

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL  
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
October 24, 2022

The October 24, 2022 City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Raymond R. Soliman at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1610 Plainfield Road Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

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

Also present were: Administrator Jim Marino, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Director of Public Works Mark Siefert, Assistant Public Works Director Blaine Kline, Police Chief Ed Clark, Finance Director Lisa Banovetz, IT Director Tim Stinnett.

**TOPIC: Gas and Wash PUD and Redevelopment Agreement**

Mayor Soliman presented the Heidner Property Northwest Corner of Division and Weber-Special Use Plan Unit Development and Drive-Through Facilities per the memo dated October 24, 2022. Planner Rigoni explained that Heidner currently owns the 74 acres at the northwest corner of Weber Road and Division Street. In June they requested a special use for a PUD with 2 drive-thru facilities for the 16 acres at the southeast corner of the property. The proposal includes a Gas and Wash, retail building, and quick service restaurant along with 2.9 acres for future retail development. Several revisions have been made to the plan which are, additional employee parking at the Gas and Wash site. Full access to Division has been revised to a full in and right out only. This revision eliminates the need to reduce the existing storage length for the left turn that currently exists on Division Street north bound to Weber Road. The proposed plans are being reviewed by the Will County Highway Department for road improvements to Weber Road as well as the Randich Road extension. Updated site plans have been provided to the Council. We continue to work with the Engineer on this project. Engineer Wiedeman went over the full access and right in on Division Street. Alderman Cipiti asked what a QSR building is. Planner Rigoni explained the that stands for quick serve restaurant. This would be similar to a fast food restaurant with a drive thru and possible indoor seating. Alderwoman Gazal asked if water and sewer was available. Engineer Wiedeman explained they are good to go. Alderwoman Gazal asked if this is in a TIF district. Planner Rigoni explained that the original TIF was not in place anymore. Administrator Marino explained that we have had discussion in regard to the TIF and an eligibility report. Alderwoman Gazal asked what was before the Council for approval tonight. Planner Rigoni explained that there is no official approval as we will have to draft an ordinance. She went over the items that would be a part of the approval process and proposed ordinance. Also, this is only for 16 acres of property. Discussion followed on the redevelopment agreement. Alderman Cipiti asked how they would work the gas pipeline into the plan. Planner Rigoni explained that you can cross a pipeline, but not pave over it. The developer has reached out to the pipeline company for their approval. Alderman Albert questioned the elimination of truck traffic on Division Street. The way this is designed, isn't it bring truck traffic onto Division. There

will be a right in right out on Weber Road. Planner Rigoni explained that Randich Road will be extended and will provide another way for trucks to enter and exit. Alderman Albert questioned the proposed residential subdivision behind this development. Discussion followed. Trucks will not be able to use Division Street when leaving the station. They can turn right and head west or use the right out and continue south on Weber. Northbound truck traffic will have to access this development from Weber and Randich. Alderman Albert expressed concern over the trucks and cars together. We have another fueling station in the City and the truck area is totally separate from where the cars fuel up. Mayor Soliman felt that this development will be a benefit to the City. There is a similar development in Shorewood, and they have not had problems with it. Mike from Heidner Property was in attendance to answer questions. Alderwoman Gazal said that this has been a long process and the developer has been very patient listening to the Council and resident in regard to their concerns. Attorney Policandriotes gave a brief presentation on the project. Glen the owner of Gas and Wash gave a presentation on the Crest Hill location and the background of the company. He explained where the various locations are located in the area. Alderman Vershay asked if they are going to have any type of recharging station for electric cars. They would. Currently they are focusing on diesel and gas fueled vehicles. Chris from the architectural group explained that they are looking into all of their options for fueling or charging cars for the future. He also explained why they felt that this is a good location for this type of development.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the Gas and Wash PUD and Redevelopment Agreement subject to the Plan Commission recommendation, finding of fact and preparation of an ordinance. Seven Council members were in favor of the project. Alderman Albert was not.

