

**CITY OF URBANA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - February 8, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 400 S. VINE STREET, URBANA, IL**

The City Council Committee Of The Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, February 8, 2016 in the Council Chambers of the Urbana City Building.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Aaron Ammons; Bill Brown; Eric Jakobsson; Diane W. Marlin; Dennis Roberts; Laurel Lunt Prussing

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Charles Smyth - Left meeting at 8:05 p.m.

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: Phyllis D. Clark; Michael P. Madigan

STAFF PRESENT: Pat Connolly; William Gray; Elizabeth Hannan; Wendy Hundley; Mike Monson; Brian Nightlinger; Lorrie Pearson; James Simon; Elizabeth Tyler

OTHERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill; Fred Giertz; Dannie Ott; Esther Patt; Bishop King James Underwood and Reverend Dr. Evelyn Underwood

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

There being a quorum, Chair Bill Brown called the meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA AND STAFF REPORT

1. Mayor Prussing informed the committee that METCAD will have a 6% increase next year.
2. Community Development Director Elizabeth Tyler informed the committee about screenings of the documentary called "My Brooklyn". One screening will be at the Champaign Public Library and the other will be at Plym Auditorium in Temple Hoyne Buell Hall. She announced that on February 24 there will be a presentation by PACA and the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission will offer a workshop on how to research your old house. It will take place in the Lewis Auditorium in the Urbana Free Library at 7:00pm.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Alderman Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on January 25, 2016. Alderman Ammons seconded the motion, which was carried by voice vote.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Brown acknowledged a card from Bishop King James and Reverend Dr. Evelyn Underwood, and further acknowledged that neither wanted to verbally express their concerns regarding Dr. Ellis Subdivision sewer issues, but asked that these issues be mentioned for the record.

Fred Giertz spoke to the Council about the Financial Transactions tax. There was discussion during which Mr. Giertz responded to concerns and questions from committee members.

Rich Cahill, Esther Patt and Dannie Otto spoke about the history of the MOR, as well as their experiences with it, and discussed various issues concerning the area with committee members.

Alice Novak and Brian Adams were not present at the meeting, but sent correspondence supporting adaptive reuse and preservation of older buildings in the MOR districts.

5. **Discussion Items**

a. **Review the Rationale for the MOR and the Busey Corridor (CD)**

Ms. Tyler presented information to the committee on the MOR, including the purpose of it, case histories of development design reviews, sections of the zoning ordinance, and the zoning description sheet. There was discussion, during which Ms. Tyler responded to questions from committee members. Chair Bill Brown relinquished the chair to Alderman Roberts from 8:50pm to 8:53pm so he could take part in the discussion. Ms. Tyler also presented some facts about the Busey Corridor.

b. **Legislative Proposals: (Mayor)**

- (1) **Increase funding for 911 agencies.** Allow counties whose voters approved land-line telephone surcharges to extend them to cell phones. (Champaign County voters approved \$1.50 per month over 20 years ago. In 2015 the state overrode this with a state-wide rate of 87 cents - half of what our voters approved - yet the City of Chicago was allowed to increase from \$2.50 up to \$3.90.)

Mayor Prussing stated that she met with some state legislators and Champaign County municipalities to discuss this topic. Committee members and Mayor Prussing discussed the surcharge amount and questioned whether the tax would apply to each cell phone on a cell phone plan and whether it would apply to Internet phone plans.

(2) **Reform of Binding Arbitration:**

- a. Allow arbitrators the freedom to fashion a compromise agreement rather than requiring them to choose only one side's offer.
- b. Require arbitrators to base decisions on a municipality's ability to pay, rather than on what other cities can afford.
- c. Limit an arbitrator's power to change the discipline imposed by a public safety chief to situations where there was a clear abuse of discretion.

Mayor Prussing informed the committee that she met with Champaign County municipalities and state legislators concerning these items. She said a proposal was drawn up by Lowenbaum Law concerning the first two items, and that the proposal was given to the Illinois Municipal League. She said Champaign City Attorney Fred Stavins is drafting something for the third item. There was discussion, during which Alderman Roberts suggested adding the following:

"Right to Choose Fair Comparables: Require arbitration to be based on fair comparables made of cities with similar populations and annual budgets - not cities of proximity with significantly different populations or annual budgets".

- (3) **Protect the Mahomet Aquifer:** Prohibit new landfills or expansion of existing landfills over the Mahomet aquifer.

Mayor Prussing stated that the Mahomet Aquifer should continue to be protected.

- (4) **Raise the Gasoline Tax to Pay for A Modern Transportation System:** State and federal gasoline taxes have been frozen for decades and no longer provide enough to maintain America's roads and bridges. Today's low gas prices provide an opportunity to increase the state gasoline tax and index it to inflation. Perhaps part of the increase could help fund high-speed rail, reducing traffic congestion and the need for more roads.

Mayor Prussing discussed the need to increase the gasoline tax in order to use it for roads and transportation. There was discussion and information provided by Chief of Staff Mike Monson and Public Works Director Bill Gray. Mr. Gray informed the Committee that there is a group in Illinois called the Transportation for Illinois Coalition, which is comprised of state wide, regional and local organizations. The goal of the organization is to end diversions of state income from fuel tax into the general fund. Mayor Prussing suggested possibly joining the group, and putting together a resolution to support an increase in the gasoline tax.

- (5) **Financial Transactions Tax:** Study a financial transactions tax on trades made on Chicago exchanges. This might generate \$10 billion annually and solve the state budget crisis.

This was presented in Public Input by Fred Giertz. Mayor Prussing discussed the possibility of a financial transactions tax being passed at the national level and said she would forward some information to committee members.

- (6) **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Bill Brown declared the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

 Kay Meharry
Kay Meharry
Recording Secretary

This meeting was taped.
This meeting was broadcast on cable television.