

Minutes of the Regular City Council Proceedings of the City of Chicago Heights, Cook County, Illinois held Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at 1601 Chicago Road, Chicago Heights, IL.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gonzalez called the regular meeting of the Chicago Heights City Council to order at 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL BY DEPUTY CLERK RACHEL VEGA

Mayor:	David Gonzalez	Present
Council:	1st Ward Renee Smith	Present
	2nd Ward Sonia Perez	Present
	3rd Ward Wanda Rodgers	Present
	4th Ward Christopher Baikauskas	Present
	5th Ward George Brassea	Present
	6th Ward Vincent Zaranti	Present
	7th Ward Kelli Merrick	Present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMUNICATIONS

Alderman Smith – no announcements.

Alderman Perez announced that she would host her next ward meeting on April 24th at 7:00 p.m. at Garfield School.

Alderman Rodgers – no announcements.

Alderman Baikauskas announced that he would host his next joint ward meeting with Park Commissioner Michele Baikauskas on Monday, April 24th at 6:00 p.m. at Roosevelt School.

Alderman Brassea announced that he would host his next ward meeting on April 26th at 6:00 p.m. at 222 Vollmer, Suite LC.

Alderman Zaranti announced that he would host his next joint ward meeting with Park Commissioner Curtis Straczek on April 24th at 7:00 p.m. at Commissioners Park.

Alderman Merrick – no announcements.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Carl Wolf of Respond Now thanked the Parks Department for its generous donation of snack items, and also thanked the City for its letter to Congresswoman Robin Kelly’s office in support of appropriations for the renovation of the Respond Now facility.

Mayra Flores, a resident of the City, expressed concerns about the safety of her area, and irresponsible pet owners.

REPORT OF CHIEF OF STAFF – KAREN ZERANTE

COS Zerante introduced Jim Semelka, the City’s municipal arborist with Great Lakes Urban Forestry Management. Mr. Semelka gave the council an overview of all the forestry management projects that he and the City worked on together. COS Zerante announced that the City recently received the distinction of Tree City, USA, as a result of the work.

REPORT OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL—T.J. SOMER

Corporation Counsel Somer reminded the City Council that its’ current term of office would expire on June 7th, whereupon the new term would begin on that date.

1. MINUTES: MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2023.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the minutes.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

2. BILLS: APPROVAL OF SECOND RUN OF MARCH 2023.

Alderman Zaranti moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the bills in the amount of \$1,161,758.87.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

3. RESOLUTION #2023 - 27 : APPROVING A PROPOSAL FOR THE CITY'S 2023 ALLEY CLEARANCE PROJECT.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Smith seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante asked for permission to accept the proposal from Desiderio Landscaping in the amount of \$28,400 for the alley clearing of weeds, trees and brush. Project specifications were prepared by Great Lakes Urban Forestry and sent out to contractors.

4. RESOLUTION #2023 - 28 : APPROVING A DEED IN LIEU OF FORECLOSURE AGREEMENT FOR ACQUISITION OF THE COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 1644 VINCENNES.

Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer reported that discussions with the property owner resulted in the owner's willingness to deed the property to the City, thus enabling the City to eliminate the delinquent taxes and return the property to the tax rolls. Brief questions on the matter.

5. RESOLUTION #2023 - 29 : APPROVING MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS TO THE CHICAGO HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Mayor Gonzalez announced that his two appointments to the library board were Carmen Sendejas and Christine Panici.

6. OMNIBUS RESOLUTION #2023 - 30 : INDUCING THE SALE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN CITY OWNED SURPLUS RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES PURSUANT TO THE CITY'S APAP PROGRAM.

Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Corporation Counsel Somer reported these were eight additional properties ready to go to closing, and that thus far, the City had processed one hundred and three properties through the Abandoned Property Acquisition Program.

7. RESOLUTION #2023 - 31 : APPROVING THE WATER MAIN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN THE VICINITY OF 11TH & ARNOLD STREETS.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Rodgers seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante asked for permission to seek bids on the project. Christopher Burke Engineering, consultant to the City, prepared project outline and estimated the cost of the massive project to be three million dollars. There was some discussion on the matter.

