

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

City Hall

1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island IL

City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor

8/8/2022 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. This meeting will also be conducted by audio and video conference without the requirement of a physically present quorum of the Rock Island City Council due to the disaster declaration issued by Governor Pritzker.

3. Roll Call

Mayor Thoms asked City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos, and Bill Healy.

Absent: None.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City Staff.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Thoms led in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Moment of Silence

Mayor Thoms requested a moment of silence. A moment of silence was observed.

6. Public Comment

Richard Edwards approached the podium to address City Council. Mr. Edwards opined the certified letter regarding the proposed tax could have been handled better. He shared his observation of tax rates in other Illinois counties. He explained Rock Island County could utilize cost avoidances including excess properties. He said he has attempted to contact the City numerous times to purchase a vacant lot next to his property to utilize for parking. Mr. Edwards requested communication from staff regarding the potential purchase of property.

Greg Stecker approached the podium to address City Council. Mr. Stecker identified himself as a third-generation business owner in Rock Island. He thanked Council for responding to his recent email. Mr. Stecker explained the importance of acknowledging over 50 property and business owners who have expressed support for the Special Service Area (SSA). He said property and business owners will be a part of deciding how funds are spent with the support of the City. Mr. Stecker opined business and property owners provide a unique perspective and point of view. Collaboration would keep money in the downtown and provide advocacy and support for businesses through the SSA. He explained that this would be more than just paying taxes and spending money. Mr. Stecker said that he is hopeful this will lead to more networking and engagement with businesses in the area so they can share different ideas for problem solving, identifying a vision for downtown, and having a dedicated staff to help focus on the needs of business and property owners in the downtown.

Tom Thoms approached the podium to address City Council. Mr. Thoms introduced himself and shared that he is a fourth-generation resident of Rock Island. He shared his experiences as a former President and CEO of two multi-million dollar businesses in the Quad Cities, one that was located in Rock Island. He said he was a part of a team that brought a \$15 million project to Rock Island which brought thousands of jobs to the area over his tenure. He has also participated in several non-profit capital campaigns and social agencies. Mr. Thoms expressed remorse and publicly apologized to Alderperson Swanson for offending her at the last City Council meeting. He said he has witnessed the deterioration of the downtown as a property owner. He opined the frustration and opposition to the SSA stems from a history of broken promises and lack of agile response from the City. He shared about his conversations with fellow McKesson Lofts residents whom report a change is needed.

Mr. Thoms explained there is a difference in the potential of broken promises with the proposal of the SSA. He said it is very rare to be approached as a leader by someone who knows the problem, knows the solution, and has funding to execute the solution. He expressed sadness that this presentation of opportunity was met with contempt, accusations, and little or no gratitude. He said the SSA proposal provides people to take care of the downtown to avoid monies invested going to waste. He offered congratulations to Council for making available funding to start a program for downtown revitalization and having the three components to the solution for downtown. Mr. Thoms encouraged members of Council to support the SSA proposal.

Erica Williams approached the podium to address Council. Ms. Williams stated support for the SSA as a Rock Island citizen. She said she was speaking on behalf of four of the six units of the DuMarche Lofts who were not able to attend the meeting. She shared that her and her family had to move from Rock Island and were excited to move back to Rock Island in the downtown because of the potential they saw in the downtown area. She shared feelings of excitement to be a Rock Islander and the positive impacts an SSA would have on the downtown area. She said her experience as a municipal employee of twenty years provides her with a unique perspective of how SSAs positively impact communities, and the benefit of having a unique funding source for a specific area. The proposed SSA would positively impact the entire City, as it frees up funds in the budget to be utilized in other areas of Rock Island. She shared that contributions to an SSA would incite feelings of pride, and being a part of deciding how those funds are spent is a unique opportunity.