**TOPIC: Concept Review Clover Communities- Independent Living Facility**

Mayor Soliman presented the Concept Review Clover Communities-Independent Living Facility per the memo dated October 24, 2022. Planner Rigoni presented a request for a proposed 55 and older community located on 6 acres on the east side of Weber Road immediately west of the White Oak Library. There would 119 units with community rooms, common patio areas, a family room, fitness area, salon, and coffee bar/lounge. The facility would include a variety of units ranging from 1-2 bedrooms with 1 and ½ baths. This development would be located along the service road in front of the library and would consist of 5 lots. It will be 1 continuous building. Details have not been completed since there is no site plan. Alderman Dyke questioned parking. Planner Rigoni explained that they will have to conform to our regulations for parking. Alderperson Oberlin asked if our ordinance allows for a 4 story building, Planner Rigoni explained that this is a commercial zoning and differs from the residential rules. This is a unique situation. It could fall under a PUD or require a special use. Planner Rigoni explained how a development such as this fits into the comprehensive plan. The special use fits in because this is age restricted. Alderperson Oberlin questioned age targeted. By definition age restricted is 55 and over. Alderman Jefferson questioned parking. Planner Rigoni explained that we have not gotten to the site plan portion and would have to adhere to our regulations. Alderman Vershay asked if it would be one car per unit. Planner Rigoni would have to look into this. Alderman Cipiti asked if the size of the facility would determine how many parking spaces would be required. It would. Normally for independent living we look at one space per unit. If there is not enough parking they may have to eliminate a unit. Alderman Cipiti felt that the reduction in units would decrease the income. Beth Ernet from Clover Communities addressed the Council. She went over the background of the company and various locations where they currently have these types of developments. They are not HUD funded. There

are 2 exceptions to the 55 and over rule and that is if someone is legally blind or handicapped. Grandchildren cannot legally reside at the facility or spend more than 2 nights at a time. They do not sell units or allow them to be converted. Parking is a 1.3-1.5 ratio. They are willing to work with our ordinances. There are also covered garages that can be rented to the residents. 90% of their other properties consist of 3 story buildings. The proposed area is narrow and that is the reason why they want to build a 4 story facility. Rent will cost around \$1750.00 - \$1950.00 a month will include activities and utilities. There are also units with higher fees that will also include meals. There is no medical care provided and each unit has a washer/dryer and full kitchen. Amenities include community rooms, common patio areas, a family room, fitness area, salon, and coffee bar/lounge. As far as marketing they stay within a 3 mile radius to allow residents to stay within their community. There are no HOA fees. Garages will be unattached and fully enclosed. Alderman Vershay asked if there will be more than one entrance to the buildings. It would depend on the style of the building. There is a recreation room on each floor. Maximum occupancy per unit is 2. Mayor Soliman asked if a son or daughter wanted to reside with a parent, could they do so. Only if they are 55 and older. Treasurer Conklin questioned property taxes. They would pay the full taxes. Alderwoman Gazal explained that she likes the concept, but her main concern is taking prime retail property for the construction of this development. Alderwoman Gazal asked if they have done any developments with retail occupying the ground floor. They had not. This is strictly residential. This building faces west and will be looking out over more commercial development. She is concerned about potential noise. Alderwoman Gazal questioned sidewalks. This facility would be connected to the library with sidewalks. Ms. Ernet reminded the Council that often "rooftops" bring in more commercial development. Alderman Albert liked the concept but not the location. Have they considered the lots that are east of the existing gas station that is in this immediate area. Alderwoman Gazal also asked how the residents will react once the parcel west of the City Center, east of this facility, gets built out and we are holding concerts, etc. and generating noise. Ms. Ernet believes the residents would enjoy it. Alderman Cipiti liked the concept and asked if they have looked at other parcels. Ms. Ernet commented they have looked at a parcel that is closer to Renwick Road. Part of the concern is that it is a little more open. Most residents that move into these type of facilities like to have some commercial spaces close to where they reside. Alderman Cipiti would like to see this in a different location but likes the concept. Alderman Albert asked Planner Rigoni if she could provide Ms. Ernet with the contact information for the other property that was mentioned. Alderman Jefferson asked if the market analysis chose this location as the best suitable location. It had, but there could be other suitable areas. Alderman Jefferson asked if they need a specific amount of acreage. Ms. Ernet said this was 5 acres, but if they need to provide on site detention, they would need to 7 to 10 acres. Mayor Soliman felt that this development could help bring in commercial businesses to the area. Discussion followed on a mixed use area which would include commercial and residential. As far as the proposed park with a bandshell, this would add another amenity to the development. Ms. Ernet would look into some of the sites that were suggested tonight. If none are suitable, then she would like to come back for further discussion on the proposal that was presented tonight. Alderwoman Gazal asked if they allow section 8 housing. Ms. Ernet explained that everyone has to accept section 8. If the voucher covers the cost of the rent the landlord has to accept it. If it doesn't cover the full rent, then you don't have to accept it and subsidize the additional fee. Mayor Soliman asked if the rent was a little low. It wasn't. A one bedroom is \$1500.00, and a two bedroom is about \$1800.00. Alderman likes the concept and feels that we might have to do a proposal such as this to bring in commercial traffic. Alderman Jefferson questioned the property taxes. The City would receive roughly \$7,700.00 per year.

