

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
February 8, 2021 - 6:00 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

2/8/2021 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AUDIO AND VIDEO CONFERENCE WITHOUT A PHYSICALLY PRESENT QUORUM OF THE ROCK ISLAND CITY COUNCIL DUE TO THE DISASTER DECLARATION ISSUED BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER

ROLL CALL

Mayor Thoms asked Interim City Clerk Linda Mohr to call the roll.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms and Alderman Mark Poulos.

Alderman Ivory D. Clark, Alderman Randy Hurt, Alderman James Spurgetis, Alderwoman Jenni Swanson, Alderman Dylan Parker, and Alderman Dave Geenen were present via remote connection in accordance with Governor Pritzker's Executive Order.

Staff: City Manager Randy Tweet, Interim City Clerk Linda Mohr, Public Works Director Mike Bartels, and other City staff.

SUNSET MARINA PRESENTATION

Public Works Director Mike Bartels began discussing an update on the Sunset Marina. He introduced Denise Browning, the Marina Manager for F3 who oversees the daily operations, and Alain Giudice, the Senior Vice President of F3. Ms. Browning introduced herself and Mr. Giudice. She noted the two and a half years that F3 has been managing the Marina have been challenging, but it has been a great opportunity for her. She said the presentation materials would summarize the history of the Marina and look forward to the future.

Ms. Browning gave an overview of the original F3 contract, which was approved in 2018 by Council. The contract covers the dates of October 15, 2018 to September 30, 2023. She noted the experience of F3 in nearby states, and the reputation they have culled. She said they have explored and implemented revenue sources such as a Ship Store and a Food and Beverage Outlet with tenants. She stated the challenges with the Marina thus far have been the 2019 record flooding, the 2020 derecho, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. She added that skills were gained through the challenges, such as additional knowledge, applying for FEMA funding, and being able to increase occupancy through a pandemic.

Ms. Browning detailed the slip occupancy for the Marina. In 2020, 240 slips out of a possible 395 were occupied, or 61%. She noted there was an increase in smaller boats during the pandemic, which assisted in creating additional long-term revenue.

She next discussed the issues that came as a result of the 2019 record spring flooding, noting were three different crests of flooding, which led to water damage of offices, electrical

equipment, and tenant boats. She said the 400 dock crested at 22 feet, which eclipsed the telescope max at 20 feet. When a heavy windstorm occurred, the 400 dock swung over and ran into the 300 dock as well as 500 dock. She said at that point, the 400 dock was no longer salvageable, and the information was turned in to FEMA.

Ms. Browning detailed the electrical damages as a result of the 2019 flooding. Water damaged electrical boxes and panels along the dock, and afterwards the City's main electrical inspector worked closely with the F3 team to ensure power was restored after 50 days. She noted the boaters were grateful to receive a credit on power usage. Ms. Browning then discussed upgrades to the Marina after the flood. She said the ship store was created out of the former Marina Manager's office, which improved the store's visual attractiveness. As well, a storage room was converted into the Marina Manager's office.

Ms. Browning introduced ideas to increase boater interest. She said she hoped to create a sense of community and a place to be for boaters. She added that ideas have been explored for potential restaurants, including the possibility of converting the coast guard auxiliary building into a restaurant. She added Fun Food Fridays took place in 2019 and Kavanaugh's Hilltop Bar brought in entertainment on the last Friday of every month, which she felt gave boaters a glimpse of the area's potential. She also discussed boater events, including the CCKMA Poker Run fundraiser that received attention from other boaters in the area. She noted the Chili Cook-Off in September, which was a closed event for boaters that attracted giveaways and raffles. She also noted the Halloween Bash, which was to be held at the Marina, but was relocated due to weather.

Ms. Browning discussed the repairs needed for the 300 dock, beginning with fixing the struts. She noted that F3 maintenance could pair with City workers to for a weld repair, but it would be considered a temporary solution. She then discussed the Travelift and accompanying Lift Well, and said the cross sections on the lift well are missing a cross support. This means it can only lift at half capacity, or about two-thirds of the boats docked. She said Mr. Bartels and staff are working on the issue, but the weather has kept that at a standstill. She added garage workers were working on rebuilding the drives on the Travel Lift, as well as other quick fixes.

