



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH
COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN JOHN RUTLEDGE | COUNCILMAN CHRISTOPHER ZARUBA

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Present By Video Conference:

Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Rutledge
Councilman Zaruba

City Staff Present By Video Conference:

Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer
Jim Kozik, Director of Planning & Economic Development
Joe Tebrugge, Director of Engineering

2. Approval of April 27, 2020 Minutes

The Council approved the April 27, 2020 City Council Planning Session minutes.

3. Public Comment

Kristine Correlli, 116 N. Main Street, expressed gratitude for the work in ensuring the success of the Downtown Wheaton businesses and expressed full support for the Hale Street closure.

4. DWA Review of Hale Street Closure and Reset COVID-19 Task Force

City Manager Dzugan stated that bars and restaurants in Illinois would be allowed to reopen with outdoor seating as part of Phase 3 of the state's reopening plan beginning May 29. As part of the state's reopening plan, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) had provided guidelines to assist in establishing reopening plans for all types of businesses. City staff is using the guidance provided by DCEO and IDPH to develop requirements specifically for outdoor seating for bars and restaurants along with temporary modifications to outdoor dining regulations and suspension of zoning requirements to allow bars and restaurants to reopen. In addition, City staff and the Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA) have proposed the closure of Hale Street to provide additional dining space for patrons.

Ms. Elle Withall of the Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA) provided recommendations to the City Council for the closure of Hale Street which included: the reopening of businesses on May 29, allowing restaurants to use the outdoor tents from Tuesday through Sunday during the week with a closing time of 9 p.m. for businesses, and incorporating the first floor of parking garage for curbside pick-up.

Mayor Suess opened discussion for the closing of Hale Street mid-block for the month of June, providing additional pick-up space within the parking garage, and utilizing sidewalks as amenity spaces.

The Council discussed the preference of allowing City Manager Dzugan and the DWA to continue to coordinate and prepare the City for the reopening using their own discretion.

Ms. Withall explained that there would be a number of expenses that the DWA would incur through the reopening of Downtown and the closing of Hale Street, and requested the City consider assisting with expenses related to the reopening. Mayor Suess commented that there is a potential for the City to receive reimbursement through the CAREs act for expenses related to COVID-19 for municipalities.

A concern expressed by the Council included additional potential requests from other local businesses seeking reimbursement for expenses or expenditures toward their reopening plans being paid by the City. The Council expressed willingness to work with the DWA and would maintain flexibility as the situation changes.

In response to questions from Mayor Suess, Ms. Withall explained that participating restaurants would provide seating and allocation of dining tables on Hale Street.

5. Downtown Streetscape Phase 4 – 100% Schematic Design Update

City Manager Dzugan stated that Assistant City Manager Duguay would provide an update to the Downtown Streetscape Phase 4 project.

Assistant City Manager Duguay reviewed the Council feedback from the April 27 Planning Session meeting that included providing design concepts that would blend the Railyard and Natural Wheaton concepts, provide for larger gatherings in Lot 3, create a landing space for the Illinois Prairie Path in Lot 4, provide a connection with environmental initiatives, exclude water features, incorporate less play elements, and include a small bike repair station.

Assistant City Manager Duguay stated that he had received the final 100% Schematic Design cost estimate of \$3.6 million for the two lots as part of Phase 4, which would be approximately \$300,000 over the City budget. He stated the remainder of the Phase 4 Streetscape work was estimated to be within the budget. Assistant City Manager Duguay requested Council approval related to the 100% Schematic Design concept in order to proceed to the Design Development phase.

Ms. Manisha Kaul of Design Workshop reviewed the changes from the previous presentation that integrated the new design concepts with the initial design goals that included maximizing usable space on both lots, facilitating access to the Prairie Path, easing pedestrian movement, developing a gateway that provides visual interest for the downtown area, increasing accessibility between both lots and the Prairie Path, relocating a portion of the Prairie Path off of railroad property, and locating an area for a multi-purpose use canopy structure on Lot 3.

Mr. Scott Allman of Ethos Workshop Architects reviewed two updated design options for the Lot 3 pavilion structure that included variations in design for the structure's trusses and pier masonry. Mr. Allman stated there is an overage of approximately \$280,000 for the structure due to the overall amount and weight of the structural steel as designed. Mr. Allman commented that once the project is out to bid, competitive bidding may lower the final cost of the overall structure.

Mayor Suess opened conversation for comments on the design concepts.

In response to Council concern regarding funding, City Manager Dzugan stated that funding for the Downtown Streetscape Phase 4 project is provided mostly by TIF 2 revenues. City Manager Dzugan stated that TIF funds can only be used for projects that are specifically within the TIF district and must be used prior to the TIF district expiring. With regards to the canopy structure, City Manager Dzugan stated that an agreement with Bensidoun for an \$800,000 investment into the structure has yet to be finalized and he would provide the Council with any updates.

In response to questions from the Council, Mr. Allman stated that the overall Phase 4 Design concept could exist without the canopy structure if the cost to build was too high and/or unfunded.

City Manager Dzugan requested the Council select a final Schematic Design option for the overall concept, then proceed with Design Development phase to further value engineer the project and retrieve competitive bids to attain a more accurate final cost in December. City Manager Dzugan stated that the canopy structure should be included within the overall bid package to estimate cost of the whole project in its entirety. Once bids are received, the Council may decide to whether to move forward with the structure.

Council members provided final feedback and direction for the completion of the Schematic Design phase and emphasized that design elements should maintain character while being cost efficient. The Council requested that the project move forward into the Design Development Phase with a next checkpoint for the project being slated for mid-July.

6. Gary Avenue - DMMC Surface Transportation Program Scoring

City Manager Dzugan reviewed the City's application for federal funding through the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for improvements to the intersection of Gary Avenue and Prairie Avenue. The scoring system used by DMMC for STP funding has changed since initial application and as a result, the Gary Avenue Project scored lower than anticipated.

Director of Engineering Tebrugge provided a brief recap of the initial project scope and explained that 22 different communities that had applied for the grant had scored higher, thus the City would have a lower likelihood of receiving funding. Director Tebrugge stated that the funding was based on ten separate categories, of which the City did not score well in three categories, which included the safety need, pavement condition, and the local need. Director Tebrugge stated that there were three of the ten categories that the City could improve their project score on which included project readiness, complete street planning factor, and green infrastructure planning.

Following discussions with Thomas Engineering, the City's engineering consultant, Director Tebrugge provided details on two additional potential funding mechanisms, apart from the DMMC STP funding to complete the project. These other options included DMMC STP Funding, which is the STP Shared Fund and the CMAP CMAQ and TAP-L.

The staff recommendation is to reapply for the DMMC STP funding mechanism that has a recall for projects in 2022, while also having Council direct staff to generate a Complete Streets Policy to further increase the City's score for the possible future funding.

In response to Council concerns regarding the Gary Avenue and Prairie Avenue intersection, Director Tebrugge and City Manager Dzugan stated staff would have Thomas Engineering review potential solutions to current visibility issues.

Council members directed City staff to proceed with developing a long-range planning strategy to address and coordinate projects and funding mechanisms for the future.

7. City Council/City Staff Comments

Councilman Barbier requested the City consider a potential innovative solution for providing some form of Fourth of July celebration and was concerned with the potential of residents having their own celebrations with fireworks. Council requested that staff provide some ideas for the upcoming holiday.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Peck