

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF CREST HILL
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
June 23, 2025

The June 23, 2025, the 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 Treasurer Jamie Malloy, City Clerk Christine Vershay-Hall, Alderman Deserio, Alderman Darrell Jefferson, Alderwoman Claudia Gazal, Alderperson Tina Oberlin, Alderman Mark Cipiti, Alderman Nate Albert.

Also Present were: City Administrator Blaine Wing, Finance Director Glenn Gehrke, Interim Public Works Director Julius Hansen, Community & Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth, City Attorney Mike Stiff.

Absent were: Alderman Scott Dyke, Alderman Joe Kubal, Police Chief Ed Clark, City Engineer Ron Wiedeman, Community Development Consultant Ron Mentzer, Building Commissioner Don Seeman, Interim Human Resource Manager Dave Strahl.

Mayor Soliman excused Alderman Dyke and Alderman Kubal from tonight's meeting.

TOPIC: Updated MOU for Car Care Towing

Mayor Soliman commented that this is informational only at this time. This is a change in ownership for one of the towing companies that the City uses for accidents and abandoned vehicles.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone had any questions, they could reach out to Deputy Chief Ryan Dobczyk.

TOPIC: East STP Pump Replacement

Mayor Raymond Soliman called on Julius Hansen, the Interim Public Works Director, to discuss the East Wastewater treatment plant pump replacement. Interim Director Hansen explained there were two options: repairing the existing pump for about \$30,000 or replacing it with a new pump for \$43,116.00. He recommended the new pump option, as the repair would leave the old impeller in place, which could have undetectable metal fatigue.

Interim Director Hansen requested approval for a not-to-exceed amount of \$55,000 for the new pump and motor rebuild. He noted the motor rebuild cost of \$10,000 would be required regardless of which option was chosen.

Council members asked clarifying questions about the impeller and the company doing the work. Interim Director Hansen explained he had limited history with the City but the manufacturer LAI, who they have worked with before, recommended DMI for the motor rebuild.

Mayor Soliman requested an informal vote for the purchase of a new pump in the amount of \$55,000.00.

AYES: Ald. Deserio, Jefferson, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert.

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Gazal.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

It was stated that they will look into the company and talk to other municipalities for references.

Interim Director Hansen stated that the motor is already at the company and taken apart to review.

TOPIC: 1813 Broadway – Variation for the Multi-Family

Mayor Raymond Soliman introduced the agenda item concerning 1813 Broadway, noting that it was agenda item number five. The applicant, represented by Brian Gould, was seeking variations for an existing four-unit non-conforming multifamily structure in the R3 zoning district. Due to structural issues discovered during renovation, partial demolition was required, triggering the need for variations to maintain its non-conforming status.

Patrick Ainsworth, the Economic and Community Development Director, provided additional background, stating that on June 12th, 2025, the applicant and his architect went before the Plan Commission. They received unanimous approval to recommend variations to the City Council, allowing the property to maintain its non-conforming status. Director Ainsworth explained that significant upgrades in parking, lighting, and landscaping had been made to bring the property up to modern standards. The property owner was working closely with city staff to address the inherited code violations and ensure compliance with the current regulations.

Mr. Gould elaborated further, describing the property's history as an old farmhouse converted over time to a multifamily dwelling. He explained that the applicant had inherited a lengthy list of violations from the former owner, who sold the property without resolving these issues. Mr. Gould assured the Council that despite the challenges, the applicant was committed to making the necessary improvements and that the renovation work was already underway.

The Council expressed concerns about potential overcrowding in the units due to their smaller size. Mr. Gould assured them that the applicant was aware of occupancy limits and informed the Council that proper management would be enforced. The applicant, a local business owner familiar with the area, would manage the property responsibly and ensure that all residents adhered to city codes.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak for or against the multiple variations for 1813 Broadway Street. There was no one in the audience that spoke.

Attorney Stiff commented that the ordinance in the packet does have conditions that were recommended by the Plan Commission.

Director Ainsworth read the eight (8) conditions that were in the packet, which are:

