

Observer Report

City Council

March 22, 2010

Observer: Jan Otwell (from home)

Aldermen Present/Absent: All Present

Staff Present: City Manager and several Department Heads

Media Present: Couldn't tell

Time Meeting Began: 7:40 pm

Time Meeting Ended: 9:50 pm (to go into exec session)

Mayor's Proclamations: (Each of these had a citizen representing the issue and available for a photo op with the Mayor):

- 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- March 24 as Google Day in Evanston to encourage Evanston's choice for high speed broadband network
- National Public Health Week

City Manager's Announcements:

- Launch of Dept. of Public Health's "Women Out Walking" Initiative
- Trash and Yard Waste Changes
- Census 2010 Update

Special Order of Business (presentations on two City Council Goals. . . for action) adopted

- Efficiency and Effectiveness of Service
- Affordable Housing Strategy and Work Plan

Citizen Comment: Three citizens supported the Innovation Center (see later part of this report); Susan Monroe spoke in support of the affordable housing task force; Jeff Smith and Betty Ester were there in behalf of the land trust; and a disabled man requested a relaxation in the city's regulations about street vending so he could have more time to set up his wares.

Significant Action:

Street Resurfacing: Aids. Rainey and Burrus voted against a motion to approve a contract for street resurfacing, saying they did not feel the contractor provided sufficiently good work. **Motion passed 7-2.**

Citizens' Lighthouse Community Land Trust: Considerable discussion ensued over a motion to approve a request by CLCLT for an additional \$20,000 from HOME funds to cover cost overruns on a home at 2212 Washington. Request was recommended by the Housing Commission, not recommended by staff. It was discussed by P&D last month and held for additional information. Ald. Rainey spoke strongly against giving CLCLT any more money; Ald Jean-Baptiste spoke just as strongly in support. Discussion centered around a "policy" --- whether the City has such a policy which would govern a decision in this case. City Manager Bobkiewicz said his office would clarify. **Motion failed 5-4.**

WCTU In Local Preservation District: A representative of the WCTU gave a presentation in behalf of a proposed ordinance designating four buildings in the 1700 block of Chicago Ave., including the WCTU headquarters, as a local historic preservation district. One of the buildings holds the papers of Frances Willard as she fought for the 18th Amendment. **For introduction.**

Technology Innovation Center: A motion was made to support \$100,000 for the Technological Innovation Center. The Economic Development Committee and the staff recommended support. Ald Fiske initiated a lively discussion by asking the board chair if he would add a city staff person to his board. The chair explained the board consisted only of himself, his wife, and one other individual and that those three people contributed large amounts of financial support. The aldermen wrestled with an organization with an unorthodox structure, but were very much in favor of the work they do. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Call of the Wards:

Ward 1: No report.

Ward 2: Ald. Jean-Baptiste urged the city planner in charge of the census to do special outreach for minority groups. . . He has just assisted in the filling of containers to be shipped to Haiti, and will return there in a few weeks to help distribute the medical supplies in the containers.

Ward 3: Ald Wynne reported how valuable the National Conference of Cities was for the City Manager and four aldermen who attended.

Ward 4: Ald. Wilson spent time with speed skater Shani Davis and urged support for efforts to renovate Robert Crown.

Ward 5: Ald Holmes announced a housing meeting at Fleetwood Jourdain.

Ward 6: Ald. Tendam also expressed appreciation for the experience of the Conference.

Ward 7: Ald. Grover also went to the Conference. Was impressed with some of the efforts for “green” cities and would like to follow up.

Ward 8: Ald. Rainey announced a budget meeting tomorrow. . . Wants staff to follow up with the disabled street vendor who spoke at citizen comment.

Ward 9: Ald. Burrus appreciated the conference. Thinks a city lobbyist would be helpful.