

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
June 26, 2023

The June 26, 2023 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 20600 City Center Blvd. Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The following Council members were present: Mayor Raymond Soliman, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, City Treasurer Glen Conklin, Alderperson Scott Dyke, Alderperson John Vershay, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Darrell Jefferson, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderperson Mark Cipiti, Alderperson Nate Albert, Alderperson Joe Kubal.

Also present were: City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, City Attorney Mike Santschi.

Absent were: Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

TOPIC: Liquor License 2350 Plainfield Rd.

Mayor Raymond Soliman commented that the applicant, Sheraz Baig, for Stop and Go located at 2350 Plainfield Road is present tonight and has applied for a Class C Liquor License. Mayor Soliman commented that a Class C Liquor License is for sale of beer and wine only, at a gas station. Mayor Soliman and Police Chief Ed Clark met with Mr. Baig on June 8, 2023 and discussed what he can and cannot do, including the sales to minors and the violations and fines the establishment can incur if not followed. Mayor Soliman informed the Council this is the mayor's choice since it is just beer and wine. Mayor Soliman stated the Council would only vote if he wanted hard liquor and Mr. Baig would have to apply for a packaged liquor license.

Mr. Sheraz Baig introduced himself and thanked the Council for inviting him tonight. He stated that this would help bring added revenue to his business if this is approved. Mayor Soliman asked the Council if they would like to ask any questions of Mr. Baig. Mayor Soliman also stated that Mr. Baig has agreed to closing the business every evening at 11:00p.m. Mr. Baig said his normal business hours are 6AM until 10PM. Mayor Soliman stated the license is \$600.00 as of July 1, 2023 until the end of the year and there are still documents needed. He informed Mr. Baig once the State License is obtained a copy will need to be turned into the City of Crest Hill along with payment.

TOPIC: IGA Weber and Ryan Traffic Signal

City Engineer Ron Weideman commented that this is the exact same agreement that was presented at the June 19, 2023 work session meeting. He stated he is presenting this again to clarify a statement that he made regarding the cost of the repair to signals if struck by a car, or 'Act of God'. Engineer Wiedeman commented that a question was asked by Alderperson Oberlin regarding cost sharing. He stated that all costs associated with repairs to the signal are to be paid by the City of Crest Hill. Engineer Wiedeman stated the County of Will has no cost responsibility for these signals. This was an agreement back in 2023

when we specifically asked for these signals and the City of Crest Hill paid for these signals. Since we own the signals, this is why we would be responsible for 100% of the repair costs and maintenance costs to the County.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote:

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Vershay, Dyke, Kubal, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin.

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None.

Alderwoman Gazal asked why we can't move the signal if we own them. Engineer Wiedeman stated that we can at 100% of the City's cost but if we ever develop the area, you would never be able to get another signal over there. He also stated it would be close to a \$500,000.00 project, just to move the signal. He commented that it is possible and would be up to the City Council to decide. He stated he could approach the County, if the Council would want that, but the cost to do this would be the City of Crest Hill's responsibility.

Alderman Albert asked if the Lockport Township would consider sharing the cost of the signal. Engineer Wiedeman commented that he would reach out to Lockport Township and see if they would consider cost sharing.

Alderwoman Gazal commented how difficult it is trying to get out of the intersection at certain times of the day.

Alderman Cipiti asked is there enough accidents to use for data to approach the County? Engineer Wiedeman commented that there is not enough data to approach the County to show we need a signal at this location. He also stated there has been a traffic study and it doesn't warrant a signal.

Alderman Albert commented it is a very dangerous intersection.

Mayor Soliman asked to deviate from the agenda to the Cost Sharing Agreement with Midwest Industrial Funds.

TOPIC: Cost Sharing Agreement with Midwest Industrial Funds

City Attorney Mike Santschi commented that there are two changes to the agreement which are financial items needing some guidance. These two items are a \$550,000.00 contribution towards the road and a request for half off the tap-on fees.

