

Observer Report
Special City Council Meeting
Capital Improvement Plan
May 17, 2010

Purpose: to hear and consider Capital Improvement Program Presentation

Observer: Jessica Feldman **Meeting began:** 7:30 pm **Meeting Ended:** 9:15 pm

Aldermen Present/Absent: All present except Alderman Jean Baptiste who was in DC. Mayor Tisdahl said he was at the White House dinner.

Staff Present: Staff from most departments

Media Present: Bill Smith for EvanstonNow, Mary Gavin for RoundTable, Bob Seidenberg, Evanston Review, Chicago Tribune and Daily Northwestern reporters (names unknown). Trib reporter expressed surprise at the small citizen attendance.

Citizen Comment: Jean Lindwall, Carl Bova, and Junad Rizki. Speakers expressed concern about using bond funds for operating expenses such as engineering studies, funding CIP projects whose life cycle does not exceed bond term.

Joellen Daly gave an overview of the presentation with Steve Drazner (sp?) presenting the 18-page slide summary of the 173 CIP Program plan. He began by explaining that the focus would be on the City Council's adopted "Priority 1" CIP projects for FY10/11, for which the priority status was previously determined based on 4 criteria: a) was project already funded or in progress at start of FY10/11; b) was project funded by revenues other than general obligation bonds; c) was project critical to the success of other projects or operations; and d) was project part of a multi year maintenance program that, if interrupted, would most likely result in higher costs for the same improvement in later years.

Alderman Rainey immediately asked Steve to provide definitions of some of the terms used in the slide presentation, including (1) G.O debt; (2) GO abated and unabated debt, and (3) CIP Fund Reserves. The definitions are:

- (1) General Obligation debt is debt financed by issuing bonds during this budget year;
- (2) GO abated is a bond where another fund (i.e. water, parking) pays;
- (3) GO unabated --- use of funds remaining from a previously issued bond on which debt is still being paid (just not being paid as part of new current year obligation).

Then Alderman Wilson, supported by Alderman Wynne, asked which of the Priority 1 projects were already approved, possibly in progress or completed with only final invoices still outstanding. He said staff needed to parse out for the Council which projects at this point can they actually do something about as they make their decisions. Alderman Burrus reminded everyone that the Council had only approved the total amount for on Priority 1 with no actual projects approved during the Budget process. Alderman Tendam chimed in saying aldermen

need to know which contracts for projects on the list are already issued and if City matches are required for any projects being funded by grants. Alderman Grover wanted to know what made priority 1 Priority 1. It was clear the aldermen thought there was insufficient information being provided in order for them to be able to make good decisions. That was the tenor throughout the meeting. Definitely not as simple an acceptance of the presentation as was anticipated.

When the Mayor finally saw no aldermanic lights on, she asked the City Manager if he had enough information to move to the next step and what would that be. He said they would like to come back possibly at the first meeting in June with the Priority 1 “minutiae” of what has been spent to date on preliminary items, etc;. with a revised Priority 1 plan based on the questions raised.