

Observer Report

Special City Council Meeting, July 19, 2010

Observer: Jan Otwell (on Channel 16)

Meeting Began: 7:02.

Meeting Ended 9:25

Aldermen Present: Ald. Wynne was out of town; Ald. Rainey was at a family event. All other aldermen were present.

Staff present: Hard to tell on the TV. Doug Gaynor, head of Parks and Rec, conducted most of the meeting. Some of his staff were there. Also the Police Chief and Library Director.

Media Present: EvanstonNow

Citizen Comment: None. (The camera panned the room about 8:30, and it was totally empty except for a couple staff and the EvanstonNow reporter)

Significant Discussion: The City Manager explained the purpose of the special meeting was to take a look at two areas: **(1) the city's special events and the (2) youth programs**. He wanted the aldermen to look at what we were doing now, and how we might do more in Evanston locations that are often not used. (A packet of information on these programs was provided to the aldermen.)

Special Events: Doug Gaynor gave a power point presentation on the programs, which stimulated discussion for an hour and a half or so. James Park (behind the Levy Center) was identified as a location for a major event that would attract several thousand participants to Evanston. Gaynor said parking was a problem, tramping on the sprinkler system, was another problem, as was the fact that activity needs to cease by 11 p.m. Aldermen considered the possibility of purchasing a mobile stage (\$85,000 when Gaynor last checked) to be used at events such as the 4th of July parade, arts festivals, etc., instead of incurring the \$5,000 rental fee each time. Use of the area along the canal should be considered, as well as cooperation with Ridgeville Park District and the area along Howar St. Gaynor explained how many of the programs offered were funded partially by another entity and attempt was made to keep some of them budget neutral.

Summary: Bobkiewicz said the City would be hiring a development director who would be on board by September. He summarized that he would check on the following suggestions raised by the aldermen:

Outdoor movies
Nature events
Cooperation with Ys, NU

Concerts in James Park
Purchase of a portable stage
More outdoor races or walks

Youth Programs: Gaynor said that he is including not only youth programs in his department but also those in the Police Department, Community Development and the Evanston Public Library. He described the Department's Youth Council and the Mayor made a commitment to attend the September meeting.

In response to a question by Ald. Jean-Baptiste, who has had a long time interest in these programs, Gaynor said to handle the kids who "fall between the cracks", the Department is working with the Cook County Sheriff's office with incarcerated youth two months before their release. Gaynor's Department tries to assure that these kids have what they need – a place to live, a job, clothes – when they get out so they are not back on the street.

Gaynor's Department is working with Put Illinois to Work and is participating in the Youth Summit. In looking ahead, he hopes to enhance youth programs at ETHS; keep Crown Center going with ice skating; flood fewer outdoor rinks next year; develop a life guard training program.

Youth Programs in Community Development: First, Department Director Lehman Walker thanked the aldermen for their good wishes as he moves back to University City, MO., which he left just a year ago to come to Evanston. He spent 12 years there as Community Development Director, and is returning as City Manager. He felt the Evanston Department needed to increase partnerships, develop more funding options, and operate more year-round programs.

Youth Programs in the Police Department: Chief Eddington outlined the work of the School Resource Officers, the Youth Services Bureau, the Youth Outreach Program, and the Victim Services Bureau.

Youth Programs of the Evanston Public Library: The Library has expanded its summer reading program with stations in Evanston Plaza, Fleetwood-Jourdain, and Robert Crown. The Loft, on the upper floor of the Main Library, is devoted to teens and their reading, listening, and creativity.

League Observations: Gaynor is a very tentative presenter, doing fine when he is reading the power point screens, but being rather short in replies to come questions, leaving the impression he can't answer them (which may be the case). Generally, however, he was well prepared. . . of the Aldermen, Jean-Baptiste and Grover did most

of the questioning, with Holmes and Burrus doing some. Rainey had given the Mayor a question about transportation, which she didn't read until the end.