

Observer Report

City Council

November 28, 2011

Observer: Betty Hayford

Aldermen present: All

Staff present: Many; Marty Lyons, Evonda Thomas, Grant Farrar, etc.

Media present: Evanston Now, RoundTable, Northwestern Daily, one other (Review?)

Meeting began: 8:20 pm

Meeting ended: 10:20

MAJOR EVENT: COUNCIL PASSED THE BUDGET FOR FY 2012! (see below for details)

Announcements: The Mayor announced Red & White Day recognizing contribution of North Shore Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The City Manager introduced Lori Osborne who reported on the Ten Ideas for Our Future developed through the Evanston 150 process leading to the 2013 Sesquicentennial celebration. Evonda Thomas announced that the Illinois Department of Public Health has recertified the Evanston Public Health Department so it is eligible for state grants. Marty Lyons announced the city has received an award for Distinguished Budget Presentation for FY2011 Budget.

Citizen comment: Nineteen citizen comments: 2 requesting Council reduce expenses and the tax rate; 2 defending the Township; 1 thanking Council for creating a balanced advisory committee on licensing rental units; 4 supporting the revised marijuana ordinance and 1 opposing it; 1 critical of Council waste; 2 supporting the Forestry Department secretary; 1 opposing the NSP2 program and Emerson Place; one requesting removal of a damaged tree; 2 supporting Occupy Evanston; and Padma Rao and her mother.

The Mayor then called on Alderman Fiske who reported on the investigation of the Ethics Board into the charges made by Padma Rao and her mother that she had been unethical. The Board unanimously ruled that she had not violated the city Code of Ethics.

Discussion/action: Alderman Rainey introduced the consent agenda. First item was approval of minutes. From **Administration & Public Works:** Payroll; Bills; approval of contract for Civic Center fire pump; approval of contracts for FY2012 Water Treatment Chemicals; approval of Contract for AFSCME uniforms; approval of renewal of contract with Duncan Solutions for Parking Ticket Management and Payment Processing; approval of Purchase of Insurance/Renewals; approval of Maintenance Contract with Evmark; authorizing the City Manager to execute a license agreement for the installation of public electric vehicle charging stations at lots 3, 4, and 32; amending the city code relating to city waterworks system providing a 5% water rate increase(introduction); increasing the sanitation service charges(introduction); requiring the recycling of electronic products (introduction); authorizing the City Manager to negotiate the sale of 1817 Church Street and to execute the sale (introduction); approving 2011 special service area #4 tax levy; amending class AC liquor licenses to allow patrons to purchase alcohol in viewing auditoriums during motion pictures rated PG-13 or R.

Planning & Development: approval of plat consolidation for two lots at 2664-68 Sheridan Road; ordinance adding a time limitation for all building permits regardless of work status (introduction); approval of amendment to the redevelopment agreement with Brinshore Development for Phase 2A of the NSP2 grant, covering the development of the first phase of Emerson Square, including an Illinois Housing Development grant of \$8.9 million; granting a special use permit for a Type 2 Subway

restaurant at 724 Clark Street; granting a special use permit for an automobile body repair shop at 1961 Dempster Street.

Human Services: amending Evanston code provisions related to “Marijuana.”

Economic Development: approval of \$50,000 matching funds for the awarded NEA grant to study potential sites for performing arts venues in downtown Evanston.

Also two appointments to the Mayor’s Youth Task Force.

The consent agenda passed without dissent.

Alderman Burrus presented items from **Administration & Public Works**, starting with the FY2012 City of Evanston budget in the amount of \$250,096,993. She commended the City Manager and Assistant City Manager Lyons for their excellent budget presentation. However she will not support because she believes more cuts should be made, some revenue projections are not realistic, and more funds should be transferred to the Capital Fund instead of borrowing. Alderman Grover stated that many people had contributed to producing the budget and she noted that hard decisions were made based on many compromises, a more effective process than could be seen in Washington. Alderman Fiske said she was troubled by some decisions including the imposition of new fees. She felt council needed a better understanding of economic development. She regretted the cut of the Forestry Department Secretary and Zoning administrator. She tried to reconsider the cut of the Secretary but did not have any support. Alderman Rainey also expressed regret at the creation of regressive taxes and fees on necessities, and hoped Council would take this issue more seriously in the future. The City Manager thanked the staff for all their good work. He noted that he has presented three hard budgets including substantial lay-offs, but he is confident that the excellent and hard-working staff will do good work. He and the staff will continue to look for ways to be efficient and serve the community.

The budget passed, 6-3, with Burrus, Fiske and Wilson voting no.

Council then considered the 2011 Tax Levy including a 2% increase for Police and Fire Pension Funding. The motion passed 9 -0. The ordinance levying the 2011 property tax for the Township passed 8 – 1, Rainey opposing.

Alderman Holmes presented one item from **Planning and Development**, the appointment of a mayoral committee to review a proposed ordinance licensing rental dwelling units. The committee is recommending a broad-based committee reflecting the different affected groups. The motion passed without dissent.

Alderman Tendam presented one item from **Economic Development**, the final report from the Lakefront Committee. Alderman Rainey suggested that the report did not accurately reflect the view of the committee that Mr. Vasilko should consult with Northwestern on his ideas, but only said that he might. It was noted that the report was just a draft and could be revised. The report was accepted without dissent.

Call of the wards. Several aldermen congratulated Alderman Tendam on his festive wedding celebration. Alderman Grover announced the establishment of the Indoor Farmers Market, and expressed pleasure at the successful Turkey Trot event on Thanksgiving Day, with 1500 participants. Alderman Wynne announced the impending demolition of the former Salvation Army site on Chicago Avenue and the ground-breaking for new development at Chicago and Kedzie.