

Observer Report
City Council
February 25, 2008

Observer: Barbara Fowler

Special Open Meeting Began: 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Ended: 10:00 p.m.

Prior to the City Council meeting, a special open meeting had been called for final discussion and vote on Ordinance 31-0-08 Licensing of Rental Dwellings. This meeting was convened at 7:30 PM. The city council meeting chamber was packed to overflowing. Many rental owners were there (possibly over 100) to protest this change in the ordinance. Those citizens who wanted to speak were allowed to do so within a 3 minute time constraint. The Council sat patiently through approximately 50 speakers, all of whom opposed the proposed ordinance. Only one citizen spoke in favor of the new licensing proposal. The proposal was defeated by the vote of the City Council, 5 nays (Jean-Baptiste, Wynn, Bernstein, Moran, Hansen) 4 ayes (Wollin, Holmes, Tisdahl, Bainey).

Needless to say, with so many citizens speaking against the ordinance, the City Council meeting was delayed until 10:05.

City Council Meeting Began: 10:05 p.m.

Meeting Ended: 11:30 p.m.

Roll call was taken and all aldermen were present.

Announcements: from the Mayor - announced that at the Evanston Community Development Corp. dinner, Alderman Holmes was recognized as an outstanding citizen.

Proclamation: March is Severe Weather Preparedness Month. City will sound sirens on March 4 at 10:00 AM.

City Clerk Morris announced this was the last regular city council meeting of David Jennings who is retiring from his city position. Ms. Morris announced that David is a fantastic photographer and has framed photographs hanging in several places, including Le Peep.

Citizens commentaries: Leah Culcan spoke about the Cultural Arts Council and asked for financial assistance to continue. Joe Sisco co-chair of the Evanston Arts Council spoke of the benefits of the organization and asked for reconsideration of any fund cuts. Gerald Gordon noted that since there were many user fees included in the proposed budget, why not eliminate all user fees and put the equivalent \$ amount into the real estate tax?

Special Order of Business: Approval of the Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2008-2009 in the amount of \$213,673,621.

Consent Agenda: approval of minutes of the Budget Workshop Council Meeting of 1/26/08, minutes of Budget Workshop Council Meeting of 2/2/08 and minutes of the regular city council meeting of 2/11/08.

Administration & Public Works: only two items were not passed by the City Council. Ordinance 34-0-08 Prepared Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverage Tax and Resolution 15-R-08 authorizing the City of Evanston City Manager to Increase the Total General Fund Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriation \$2,087,500 to a New Total of \$91,35 862 (to increase the total General Fund Fiscal Year 2007/2008 appropriation \$2,087,500 to a new total of \$91,357,862).

Planning & Development: items were held in committee for March 10th meeting.

The mayor is bothered by foreclosures in Evanston. Council members' comments were many concerning cutting the budget (which would cut services said City Manager); cut back 1 million of capital projects asked Alderman Jean-Baptiste; kickbacks to Hilton Garden Inn asked Alderman Rainey.

Alderman Bernstein wants discussion with Metra RR and the bus company concerning the condition of the bridge over Dempster.

The aldermen spoke warmly to David Jennings and thanked him for his many years of service to Evanston.

The Council went into executive session at 11:30 PM.