**TOPIC: City Center & Public Works Building Construction Investigation**

Mayor Soliman presented the City Center & Public Works Building Construction Investigation per the memo dated October 24, 2022. Administrator Marino explained that some questions arose on who is responsible for the work that was done at Public Works and the City Center. A request was made to pursue an investigation into these concerns to hold individuals accountable for the number of problems, poor decisions, and substandard workmanship. Administrator Marino contacted six companies who perform such investigations. The low proposal was from DLA in the amount of \$24,000.00. Most of the companies work on the finance end of the investigation. Alderwoman Gazal felt that we are at the point where we know what the problem was and any other funds that are spent on this will never be recovered. How can you hold someone accountable when we put the employees in that position. Hopefully, we learned from our mistake. Attorney Stiff agreed with Alderwoman Gazals comment. He doesn't know if the scope of their investigation would show a contract was at fault that we would have recourse against. You don't need to pay someone to tell you where the problem lies. Alderman Cipiti asked if the investigation would involve interviewing employees and what if they are no longer with the City. How can we force a former employee to come in for an interview. Alderman Jefferson asked how far this investigation could go. Would it get to the point where we could take them to court. Wouldn't this investigation be doing the same thing that Harbour is doing right now. How do we move forward to recoup the money back if we find out we were overcharged for materials. He feels that we would just be putting bad money after bad money.

(Tape #2 begins)

Alderwoman Gazal felt we should move forward. Alderman Albert felt that more information has been given to us since the last time this was discussed. Administrator Marino doesn't feel it will get us anywhere to do this investigation since we suspect what happened. Alderperson Oberlin would like to know what we suspect. Administrator Marino said the project was not managed well, there were poor decision made by individuals involved in the project and not enough oversite with the contractors. Alderman Cipiti asked who this would fall on in regard to accountability. The individuals involved with overseeing the project. Alderman Cipiti asked if there were expenditures that were not approved for the Public Works project. Administrator Marino said that we haven't gotten into that as we are looking into the City Center. Alderman Cipiti doesn't feel that hiring an investigation company is going to get us any more information. The Attorney commented that the only way you are going to force cooperation from people who are no longer employed is to sue them by subpoena power, or directly. The Attorney believes that Harbour has identified with contractors any workmanship problems and that is being addressed. The Attorney doesn't believe that these former employees are going to take a call from us. He explained how to take action on what you would consider a culpable person. You can't ask what happened but can ask who was involved. In this case we believe we know who the culpable parties were. Alderwoman Gazal asked if we get some one under oath and they state, I did what I was asked by my employer, how are going to sue them. This is a no win situation. Treasurer Conklin felt that we need to except what happened and move on. Alderperson Oberlin hopes that in the future we learn from this mistake. Treasurer Conklin said that we asked repeatedly for information and were not given what was requested. Alderman Vershay explained that his concern is making sure the building is safe to work in. We need to stop worrying about the small things like paint colors, etc. and work on getting into the City Center. Once we move than we can worry

