



**: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS :**

**: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS :**

A Special Meeting of the City Council of Peoria, Illinois, was held November 1, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. at City Hall, Council Chambers (Room 400), 419 Fulton Street, with Mayor Ali presiding, and with proper notice having been posted.

**ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE**

After having established a quorum, Mayor Ali said a notice was received from Council Member Ruckriegel in accordance with the rules established by Ordinance No. 16,142. She said Council Member Ruckriegel would be authorized to attend the meeting electronically unless a motion objecting to electronic attendance was made, seconded, and approved by two-thirds of the members of the City Council physically present at the meeting. She said if no such motion was made and seconded, then the request by Council Member Ruckriegel to attend electronically shall be deemed approved by the City Council and Council Member Ruckriegel would be declared as present.

Hearing no objection to the request for an electronic attendance, Council Member Ruckriegel was declared present by Mayor Ali.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll Call showed the following Council Members were present: Allen, Cyr, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggenbach, Ruckriegel (electronic attendance), Velpula, Mayor Ali – 11.  
Absent: None.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ali requested a moment of silent prayer or reflection and then she led the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Ali wished Council Member Jensen happy birthday, and she congratulated Council Member Oyler for his recognition as one of Peoria Magazines '40 Leaders Under 40'.

**PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS – CITY OF PEORIA**

**(22-373) Communication from the Mayor and Corporation Counsel with a Request to APPROVE the DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY.**

Council Member Allen moved to approve the Declaration of Local State of Emergency; seconded by Council Member Velpula.

Council Member Kelly discussed the conditions permitted under the proposed Declaration of Local State of Emergency, stating he believed they were expired provisions. He said he would vote against the item because it was no longer relevant.

Mayor Ali said the Declaration of Local State of Emergency was in line with Governor Pritzker's Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation in response to the ongoing Coronavirus situation, which allowed remote commission meetings to continue. City Manager Urich confirmed some committees and commissions were utilizing the remote meetings condition, while some Staff utilized the alternative work schedules, including remote work, allowed through the protocols.

Motion to approve the Declaration of Local State of Emergency was approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Allen, Cyr, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Velpula, Mayor Ali – 11;

Nays: None.

**(22-348) Communication from the City Manager and Finance Director/Comptroller with a Request to Hold a DISCUSSION on the 2023 REVISED BUDGET.**

City Manager Patrick Urich presented the second series of Report Backs to the Council.

**Parking System Study**

For the first Report Back, Public Works Director Rick Powers proposed a Parking System Study in response to inquiries regarding free parking in downtown Peoria to determine inventory and needs. He said the study would include a financial analysis, public involvement, review of the current parking technology, data collection and engineering, and a final report all at a total estimated cost of \$65,000.00 to be completed six months from the date of the agreement.

Council Member Riggerbach said he was excited about free parking solutions downtown with a strategy against long-term parking from parking decks encroaching onto the streets, and he said he was looking forward to the results from the parking study.

Council Member Jensen asked for a comparison with similar municipalities that have free on-street parking and vibrant downtowns, such as Champaign, Illinois.

In response to Council Member Cyr regarding an amendment to the 2023 Revised Budget to account for the \$65,000.00 Parking System Study, City Manager Urich said motions to amend the proposed 2023 Revised Budget would be presented to the Council at the November 8, 2022, City Council Meeting. Council Member Cyr said he did not want to spend funds on the Parking Study, citing his satisfaction with the responses from City Staff on the proposition of free parking downtown. He said he believed the parking decks fees should be increased to fully cover their expenses and maintenance.

In response to Council Member Velpula concerning the annual parking fee revenue the City collected, Finance Director Kyle Cratty said the total parking fees received was \$1.5 million.

Discussions were held concerning annual parking fee revenues and parking deck expenses. Council Member Kelly said revenue from parking decks only covered half their cost annually, he said they were valuable assets and offering free parking would enhance many benefits downtown. He said it was important to spur growth and create a thriving downtown to grow revenues to cover responsibilities like pension fund obligations.

City Manager Urich explained the City controlled 32% of the parking in downtown Peoria and the Riverfront District. He said if the City offered free parking in parking decks, it would adversely affect the privately-owned parking structures.

Council Member Oyler said he was not opposed to a Parking Study, but he said the Council needed to have a comprehensive discussion to ensure maintenance of parking decks were a priority despite reductions to parking fee revenues.

Discussions were held regarding strategies and technology to manage long-term parking encroachment moving from parking decks to on-street parking spaces and the scope of the Parking Study. City Manager Urich said the Council could amend or approve the scope of the study written by Staff. Council Member Grayeb said free parking could be established in stages, with on-street parking as the primary phase after considering the results from the Parking Study. He discussed the history of parking in downtown Peoria and other parking incentive options.

