

Observer Report

City Council

Date: September 27, 2008

Observer: Barbara Putta

Aldermen Present/Absent: All aldermen present

Staff Present: Mayor, City Manager, City Clerk

Meeting began: 9:05 pm

Meeting ended: 11:00 pm

Mayor Public Announcements: The Mayor introduced CEDA, a metropolitan social service organization with offices in Evanston, which gave a presentation on its services.

Art Presentation: donation of print of Fountain Square for Levy Center.

The City Manager announced a foreclosure prevention seminar for Nov 5 at 5:30 PM.

The City Clerk announced that an average of 500 people per day have been voting early, for a projected total of approximately 8000 early voters in Evanston.

Citizen Comment: (1) objection to process for branch library renovation, (2) request for sidewalk snow removal as a condition for extension of building permit for the developer of Central Street condos, (3) defense of high salary expenses for affordable housing projects, (4) objection to cable work by Comcast (not ATT), (5) **encouragement of applications for property tax exemptions (9 different exemptions are available) by the Township Assessor**, (6) objection to property tax interfund transfers, (7) (8) (9) thanks for Mason Park renovations, staff and programming, (10) announcement of housing meeting Nov 13 at Levy Center, and (11) concern about NU long range plan potential to block public access at south end.

Special Order of Business: unanimous approval of \$52,500 contract for design, design development, preparation of construction documents and oversight of remodeling of North and South Branches of Library. Various aldermen repeated stands on location of branches (Rainey -- consider Dempster Plaza as alternative site; Wynn - defended South Branch site; Jean-Baptiste - consider Robert Crown as future site for west branch). Bernstein directed City staff to negotiate with branch site landlord for sharing of expenses and extension of lease.

The Consent Agenda was passed unanimously, with virtually no comment::

(1) Approval of Minutes of 5/19/08 and 10/13/08.

(2) Approval of Administration & Public Works Consent Agenda: City Payroll through 10/12, Bills through 10/28, and contracts for service maintenance for police department and 911 center, Church Street and Maple Avenue Self Park revenue control equipment service; change in project scope for renovation of Evanston Art Center; increase to \$35 of emergency parking violation penalty; and authorization of issuance of \$20 million general obligation bonds (rules suspended to provide that bonds would not be marketed at certain interest rates).

(3) Approval of Planning and Development Consent Agenda: additional 2-year extension for 1700 Central Street PUD (**concerns about housing market were expressed in Planning & Development meeting**), allocation of \$81,830 in HOME funds for 5 Community Housing Development Organizations (**concerns about high salary expenses and viability of vacant affordable housing projects in light**

of foreclosure crisis were expressed in Planning & Development meeting); denial for map amendment and PUD for 1031 Sherman; tabled map amendment and PUD for 708 Church.

(4) Approval of September 2008 Township monthly bills.

(5) Approval of \$132,000 for EVMARK to bridge operational budget funding gap.

(6) Approval of appointments of **Chris Robuck to Board of Ethics, Audrey Soglin Kihm to Civil Service Commission, and Christopher Stewart to Library Board.**

Call of Wards: Wollin announced another meeting about NU's Long Term Plan on Oct 30; Jean-Baptiste acknowledged work of Mason Park citizens group; Bernstein encouraged further future discussion of CHDOS affordable housing projects; **Moran announced that he would not run re-election after 18 years in office;** Tisdahl encouraged early voting; and Rainey and Hanson applauded Bike the Ridge event.