about if we are going to go after someone or not. As far as Public Works, lets concern ourselves as to whether the building is safe to work in first. Alderman Kubal said that we tried to construct these buildings in house and should have used a professional management company. We made the error to do the work in house. We needed to have someone overseeing the project like Harbour. Alderman Dyke agreed with what has been said. We can't correct the past and we need to move forward. Mayor Soliman informed the Council that he had the opportunity to speak with the investigation companies. He feels that we have gotten more information from Harbour. One of the companies explained that you are not going to get much information from former employees to help with an investigation.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the City Center & Public Works Building Construction Investigation. Alderwoman Gazal commented that she asked for information on the construction of the facilities for two years and got no answers. When an official asks questions, they are not being nosey but have concerns and need answers. Alderperson Oberlin agreed with Alderwoman Gazal. We need to make sure that we be transparent and clear. That means that we show what we are doing, not hide it. We need to be transparent with the residents and the members of the Council.

All members present were in agreement to hold off on the hiring of an investigation firm for work performed on the Public Works and City Center facilities.

**TOPIC: Waive Park District Building Permit Fee**

Mayor Soliman presented a request to Waive Park District Building Permit Fees per the memo dated October 24, 2022. Administrator Marino informed the Council that the Park District is working on improvements at the Prairie Bluff Golf Course at a construction cost of \$4 million. The permit fee would be around \$51,520.00. They are asking for a reduction in the building permit fee. The City has done a reduction of fees in the past for other projects. Alderwoman Gazal felt that if we do this we are asking the taxpayers to pick up the cost due to the fact that we have hired an outside company to do the inspections. Administrator Marion explained that the Park District will pay Lakeside the cost for inspections. Alderperson Oberlin asked how much of a reduction have we given them in the past. It was 50% and was in 2012. Alderman Albert asked what other communities do with fees for government agencies for permit fees, do they waive or reduce the fees. Administrator Marino would have to check with other communities to see what their procedure is. Alderman Cipiti would also like to see what other communities within the Lockport Park District do. The park district agreed to pay the Lakeside fee of \$10,000.00. Alderperson Oberlin didn't see a problem with reducing the permit fee. Attorney Stiff asked what the request is. For a 50% reduction or waiver of the fees. A 50% reduction would bring the permit fee to \$25,760.00. Alderman Jefferson asked if the City has a good relationship with the park district. Discussion followed. Alderperson Oberlin said that we do research, and then don't use the information we gather. She hopes that the park district will remember this request when it comes time for negotiations for the proposed park west of the City Center. Mayor Soliman would like to get input from other communities before we make a decision. Alderman Albert informed the Council that he had a discussion with the library director. When they remodeled the libraries the other communities waived the permit fees. We didn't. He would like to be consistent with other municipalities in the same taxing district. This might be a time to do some negotiations with the park district. Alderman Vershay asked how much the proposed park is going to cost next to the City Center. The Mayor thought it would be over \$2 million. Alderman Vershay brought up the funds that we have spent on the East Plant, the Public Works Facility, the City Center, the park proposal, and the renovations to the West Plant. His concern is where all of this money

is going to come from. Treasurer Conklin went over the finances, bonding, and grants for these projects. The Mayor asked the Administrator to see what the other communities do and email the Council with the findings. If the other communities waive all fees except what a contractor charges them, would we be willing to waive all permit fees. Alderman Vershay asked, why do we have to do what everyone else does. We should make our own decisions. Alderman Albert commented that we are backed into a corner again, why didn't the Park District come to us months ago to discuss this fee.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote. If other communities give a break on waiving all the fees except for the Lakeside fee will the Council follow suit.

AYES: Ald. Dyke, Albert, Kubal.

NAYES: Ald. Vershay, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote on the Council giving them a 50% reduction on the fees, except for the Lakeside fee will the Council follow suit.

Yes: Ald. Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Albert, Kubal.