1. Remove existing private concrete stairs that connect to the public sidewalk along the west side of Broadway St. and restore disturbed area with grass.
2. Obtain a building permit and construct new refuse container enclosures in the locations reflected on Proposed Site Plan (Staff Report Exhibit F). The design of these enclosures shall comply with applicable City design requirements.
3. Reside and trim all four sides of the 4-unit building with LP Smart Siding composite trim and shake shingle accent details in substantial conformance with the Proposed Elevation Plan (Staff Report Exhibit H).
4. Obtain a building permit and pave the proposed driveway/parking improvements on the property in substantial conformance with the location and dimensions reflected on Proposed Site Plan (Staff Report Exhibit F). The design and striping of these improvements shall comply with applicable City design requirements.
5. Install new "One-Way Entrance" and One-Way Exit" Directional signs on the Subject Property at each private driveway connection to Broadway Street.
6. Restore Disturbed areas on the site that will not be covered with structures or pavement with topsoil and grass or mulch.
7. Install and maintain the landscaping reflected on the proposed Landscape Plan (Staff Report Exhibit I)
8. Amend existing building permit for the building renovation project to accommodate the installation of building mounted light fixtures that would illuminate the proposed parking spaces in front of the building. Cut sheets and mounting details for said fixtures shall be provided in the building permit amendment submittal. Said light fixtures shall be flat glass fixtures mounted so the lens of the fixture is oriented parallel to the ground surface below. "Flood lights" designed and mounted to project light perpendicular to the ground surface are prohibited.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for 1813 Broadway Street.

AYES: Ald. Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

TOPIC: 1800 Dearborn Street – SU Permit and Variations for the Reactivation of the Church – Applicant is Redemption Hour Ministry

Economic and Community Development Director Patrick Ainsworth presented detailed information regarding the application from Redemption Hour Ministry to reactivate the former St. Ann's Catholic Church located at 1800 Dearborn Street. He highlighted that on June 12th, the Plan Commission had unanimously recommended approval of the special use permit and variations despite the property having previous non-conforming issues under zoning due to its unique history as an existing church with no prior special use permit. This presented an opportunity for the Council to formalize its use as a church under new ownership.

The applicant, represented by Pastor Henry Amegatcher, provided an inspiring and comprehensive presentation about their ministry's values, history, as well as their strategic plans for infusing life back into the church. Pastor Amegatcher assured Council members that there would not be substantial alterations to the building's structure, signifying their respect for the historical and emotional value it holds for many in the community. Instead, they planned to maintain its character while ensuring that no alcoholic activities would be

permitted on the premises, aligning with their philosophy of hosting sober, community-building gatherings.

Council members reflected positively on the proposal with a particular emphasis on Pastor Amegatcher's dedication and vision for the church's role in community service. They considered the condition to prohibit alcohol on the property to protect the integrity of the neighborhood and the sanctuary. This condition was discussed in depth and included within the proposal as a testament to the shared values between the church and the community.

Several Council members shared personal anecdotes reflecting their own connections to the former St. Ann's Church, illustrating the deep-rooted significance it holds within the local history. Council members also welcomed Pastor Amegatcher and the congregation to the community. This added layers to the conversation, uniting memories with future possibilities offered by Redemption Hour Ministry's plans.

Mayor Soliman noted that there was not a condition stating no alcohol on the premises. He then commented that a special use goes with the property and asked if by chance in twenty years, Redemption Hour Ministry is no longer there, and a new establishment comes in they could use alcohol at the premises since there is no condition regarding no alcohol on the premises. Mayor Soliman commented that he would like to see a condition added stating no alcohol beverages on the premises. Pastor Amegatcher was agreeable to adding that condition.

Alderman Albert commented that he does not like the fact of having the alcohol limitation because St. Anne's Church was able to have alcohol and wondered why they would make that restriction now. Mayor Soliman commented that it was through the Diocese Liquor License.

Mayor Soliman asked if there were any objections by the Council to add the condition that no alcohol would be on the premises. No objections were made.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak for or against Redemption Hour Ministry.

Davion Smith, a member of Redemption Hour Ministries, took the opportunity to express his strong support for the application for the church property at 1800 Dearborn Street. As a new member of the congregation, Mr. Smith shared his personal journey over the past four to five months since joining the ministry. He highlighted the significant and positive impact that the organization has had on his life. According to Mr. Smith, before joining Redemption Hour Ministry, he was facing financial challenges; he did not have a car and was riding a bike to work under difficult circumstances. However, since becoming a part of the organization, he has experienced considerable improvements in his circumstances.

He credited the church community's support and programs for helping him secure a good-paying job and enabling him to purchase a vehicle, marking a notable turnaround in his financial and personal life. Mr. Smith emphasized how the ministry's focus on uplifting individuals, like himself, through guidance and practical assistance had provided him with stability and hope for the future. He described the organization as playing an instrumental role in helping him set his life back on the right path and expressed profound gratitude for the positive changes he had experienced due to the ministry's influence. His testimony

served as a commendation for the kind of outreach that Redemption Hour Ministries extends to its members, highlighting the community-driven and life-affirming mission that they intend to carry forward at the Dearborn Street church property.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote for Redemption Hour Ministry located at 1800 Dearborn Street along with adding the condition of no alcohol on premises and property.

AYES: Ald. Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti.

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Ald. Albert.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

Mayor Soliman stated that this will be on the July 7th Meeting agenda.

