



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

CONTOIS AUDITORIUM, CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 28, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kurt Wright (Council President) – Ward 4

Jane Knodell – Central District

David Hartnett – North District

Joan Shannon – South District

Richard Deane – East District

Sharon Foley Bushor – Ward 1

Max Tracy – Ward 2

Brian Pine – Ward 3

William “Chip” Mason – Ward 5

Karen Paul – Ward 6

Ali Dieng – Ward 7

Adam Roof – Ward 8

ADMINISTRATION: Miro Weinberger, Mayor

Beth Anderson, CAO

Rich Goodwin, DFO

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney

Jordan Redell, Mayor’s Office

Olivia LaVecchia, Mayor’s Office

Lori Olberg, C/T



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

Amy Bovee, C/T

Chapin Spencer, DPW

David White, Planning & Zoning and CEDO

Meagan Tuttle, Planning & Zoning

OTHERS PRESENT:

Erica Redic

Zander Wheeler

Janet Patterson

Sharia Hart

Wayne Senville

Charlie Messing

Kathleen Ryan

Mark Porter

Deborah Roseman

Sandy Wynne

Carolyn Bates

Elizabeth Curtis

Travis Fryer

John Bossange

Lynn Martin

Richard Hillyard

Vincent Pierce

Amy Radcliffe

Maxine Holmes

Charles Thorpe

Andrew Simon

Andrea Todd

Melissa Eisen



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

Albert Petracca
Charles Simpson
Barb Alsop
Bob Kiernan
Faith Englesroot
Katharine Monstream
Doreen Kraft
David Schein
Milton Rosa Ortiz
Peggy Lohrs
Janice Rosotti
Karen Getkos
Liz Curry
James Leas
Paul Kushner
Joann Hunt
Steve Marshall
Kayla Gokey
Ann Taylor
Kevin Dooderman
Donna Walters
Monique Fordham
Kate Keough
George Russell
Springer Harris
Steve Goodkind
Alex Lavin
Lynn Bradsford



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

Zoriya Hightower

July Sanders

Matt Ennis

Ben Travers

Walter Cady

Betsy McGavisk

Casey Gilbert

Kara Massari

Sarah Beal

Sovay Overby

Annie McAney

Larry Lewack

Phelan Fretz

Laura Soloman

Brian Cina

Julie Macuga

[Note: Minutes reflect order of published agenda.]

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Council President Wright called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM on January 28, 2019 and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.01 Agenda

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Bushor to approve the agenda with the following amendments:

- **Note materials for Item 3.17 (Reclassify positions in Mayor's Office)**
- **Add Item 3.18 (Rezoning, 75 Maple Street)**
- **Add Item 3.19 (Annual City Audit FY18)**



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

- Remove Item 4.01 (The Neighborhood Project Final Report 2018)
- Note materials for Item 4.06 (Annual Meeting Ballot Item, Amendments DID Charter Change)
- Note materials for Item 4.08 (Annual Meeting Ballot Advisory Question, City Hall Park)
- Amend Item 4.09 (Remove ZA#18-08, Form District 5 Boundaries, from Public Hearing)
- Remove Item 4.11 (ZA#18-08, Form District 5 Boundaries)
- Amend Item 4.13 (ZA#19-05, Density Calculation)
- Add 4.14 (Annual Meeting Ballot Item, Increase Maximum Tax Rate)

AMENDMENT by Councilor Mason, SECOND by Councilor Bushor, to amend Item 4.09 to remove ZA#19-02 from the public hearing and remove Item 4.12 (ZA#19-02). VOTING ON AMENDMENT: unanimous; motion carried.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM

Public forum was opened at 7:18 PM.