No: Ald. Dyke, Vershay.

Alderman Cipiti did not provide an answer. Mr. Soifer suggested offering the Park District the 50% reduction in fees and negotiate with them from there. Alderman Albert asked if they submitted the plans and assumed that there wasn't going to be a fee. Administrator Marino said that once the park district found out what the fee was, the matter was brought to his attention.

Council agreed to 50% waiver no matter what other communities do.

Alderman Vershay questioned the fee that the City proposed to charge residents to have a company come and remove graffiti from property. He felt that it wasn't fair to the residents and asked that we look into staff doing the removal. This can be discussed in depth at a future meeting.

### **TOPIC: Rental Property Registration**

Mayor Soliman presented the Rental Property Registration per the memo dated October 24, 2022. At the last meeting Alderman Dyke passed out a list of some of the homes that are not registered as rentals. A number of these homes have gone to hearings and are still not registered.

He would like to know how we are handling this process to make sure that the properties are brought into compliance. Alderman Dyke explained that when Steve Gulden was here, he had asked how the procedure is done. He would like to know who is accountable and who would do the follow up. Administrator Marino explained that it would be the responsibility of the department head. Alderwoman Gazal reminded the Council that we had the Building Commissioner working on the City Center for at least three years. Alderman Dyke said that we still had personnel in the office and part time inspectors that could have addressed these issues. Even if we don't have a department head in place, we have to continue to make the department run. Alderman Cipiti asked if we could make this issue more of a priority versus ticketing garbage cans left at the curb. He felt that the rental situation is problematic. Alderman Dyke also said that it also involves the clean up of property that gets pushed aside. Administrator Marino explained that we have 2 clerks, and a part-time inspector and they are doing their best until we can get more staff in place. Alderman Dyke brought up a situation where a wrong address was given for a storage

container, but the violation was very obvious when you drove down the street. Storage containers were discussed many years ago and there is a time frame as to how long they can be on a property. Alderwoman Gazal said that when we started construction of the new buildings and put the building commissioner in charge the Council was concerned about the violation work being neglected. We need to get the staff in place and move on and get things done. Staff is stressed because we are shorthanded, and everyone is trying to get things done. Mayor Soliman explained that during Covid, if there was an administration hearing, and they didn't show up or fix the problem a fine was assessed. Attorney Stiff said that during Covid, there were issues getting these cases to court. These cases can eventually go to a debt collector. We need to get updates with names and phone numbers for these properties. Administrator Marino explained that when the last Economic Developer was here, he had started working on some of these issues. The Administrator met the Attorney and Building personnel to discuss some of the problems and look for solutions. Alderman Cipiti had asked for a list of rental property in violation and there were only three. Administrator Marino explained that those are the ones that are going through the process. Staff is going through the list to find out what the current status is. Administrator Marino went over the process. We have 2100 rental properties in the City. Attorney Stiff explained that there was discussion on amending the ordinance for the property owners that schedule their inspections and care for their property. One thing that could be done is allow them to have an inspection once every several years versus once a year. Discussion followed on the wording of the ordinance and how the inspections can be accommodated. The good thing is that we are discussing this and trying to come up with solutions. Alderman Vershay felt that we need some one on staff to see the violation through from beginning to end. Alderman Jefferson felt that we have owners that know they have a year before the next inspection, so they become lax. We need to tighten up the ordinance. Alderperson Oberlin was told by a former staff member that there are certain things that aren't done during a rental inspection.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

**MAYORS UPDATES:**

Mayor Soliman informed the Council that the monuments are scheduled to be moved this Saturday to the City Center. Once the monuments and the columns are moved and put in place, the company will continue with the brick pavers. Alderman Cipiti asked for an update on the security cameras. Administrator Marino gave the Council an update.

**COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:**

There were no committee/liaison updates.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:**

Administrator Marino informed the Council that PT Ferro has been on site at the City Center and concrete work is done and ready for the placement of the monuments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

As presented \_\_\_\_\_

As amended \_\_\_\_\_

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CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

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RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR

DRAFT