TOPIC: A Resolution for Amendment No 1 to the June 16, 2025, Agreement for Phase 1 – CIPP Water Main Rehabilitation by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Strand Associates for No Change in Cost and A Resolution for Amendment No 3 to the August 31, 2023, Agreement for Design and Bidding – Related Services for CIPP Water Main Rehabilitation by and Between the City of Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois and Strand Associates, Inc. for No Change in Cost

City Administrator Blaine Wing addressed both items on the agenda concerning amendments to existing agreements with Strand Associates for CIPP Water Main Rehabilitation projects. He presented these amendments collectively, providing an explanation about the necessity of addendums to both contracts.

Administrator Wing stated that these changes did not imply any additional cost burden on the city. In fact, the alterations would culminate in a financial saving exceeding \$250,000 for the city. This significant cost-saving measure presented a notable advantage to the ongoing projects and underlined the effective management and negotiation efforts of the city's administrative team.

Seeking the Council's permission, Administrator Wing advocated for granting Mayor Raymond Soliman the authority to sign the addendum documents proactively. However, he clarified that the formal ratification of these amendments would occur at the upcoming City Council meeting on July 7th. This approval process was underscored with a sense of urgency, as the signed documents needed to be submitted by June 30th.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

AYES: Ald. Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin, Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

TOPIC: Duck/Geese Crossing Warning Signs Knapp – Provide Direction to Staff for the Installation of These Signs by Public Works

City Administrator Blaine Wing presented information about installing duck and geese crossing warning signs. He provided the Council with various sign options and potential locations for installation. Alderwoman Gazal suggested that the signs include words like "slow" or "caution" to enhance safety measures and to clearly communicate the intended caution to drivers. One Council member also suggested that the signs feature images, such

as a picture of a mother duck with ducklings, to effectively capture the attention of drivers, as ducks cannot read, and it would help in visually communicating the need to slow down.

The discussion expanded to include additional safety measures, such as the possibility of adding flashing lights to existing signs on Weber Road. However, it was noted that implementing flashing signs would require coordination with the county authorities, as Weber Road is under their jurisdiction. This highlighted the complexities involved in making infrastructural changes on county-controlled roads and the need for collaborative efforts between the City and County.

Administrator Wing took note of the Council's input and mentioned that he would research sign designs used in neighboring communities to ensure consistency and effectiveness. This research would also include exploring options that incorporate the suggested cautionary wording and visual elements. Administrator Wing committed to updating the Council once the signs had been ordered and further assured them that any selected designs would aim to improve public safety and driver awareness in areas identified as needing duck crossing warnings.

TOPIC: Text Amendments to the City of Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance

Economic and Community Development Director Patrick Ainsworth presented the proposed text amendments to the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance, which revolved around four central themes aimed at refining existing regulations and introducing new definitions to streamline the regulatory process:

1. **Vehicle Storage and Salvage:** The amendments sought to clarify definitions and uses related to auto wrecking, salvage, and junkyards. A pivotal change was introducing more precise terms like "inoperable vehicle," distinguishing it from "operable vehicle," and revamping the definitions to better categorize various types of vehicle-related storage and salvage activities. This also included removing certain elements from broader categories like junkyard and salvage yard to provide a clear and focused definition specifically for motor vehicle salvage and wrecking facilities.
2. **Contractor and Landscape-Based Businesses:** Recognizing a notable presence of contractor-based and landscape businesses in the area, these amendments aimed to permit such enterprises as special uses within specified zoning districts. This would include additional zoning districts where these businesses can operate following a special use approval, specifically focusing on streets like Theodore, Rock Run, and Broadway. The amendments also laid out specific requirements for parking, setbacks, and screening to ensure these businesses operate harmoniously within the community.
3. **Alternative Beauty Businesses:** A notable addition was the introduction of definitions and regulatory requirements for alternative beauty and personal service businesses. Recognizing the emergence of hybrid beauty businesses that were not previously well-defined, the amendments aimed to provide a structured framework for such businesses to operate. This involved defining a range of services under new terms, such as aesthetician services, and ensuring they would be subjected to a special use permit process, ensuring compliance with location and operational standards.
4. **Firearm-Related Businesses:** A significant enhancement involved incorporating regulations for firearm-related businesses which were previously absent from the zoning ordinance. To ensure safety and community compatibility, regulations were

established to control locations where firearm-related activities could occur. This included implementing a buffer zone of 150 feet between firearm-related businesses and sensitive areas such as schools, parks, and churches. Each application for a firearm-related business would now undergo a thorough vetting process to ensure compliance and mitigate any potential community concerns.

Mayor Soliman asked if anyone in the audience had any questions for Director Ainsworth.

