

**Observer Report  
City Council  
September 22, 2008**

**Observer:** Fran Seidman

**Aldermen Present:** All

**Meeting Began:** 9 p.m.

**Meeting Ended:** 11:30 pm

The meeting began at 9PM (A&PW ran late). All the aldermen were present. Also the Mayor, the Interim City Manager and Interim City Clerk. Staff was well represented, and citizens came and went, as their topics of interest came up.

There were two proclamations--one honoring the United Way--one honoring Meals at Home. Fire Safety Week begins on October 5th, and there will be an Open House at the Fire Station on Emerson.

The death of Ellen Schrodtt was announced, and during the Call of the Wards every alderman expressed sorrow at her passing.

Citizen Comment

A number of people were there to participate in the Citizen Comment area. The Mayor tried quite hard to limit the comments, on the grounds that everyone would say essentially the same things, and it seemed likely that some changes will be made before long. The topic of everyone's concern was the AT&T boxes going up throughout the city, without any input from residents, in close proximity to homes. Resentment was strong that AT&T was given carte blanche by the state legislature, without consideration of possible safety factors, or effect on property values, or environmental impact. There was recognition that our legislators were under the impression that the competition would control costs, but the consensus was that was totally off base, and that something must be done, without delay.

Mayor Morton seemed convinced that other jurisdictions, comparable to Evanston, had taken actions to stop AT&T, but the legal opinion seemed to isolation essentially preempted the rights of localities. It also was noted that AT&T is following Evanston's ordinances. We can not "opt out". Alderman Jean-Baptiste said, in summary, that we all feel shocked and powerless, , and that the Legal Department needs to find a way to slow down the installations until a more permanent solution can be found.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was passed, with several items removed for specific consideration. The first "off" item involved a family apparently in arrears to the city. The facts were not clearly

presented. There was an interesting and somewhat heated exchange between the Mayor and Alderman Jean-Baptiste. She asked a question about the children involved. He said that was totally irrelevant. She said the well-being of children would always be of concern to her, and that as responsible professionals we have a legal obligation to the children who come our way. End of discussion.

Also up for consideration was the City-owned property in the 700 block of Chicago Avenue. This would be consolidated with two private parcels for a private mixed-use development. It went back for some further work.

There was a fair amount of discussion regarding a Special Sign District at 901 Church. Would it attract graffiti? Passed with one opposing vote by Ald. Moran. Considerable discussion of the convenience store at 2536 Ewing. Neighbors object to the strong lighting in a residential area. This and a few other concerns led to amendments to the ordinance, and a hold till new material reaches the Council. Representatives from the store and franchisee were present and seemed cooperative.

### Finances

Alderman Rainey introduced and handled the discussion of four additional items relating to salary increases for the mayor, aldermen, city clerk, and township supervisor. The Compensation Committee recommended increases for all, but specified 4 year increments of \$500 per year. Ald. Rainey supported the increases but stated in her motions that the increases would take place in full as of the coming year. Alderman Moran objected, saying that there are serious budget considerations and financial issues. Each of the other aldermen rose in turn and gave persuasive arguments that the increases are deserved and needed. Several pointed out that they may not be in office next year, and are concerned about their successors. Motions passed with one nay vote. Mayor's pay will go from \$17,000 to \$19,000; Aldermen from \$10,000 to \$12,000; City Clerk from \$49,000 to \$50,000; and Township Supervisor from \$11,400 to \$13,400.

The Mayor expressed concern that the Commission report did not mention their medical benefits. It was moved and seconded that the report be amended to include a reference to the medical benefits. This passed unanimously.

### Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.