

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, July 18th 2023
7:00 PM - City Council Chamber - 1st Floor

Please NOTE: These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

Chair Chanzit called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Miller, Lanci, Pieper, Chanzit, Solfa, Wolff, Baerren, Leman, Ajazi, Malay.

Absent: Beck, Uher, Cerone, Vogelsinger*

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Laura Newman, City Administrator; Gary Holm, Director of Public Works; Max Weiss, City Analyst; and Ellyn Theis, Recording Secretary.

*Ald. Vogelsinger entered the meeting at 7:28pm.

2. Reminder: Please speak directly into the mic

3. Items added/removed/changed

Chair Chanzit noted that the subcommittee did not have the opportunity to meet regarding item 5 (Discussion: Recommendations For Safety Improvements To Rte. 31) so the subcommittee can discuss further.

Motion: To move item 5 to the next meeting

Maker: Chanzit

Second: Solfa

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Miller, Lanci, Pieper, Chanzit, Solfa, Wolff, Baerren, Leman, Ajazi, Malay.

Nay:

10-0, 4 absent, motion carried.

4. Matters From The Public (For Items NOT On Agenda)

None

5. Discussion: Concepts For Dam Removal/Depot Pond Preservation (LN)

The city and the Park District hired Hitchcock Design Group to create a master plan for the Fox River corridor. The City and the Park District have been trying to arrive at a consensus for a general configuration for the pond. To maintain the pond, there are two alternatives that have been presented for consideration: option "A", an estimated 4.5 million project, would construct a berm from Duck Island to the west bank of the river and uses a pump system to maintain the levels in the pond. Option "B", an estimated 14.5 million, would replace the current dam with a rockwears tall enough to divert the river water and to maintain the pond. The Park District unanimously supports option "B". The discussion tonight is about finding a path forward on this project. Laura Newman recommends each councilmember state their choice between option "A" and "B" as a good place to start.

Ald. Miller is in favor of option "A" due to the cost efficiency and environmental benefit. Would like to leave the environment to sustain itself.

Ald. Lanci is on the fence but is leaning towards option "B". Feels it is time for something transformative.

Ald. Pieper is also on the fence but is leaning towards option "A" on the premise that it is more cost effective and amenities could possibly be added in the "A" configuration. Is interested in the Army Corp sounding data of what the river would look like in a post "A" scenario to get a better feel for the impact upstream. Has suspicion whether option "B" would bring in enough investment to pay for itself.

Ald. Wolff is in favor of option "A", as the less that we put into the river the better off it is. Notes the fact that "B" does provide additional use or draw to the river is appealing and would transform the river through downtown, but we know that the river is not going to get any wider than it is now.

Ald. Solfa is strongly in favor of option "A". Option "A" maintains the pond at all times, and the pond is what defines downtown Batavia. In terms of amenities and transformative values, if you look at all of the mockups, the only thing that "B" provides that "A" does not is rockwears. Otherwise, all features along the banks and options provided all are maybe 90% similar between the two plans. Does not see the majority saying for the extreme amount of increased cost that it's worth it to have some rockwears when everything else can be similarly provided and the pond can be constantly maintained at the same level, which will provide opportunities for use of the pond year round.

Ald. Baerren is in favor of option "A" due to the environmental benefit. The amenities are essentially the same between "A" and "B" with the exception of rockwears. As noted, the

rockwears in Yorkville have required additional investment to maintain. Either one is going to have a long term cost associated, but with the initial cost considered, "A" would be best for the community.

Ald. Leman is in favor of option "B". Notes that engineering studies have not been done on either of these options yet, as they are just in the design stage. "A" and "B" both improve the environment, with the understanding that "A" improves a bit more than "B". Anything we can do to encourage people to be outdoors is good for the environment and she is a supporter of. We are the farthest south community of the tri cities and that provides great opportunities for those who enjoy watercraft. Is hesitant about the pumping system.

Ald. Ajazi is in favor of option "A".

Ald. Malay is in favor of option "B". Notes that the council can't look at this as just a "Batavia" decision. We talk about the river as being an asset, and if we went with "A", we would be diminishing that asset. It is a value to have the river here in Batavia and we are taking a huge risk to remove the dam. The rockwears would provide significant environmental benefit over the current situation. As we observe increased climate change, he would rather have more water stay here in Batavia than pass through town in a small stream. Is adamantly opposed to option "A" as it diminishes one of the best assets of Batavia.

Ald. Uher is in favor of option "B". The Park District has not committed to doing anything with the extra amenities. Option "A" may provide a pond and a river but nothing else because they don't have the money to spend on it. Option "B" would provide a pond and it would always be full due to physics and a white water area. This wouldn't be dangerous. We know the river is going to shrink by 100+ feet and the depth will go down by a foot. Under normal, rainy conditions it will be too shallow to use.

Ald. Vogelsinger is in favor of option "B".

Chair Chanzit is in favor of option "B".

6. Discussion: Potential Uses Of Single Use Bag Fee Revenues (LN)

The city implemented the single use bag fee on July 1st. There are 3 large retailers out of the 16 who did not respond to a usage survey, so it is not an exact estimate, but 4.5 million bags for a total of \$267,000 in bag fee revenue.

Carolyn Burnham presented from the Batavia Environmental Committee on potential uses of the single use bag fee revenue. The following options were presented:

- Parkway trees
- Additional outreach and education programs regarding plastic, waste reduction and diversion programs as well as other topics about sustainability.
- Update or add additional outdoor recycling containers in the city that are better marked for recycling to help reduce contamination.
- Rebates to help residents decarbonize their homes with a preference to those with lower incomes.

Ald. Barren is in support of the tree program and in educational programming. In favor of potentially incorporating educational videos for the website. Ald. Vogelsinger is also in support of the tree program and additional recycling containers. Ald. Lanci is not in favor of the bag fee and questions whether it is effective in reducing the amount of plastic. Ald. Uher feels that if the bag fee doesn't reduce the actual use of plastic within 6 months, he would like to revisit. Is not in favor of a subsidy or rebate. Mayor Schielke recommended approaching RSVP as a resource to help pay bills of citizens who are of lower income using the revenue generated from the bag fee. Staff direction is to let the revenue accumulate in the environmental management fund.

7. Adjournment

With no further matters to discuss, Alderman Chanzit called for adjournment at 9:32.

Committee of the Whole Minutes Translated Respectfully by Ellyn Theis