COMMENTS

- Erica Redic announced her candidacy for the North District seat on City Council.
- Zander Wheeler spoke in favor of amending the downtown DID because Burlington is more diverse and richer than a four block area. This will expand the character to other blocks.
- Janet Patterson urged holding a public vote on the plan for City Hall Park. Benches and bathrooms are needed.
- Sheria Hart, BBA, spoke in support of the City Hall Park plan to create revitalized space and bring more people downtown.
- Wayne Senville urged City Council to put the City Hall Park question on the ballot since 3,300 people signed the petition to put the advisory question on the ballot. A plan that the majority of the community wants is needed and the question will provide an answer. Stop and listen to the people.
- Charlie Messing recalled people gave input on the City Hall Park charrettes, but the plan was changed very little. Let the people vote on the plan.
- Kathleen Ryan, landscape architect, said City Hall Park is part of a national historic district and an iconic town green. The new plan does not recognize this.
- Mark Porter said City Hall Park is not the jewel of Burlington and has no sense of space. People feel intimidated in the park. City Council is urged to support the current plan.
- Deborah Roseman spoke in support of the plan for City Hall Park and having a park that is safe and beautiful.
- Sandy Wynne advocated for people to buy fair trade chocolate to wipe out child labor.
- Carolyn Bates spoke in support of the City Hall Park design.
- Elizabeth Curtis urged quantifying the numbers associated with activities and enjoyment of the park.
- Travis Fryer spoke in support of citizens having a say and urged City Council to put the question on the ballot about City Hall Park.
- John Bossange, Parks, Rec, & Waterfront Committee, said the committee supports the City Hall Park initiative. Residents had opportunity to give feedback.
- Lynn Martin urged City Council to listen to the residents who signed the petition on City Hall Park.
- Richard Hillyard suggested postponing the park project until there is a publicly informed and supported design. This could save \$1 million.
- Vincent Pierce, Parks, Rec, & Waterfront Committee, spoke in support of the City Hall Park plan in its current iteration and urged moving ahead with the project. It is a disservice to city employees to say the park is



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

mismanaged as some of the public have said.

- Amy Radcliffe said the City Hall Park plan does not reflect the wishes of the people so the question should be on the ballot.
- Maxine Holmes said City Hall Park is important. As many of the big trees should be saved as possible.
- Charles Thorpe spoke in support of having the question on City Hall Park on the ballot and spoke against privatizing downtown.
- Andrew Simon spoke in support of putting the City Hall Park plan on the ballot and letting the voters decide.
- Andrea Todd spoke against expanding the downtown DID and privatization. The downtown should be in the hands of the city. A broader education campaign on the expansion should be done.
- Melissa Eisen spoke of a public health concern with grey water being part of the City Hall Park design.
- Albert Petracca spoke in support of moving from a representative democracy to a popular democracy, from the voting booth to direct action to save City Hall Park.
- Charles Simpson spoke of relocating the children's statue on Church Street to City Hall Park and the campaign (lobbying) on the pending ballot item being illegal.
- Barb Alsop said the DID and the City Hall Park project are both boondoggles. Expanding the downtown DID will result in gentrification, exclusion of undesirables, and be limited to those who are well-heeled to be involved with businesses. Regarding City Hall Park the design is made for tourists and businesses. Burlington residents are using the park as it is. Let the people be heard. Hold the vote.
- Bob Kiernan spoke in support of the City Hall Park design and urged City Council to move forward with the project.
- Faith Englesroot said if the trees are given room to grow the airspace will be filled. Having multiple layers of trees will give the best shade to the park. City Council is urged to take care of the trees and make human space, too.
- Katharine Montstream spoke in support of the new plan for the park so more people will use it.
- Doreen Kraft said people have suggested starting a group because the park will do much for storm water, but City Arts does not start advocacy groups. Doreen Kraft read a letter from Vicky Smith from the King Street Center in support of the City Hall Park project and noting that families and children are afraid to use the park as it is now.
- David Schein said the park plan was done in a nepotistic way because the plan was designed by the husband of a Burlington city employee in a department with a vested interest in the project. Also, Pomerleau's fountain would be better at Oakledge Park and should be moved. The plan for City Hall Park should include a playground and bathrooms.
- Milton Rosa Ortez spoke in support of the City Hall Park plan and urged City Council to move forward. People have had the change for input.
- Peggy Luhrs said democracy calls for having the City Hall Park plan on the ballot and keeping the trees.
- Janice Rosotti sang a song urging City Council to put the park plan to a public vote.
- Karen Getkos, Local Motion, spoke in support of the park being accessible to all people and having a reliable, clear public process.
- Liz Curry expressed appreciation for the public process that was held with the park plan and echoed the concern about too many uses creating an overactive space. City Council is urged to put the park plan on the ballot for public vote.
- James Leas spoke of voter suppression and City Council putting the city in debt for City Hall Park. Let the people vote. Put the petition question on the ballot.
- Paul Kushner spoke in support of the DID issue moving forward, support for the new design of City Hall Park, and the need for a better way to bring ballot items before the public so the wording cannot be prejudicially biased.
- Steve Marshall expressed concern for class division in the city, stressing that homeless people are human beings and should not be purged out of the park.
- Joann Hunt urged City Council to put the park question on the ballot, and also mentioned the need for a lighted crosswalk on North Avenue.
- Kayla Gokey spoke against the waterjet fountain design in City Hall Park and to let the citizens have the right to vote



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

on the park plan.

