

Observer Report
City Council
April 14, 2009

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present/Absent: All there.

Staff Present: Department heads, transportation engineering staff, legal staff.

Media Present: Bill Smith was the only one I recognized but there were others.

Meeting Began. 8:55 pm

Meeting Ended: 10:45 p.m.

No. of Citizens in Attendance: About 15, including newly elected: Grover, Tendam, and D. Wilson and B. Wilson.

Announcements Two young women (11 and 15) received citations from the City for their contact with 911 when they saw a man stumble and fall in Brummel Park last fall. Their families were there with lots of “Ahs!” and cameras clicking celebrating a moment for them to be proud. Business Week named Evanston as one of the 50 top small cities in which to start a business.

Annual Town Meeting Pat Vance quoted the Constitution and Lincoln in her report that stated that the township is the oldest form of government. She also said that average township grant to residents increased 11% last year and that the Township had an average case load of 68 clients. Sharon Eckersoll was less eloquent and reminded the audience that the county court houses are fazing out their assistance for tax bills which will likely increase the call for local help.

Citizen Comment Jeff Smith spoke against the extension of the 1700 Central St. development. A candidate in the 7th Ward expressed his dismay at the “machine” antics in the election. Eckersoll echoed that sentiment and also said that on the day after the election 3 squad cars pulled up to her office as she and staff were sorting paper and told them to stop as they might be destroying files. Later Steve Bernstein and Bonnie Wilson arrived. And, she had to speak with Purze in the hall as she was told her office no longer rented the conference room. Finally, a new resident spoke of his “sticker shock” when moving to Evanston: high taxes, high fees, quick parking tickets, etc.

Multimodal Transportation Plan Presentation Paul Snyder, transportation engineer, gave a very brief overview of the plan which will have the City improving how people can get around the City over the next four years.

Significant Discussions, Action Taken:

* Tisdahl attempted to delete the City portion of a Cultural Program (\$24,200) from the awards and only use the state share (\$12,800) in order to cut expenditures. The motion was defeated as others said it was too late in the process – the applications were received in November.

* A foreclosure prevention strategy for 241 Callan called to add \$60,000 in affordable housing funds to help the developer while some units are converted to rental passed with the modification that the developer pay back property taxes and provide an update on the leasing of the units within 60 days.

* Bernstein amended the motion for payment of township bills. Human Services was holding up payment of legal bills thus reducing the original request from \$141,901 to \$65,505. Bernstein's amendment further reduced the payment by \$742 until an invoice for office supplies was verified by staff.

Call of the Wards

Bernstein reported that he has spoken with Julie Hamos to explore having the township elected officers installation moved to the spring rather than to January 1 of the following year.

Moran suggested people read the library report as it details the many activities of the library system.

Holmes expressed her dismay that there were statements made during the campaign that were not truthful.