

**Observer Report
Rules Committee
August 6, 2007**

Observer: Sue Calder

Aldermen Present/Absent: John-Baptiste (chair), Moran, Tisdahl, Bernstein, Rainey, Holmes, Wynne, Hansen and Mayor Morton. Absent: Wollin

Staff Present: Carroll, Aillo, Hill and Purze, Morgan, Francelino and others.

Media Present: Evanston Review, RoundTable

Meeting Began. 6:04 pm

Meeting Ended: 7:15 pm

No. of Citizens in Attendance: about 15 – mostly connected with the NAACP

Significant Discussions, Action Taken:

- 1) Approved the concept of joint Preservation Commission and Plan Commission meetings when there is a presentation for a planned development. The idea is that the developer would then only have to make one presentation and each of the commissions would have the opportunity to ask questions. When it comes to a vote, Preservation will vote first and then the Plan C. It is anticipated that such joint meetings would happen several times a year but not monthly. Details are still being worked out.
- 2) Sent to Council the proposition to have a referendum for an increase in the real estate transfer tax of \$1 to help with the \$100 million liability in the underfunded pension fund.
- 3) Discussed the use of web sites by aldermen. Evidently Ald. Rainey has a web site which she pays for and identifies herself as “8th Ward Alderman, City of Evanston.” She has put on it a disclaimer that it is her site but is that enough? Question on the liability of the city if someone thought a statement was libelous. This pretty much was “he says, she says” with lots of heated statements. The issue was whether the site included something to the effect that a couple of people were “meddlers” or whether that statement was taken from a personal letter Ald. Rainey wrote on reading scores at Oakton which was then posted on the Oakton School website. Asked Legal department to get back to them on research on freedom of speech – contact the ACLU, etc.