- Ann Taylor spoke of being more respectful of nature and the need in City Hall Park for space for children, bathrooms, making the waterjet fountain smaller, improving accessibility, putting the farmers market on the waterfront, saving the big trees, and adding seating in the shade. The park project should go to public vote.
- Kevin Dooderman asked about setbacks at CityPlace and the impact of a nine month delay in construction. Mr. Dooderman said City Hall Park should have more green space, and spoke of nepotism with the project which should be addressed by City Council.
- Donna Walters and Monique Fordham asked for an explanation of the many last minute changes to the park project, the increase in the budget, soil contamination just now being discovered, and the process not being transparent. City Council is urged to respect the rights of the voters and to have faith in the democratic process.
- Kate Keough urged letting the people of Burlington vote on the park project. The park is on the registry of national historic places. City Council is urged to listen to what the people want with the park. As an aside the fountain in front of City Hall should be put back in operation.
- George Russell said City Council balanced needs with the park and should move forward with the project.
- Springer Harris urged City Council to move forward with the park project.
- Steve Goodkind said City Council needs to address the sidewalks in the city, withdraw the governance item from the DID expansion proposal, put the "Keep the Park Green" initiative on the ballot, and take down the billboards around the hole in the ground downtown.
- Alex Lavin recognized the good work by City Council with Memorial Auditorium and Moran, and urged putting the park project on the ballot.
- Lynn Bradsford said City Hall Park now is unsavory and attracts very interesting types of people. The city arborist knows trees and informed the project.
- Zoriya Hightower spoke in support of the park design and expressed appreciation for the input from the citizens. The park project has been through due process and should move forward.
- July Sanders spoke in support of putting the City Hall Park project on the ballot, listening to the people, and representing everyone.
- Matt Ennis said to allow the park to regenerate the farmers market should be out of the park, but in the area. The park plan should be on the ballot for public vote.
- Ben Travers spoke in support of the new plan for City Hall Park going forward.

There were no further comments. Public Forum was closed at 9:05 PM.

The meeting was recessed from 9:06 PM to 9:11 PM.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

- 3.01 PROCEDURAL: Amend/Adopt Consent Agenda and Take Action(s) as Indicated
- 3.02 COMMUNICATION: Accountability List
- 3.03 COMMUNICATION: ReUse Zone Update
- 3.04 COMMUNICATION: Contract, Lining Storm Water Collection System
- 3.05 COMMUNICATION: Memorial Auditorium Update



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

- 3.06 COMMUNICATION: Step Placement, Traci Paquette
- 3.07 COMMUNICATION: Preliminary FY18 General Fund Audit Results
- 3.08 COMMUNICATION: City Hall Park Design, Richard Bragg
- 3.09 COMMUNICATION: Cathedral Square, Ron Ruloff
- 3.10 COMMUNICATION: DID Charter Change, Gene Bergman
- 3.11 COMMUNICATION: DID Charter Amendments, Adam Roof
- 3.12 COMMUNICATION: Disposal of Furniture, City Hall
- 3.13 COMMUNICATION: Contract, Water and Sewer Main Emergency Repairs
- 3.14 COMMUNICATION: FIO Document(s)
- 3.15 RESOLUTION: Amend Community Justice Center Citizen Advisory Board Bylaws
- 3.16 RESOLUTION: Personnel Policy Update, Sections 4.4.b and 6.3.
- 3.17 RESOLUTION: Reclassify Positions, Mayor's Office
- 3.18 COMMUNICATION: Rezoning 75 Maple Street, Michael Trombley
- 3.19 RESOLUTION: Annual City Audit FY18

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Bushor, to adopt the Consent Agenda and take the actions indicated for Items 3.01 through 3.19. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

4.0 DELIBERATIVE AGENDA

4.01 Presentation: The Neighborhood Project Final Report November 2018

Removed from agenda.

