

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
April 22, 2019 - 5:30 p.m.**

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

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderman Virgil J. Mayberry, Alderman James Spurgetis, Alderman Stephen L. Tollenaar, Alderman Dylan Parker, Alderman Dave Geenen, and Alderman Ivory D. Clark

Absent: Alderman Joshua Schipp

Staff: City Manager Randy Tweet, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Judith Gilbert, and other City staff

4/22/2019 - Minutes

**CITY ATTORNEY AND CITY CLERK: PROPOSED PUBLIC COMMENT RULES**

City Attorney Dave Morrison said he and the City Clerk were asked to look at Public Comment rules which are a requirement of the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Morrison reviewed the Illinois Quad Cities communities they looked at that have adopted and published Public Comment rules: East Moline and Colona; Rock Island County and Henry County. He said they looked also at the cities of Evanston and Champaign. Mr. Morrison said Champaign has a large legal department and a robust economy.

Mr. Morrison stated Council wanted Public Comment earlier in the meeting. Mr. Morrison said they are proposing Public Comment be held at the beginning of City Council meetings, after the Moment of Silence. It is for agenda items or anything someone wishes to talk about. He said the allotted time for Public Comment will be thirty (30) minutes. Mr. Morrison suggested that if more time is needed after running out the thirty minutes, such as when there is a hot topic, the remainder of the speakers be heard at the end of the meeting. The speakers would be taken in order of sign-up.

Mr. Morrison said speakers would each have five (5) minutes to address Council. He explained that a reasonable amount of time is required; there is no set rule, but traditionally Rock Island has allowed five minutes per speaker. City Clerk Judith Gilbert cautioned closer timekeeping may be needed with Public Comment at the beginning. Currently, speakers are allowed to go on long after the five minutes.

Speakers would be required to sign up on the sign-in sheet prior to the meeting. Mr. Morrison explained that speakers cannot be asked for their address, only their town of residence. Alderman Parker asked why there are two sign-in sheets. City Clerk Gilbert explained that currently the sign-in sheet at the back of Council Chambers is for speakers who want to talk about items not on the agenda. The other one is for speakers discussing agenda items so that she has a record of all speakers. Mr. Morrison stated if Council adopted the proposed rules, only one sign-in sheet would be needed. Speakers could talk about whatever they want if they sign up. He added people who want to speak about agenda items should be given priority to speak first.

Mr. Morrison said it was important to say what Public Comment is not. He said speakers should not use Public Comment time to harass Council or engage in disturbing behavior. By laying out the guidelines for Public Comment, Mr. Morrison said it gives the Mayor discretion to step in if needed. Mr. Morrison said Public Comment is not for asking questions of Council or engaging in a debate or dialogue. He explained it is not an appropriate forum to talk with Council members. Conversations with Council members should be arranged for outside of Council meetings. He said the guidelines prepared by City Clerk Gilbert will give people direction what to expect for Public Comment.

City Clerk Gilbert reviewed the general guidelines she proposes. She explained that once everything is adopted, it will be published on the City website and she will also have it on the Annual Calendar of Council meetings and on the sign-up sheet. Speakers should go up to the podium when their name is called and state their name for the record. Speakers should address their comments to Council as a whole; not to individual members. Speakers should be encouraged to be concise with their comments with the five minute limit. Ms. Gilbert said speakers tend to repeat themselves.

Alderman Mayberry asked about having them state their address for the record. City Clerk Gilbert responded they cannot ask them for their address, although people often give their address anyway. Mr. Morrison said they can be asked what town they live in. Alderman Tollenaer asked if it can only be Rock Island residents who are allowed to speak. City Clerk Gilbert responded no; everyone who wishes to speak must be given the opportunity.

City Clerk Gilbert said they don't want to tie up Public Comment with questions for Council; that often gets into a debate. Speakers should be told to arrange a conversation or meeting outside of Council meetings. Ms. Gilbert said speakers should be civil and courteous in their comments and profanity will not be tolerated. She added disturbances will also not be tolerated and may be cause for removal.

