

Observer Report

Council or Committee: City Council

Date: July 28, 2008

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present/Absent: Absent Hanson. Bernstein attended via phone from me.

Staff Present: Russell, Green, Gaynor, Police Chief, others

Media Present: Review, RoundTable and some NU students

Meeting Began. 9 pm (30 minutes late)

Meeting Ended: 11:15 p.m.

No. of Citizens in Attendance: About 30 (after citizen comment)

Announcements/Citizen Comment

Twenty-three on agenda topics and two on other items. Several people spoke in favor of the PACE dormitory/National Lewis project on Central St. One spoke in favor of requiring the project to pay a fee in lieu of taxes. The Evanston Baseball/Softball Assoc. had two speakers thanking the city for its support (maintenance of the fields) and publicly donated four scoreboards for four fields at James Park. A handful of players handed out pins that had been designed to trade with other teams at a national tournament. 1600 kids play baseball through this program. J. Rizki spoke of the need for better management of City-owned real estate. Representative from NRA spoke for repeal of the gun ordinance. Several urged patience since a model ordinance is being developed (by a local lawyer) to fill in any number of holes that will be opened when there is no ordinance at all. One spoke against the curb cuts for Trader Joe's.

Significant Discussions, Action Taken:

- The “Weapons” ordinance, scheduled for repeal, was held at the committee level to await development of a model ordinance.
- The curb cuts for Trader Joe’s were approved despite the loss of two metered parking spots. There was a call to have the store rep lost revenue.
- National Lewis dormitory on Central St. was approved despite repeated urgings by Ann Rainey to require a fee in lieu of the lost taxes (\$90,000 while the building was empty), especially when the school’s Form 990 indicates it is well capable of paying the fee. Jean-Baptiste also voiced opposition and suggested that a policy be developed to deal with similar situations when property may be taken off the tax roll. Liz Tisdahl spoke eloquently – supporting this type of program is “Evanston” and questioned how it would be v if these disabled students are, in essence, taxed and thousands of other students are not. Moran spoke in favor with similar arguments and Wollin said that education should not be taxed.

Call of the Wards

Several thanked the Eshes for donating \$45,000+ to refurbish a grotto next to the Lighthouse. Alderman Rainey said that Metro has \$250,000 in its budget to design a stop for the yellow line. Wollin reported that she received a letter that Whole Foods South will donate slightly old flowers and plants to 501-c-3 agencies.

Your comments, impressions; is League action needed? Just a slight suggestion. Someone should suggest that when an alderman is present via phone (Bernstein spoke was at home and following on the TV and speaking into a phone), they should either mute the TV or go in a different room to avoid the echo.