pride in Preservation."

Council members expressed support for the motto "History Lives in Wheaton."

Ms. Ferrebee stated that the Wheaton Register of Historic Places' funding is comprised of \$300 for the lecture and \$200 for the research and information collection. Council members requested that the commission make minor modifications and resubmit their 2024 action items based on this meeting's discussion.

In response to a Council question, Public Information Officer Bishel stated that the Communications Department would like to gain a better understanding as to the type of video the commission would like produced regarding the Wheaton Register of Historic Places.

IV. Public Comment

Erica Nelson noted that she supports hiring an outside expert to perform a service gap analysis for the Commission on Aging. She also suggested that there could be opportunities for the Community Relations Commission and Environmental Improvement Commission to collaborate regarding education.

V. City Council/Staff Comments

Councilwoman Bray-Parker wished community members who celebrate it a Happy Hanukkah.

Councilman Weller, Councilwoman Robbins, and Councilman Clousing thanked all commission members for their hard work and how it contributes to making Wheaton a great place to live and work.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Halie Cardinal