4.02 Public Hearing: Charter Changes March 5, 2019 Annual City Meeting

The public hearing on charter changes for consideration at the annual city meeting was opened at 9:12 PM. There were no comments and the public hearing was closed.

4.03 Charter Change to Eliminate Business Personal Property Tax

The public hearing on the charter change to eliminate the business personal property tax was opened at 9:12 PM. There were no comments and the public hearing was closed.





Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

4.04 Charter Change to Create Department of Permitting and Inspections

The public hearing on the charter change to create a Department of Permitting and Inspections was opened at 9:12 PM. There were no comments and the public hearing was closed.

4.05 Charter Change to Strengthen and Restructure Downtown Improvement District

The public hearing on the charter change to strengthen and restructure the DID was opened at 9:13 PM.

COMMENTS

Walter Cady spoke of the lack of communication to the public and the need for voter education on the charter change. Mr. Cady urged removing the charter change from the ballot, tabling the discussion, and treating the citizens as equal partners in the democracy.

Betsy McGavisk spoke of the public process for the park and the DID, stressing that more time is needed to gather more public input. City Council is urged to remove the charter change from the ballot.

Casey Gilbert spoke of the very positive experience with the DID in Portland, Maine, and the 501(C)4 model.

Kara Massari, business owner on Church Street, spoke in favor of the DID being on the ballot in March and small businesses pooling their money to make the community more vibrant.

Springer Harris read a statement by Richard Price in support of the expanded DID. Mr. Harris spoke of the work of the DID advisory committee and expressed his support of the DID proposal.

Sarah Beal clarified misinformation with the DID proposal relative to businesses paying to support the DID to make a better downtown and the city having more, not less, control.

Solvey Overby said the language for the DID proposal was not thought through and the charter change is not ready to be presented. The proposal should not be on the ballot until people have had a chance to read and understand the charter change. The DID can be expanded without a charter change. This option should be discussed.

Annie McAney spoke of the need to look at the DID in the context of discrimination against homeless people.



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

Larry Lewack said the flaw in the DID proposal is handing over control to a nonprofit group without accountability to the taxpayers. CSM and the city already do a good job with the downtown. Expanding the scope and size of the current district can be explored, but the proposal is not ready to be put on the ballot at this time.

Phelan Fretz, ECHO, spoke in favor of moving ahead with the DID expansion. Burlington is struggling to align the waterfront with downtown. The expansion of the DID will play a great role in this.

Laura Soloman urged taking the DID off the ballot because people know very little on the issue. More public education is needed. There is concern about having poor public policy with this type of governance.

Brian Cina, businessman, said he cannot pay more for services that are already received, and urged looking for other ways to improve the downtown without creating more bureaucracy.

Julie Macuga spoke against the DID expansion and selling the downtown to the highest bidder.

There were no further comments. The public hearing was closed at 10:05 PM.

4.06 Charter Change: Strengthen and Restructure DID (revised)

MOTION by Councilor Roof, SECOND by Councilor Shannon, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution on the charter change to strengthen and restructure the Downtown Improvement District (DID).

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Roof said there were changes made to the proposal based on the comments heard. All are thanked for the hard work on the matter.
- Councilor Bushor said the proposal has improved each step of the way, but is still not ready for the March ballot.
- Councilor Tracy said the process has been rushed and people were not able to fully weigh all the options.
- Councilor Hartnett observed there are competing markets all around Burlington. The city needs to compete and have a downtown that benefits all. This is an opportunity to let the voters decide.
- Councilor Knodell expressed concern about creating a complicated governance process.
- Councilor Dieng said the proposal is problematic, and asked about the difference between a 501(C)4 organization versus a 501(C)6 organization. City Attorney Blackwood said the type of nonprofit will be determined by the entity.

MOTION by Councilor Mason, SECOND by Councilor Knodell, to suspend the rules to only complete action on Items 4.06 (DID), 4.07 (City Hall Park), 4.09 (Zoning Amendments), 4.10 (ZA#18-07 Conditional Use Exemptions), 4.13 (ZA#19-05 (Density Calculations), 4.14 (Increase Maximum Tax Rate). VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

CONTINUED DISCUSSION on Item 4.05 (DID):

- Councilor Dieng spoke against giving the downtown to a private entity. Also, the name "DID" should be changed to "Business Improvement District". A model that works for the city needs to be found. More time is needed to talk to the public.
- Councilor Pine said the DID was expanded in the past. Burlington needs to develop a vibrant urban center. The proposal should be on the ballot and more debate held to find a middle ground.