Steve Gulden, a representative for Midwest Industrial Funds, commented that through negotiations with the City staff, Midwest Industrial Funds, have agreed to pay \$550,000.00 for the widening of Enterprise Drive and for a future road extension. He commented that they also agreed to contribute \$300,000.00 for the Lidice Drive widening. Steve commented that in total they are investing over \$850,000.00 in the City of Crest Hill. After looking into all the permits and tap-on fees, commenting that the tap-on fee was a little high, they are asking for a 50% reduction of the current tap-on fees. He stated the current fee is \$167,000 and we are looking for a reduction of \$83,578.00. The fee is still very substantial and is still much higher than other communities and an \$80,000.00 reduction in

permit fees makes a difference in today's world. It was commented that they would appreciate this reduction and it would be very helpful with the project.

Alderman Kubal commented that he is happy to see a plan that has a cash contribution for future improvement to Weber Road from Enterprise Drive.

Alderperson Oberlin commented she did not see anything about the future improvements to Lidice Parkway in the agreement. A representative from Midwest Industrial Funds commented that it is not in the agreement because it is a condition of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) since this agreement is a cost sharing agreement and there is no cost being shared therefore it is not in this agreement. Attorney Santschi stated that it will be addressed at the same time as the agreement and the PUD. Steve Gulden commented that once it is approved it will be a condition of the PUD.

Alderman Albert commented that he agrees with what Alderman Kubal stated and hopes to give a reduction in tap-on fees.

Mayor Soliman commented that our tap-on fee is not as high as some surrounding communities but does not deny our tap-on fees are high. He also stated the reduction is not out of line since we have done this to other businesses. He also commented that the cash donation to offset the engineering costs for the new roadway, which will be a tremendous asset to the City of Crest Hill.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that this is an investment for our city and agrees with everything that has been said.

Alderman Jefferson commented that this is a win-win for both parties.

Mayor Soliman commented that the Plan Commission voted favorably to this project.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Vershay, Dyke.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Non-Employee in City Hall Discussion

Mayor Soliman commented that this topic was asked to be discussed by Alderwoman Gazal. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she received an email from the City Clerk regarding this and she will turn the discussion over to the City Clerk.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall asked to have this tabled until more department heads are present at the meeting for the discussion.

There were no objections from the Council. The Council agreed to table this until the next work session meeting on July 10, 2023.

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TOPIC: Special Events Ordinance Discussion

Mayor Soliman commented that this topic was asked to be put on the agenda to discuss by Alderman Albert.

Alderman Albert commented that he thought Ordinance #1781 was pertaining to larger events, not smaller events where we are not capturing sales tax from larger vendors such as a food truck, etc. He stated his intention of the ordinance was for capturing lost sales tax.

Alderwoman Gazal stated that was her thought on the ordinance, as well. Mayor Soliman asked if they were thinking this ordinance was strictly regarding food trucks? Alderman Albert stated not necessarily just food trucks. He stated he figured it to be a large gathering event and not a small mom and pop business and it seems we are enforcing more on the smaller level.

Alderperson Oberlin said she thought it was for larger events as well. Alderwoman Gazal stated we can't put more pressure on our restaurants when we are already taxing so much.

Alderman Cipiti commented that the ordinance is not clearly defined to separate big from small events. He stated it lumps everyone in the same definition and it is a detriment to the smaller businesses. He also commented that the \$50.00 fee per vendor is steep when some of the small vendors only make \$50.00 at these events.

Alderperson Oberlin stated she believed it was for bigger vendors such as food trucks, as well. She also commented that the \$50.00 fee was for more food-like vendors since we are not receiving tax.

Alderman Cipiti asked the City Attorney if there is a way to define event sizes in the ordinance where maybe the smaller ones would not need to comply, but larger ones would? Attorney Santchi commented that it would need to be looked at with greater detail and come up with a definition which draws those two categories clearly, so it does not become an arbitrary discrimination on favoring one over the other.

Alderwoman Gazal stated she remembers the discussion clearly regarding this ordinance and it was basically for food trucks.