Caitlin Russell and Jeff Ehrenberg approached the podium to address City Council. Ms. Russell stated they are the property owners at 1701 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Rock Island which is the new Federal building in downtown and are in opposition of the proposed SSA. She said she is a Chamber board member and stated support of utilizing the Chamber to assess this process. Mr. Ehrenberg of Rock Island Investors addressed Council by stating they were fortunate to have been awarded a contract to have the United States government as their tenant. He spoke about previous conversations with the Mayor regarding possibly renewing the downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district and how it would benefit prospective developers of constructing new buildings or remodeling existing buildings. He said businesses would qualify for the TIF district. He opined the fees for the proposed SSA are hideous with no guarantee of benefits for downtown stakeholders. He requested Council afford an opportunity for property owners to vote on the proposed SSA tax before enforcing it.

Ms. Williams returned to the podium to add to her earlier statement and declare disagreement with the previous speaker. She said she is happy to share her municipal wage as a homeowner to improve the downtown. She said she walks downtown as she walked to the City Council meeting and she and her family walk to enjoy dinner at downtown restaurants. She reiterated that she has the permission of others to speak on their behalf who support the SSA and are agreeable to funding the SSA.

Jeff Ehrenburg returned to the podium to add to his earlier statement about the recent history with the proposed SSA and deals made with Royal Neighbors and Modern Woodmen to exclude them from the added cost of the SSA. He said people should be aware of that.

Mayor Thoms clarified that Royal Neighbors has not been excluded from the proposed SSA. He added that Modern Woodmen is contributing funds to the SSA and are neutral to the proposal. Modern Woodmen is committed to contributing \$250,000 over five years to the proposed SSA as an endorsement of economic development in downtown.

[inaudible comment from audience]

Mayor Thoms said it was decided to not renew the TIF district at this time and that could be discussed in the future.

Mayor Thoms introduced and welcomed Sarah Hayden as the Communication Specialist, which is a new position with the City. He encouraged individuals to contact Sarah regarding information about the City or things they feel should be shared by the press or concerns to be addressed.

7. Minutes from the July 25, 2022 Study Session and City Council Meeting.

Clerk Gange noted scrivener's error in the copies Council received.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the minutes as printed; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

8. Update Rock Island

**Quad City Botanical Center offering Pay What You Want Week August 7-13, 2022** – The Botanical Center is offering pay what you want admission this week to allow for every community member to have a chance to experience all that the summer gardens have to offer. Visit their website for more information.

**River Action's Annual Floatzilla to be held on Saturday, August 20, 2022** – Paddlers will launch from five sites across the Quad Cities to take over the Mississippi River for the day. Join the fun at Lake Potter in Rock Island featuring local food trucks and live music for participants to enjoy! Visit their website for more information and to register.

**Thursday Night Groove Concert Series in Schweibert Park is back!** The concert series will run every Thursday from August 18 through October 13, 2022 featuring a different band each week. Concessions from Bent River Brewing Co. and Happy Joe's Pizza will be available starting at 6:00 p.m. with live music from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Visit the Rock Island Parks & Recreation website for more information.

**The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center will host its 35th Annual Family Fun Day on Saturday, August 27, 2022.** The fun starts at 10:00 a.m. with a parade on 9<sup>th</sup> Street followed by a family fun day full of activities. For more information, visit their website.

9. Announcement of the 2022 Rock Island Citizen of the Year Award Winners.

Aldersperson Healy said the Citizen of the Year Awards have been given annually since 1987 by the Mayor and City Council. These awards recognize outstanding people who often go unrecognized in our community. The selection committee consists of prior year winners, members of the Labor Day Parade Committee, the Deputy City Clerk, and chaired by a member of the City Council. The committee interviewed the nominees and then selected the recipients. He announced a reception honoring the winners will be held on August 22, 2022 at 6:20 p.m. in the lobby of Council Chambers and the award presentation will immediately follow at 6:45 p.m.

Aldersperson Healy explained the committee was tasked with difficult choices due to excellent nominations. He declared the winners as McDonald's on 30<sup>th</sup> Street in the business category, Michelle Greenwood, a teacher at Rock Island-Milan High School in the honorary category, Vicki Hess in the individual category, Judge Carol Pentuic in the professional category, Celebrate Recovery in the

organization category, James Kerr in the veteran category, and Quincy Davis in the youth category in recognition of his work with the youth of Rock Island.