Alderman Mayberry asked who is the timekeeper. Mayor Thoms replied he is. City Clerk Gilbert said the Mayor is the Chair. Mr. Morrison said it is the Mayor's job to warn anyone if they are getting out of hand.

City Clerk Gilbert stated it is an OMA requirement that Council's adoption of Public Comment rules will apply to all boards, committees, and commissions that are subsidiaries of the City of Rock Island except for the Library board. Ms. Gilbert reviewed the proposed timeline for the adoption of the rules. She added that OMA recommends the adoption of Public Comment rules not be rushed. The City Attorney will prepare the ordinance for a first reading at the May 13, 2019 Council meeting (Old Business). The second reading and the adoption of the ordinance would be at the May 20, 2019 Council meeting. Ms. Gilbert said this timeline will allow sufficient time for public input.

Mr. Morrison said the proposed rules are not set in stone; it is up to Council to decide them. He recommended they send their thoughts to the City Manager. He further explained that there can be time, place, and manner restrictions, but no content restrictions except for the profanity rule.

Alderman Spurgetis said he likes Public Comment at the beginning for agenda items, but what if someone wants to speak when an agenda item comes up. Mr. Morrison said the Mayor as Chair should make that decision. He said you don't want to cut people off, but it's up to the Mayor and Council if they want to hear them.

Alderman Parker stated he prefers Public Comment at the beginning for all non-agenda items and allow Public Comment during agenda items. Discussion continued regarding this proposal.

Mr. Morrison concluded with cautioning Council that there should be time for input on the rules. He stated if they do two readings of the ordinance, no one can complain then.

Alderman Parker asked who will monitor Public Comment compliance with all of the subsidiary bodies. City Manager Randy Tweet said once the ordinance is adopted, a notification will be sent to all boards and commissions. There are also staff liaisons for all boards and commissions. City Clerk Gilbert said many boards and commissions already have Public Comment at the beginning of their meeting.

## **CED: HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT**

Community and Economic Development Budget and Grants Manager Colleen Small-Vollman said the City had been approached last February by the City of Davenport to see if Rock Island would be willing to partner again to complete the HUD housing needs assessment. Ms. Small-Vollman agreed as it helps to share the costs of the study; she said Moline agreed too. She said the housing needs assessment goes along with the Five Year Consolidated Plan and also helps with the Fair Housing Rule. She presented the intergovernmental agreement. Ms. Small-Vollman said it had already been reviewed by the City Attorney. She said it will be on the next Council meeting agenda for approval.

Alderman Parker asked if this housing study was different than the one where a consultant was hired. Ms. Small-Vollman replied the consultant was hired to do an analysis of impediments to fair housing which is different. She said the housing needs assessment will look at the city's housing stock. She said HUD requires both.

Alderman Parker confirmed that the intergovernmental agreement is to collectively purchase a consultant; he wanted to know how the data will be used. Ms. Small-Vollman replied that typically they have not done the study as an intergovernmental agreement. Each city has always done their own. She said this study will look at data for the three communities, the major players in the Quad Cities. She explained this will give them insight into what's going on in the other communities; how they're faring and what they're doing. Ms. Small-Vollman said it will be a unique sharing of information. The cities will be able to look across city boundaries for programs or work together to address needs identified in all three communities.

Alderman Parker asked if the study will show the need for affordable housing. Ms. Small-Vollman replied yes and what kind of affordable housing; for example, senior, family or multi-family housing; housing with three or four bedrooms, etc. She explained the analysis to impediments study does not look at those things. Alderman Parker asked if there was any City policy since the last housing assessment. Ms. Small-Vollman replied no, not in the last two and a half years. She added the City is finally in a place where all of these things can be addressed. She said the study will work nicely with getting housing developers to come in.