Ms. Browning discussed the updates to FEMA claims. She said \$15,850.05 for damages was submitted under Category E for the Marina Office, and FEMA determined that this was not eligible as it was not covered by flood insurance. She added it was wise to not have flood insurance due to the cost, which exceeds the damage. Also, \$128,558.13 was submitted under Category G for damages to the parking lot, garage door, and revetment, which FEMA determined was not eligible. FEMA approved \$1,896,378.53 under Category G for the 400 dock, electrical repairs, and dredging. This amount is to be sent to the State of Illinois. The City would be reimbursed \$1,422,283.90 after all repairs are completed and detailed paperwork is submitted to the State, which will keep 25 percent. This project was approved December 15, 2020. She noted the deadline for completion is March 19, 2021, which is automatically determined by FEMA. A request for a completion extension was made on January 4, 2021 with the new desired deadline of December 31, 2022.

Ms. Browning talked about the plan for dredging, which she said would be critical for the future of the marina. She said there has been collaboration with the Core of Engineers at the Rock Island Arsenal to understand the flat pool and acquire documentation going back to the 1960s. She said the last time the City did this was 1989 with coverage of nearly 15,000 cubic yards, but the scenario has become critical and needs to be addressed. She said the navigation channel into the main channel which is maintained by the Corps of Engineers, has a RFP out for dredging the entry in 2022. She noted most river Marinas have an annual dredge plan, but Sunset is larger than most on the Mississippi River.

Ms. Browning discussed one concept for dredging, showing an illustration of the cubic yards for

each section of the Marina in need according to the proposed plan. She said there is a great deal of silt in the harbor. She then noted the project could exceed a million dollars in cost, and if not done could close the harbor, but it must be done in a beneficial way to the taxpayers and boaters.

Ms. Browning presented ideas for future events at the Marina. She said there will be Fun Food Fridays, the Chili Cook-Off, and the Halloween Bash, as well as a possible event with CCKMA. She added the hope is to put ideas together for a potential restaurant in the Marina. She said the Sunset Marina team and F3 Marina are grateful to be able to serve the Quad Cities boating community.

Alderman Spurgetis asked if the City was anticipating a five-year dredge plan, and how did that interact with the extension request. Ms. Browning said the dredge concept would be separate from FEMA, as they did not approve dredge funding. She estimated that with the need to dredge 199,000 cubic yards, the cost would be between 5 and 8 million dollars. She added going forward, they would need guidance from Council as to what their expectations would be and what funds may be available so a plan could be created. Alderman Spurgetis referred to the FEMA update and asked about the eligibility for dredging. Ms. Browning said FEMA did not approve funding for that, as there was no dredge plan.

Mayor Thoms asked Ms. Browning about kayak rentals. She said she has spoken with Kathy Wine of River Action who has a plan as to how that might work from a third party so the City would not need to incur additional cost for inventory and maintenance. Mayor Thoms asked about the graveyard of older boats. Ms. Browning said it is in her immediate goals to look into that, as she would like to get rid of unwanted or abandoned boats. She noted there are some old boats for which owners continue to pay rent, and they have asked the Marina to help them with disposal. She said removing the old boats would improve the look of the Marina and would open up more storage. Mayor Thoms asked about a renewal for the contract with F3 Marina. Mr. Giudice said any contract renewal would be up to the City to decide how they want to move forward. Alderman Geenen asked Mr. Tweet what the state of the renewal would be. Mr. Tweet said the contract would be up in 2023. Alderman Geenen said his family has spent time in the Marina and surveyed boat owners which resulted in all positive reviews. Mayor Thoms asked about marking the channel from the Marina out to the channel. Ms. Browning said she has reached out to the Corps of Engineers, but they will not mark it for the City. She noted if the City decides to have dredging done in 2022, marking the channel should be considered as well.

Mr. Giudice noted that in a Colorado marina which F3 manages, 1.3 million dollars in revenue was generated from use of non-motorized vessels. He said kayak rentals are a trend that is increasing in popularity, especially as boaters continue to age. He said in other locations, the marina is a small part of a multi-purpose area to recreation.

Mayor Thoms thanked Ms. Browning and Mr. Giudice for their time.