8. RESOLUTION #2023 - 32 : APPROVING A PROPOSAL FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE CITY'S 2023 & 2024 INDEPENDENCE DAY FIREWORKS SHOW.

Alderman Zaranti moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried

COS Zerante asked for permission to enter into an agreement with Pyrotecnico Fireworks, Inc. for presentation of the City's fireworks display in 2023 and 2024 at a cost of \$ 33,000 per year. The City used the services of the company the last several years for its annual fireworks display.

9. RESOLUTION #2023 - 33 : APPROVING THE CLOSURE OF CERTAIN STATE ROADWAYS FOR THE CITY'S 2023 INDEPENDENCE DAY FIREWORKS SHOW AND MEMORIAL DAY PARADE.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Rodgers seconded, a motion to approve resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none
Motion to approve carried.

COS Zerante asked for permission to close the usual state roads related to the May 29th Memorial Day parade and the July 3rd Independence Day fireworks display. Brief question on the matter.

10. RESOLUTION #2023 - 34 : APPROVING AN EXTENSION OF THE "OPTION AGREEMENT" FOR THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO PURCHASE THE CITY OWNED COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AT 1340 OTTO BOULEVARD.

Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Perez seconded, a motion to approve resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none
Motion to approve table.

Corporation Counsel Somer explained that Boyd Funeral Service was asking that the term of the option to purchase agreement currently in place with the City be extended to June 30, 2023. At that point, the company thought it could be ready to close on the property.

11. ORDINANCE #2023 - 8 : APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR EVOKE VENTURES GROUP, INC. FOR OPERATION OF A STATE OF ILLINOIS LICENSED CANNABIS RELATED BUSINESS AT 711 W. 15TH STREET.

Alderman Baikauskas moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the ordinance.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none
Motion to approve carried

Corporation Counsel Somer stated that the ordinance was to formalize the issuance of the special use permit, which was required by City Code for a cannabis related business. The City previously approved the redevelopment agreement and sale of the property to Evoke.

12. ORDINANCE #2023 - 9 : APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR “HT23 CUSTOM CRAFTERS, LLC” FOR OPERATION OF A STATE OF ILLINOIS LICENSED CANNABIS RELATED BUSINESS AT 180 WEST JOE ORR ROAD.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Baikauskas seconded, a motion to approve the ordinance.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none
Motion to approve carried

Discussion for this agenda item was included in the discussion for agenda item #11.

13. ORDINANCE #2023 - 10 : AMENDING CHAPTER 35 OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES AND ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Zaranti seconded, a motion to approve the ordinance.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none
Motion to approve carried

Mayor Gonzalez explained why he desired to establish the office of superintendent of police with Matthew Gainer specifically in mind. Mr. Gainer recently retired from the State Police where he was second in command. Mayor Gonzalez stated Mr. Gainer would bring police technological resources to the department, and assist with the day to day operations of the department. The council discussed the matter.

14. RESOLUTION #2023 - 35 : APPROVING A MAYORAL APPOINTMENT TO THE OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE OF THE CHICAGO HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Alderman Perez moved, and Alderman Zaranti seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried

Mayor Gonzalez provided the city council with the resume of Matthew Gainer. Mayor Gonzalez highlighted Mr. Gainer's extensive experience with the State Police as Lt. Col. 2nd in Command of Investigations, and with the Major Task Force in the south suburbs for many years. He believed that the City would benefit tremendously by Mr. Gainer's expertise.

15. RESOLUTION #2023 - 36 : APPROVING A PROPOSAL FOR FENCE REPLACEMENT FOR CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE BEACON BOULEVARD FENCELINE.

Alderman Smith moved, and Alderman Merrick seconded, a motion to approve the resolution.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried

COS Zerante asking for approval to replace certain sections of the fence along Beacon Blvd. She said the repair was a compelling issue in terms of safety and esthetics. The recommendation was to accept the proposal from Fence Masters for \$29,650.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:20 p.m. Alderman Rodgers moved, and Alderman Smith seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Smith, Perez, Rodgers, Baikauskas, Brassea, Zaranti, Merrick

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

Motion to approve carried.

Lori Wilcox, City Clerk