Stuart Soifer, a resident, questioned if the businesses are done in residential districts. Director Ainsworth commented that there is a home-based business ordinance and if it is not within that code section, it is not permitted based on that existing code and will encourage them to find a commercial space.

Director Ainsworth emphasized that these amendments were designed to eliminate ambiguities, introduce comprehensive definitions, and bolster the city's regulatory framework to manage the city's diverse business landscape effectively. The new regulations were crafted in conjunction with City Attorney Mike Stiff and Planning Commission members, aiming to address the ongoing evolution of business practices in Crest Hill.

Mayor Soliman asked for an informal vote.

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Jefferson, Deserio, Albert, Cipiti, Oberlin.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

TOPIC: Discussion and Update on My Waffle

City Attorney Stiff commented that this should not be discussed in an open session and asked for a motion to go into executive session on litigation under 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

Mayor Soliman commented that they want to finish with the rest of the agenda and then go into executive session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stuart Soifer, a resident, commented that he can give a name of a company for the signs that would not cost \$15,000.00 and he was told that the \$15,000.00 is just the amount that was budgeted for signage.

MAYOR UPDATES:

There were no Mayor updates.

COMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES:

Council members discussed the need to officially record recent changes to committee chair assignments. Mayor Soliman then stated who was on each committee:

Beautification – Alderman Dyke and Alderman Deserio

Events – Alderwoman Gazal and Alderman Jefferson

Lidice – Alderperson Oberlin

Veterans & Police Memorial – Mayor Soliman

Mayor Soliman agreed to include this on the July 7th meeting agenda.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

City Administrator Blaine Wing provided several updates, covering a range of operational and structural topics.

Illinois Municipal League Event: Administrator Wing began by reminding Council members about the upcoming Illinois Municipal League event. He emphasized the importance of the event, noting that funds for attending were already budgeted. Mr. Wing requested Council members inform Marybel about their availability and intentions to attend, allowing efficient coordination for registration and hotel bookings.

City Plaque: He then recommended the placement of the new city plaque outside the Council Chambers, explaining that this location was practical and would help preserve the plaque from the elements.

Website Upgrade: Discussing digital infrastructure, Administrator Wing outlined plans to refresh and update the City's website. This would address both an overdue refresh cycle due to previous delays and forthcoming compliance requirements associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The upgrade aimed to enhance functionality, streamline city communications, and allow residents to process payments more efficiently.

Ceiling Projector Proposal: Administrator Wing proposed the installation of a ceiling projector and dropdown screen in the Council Chambers to facilitate clearer presentations and better engagement during meetings. This would replace the less effective and cumbersome television screen currently in use. He highlighted that the expected cost would remain under \$10,000, making it a feasible improvement within the budget.

Staffing Updates: A significant update concerned staffing, particularly the unexpected withdrawal of the Public Works Director candidate. Administrator Wing described ongoing efforts to recruit effectively, asserting plans to leverage both direct recruitment and the use of temporary or interim positions. He also shared positive news about new maintenance workers joining after successful background checks and noted appointments set before the upcoming Fourth of July holiday.

Department Evaluations: Administrator Wing elaborated on continuous evaluations of each city department to formulate potential restructuring recommendations, aiming to optimize city operations and align them with strategic goals.

Council Agenda Streamlining: Additionally, he suggested streamlining Council agendas by incorporating a consent agenda, which would help make Council meetings more efficient by allowing non-controversial items to be approved with a single vote.

Emergency Purchase Procedures: Finally, he proposed a process for managing emergency purchases. Emphasizing quick response for health and safety issues, Administrator Wing recommended bringing emergencies to the Council's attention for guidance before formal action at the next Council meeting. Council members expressed appreciation for Administrator Wing's comprehensive approach and provided feedback on the various proposals, reflecting a collaborative atmosphere.

Historical Items Display: In a related discussion, Mayor Soliman mentioned the idea of preserving and displaying historical items from the old City Hall, such as a plaque with names of previous Mayors and Council members. The Council was supportive of this initiative, acknowledging its importance in honoring the City's history.

Mayor Soliman stated that there is a need for an executive session for litigation under 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

(#1) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Jefferson, to go into an executive session on litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Deserio, Jefferson, Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Dyke, Kubal.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Executive Session 8:43 p.m.

(#2) Motion by Alderperson Oberlin seconded by Alderman Jefferson, to reconvene from the executive session on Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Ald. Gazal, Oberlin, Cipiti, Albert, Deserio, Jefferson.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Ald. Kubal, Dyke.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened 9:03p.m.

There being no further business before the Council, and no action needed from the executive sessions, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2025.

As presented _____

As amended _____

CHRISTINE VERSHAY-HALL, CITY CLERK

RAYMOND R. SOLIMAN, MAYOR