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall commented that on the first page of the ordinance under definitions reads "an event held on public and/or private property outside of the normal and intended use of that property" which is why we were questioning the businesses advertising a special event.

Alderman Albert commented that his point is that it was never intended to have small vendor events pay the permit and have each vendor pay \$50.00.

City Treasurer Glen Conklin asked if a simple remedy would be to change the cost? Alderman Cipiti stated for the bigger events he sees the \$50.00; so, he does not feel we should lower the cost. Alderperson Oberlin commented that we need to craft the verbiage of the ordinance correctly and what defines a special event. Treasurer Conklin stated if it

is a public event the scale of the event is given by the attendance of the event at any given time.

City Clerk Vershay-Hall stated that there are upcoming events in July and direction is needed on how to handle this ordinance and if we are enforcing for the \$5.00 fee or are we refunding the two businesses that paid already for their events they had in June. Treasurer Conklin commented that it isn't the \$5.00, it's the \$50.00 per vendor. City Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that there is nothing in the ordinance to state what happens if they do not comply.

Alderman Albert commented that we should hold off until we can get some more information on what other municipalities do and fees they charge.

Mayor Soliman asked Attorney Santschi since some of the council members didn't intend this for small events ordinance how do you classify the difference from private or public? He also commented how this would work for subdivisions who are a private subdivision where the public cannot attend? Attorney Santchi commented that there are a lot of variables that can be interpreted differently, and he would need to go back and look at the context of the codes.

Alderman Dyke commented how do we proceed forward when someone comes in for a special event permit.

Attorney Santchi commented he will investigate this and come up with examples. Mayor Soliman asked if the information can be directed to the City Clerk's Office and not the Mayor's Office. Attorney Santchi commented that he will discuss with Attorney Stiff to see if there is formal action needed to suspend Ordinance #1781.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote to suspend the enforcement of Ordinance along with the \$5.00 permit fee for business and the \$50.00 vendor fee under this ordinance.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Vershay, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal.

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: Ald. Jefferson.

ABSENT: None

TOPIC: IML Conference Approval

Mayor Soliman commented that there is information for the IML Conference that was put in your packet. He stated that the city will pay for the cost of the conference, hotel fees, and parking for the conference, traveling expenses/mileage, and \$100.00 per diem. Alderman Cipiti asked about the reimbursement for mileage if the attendee drove to and from the event. Treasurer Conklin commented that he would accept for reimbursement a MapQuest showing mileage from home to conference. Treasurer Conklin asked everyone to follow the procedure that was put in place on travel and no handwritten receipts will be accepted, and no alcohol. He stated that there is a \$100.00 per diem and only for individual attending, and parking for the event. Discussion followed regarding parking reimbursement. Please notify Marybel by August 31, 2023 if you will be attending.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote:

AYES: Ald. Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal, Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal.

NAYES: Ald. Vershay.

ABSENT: None.

TOPIC: Hiring Part Time Staff in Clerk's Office

City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall commented she would like to move forward on hiring a part-time staff member. She commented that this has been budgeted for the last two years and she would like to hire a part-time person. Alderman Dyke asked how many hours would this position be? Clerk Vershay-Hall stated she would like to keep it under a thousand hours. Treasurer Conklin asked wasn't this previously approved? Clerk Vershay-Hall said it has been on the budget the last couple of years but never was asked for and now she would like to expend this money and move forward with getting a part-time person for the Clerk's Office. Several members would like to see a job description and duties of the part-time staff.

Alderman Dyke asked what would the duties be of the part-time person? Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that they would be trained on Plan Commission in case the Clerk handling Plan Commission is on vacation and give some of the small things that the Deputy Clerk is handling to the part-time person. She also commented it would be the same duties as the past part-time employee did but no Deputy work. Alderman Cipiti asked if there will be a formal job description? Clerk Vershay-Hall commented in the past it has always been a secretary position and never has had a job description.

Alderwoman Gazal commented she doesn't believe there is enough work in the Clerk's Office and the Clerk does most of the minutes. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that she does not do all the minutes. Alderwoman Gazal also commented that there is a separate window now for water payments and we don't take water payments any longer so why would we need another person.

