

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
February 27, 2023 - 5:00 p.m.**

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

2/27/2023 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

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 City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Alderpersons Randy Hurt, Judith Gilbert, Dylan Parker (virtual), Mark Poulos, Bill Healy, and Mayor Mike Thoms.

Absent: Moses Robinson.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Thoms asked if there was anyone in the audience or virtually that wished to comment.

Rock Island resident and boat owner Tom Thoms discussed his experiences with Sunset Marina over time, and asked Council to consider how to revitalize it. He noted the sums of money he had spent locally, and the sales tax dollars brought in by the City as a result of having the Marina.

SUNSET MARINA FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS PRESENTATION

Public Works Director Mike Bartels discussed results of the market analysis performed by Edgewater Resources for the City's Sunset Marina. He introduced Greg Weykamp and Nick Stefani of Edgewater. Mr. Weykamp discussed Edgewater's qualifications and summarized the purpose of the presentation.

Mr. Weykamp said the analysis consisted of a condition assessment, a market analysis, alternative measures, and funding strategies for the marina. Regarding the assessment of conditions, he said the facility is well past the useful lifespan as is, and discussed deficiencies with the electrical safety and connections at the docks in the Marina, as well as a lack of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. He noted the need to bring the facility up to modern ADA and safety standards, also citing potential liability concerns.

Mr. Weykamp discussed the market analysis performed by Edgewater. He said the regional occupancy is strong, and there are waiting lists at many local facilities. He noted the rates at these modern competitors are also competitive, and said the occupancy at Sunset Marina is well below the region's norms. He proposed rates for marina slips, which he opined should be higher than what they currently are, and the City should consider a variety of differing slip sizes, as boats have become longer and wider over time. He said the proposed rates are on par with other local facilities, and are correlated with the costs of what a modern facility should be.

Mr. Weykamp reviewed comparable marinas in the area and discussed their conditions and rate schedules. These included Lindsay Park Yacht Club, the Clinton Marina, and the Bluff Harbor Marina. He cautioned against keeping rates artificially low due to having a publicly-owned facility.

Mr. Weykamp discussed potential strategies for the marina. The first option is to continue City ownership and operations as is. This would include increasing rental rates to match the market. Another is to continue City ownership, but lease it to an operator. This would still leave the City open to potential liability issues. A third option is to sell the facility to a private developer. Due to the land costs as well as the facility repairs, the option of selling includes the cost for preparing it to sell, as well as the potential for the buyers inappropriately caring for the facility. The last option is to close Sunset Marina altogether.

Mr. Weykamp said his suggestion is to continue City ownership, as it is in the best financial position to provide the best benefit to the community at the lowest cost. He said rebuilding the entire marina is not the explicit recommendation at the moment, but plans to build it back in phases should be put in place. A rebuild and modernization of the entire marina would be estimated at a cost of \$9,218,000. This would encompass a smaller 200 slip size, which would be expandable in capacity by 50 to 100 slips in phases or stages. He recommended having a smaller facility with a smaller footprint by cutting the dredging area in half, thus reducing the costs of doing that work. He reviewed strategies to provide revenue from the marina, and suggested using proposed revenue to serve as a revenue bond, which would support the construction of \$6.75 million as proposed.

Mr. Weykamp said with the existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant, potential grants, and expected revenues, the City could reconstruct the marina and operate with self-sufficiency. Another strategy is to rebuild the 400 dock at a cost of \$2.75 million, and revenues will make up that difference, along with the FEMA grant.

Alderperson Hurt said regardless of what is done with the marina, the City still has a \$283,000.00 bond debt to repay. He asked Mr. Weykamp how he would go about assisting the City with grant writing. Mr. Weykamp discussed the various federal grants that could be applied for, of which his

company has had 100 percent success thus far. There are also U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Boating Infrastructure grants available.

Aldersperson Healy discussed his experience with boating in Alabama and Tennessee. He said dry docking was popular in those areas, and asked if that was an option in Rock Island. Mr. Weykamp said that is a cheap and reasonable option.

City Manager Thompson asked Mr. Bartels to provide the status of the 400 dock and the FEMA grant. Mr. Bartels said there is a current deadline of September 20 of 2023 to complete the FEMA grant. He said any recommendation or direction from Council on Marina or dock matters would be appreciated. Mr. Thompson said the Council had previously voted to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to match \$1 million towards the FEMA grant.

Aldersperson Poulos asked if the maintenance plan included consideration of leasing or hiring a dredge company or perhaps having the City's own dredge. Mr. Bartels said dredging is not something that can be done by the staff, as they do not have the expertise, and there may also be a liability to the City involved. Mr. Weykamp concurred.

Mayor Thoms noted there is another grant opportunity available through a state legislation bill to recognize the City as a Port District, and may attract federal infrastructure funding. Aldersperson Hurt asked who co-chaired the bill for the project. Mayor Thoms said Senators Mike Halpin and Neil Anderson are co-sponsors, and Representative Gregg Johnson would sponsor it in the House. Mr. Bartels said the facility needs to be addressed one way or another, as it has outlived its useful life and has liabilities.

Aldersperson Parker asked if the City performed due diligence regarding the presenters and the numbers given. Mr. Bartels said once the scope of a plan has been decided, staff will review the plan in further detail. Mr. Thompson said a higher analysis might be done regarding market demand if upwards of \$10 million are spent, but the current decision is focused on the 400 dock.

