

Observer Report

City Council

March 8, 2010

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present/Absent: All there.

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

Media Present: Bill Smith, Bob Seidenberg, one other

Meeting Began. 8:25 pm
(This was just about 15 minutes after P&D)

Meeting Ended: 10:15 p.m.
(Went to Exec. Session)

No. of Citizens in Attendance: About 10, but all left after the Consent Agenda at 9:55.

Announcements

- The Mayor was at a meeting where Mayor Daley was talking about gun control and he also was dismayed that Quinn was cutting \$300 million from cities which translates to about \$1.6 million for Evanston.
- The chief of the state fire union spoke. He supports reform to the pension system after the organization did an analysis of the state of pensions state-wide. The report focused more on downstate. The union will support a bill that calls for any change in benefits must be analyzed as to the cost to the local municipality. They also support HB5497 which will extend the date of having the pensions fully funded from 2033 to 2040; if there is another downturn in the stock market the compliance would be readjusted; actuarial assumptions on return of investments cannot exceed 7.5%; and if a community is not choosing to fulfill its obligation, the state comptroller would get involved.
- There was a demonstration of Teen Tech Week at the library by three girls. They should have been given a time limit, but it was cute.
- The Manager announced there is a grassroots group working with staff to develop a proposal for Evanston to become a “Google” community. 3/24 will be Google Day in Evanston. Competition will be fierce. (Peoria has changed its name to Google for the month!)

Special Order of Business Council had charged staff to address Safety Goals. The City engineer reported that the department is working on pedestrian safety (more crosswalks, curb buildouts, Oakton school area, a “safe route to school” and bicycle safety). Parks/Recreation is working with District 202 to develop some safe places for teens to hang out on weekends. The chief said there have already been 17 citations for speeding in school areas, a lot more DUI enforcement and more work with the 50 Neighborhood watch groups.

Doug Gaynor described the RFQ for a new ice rink at Robert Crown. The proposal is looking for a public/private partnership and certainly would not be a club. The current building would be torn down after a new building is built – likely at the corner of Dodge and Oakton. Staff is looking for similar types of arrangements but not finding any close by.

Citizen Comment: Only one person who chastised the council and particularly the Mayor for the fiscal mess we are in and not dealing with.

Significant Discussions, Action Taken: Started at 9:40. They really didn't do anything that wasn't already talked about in Committees.

Call of the Wards

- Ald. Fiske said staff did a good job at her Ward meeting last week. Thanked the Mayor for her help in resolving that folks who wanted to stay in their apartments at 1900 Sherman while their windows were being retuckpointed could do so after signing a waiver.
- Ald. Wynne noted this was International Women's Day and that most women in the world are still poorly educated, underfed, uneducated and under paid – 15 years after the conference in Beijing.
- Ald. Rainey referred to Rules that we will be negotiating with cable companies shortly and there should be a citizen/cable committee established.