Clerk Vershay-Hall asked what would she do if a staff member went on sick leave? She commented that she is part-time just like the treasurer and the mayor. Alderwoman Gazal commented that there are no more sticker licenses and business licenses are only once a year. Clerk Vershay-Hall stated that we have always had a part-time person until Karen Kozerka took the Deputy position and we never filled her part-time spot that has been budgeted for.

Alderman Cipiti stated that he can't speak to whether the position is needed or not since he is not there everyday but for the sake of formality, he feels there needs to be a job description before hiring someone.

Alderman Dyke commented that if a full-time person becomes sick there is no way a part-time person can do what a full-time person would do unless you adjust the hours.

Alderwoman Gazal asked if they could have an idea of what they would do every day. Clerk Vershay-Hall commented that one clerk strictly does the minutes and runs the front counter and then the Deputy is doing Deputy work and doing everyone else's work that

people ask her to do, along with answering phones and working the counter, as well. She also stated one of the workers does translation for the office and the Police Department and does not get paid to do this.

Alderman Dyke commented that there has always been a part-time up until Karen became Deputy.

Treasurer Conklin stated that we are not looking at covering ten or twelve weeks of vacation like we have in the past.

Alderman Albert commented that decisions like this are difficult to make when there is no City Administrator since we do not know what the day-to-day operations are, and an Administrator would be best to make this decision.

Alderman Oberlin commented that we have requested a job description for every position, in the past when Heather was here, and we never received a description for any position.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone objects to tabling this topic for future. There were no objections.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stuart Soifer asked if there are two or three trucks that pick-up garbage, recycling, and landscape waste? Mayor Soliman commented that one truck picks up garbage, another truck picks up recycling, and then another truck picks up yard waste. Stuart commented that is not what happens in his subdivision. He also commented that the landscape waste sometimes goes in the recycling truck or the garbage truck, and sometimes it does not get picked up at all. He commented that he can show Ring camera footage to prove this. Alderman Albert commented that sometimes he has noticed in his neighborhood that yard waste is put in the garbage truck and believes it has to do with drivers and limitations they might have.

Treasurer Conklin stated the City has had many discussions with Republic Services and not getting any resolution and when that contract comes up this will be a consideration.

MAYORS UPDATES:

Mayor Soliman commented that our Interim Planner Maura Rigoni has a new position, and it is creating a schedule conflict with Plan Commission, and she is trying to cut back on some hours here at the City of Crest Hill. This is why the Plan Commission is having to reschedule their meetings on a different day in the month. The Plan Commission has talked within themselves on changing the date of the meetings so more of our city staff can be present. Mayor Soliman stated the Plan Commission is suggesting the second Thursday of the month. Mayor Soliman also stated that he is being told by Attorney Stiff, since there is an ordinance stating second Wednesday of the month, there will need to be a text amendment of the Ordinance if Council will be willing to change from the second Wednesday to the Second Thursday. Mayor Soliman stated that Attorney Stiff said this will take two months since it will have to go through Plan Commission and then to the City Council.

Attorney Santchi stated that it must be published fifteen days prior to the next Plan Commission meeting to have a Public Hearing.

Alderman Albert asked if they could just keep changing the date? Attorney Santschi commented that he would recommend taking that administrative decision out of the Ordinance so it would not have to go through the hearing process.

Alderwoman Gazal commented that she has a problem with changing the ordinance for just one person not being able to make the meeting. Attorney Santchi commented that he would suggest that the hearing process be taken out of the ordinance to allow adjustments without the public hearing.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal.

NAYES: Ald. Vershay.

ABSENT: None

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

No committee updates tonight.

Mayor Raymond Soliman informed the Council that there was a need for an executive session on personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

(#1) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderwoman Gazal, to go into an executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Vershay, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Kubal.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:22 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Cipiti to reconvene from the executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Kubal, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Vershay, Dyke.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being eight (8) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened 10:19 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2023

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT