



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH
COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN JOHN RUTLEDGE | COUNCILMAN CHRISTOPHER ZARUBA

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

Monday, January 27, 2020

1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Physically Present: Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Rutledge
Councilman Zaruba

Absent: None

City Staff Present: Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of December 9, 2019 Planning Session Minutes

The Council approved the December 9, 2019 City Council Planning Session minutes.

4. Park District Funding Request – Memorial Park

City Manager Dzugan introduced members of the Wheaton Park District Board and Executive Director Michael Benard, who were present to review a request for a \$1 million financial partnership to assist with capital improvements the Park District is completing in Memorial Park.

Representatives from the Park District outlined some of the key points from their funding request report, highlighting the uses of Memorial Park and the ways it improves the quality of life for the community. Executive Director Benard reviewed the financial partnership between the Park District and the City to address flooding issues in Northside Park in 2008, and he stated the Park District believes this is a similar opportunity for collaboration.

Mr. Benard summarized some of the ways in which the Park District contributes to the City's budget through waived fees for the use of Memorial Park, and he stated that using the DuPage Convention & Visitor's Bureau's metrics, the Park District's Memorial Park events have an economic impact of approximately \$7.5 million annually.

Council members expressed that there are a number of significant expenses the City will also be incurring related to special events, especially the potential need for additional parking during larger special events in

Memorial Park. Council members also expressed concern that while the Park District sought feedback from the municipal band regarding improvements to the bandshell, it would have been more appropriate to solicit the City's feedback, as the band representatives do not have authority to bind the City for improvement costs.

Other Council members expressed concern about the timing of this request, as the Park District has been planning these improvements since 2016, and the request for financial contribution was only initially made in the summer of 2019. The face-to-face meeting is being made with the project well into construction and nearing completion, without the opportunity for much City input. Council members expressed a concern that it does not appear that the Park District has a financial need for assistance in order to complete the project.

Representatives from the Park District stated this is an opportunity for financial contribution going forward, and the Park District does not intend for the City to provide the requested contribution in full at one time.

City Manager Dzugan outlined some of the costs the City incurs to assist with Park District events, which total approximately \$75,000 annually in labor and services from the Public Works and Police departments.

To answer Council questions about the costs for this project, Mr. Benard stated the original construction engineering costs were estimated to be high, and the Park District altered its plan to reduce costs by approximately \$2.5 million.

In response to a question about the municipal band's use of the park, Mr. Benard stated while the Park District does receive more requests for use of the park, the Park District had planned on the band's continued use of the park.

Council members stated they would be interested in getting more information from the Park District on how the figure of \$1 million came to be requested. Council members also expressed concern that this request crosses the lines of what the two entities should be asking of each other. Both the City Council and Park District agreed to continue this discussion among their own entities and continue to consider opportunities for future cooperation.

5. City Council/Staff Comments

Mayor Sues stated he appreciates this opportunity to discuss collaboration, and the City and Park District will be looking to update the intergovernmental agreement in the future.

The Council questioned how they would go about making changes to the decision they made at the last City Council meeting regarding the streetscape design for the block of Main Street between Wesley and Seminary. The Council discussed which option would be ideal for creating lanes with the least amount of shifting and which option would add trees on both sides of Main Street.

Assistant City Manager Duguay stated with this added block of work, the Contractor estimates the timeline of work for this spring/summer will be extended by about 6 weeks.

City Manager Dzugan stated the Council will need a motion to reconsider at their next City Council meeting, and staff will present more information about the options for consideration.

Council members discussed additional capital projects that would facilitate collaboration between the City and Park District, including proposed expansion of Cosley Zoo and a possible overpass at Gary Avenue connecting additional parking to the east. The City will also be looking at traffic changes in this area, including the configuration of Gary Avenue at Prairie, and the intersection of Gary Avenue and Harrison. Both of these projects could be considered for federal funding assistance.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bishel