

 APPROVED

**URBANA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022**

President Hess called the City of Urbana Work Session to order at 6:00 pm.

City Staff attending: Director of Law Mark Feinstein, City Zoning and Compliance Officer Preston Carter

All Council members present

Committees

Mr. Thackery passed out guidelines for potential committee structures. He proposed six council committees. Examples would include Economic and Community Development (potentially including Doug Crabill) and a new committee focusing on the Budget.

Mr. Paul indicated Council should ask the new members what they would be interested in. Also, there should not be more than three members per committee.

Mr. Thackery would like to see each committee chaired by a council member with a city staff person as well. He would also like to see it organized by the first council meeting in February.

Mr. Paul would like to see some flexibility to the committees. Things change and Council should be able to create or remove as they see fit.

Mr. Feinstein suggested Council could amend the rules of Council to include rules regarding committees. He indicated in Columbus, each council member is a chair of a committee. Any potential new ordinance goes to that committee first, where the chair would be the sponsor when it goes to the full council.

Mr. Paul indicated he liked the idea of multiple council members on each committee. Mr. Hess indicated that is easier in Columbus where city council members are full time jobs.

Mr. Thackery likes the idea of sponsorship and presentation of legislation. He indicated, however, that city staff should lead the charge. He believes the communication and support from Council should be ongoing through the development of the legislation.

Mr. Paul indicated he liked the Work Force Development committee that Columbus has. Ms. Jumper inquired if these committees are similar to the parking committee the City previously had. This committee had issues with enforcement.

Mr. Thackery indicated it was important for each committee to have proper minutes. Mr. Scott questioned the value of minutes for committees. For infrastructure, he indicated until it actually comes up with a game plan, there was nothing worth taking minutes for. Mr. Thackery indicated it's important to know specifically what is done at each committee meeting. He would like to see committee meetings more formalized here. Each committee should have public meetings, where even if there is nothing specific to talk about, Council members would still be there to answer questions from the general public.

Mr. Hess inquired if anything was getting accomplished in current committee meetings. Mr. Thackery stated that when the Safety Committee is active, he feels it is was productive in learning

about the number of runs, shortages, etc. Mr. Carter indicated that sometimes it is harder to have quantifiable objectives to work towards. Often, it becomes what have we done, instead of what we're working towards. Mr. Paul agreed, stating that last year was more of seeing where things went.

Mr. Scott like the idea of having the committees have specific purposes. For example, the Infrastructure committee would work to find grants to use to pave streets that otherwise couldn't be funded. Mr. Thackery indicated that the committees could work together, i.e. a Budget committee would work to also help find funding. Ways need to be found, otherwise nothing would ever get done.

Mrs. Bean is unsure about council members being the chairs of the committees. City Staff may potentially have better experience. Mr. Paul indicated that currently meetings are informal, everyone casually talks. Mrs. Bean would potentially like to sponsor any future fireworks legislation.

Mr. Hess indicated each council member used to have a department he or she was responsible for. That department would go to their liaison for any needs. It made Council more involved with what was going on in the City. Theoretically, Mr. Thackery would be responsible for the Fire Department as he already has a relationship with Chief Ortleib being on the current safety committee. Mr. Thackery expanded by saying Infrastructure would talk with water and sewer. Mr. Scott indicated he was more familiar with the streets.

Ms. Jumper inquired if CEP was already handling Community Development. Mr. Thackery stated CEP was more for the County than the City, but they do some support work.

Mrs. Collier stated that she preferred the committee as opposed to the direct liaison. She felt she had a better indication of everything going on this way. Mr. Hess stated that liaisons would theoretically be a one-person committee that would report directly to Council. It would be more singularly focused.

Mr. Thackery indicated that it appeared to be pretty split between committees and liaisons. He asked to take a quick poll to see where each person stood. Mrs. Bean liked the committee idea. Mrs. Collier liked the committee approach and was curious why the other way didn't work. Mr. Paul indicated it just kind of stopped. He stated that it was still pretty muddy on what committees would actually be needed. If he had to pick at this moment, he would pick department representatives because the role is more clear cut. Mr. Scott and Ms. Jumper both agreed with Mr. Paul.