Mr. Weykamp said the next step in the process would be to expand the scope of the engineering portion. He added he is confident in the market rates, as that is what is currently being charged. If they can provide more detailed cost information, F3 Marina would be competent enough to perform a revenue analysis. Aldersperson Healy asked how much the engineering costs would be. Mr. Weykamp said there is an existing proposal for the 400 dock, and Mr. Bartels added that it was estimated at \$187,000.00. Mr. Bartels said additional dredging needs to be done now outside of the 400 dock.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked if the slips were viable. Mr. Bartels said those on the riverside would be the ones for which to focus on. Mayor Thoms further explained which slips were viable. Aldersperson Gilbert said she did not understand how the proposal could be funded, and noted concerns about selling bonds to do the work going forward. Mr. Thompson said it has been suggested that the larger proposal of approximately \$9 million be done in phases, with primary attention given to the 400 dock. Engineering funds to build that dock is an eligible part of the FEMA grant, but dredging is not.

Aldersperson Swanson said it appears the City has the funding to replace the 400 dock if dredging is completed. She suggested operating as a smaller marina at first, and then build back up to a full marina, and discussed the larger benefits for the future. She said it would be fiscally foolish to not invest in the marina.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked how many viable slips were in the 300 dock. Mr. Bartels did not have the information currently available. Aldersperson Healy said closing or selling the marina were not viable options for him. Aldersperson Hurt said he is for the 125 slip number for which to build upon. Aldersperson Poulos said it is fiscally responsible of the City to move forward with the marina.

Alderson Healy said this decision has been delayed many times, and something needs to be done now.

Mr. Bartels asked Mr. Weykamp when a proposal for engineering and design costs could be obtained. Mr. Weykamp responded it could be within a week. Alderson Poulos asked how any work done in 2023 would affect marina operations. Mr. Weykamp said the main obstacles are permitting and waiting for testing to return from labs, and realistically any dredging done would be in the fall, and they would work to avoid interrupting any boating activities. Mr. Stefani said determination of time is depending on permits, which are in turn dependent on what materials are pulled from the ground. He added the Illinois EPA is most concerned about what is pulled from the water, and where it will be placed, and their process could take 6 to 12 months.

Mr. Thompson said the plan would be to bring back the scope of work and the engineering proposal by the March 27, 2023 Council meeting date. Alderson Gilbert asked what would be involved in that proposal. Mr. Bartels said it would contain information on a possible 125 slip count and the dredging involved, as well as any decommissioning on any older docks and electrical upgrades on remaining docks. Alderson Healy asked if there had been consideration for plastic molding docks. Mr. Weykamp said that type of construction is not typically compatible with covered roof systems. Alderson Parker asked if the 125 slip option was preferred over a 200 slip option. Alderson Swanson said she introduced that idea to encourage movement on a smaller scale. Mr. Bartels noted that if the 125 slip option were to be entertained, staff would need to see how many slips would remain, and how many boaters would be displaced.

FLOCK LICENSE PLATE READER SYSTEM PRESENTATION

Police Chief Rich Landi provided an overview of the recommended Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system. He said the system is already in place and in operation with many other local municipalities, and it is already been utilized by accessing the system for useful investigation results. He noted the presence of State Attorney Dora Villareal in the audience for any questions Council may have, and Flock Safety representative Hector Soliman-Valdez via virtual connection.

Mr. Soliman-Valdez introduced himself and provided background information on his company. He said the goal is to create a force multiplier to capture objective evidence for distribution to the correct users. He discussed how the system functions, and the benefits to local law enforcement, noting there is no identifiable personal information involved, and the data is not retained long-term.

Mr. Soliman-Valdez said the ALPR system serves as a proactive crime prevention and elimination tool, as well as an investigative benefit and a crime deterrent. He said the data is stored with end-to-end encryption, which is the highest available protection, and that a search reason is required. He discussed examples of how the Flock Safety system has helped solve certain investigations and prevent crimes.

Alderson Hurt asked if the data could be obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Mr. Soliman-Valdez said in order to access the data, the police need a case number, and the data becomes part of an investigation, adding that it then follows the investigative process. Chief Landi said as long as the data is not in the form of a document the department possesses, a search would need to be performed through a database, and is not eligible for a FOIA request. City Attorney Morrison said it would depend on what the Attorney General eventually states. He suggested contacting one of the aforementioned municipalities using the system to understand what challenges they have faced. Mr. Soliman-Valdez added there is a 30-day rolling basis for holding data.

Aldersperson Hurt asked if the system would add a burden to monitor it. Chief Landi said there has already been a pilot program in place for license plate readers, which sends an alert on a dashboard. Aldersperson Hurt asked if the provided map would indicate the proposed locations for cameras, as there are none in the southwest area of the City. Chief Landi confirmed that was correct, but Milan also has some cameras in that area already, and Rock Island would be able to access them. Aldersperson Poulos asked if the image captures would be considered evidence. Chief Landi said that is possible, but only if an investigation calls for it.

Aldersperson Poulos asked Ms. Villareal if there would be a request for a Frye hearing on this type of technology. Ms. Villareal said there have been some Frye hearings in other counties based on system and reliability. She said she is a proponent of more surveillance, as local judges and juries expect more evidence. Pertaining to FOIA requests, she noted there are retention periods for squad and body cameras, and those also self-delete after a period of time. Mr. Morrison said the data is property of the City, but there is an exception for law enforcement, and a distinction should be made. Mr. Soliman-Valdez added that Flock Safety cannot sell or share the data to a third party. Aldersperson Gilbert asked for clarification on which municipalities had this system. Chief Landi confirmed Milan, Silvis, East Moline, and the Rock Island County Sheriff's Office is considering strategic placement of cameras in the area.

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Healy moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Poulos seconded.

VOTE:

Motion passed on a 6-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Swanson, Parker, Poulos, Healy, Hurt, and Gilbert. Nay: None. Absent: Robinson.

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.



Josh Adams, Deputy City Clerk