Ms. Small-Vollman said the study should be completed by the end of 2019 or beginning of 2020. Alderman Parker asked how Council will get this information. She added Council will adopt the completed study. She will create binders for each Council member with the study. There will be a 30-day Public Comment period as well as a study session. This will also be done when the Consolidated Plan comes back. All information will be put on the website. Alderman Parker asked about community partners such as the Housing Authority and Project Now and if they are involved. Ms. Small-Vollman said yes; they are stakeholders. Alderman Geenen said better relationships are needed with the community partners.

## **BUSINESS SUCCESSION PLANNING WITH WIUSBDC**

Community and Economic Development Director Chandler Poole said one of the things they

were asked to explore and discuss was small business and business succession to ensure businesses stay in Rock Island. Mr. Poole introduced Ann Friederichs from the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Western Illinois University. Mr. Poole said people who come to the City with business ideas are referred to Ms. Friederichs. He said she is an expert at helping people create business plans.

Ms. Friederichs said business succession is very important for keeping the business in the community. She has an office at the WIU Moline campus, but she is usually out talking to businesses. Her territory reaches from Galesburg to Galena. The best way to contact her is by phone or email. Ms. Friederichs explained the SBDC is federally funded through the Small Business Administration in the form of a grant that comes through the State of Illinois through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. She said the host institution must match the grant 100%. She works in conjunction with the SBDC on the WIU Macomb campus which has been there for thirty years and her office has been operating for two years at the Moline campus. She stated all of the services are free.

Ms. Friederichs stated the SBDC provides one-on-one confidential business counseling; a confidentiality statement is signed. Services cover business start-up, expansion, acquisition or sale; business planning and financial projections; marketing, promotions, and publicity; government regulations; intellectual property research; management and human resources management; and succession planning. She said succession planning is very personal. Clients also have access to the International Trade Center and Procurement Technical Assistance Center on campus. She said holding workshops on business succession do not work; no one shows up. The issue is too personal.

Ms. Friederichs stated that 47% of business owners over the age of 65 do not have a transition plan for themselves or their businesses. She explained that if business owners want a company to continue to have value, they must have an exit strategy. She stated vendor agreements often require succession plans.

Ms. Friederichs provided some statistics. She said baby boomers own a majority of the estimated 15 million privately owned business in the US. Approximately 60% of these businesses are owned by people born before 1964. Millennials were born approximately in the early 1980s to the mid to late 1990s. She said 30% of millennials have already been involved in some way in entrepreneurship and 26% have already lived entirely off the income of a small business, Etsy shop, or Uber. She gave some additional statistics that 49% of millennials stated with the right resources they would quit their jobs and start a business in the next six months. She added that many millennials are carrying a lot of student loan debt.

Ms. Friederichs reviewed the reasons for a sale: retirement, partnership disputes, illness or death, overwork, and boredom. She said they have a sixty page workbook that has to be worked through for succession planning over time. Some succession plan considerations are personal and financial. She explained owners will face a sense of loss and will actually grieve the loss of their business, as well as grieving the loss of their employees and clients. Ms. Friederichs distributed examples of the worksheets and said it is a long process. She said they like to see business owners two years from their exit, but they will see people later for succession planning.

Alderman Parker asked if business owners are asked about succession planning when CED does business visits. Economic Development Manager Tarah Sipes said sometimes people don't want to discuss such a personal topic. However, she always references Ms. Friederichs when speaking with business owners. Alderman Parker said he was recently appointed to the Bi-State Regional Commission and they were reviewing their comprehensive economic development strategy. He said they recognize that a number of small businesses have no succession plan. Alderman Parker asked Ms. Friederichs if she was in communication with Bi-

State; Ms. Friederichs replied yes.

Alderman Parker said that when he brought the topic up in Goal Setting, his original intent was exploring ways for owners to sell to their employees when there is no one else to buy the business. Mr. Friederichs said they have resources to assist with that option. Alderman Geenen spoke about the changes in the 7a loan program which offers more incentives for employee-owned businesses. Alderman Geenen said Ascentra and IH Mississippi Valley Credit Unions are the only financial institutions doing 7a loans.

Mayor Thoms thanked Ms. Friederichs.

The study session concluded at 6:26 p.m.

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Judith H. Gilbert, City Clerk