Continued discussions were held on a parking strategy comparison with other municipalities and parking technologies. Council Member Ruckriegel said investments in parking garages with smart technology and quality maintenance were key elements to addressing parking solutions in downtown Peoria. He said the costs related to the Study could be applied to personnel implementing free parking.

Council Member Allen said the Parking Study was a worthy investment that would provide necessary information to allow the Council to make a data-driven decision.

Discussions were held regarding the on-street reverse-in parking, the inclusion of parking decks in the Parking Study, and the possibility of reinstating parking fees in the future.

Mayor Ali said she was in favor of the Parking Study in order to allow the Council to make an informed data-driven decision. She said she supported smart parking solutions and starting with free on-street parking before considering including parking decks.

### **Young Minds Project Funding Options – Carle UPH**

City Manager Urich proceeded with the next Report Back by explaining three options for funding support for UnityPlace in response to the presentation at the October 25, 2022, City Council Meeting. He said UnityPoint Health announced its acquisition by Carle Health System, and he said the funding would support capital improvements on the former Heddington Oaks facility.

Council Member Velpula said it was prudent to be cautious about distributing funds during the transition to Carle Health System because of the precedent it would set for other entities requesting support to fund community projects. He recommended the Council reserve the decision until additional details could be reviewed and the transition was finalized.

Mayor Ali noted the existing Board of Directors would remain the same after the transition. Council Member Cyr recited concerns raised by citizens regarding the use of taxpayer money to provide funding support for this project.

Council Member Allen said he needed more information before making a decision on the funding for UnityPlace. He asked if there was a precedence for providing support to non-profit organizations. City Manager Urich described support the City provided to nonprofit organizations on a regular or singular basis. Council Member Allen described the need for mental health services in the community and he asked the Council to keep an open mind regarding the proposition.

Council Member Oyler said he was not prepared to make a decision. He asked whether Peoria County was asked to contribute, and City Manager Urich said they provided UnityPlace the opportunity to purchase the Heddington Oaks facility at a discounted price. Council Member Oyler said it would benefit the community, but the location was not in the City of Peoria.

Council Member Jackson said a state-wide reduction in social services resulted in a detrimental situation for many citizens. She asked the Council to have an open mind and consider options to address concerns in the community and provide much needed services.

Mayor Ali said the funding would be an investment in Peoria and the region. She said the amount of funding was negotiable and she wanted the City of Peoria to provide its fair share to a project that would serve the mental health needs of the community.

After Council Member Jensen said it was a very important program filling a need in the community for mental health services, she said she would prefer a funding plan spread out over several years instead of concentrated in 2023.

Council Member Grayeb said crime rates in youth as well as adults were increasing, and he remarked on the need for mental health services in the community. He said he wanted more details regarding the presence and partnership of UnityPlace staff in local schools.

Council Member Velpula said he would consider an amount less than \$1 million.

Council Member Ruckriegel said UnityPlace would provide services to the entire region, and the request for support differed from others because it would not only help future generations, but it also provided needed mental health services locally. He asked the Council to look at the larger impact of the project, and he asked City Manager Urich to provide additional options for funding for the Council to consider, including a multi-year plan, a reduced contribution, and alternative funding sources.

Mayor Ali requested City Manager Urich to bring back to the Council more funding options over multiple years with a lesser funding amount.

Council Member Kelly said he was in favor of residential treatment services and would be beneficial to the community.

### **Site Selector Report Back**

City Manager Urich proceeded with the third Report Back concerning a recent site selector visit summary. He said the number one recommendation was to focus on creating a vibrant downtown to make Peoria more attractive and competitive.

Council Member Velpula said the report provided a clear picture of how Peoria was viewed from an outside perspective for business opportunities. He discussed the growth of the healthcare industry and the benefits of attracting biotechnology businesses to the City. He said the suggested improvements would benefit any industry considering a location in Peoria to establish their business. He discussed incentive options to attract businesses to Peoria, and potential qualifications and limitations to impose for a prudent allocation of resources. He said attracting new businesses would revitalize the area, attract new talent, and strengthen the existing workforce.

Mayor Ali said Peoria had a recognized brand but the impression from the report was that it was fading. She said revitalizing Peoria into a biotechnology hub would be great for local medical

facilities and suppliers. She read into the record the eight recommendations the site selector group provided, noting it was beneficial to obtain an outside viewpoint, even if it confirmed what the Council already knew.