10. Proclamation declaring August 3, 2022 as The Greatest International Scavenger Hunt Awareness Day in Rock Island.

Clerk Gange read the proclamation. Mayor Thoms read his declaration. Heather Nobling Kangas came forward to accept the proclamation. A picture was taken with Mayor Thoms.

11. Consent Agenda

- a. Claim - Report from the Human Resources Department regarding payment in the amount of \$14,442.00 to David G. Morrison, City Attorney, for services rendered during the month of July 2022.
- b. Claims for the week July 15, 2022 through July 21, 2022 in the amount of \$292,026.98; week of July 22, 2022 through July 28, 2022 in the amount of \$1,087,253.35; and payroll for the weeks of July 11, 2022 through July 24, 2022 in the amount of \$1,650,826.24.
- c. ACH Report for June 2022 in the amount of \$2,446,906.06.
- d. Purchase Card claims for the period of May 27, 2022 through June 27, 2022 in the amount of \$84,921.83.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve Consent Agenda items a through d; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

12. Report from the Public Works Department regarding contract negotiations with HRGreen of Cedar Rapids, IA for engineering services for Funding Assistance for the Water System Standby Power.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to allow the Public Works Department to negotiate a contract with HRGreen for the Water System Standby Power; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

13. Report from the Public Works Department regarding a request for a temporary construction easement at 1500 1st Avenue to improve US 67 (15th Street) from 2nd to 5th Avenue for the Pedestrian Ramp Project in order to improve pedestrian access.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Robison moved to approve the IDOT's acquisition of a temporary construction easement at 1500 1st Avenue and authorize the City Manager to execute the documents; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

14. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a Request for Proposal for a site redevelopment assessment, recommending the proposal be awarded to Shive-Hattery Architecture & Engineering of Bettendorf, IA not to exceed \$50,000.00.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to approve the proposal as recommended and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

15. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a recommendation to initiate approval of a downtown special services area (SSA) ordinance. (First Reading)

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to consider the SSA initiating ordinance, begin the sixty-day public comment period, and direct staff to prepare notices for a public hearing to follow comment period as required by law; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Aldersperson Gilbert read a statement regarding her support for the downtown revitalization. She summarized information from the presentation from the July 25, 2022 Council meeting and shared related concerns. She opined safety is the number one issue in the downtown and voiced concern about how effectively it will be addressed by Clean and Safe Ambassadors and Community Navigators.

Aldersperson Gilbert noted the Police Department does not possess the resources to implement needed security measures to address concerns in the downtown. She said it has been estimated at approximately \$250,000 per year to provide private, professionally trained security for the proposed downtown SSA. She said business and property owners have stated to her that they would gladly pay for an SSA if it including reclaiming the downtown.

Aldersperson Gilbert said other investments in the downtown would be wasted if safety and security were not addressed first. She encouraged other Council members to consider private, professionally trained security and prioritize it in the SSA budget. She shared about her communication with business and property owners and her plan to continue corresponding with them regarding the proposed SSA. She said 75% of them have not had the opportunity to share their opinion and their answer should be assumed "no."

Aldersperson Gilbert stated the requirement for support to move ahead with the tax is 25% and 51% to oppose it to prevent it from moving forward. She opined 51% should be required to move ahead with the tax. She said there are even less supporters of the SSA tax after the previous Council meeting. She said it is unfair to vote on something as impactful as an additional tax burden during a recession without including all stakeholders, and for that reason she would vote no on behalf of the 75% of stakeholders that have not indicated support.

Aldersperson Healy recused himself from the vote due to being a property owner in the downtown area. He said thoughtfulness in the SSA process is needed to ensure downtown Rock Island is attractive to larger businesses.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 5-1-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Robinson, and Hurt Nay: Gilbert. Absent: None.

16. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding the sale of City-owned property located at 1323,1324, and 1325 6th Avenue (PIN 0735127014) to Brett Ackerland for \$722.50.00 plus closing costs. (First Reading)

MOTION:

Aldersperson Robinson moved to approve the sale as recommended; authorize the City Manager to execute the sales agreement; consider, suspend the rules and pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

17. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding the sale of City-owned property located at 2517 7th Avenue (PIN 0736306009) to Jeff Konrad for \$1.00 plus closing costs. (First Reading)

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the sale as recommended; authorize the City Manager to execute the sales agreement; consider, suspend the rules, and pass the ordinance; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

18. Report from the Community & Economic Development Department regarding a variance request from Brandon Albertson, owner of Brandon's Pub & Grille to allow two principal structures on one parcel at 3008 7th Avenue.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to approve the variance request as recommended; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

19. Report from the Finance Department regarding the CY 2021 Firefighters and Police Pension Fund Assumptions.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the recommended pension assumptions, Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Aldersperson Poulos recused himself from the vote due his affiliation with the firefighter pension fund.

Aldersperson Swanson asked if the City would have funds available to avoid taxpayers paying for a gap in actuarial assumptions and the market. Finance Director Linda Barnes explained that this would be included in the budget process and the amount would impact the property tax levy. She said the City is waiting on the estimated equalized assessed value from the County to move forward.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 6-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

20. Report from the Finance Department regarding the Municipal Compliance Reports for the Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2021 from the Police Pension Fund and the Fire Pension Fund.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Hurt moved to approve the Municipal Compliance Reports for the Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2021 for the Police Pension Fund and the Fire Pension Fund; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

21. Report from the Finance Department regarding an adjustment to the CY 2022 budget, increasing the Library Fund (251) expenditures by \$144,319.90 for long range building plans.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to approve the budget adjustment as recommended; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

22. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding an Activity Permit and Resolution from the Quad City Bandits to hold their annual Quad City Bandits Race to Home 5K event on Saturday, October 8, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Healy moved to approve the event as recommended and adopt the resolution; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

23. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a request from the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, 630 9th Street, to hold their annual Family Fun Day on Saturday, August 27, 2022 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.,

with street closures at 9th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues; and a request for sound amplification.

DICUSSION:

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if a waiver of the application fee was included. Clerk Gange responded affirmatively and noted she would include this detail in future agenda items.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Robinson moved to approve the event and requests as recommended; Aldersperson Hurt seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

24. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding a Plaza Activity Event request from Kyle Born of The Smoking Dog Pub for an outdoor fenced event with games and live music from Thursday, September 1, 2022 through Sunday, September 4, 2022 from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. in conjunction with the Rock Island Grand Prix.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to approve the event and requests, subject to complying with all liquor license regulations, contacting the Fire Department for fire and safety considerations, and subject to being closed down early if complaints are received; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

25. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding street closing and sound amplification requests from Evelyn Day to hold a block party on 43rd Street, 20th to 21st Avenues on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to approve the requests as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

26. Report from the City Clerk's office regarding an Activity permit application from the Cornbelt Running Club for their 33rd annual Nancy Kapheim Memorial Classic 5K and 10K Run on Sunday, October 2nd, 2022 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Swanson moved to approve the event as recommended; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

27. Other Business

Aldersperson Swanson announced a 4th Ward meeting on Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at Hodge Park beginning at 6:00 p.m. She encouraged all 4th ward residents to attend and share their thoughts.

Aldersperson Robinson thanked participants for attending the 1st Ward meeting on July 28th, including Police Chief Richard Landi who presented about recent events.

Mayor Thoms said National Night Out was well attended and a lot of fun. He also shared about Deputy Chief McCloud participating in the dunk tank.

28. Closed Session.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Gilbert moved to enter Closed Session for the exception cited; Aldersperson Robinson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

29. Motion to Adjourn.

Upon re-entering the regular meeting, roll call was taken.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderspersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos, and Bill Healy.

Absent: None.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City Staff.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Parker moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Healy seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting concluded at 7:54 p.m.

Naomi Sanderson

Naomi Sanderson, Deputy City Clerk