Ms. Jumper indicated if Council were to have committees, they would not necessarily have to meet every month. Mr. Thackery stated that specific meetings would have to be scheduled due to the public open meetings requirement. Mr. Carter indicated that there would not be any open meetings requirement with department liaisons. One could just swing by whenever needed.

Mr. Feinstein suggested why not start with department representatives. If they don't work, Council could go back to committees. This way, you wouldn't need a specific purpose, and may actually accomplish more. Mr. Paul then added that each council member would report at each meeting if there was anything to update.

Ms. Bean agreed with this plan. Mr. Thackery now agreed with this plan as well. As long as something was structured with reports at Council meetings. Mr. Thackery and Mr. Feinstein will meet to list the departments and potential assignments.

Mr. Hess asked if this would need to be passed by ordinance. Mr. Feinstein stated this would require a resolution.

Salary Committee

Mr. Feinstein indicated that the salary committee previously met and made recommendations. Council can accept (all/some) or reject those recommendations. Each recommendation should be brought up and decided ye or nay. Unlike the planning commission, if it is rejected, then the recommendation is dead. Mr. Feinstein indicated that nothing is enacted yet. Each passed recommendation would go into effect during the next term, as no one can vote themselves a raise.

Mr. Scott indicated it should just be brought up at the next meeting. Each item should be voted on to just be done with it. The remaining council members all agreed.

Ordinance 4561-22

Mr. Feinstein indicated these were planning commission recommendations. Any thoughts Council has would be sent back to the planning commission.

Mr. Scott has an issue with the 72 hours per year language. Mr. Carter stated that it can sit on your property (on the durable surface) for as long as you want. One just can't live in it for more than 72 hours. Mr. Paul asked how prevalent this issue was. Mr. Carter indicated enough to warrant this ordinance. Ms. Jumper added that people live in vans and tents under bridges. This is all visible from her property.

Mr. Carter indicated that enforcement would be like any other zoning violation. First, a letter would be issued that takes time. Then a violator would be given ten days to address the violation. Typically guests are going to be gone by then. If not, it goes to Court. First offense is a minor misdemeanor. Subsequent offenses are misdemeanors of the fourth degree (potential jail time). Mr. Thackery asked if these are complaints that are initiated by the general public. Mr. Carter answered that yes, typically that is what zoning responds to. Zoning needs a vantage point to view. If he can't see it, he can't enforce it.

Ms. Jumper asked if this is something that one could get permission for ahead of time. Mr. Carter indicated no.

Mr. Thackery stated the guidance is to keep the neighborhood so everyone can appreciate it. Mr. Hurst indicated that in a lot of more updated zoning cities, it is becoming an issue of taking utilities, which becomes a hazard. Need a stricter threshold to keep it from becoming an issue. Campers are growing with weeds in back yards. There are approximately 10-12 rotting away which brings down property values.

Mr. Paul brought up the issue previously with mowing lawn into street. Voted down because police said they would never enforce it. This issue would be for the habitual abuser.

Mr. Carter added the point of zoning is not to overturn every rock. It's to keep things as harmonious as possible.

Mrs. Bean stated the explanation for enforcement made perfect sense.

Mr. Carter added the term utility trailer was added to address anything basically that has wheels, which cannot be parked on grass. He referenced storage facilities if one couldn't do that in one's own yard. Those facilities are still required to not be on grass.

Mr. Hess brought up a potential issue with business like SVG and White's parking in lots versus parking in grass like they currently do.

Mr. Hurst asked why do they need to park in grass. There are parking standards for environmental reasons. If there is a legitimate reason these businesses need to park in grass, they can apply for a variance.

Ordinance 4562-22

No council member had any comment on the issue.

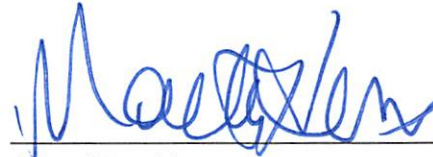
WORK SESSION COMPLETED AT 7:29 p.m.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

February 1, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.



Council Clerk



Council President