Council Member Allen said Peoria rebranded itself in the past and they could do it again with the thriving healthcare network. He said, for continued growth, the Council must invest in the downtown with collaborative partners for a cohesive strategy.

### **Fulton Plaza**

Director Powers proceeded with the fourth Report Back regarding Fulton Plaza improvements and maintenance. He explained the current condition of the plaza and he noted a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was included in the information packet indicating the cost to convert it back into a roadway was over \$2 million. He explained the plan to address concerns in the plaza while the Capital Sheet was categorized for future funding, including utility vault improvements, ground-leveling, as well as landscape planning and maintenance.

Council Member Riggerbach said it was important to address concerns of Fulton Plaza since it was a gateway from the Civic Center to the Riverfront District. In response to his inquiry about the OSF Redevelopment Agreement, City Manager Urich said the agreement did not prohibit making the proposed improvements, noting the Public Works Department was the entity responsible for the project.

### **Transportation Commission Recommendations**

Director Powers proceeded with the fifth Report Back regarding recommendations from the Transportation Commission, including increasing a pedestrian and bike-friendly focus around the Complete Streets Policy and increased spending for safety mechanisms on streets for all types of travelers. He explained the challenges and extra costs with retrofitting existing roadways to meet the Complete Streets standards. He said it was much easier with new construction projects to comply with those standards.

In response to Council Member Jensen regarding bicycle accommodations, Bicycle Master Plan, and sidewalk improvements inclusion in CIP projects in the proposed 2023 Revised Budget, Director Powers said Complete Streets Policies were included in all applicable projects and the barrier level was determined through a variety of factors, including space and funding.

City Manager Urich said the Complete Streets concept did not apply to the entire City, but it was applied where applicable, provided there was available funding. He discussed challenges with managing existing infrastructure, grant fund applications to better address the Complete Streets policies, and recent projects in the City where the policies were applied to varying degrees.

Council Member Jensen said it was important to heed the Transportation Commission recommendations, and to prioritize funding for sidewalks in older neighborhoods outside the 61605 zip code. City Manager Urich explained the sidewalk improvements would be determined once the 61605 grant was awarded, with a focus on the areas of the greatest need in the City. He said he would provide a Report Back on where the sidewalk improvement projects were planned in the City.

### **Kickapoo Terrace CIP**

Director Powers proceeded with the sixth Report Back regarding Kickapoo Terrace improvements, noting the CIP sheet and additional information was included in the information

packet. Council Member Jackson thanked Director Powers for his efforts, noting the proposed project coincided with what she requested at the October 25, 2022, City Council Meeting.

At the conclusion of the Report Back discussions, Mayor Ali thanked City Manager Ulrich and Staff for the information and efforts.

City Manager Ulrich said he would take the direction provided by the Council that evening and from previous discussions to bring several budget motions back for consideration at the November 8, 2022, City Council Meeting. He said there were additional amendments that were needed to be made to the 2023 Revised Budget including amendments to the Rock Island Greenway Plan and state grant application, the extension of the new Curb and Gutter Program in the Stormwater Utility Fund, and accounting changes in the Capital Budget for street lighting after the recent award of a state grant.

Discussions were held regarding the responsibility and ownership of streetlights in the City of Peoria, and requests communicated to Ameren, Illinois, regarding installation and maintenance of street and alleyway lights.

Council Member Cyr requested a Report Back detailing the CIP plan by District and the City as a whole. He also requested options for a 5-year plan to repay the Garbage Fund account.

Council Member Kelly requested a Report Back detailing the responsibility of the City of Peoria and Ameren, Illinois for streetlights in the City, as well as the status of their operation.

#### **CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL/TOWN BOARD**

Hearing no objection, Mayor Ali granted privilege of the floor to those citizens wishing to address the City Council/Town Board.

Mary Clark, a citizen of Peoria, stated she had concerns over the increasing Stormwater Utility Fees. She asked how the fee was implemented and noted that while the sewers needed to be maintained, there should be alternative options. She said the reverse-in on-street parking did not make sense and disrupted traffic.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

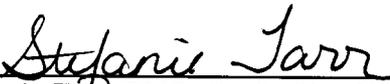
It was determined there was no need to enter into Executive Session at that time.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Cyr moved to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting; seconded by Council Member Kelly.

Motion to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting was approved by roll call vote.  
Yeas: Allen, Cyr, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Velpula, Mayor Ali – 11;  
Nays: None.

The Special City Council Meeting was adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

  
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Stefanie Tarr, RMC, CMC, City Clerk  
City of Peoria, Illinois