

**Observer Report
City Council
February 9, 2009**

Council or Committee: City Council

Date: 2/9/09

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present/Absent: All there.

Staff Present: Cast of dozens since the budget and downtown plan were on the agenda.

Media Present: Review and RoundTable and a NU class

Meeting Began. 9:05 pm

Meeting Ended: 11:30 p.m.

No. of Citizens in Attendance: About 40

Announcements/Citizen Comment

On a pleasant note, Evanston received awards for painting the snowplows and for the Ridge Ave. improvement. Then came citizen comment which was the most vitriolic I have ever heard with all those types of comments based on the process for the Downtown Plan. One person announced that he had sent a complaint to Springfield and it was forwarded to Lisa Madigan's office.

2016 Olympics plan was presented (and later passed on the consent agenda). Evanston would be host of the pentathlon (5-part event of swimming, horseback obstacle course, pistol shooting – air gun – cross country running race and fencing). All events at NU facilities. Only 5 events outside of Chicago. No parking at the events. Also, the Orrington Hotel is one of the designated hotels for Olympic officials and press.

Significant Discussions, Action Taken:

* Staff highlighted the changes to the budget. The budget would be balanced with no tax increase and several one-time infusions of cash from other funds and it was slightly lower than 2008. NU had agreed to contribute to the improvement of the salt dome and would pay administration fees on their purchases of salt, AND, Russell was in continuing discussion with Sunshine and Krasnow on future cash contributions. Ann Rainey announced she was going to move to hold over passage since she still had some meetings with constituents, at which point the Mayor said the budget had to be passed on the 9th in order to allow time for a potential veto and then a 10-day window for the Council to adopt another budget. Staff announced that preparation for 2010 would start in March and that they would prepare for Council review a quarterly assessment of income and expenses so there would be no surprises and changes could be made in a timely fashion.

* Downtown Plan was passed with no discussion – it was already 11 pm.

* Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov School for a rezoning was denied.

* Roycemore's request for the Methodist building to be rezoned to R4 was passed and the ordinance will be drafted to allow them until March 2011 to begin construction of the gymnasium.

* Changing the code to raise the lodging establishment fees will come up at the next meeting. Russell has the legal opinion and is also looking into a fee for reinspection. Rainey wanted staff to give Council examples of code violations for non-profits. Wollen has examples of other town-gown rooming house fees.

Call of the Wards

Never a dull moment at the meeting. Jean Baptiste wanted to make a motion to have the AT&T box construction ceased until the Rules committee can debate and develop a plan for the future of the boxes. Mayor said that's not possible during the Call of the Wards. Finally it was moved to "bypass the rules" (for some reason they couldn't "suspend" them) and then to move the issue to Rules and make AT&T "cease and desist" any construction in the interim. Several aldermen made note of the tone of the citizens who commented.

League Action

We should make certain the quarterly budget reviews are provided and discussed.