AMENDMENT by Councilor Tracy, **SECOND** by Councilor Dieng, to remove lines 6 through 9 in the Whereas clause, and add "removed from the ballot this annual city meeting on March 5, 2019" on Line 13 after the word "be".

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENT:

- Councilor Dieng spoke of connecting the downtown to the waterfront, and the need for more input from the community.
- Councilor Knodell spoke in favor of not moving forward with the charter change at this time.

VOTING ON AMENDMENT (by roll call): Councilor Bushor –aye, Councilor Deane – nay, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Hartnett – nay, Councilor Knodell – aye, Councilor Mason – nay, Councilor Paul – nay, Councilor Pine – nay, Councilor Roof – nay, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Tracy – aye, Council President Wright – nay (4 ayes, 8 nays); motion did not carry. The amendment did not pass.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON ORIGINAL MOTION:

- Councilor Bushor said the revised language of the charter change is an improvement.
- Councilor Tracy pointed out the language includes a livable wage.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

4.07 Concise Summary of Charter Change Amendments on Ballot & Warning (Charter Change Committee)

MOTION by Councilor Shannon, **SECOND** by Councilor Deane, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution on concise summary of charter change amendments on the ballot and on the warning. **VOTING:** unanimous; motion carried.

4.08 Advisory Question: City Hall Park (Councilors Bushor, Dieng, Knodell, Pine, Tracy)

MOTION by Councilor Dieng, **SECOND** by Councilor Knodell, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution on the advisory question on the ballot pertaining to City Hall Park.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Dieng spoke in favor of the park which will help bring people into the city, and urged everyone to work together with the elected officials.
- Councilor Mason said since 2014 public input has been gathered and \$500,000 plus many hours of staff time have been spent on the plan which has been modified based on input. The design was approved. It is time to move the project forward.



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

- Councilor Paul mentioned as a result of the effort by people many trees are being saved. The park is a community asset and there is something in the plan for everyone. There is concern about the ever increasing number of ballot advisory questions. A vote by City Council needs to be the word to the people. City Council voted on the park plan after a seven year process.
- Councilor Bushor stated there was public dissatisfaction with the park plan from the beginning. The 3,300 people who signed the petition have a voice. As proposals change City Council needs to decide whether to change the decision.
- Councilor Pine said City Council needs to represent the voice of the people and listen to constituents.
- Councilor Shannon pointed out more feedback and information on this issue was gathered then with other issues. A minority group should not be allowed to undo all the work that has been done. The process should not be disrupted. It is time to move forward with the park.
- Councilor Deane spoke in support of the park design and moving forward with the project now, not putting an advisory question on the ballot.
- Councilor Hartnett said there is a problem with the language of the ballot question editorializing the issue rather than being a direct question. Also, there have been untrue accusations made against city employees with regard to the trees and that is not acceptable.
- Councilor Knodell said the ad hoc committee tried to come up with a compromise with the park plan. The ad hoc process did not go far enough. The answer to the ballot question will provide more clear direction on what to do next.
- Councilor Roof spoke in support of the park plan, acknowledging the decision is not easy. There is concern with the language of the ballot question which should have objective neutrality. A process that clarifies such standards and expectations is needed.
- Councilor Tracy spoke in support of putting the question on the ballot. People want answers and want to know they are being heard. If the plan is as good as it is then the vote in March will affirm this.
- Councilor Dieng cautioned that mistrust will grow if the question is not allowed on the ballot. City Council needs to respect the democratic process. The City Attorney helped with the language of the resolution. What the constituents have said must be respected.
- Mayor Weinberger said as a result of the advocacy of the park group there will be more trees. The project represents a multi-department, multi-agency effort. A grant was received eight years ago to re-envision the park, have a public input process, and save public spaces. City Council is urged to make the park a reality.
- Council President Wright said the language of the resolution is important. There have been occurrences when City Council changed the language on a ballot question. A bad precedent was set last year by allowing a poorly worded ballot question. That precedent needs to be stopped with an impartial, basic, neutral question on the ballot. The question should not be double barreled where one portion can be answered differently than another portion of the question. The City Attorney cannot say what City Council will do. The City Attorney can only give legal advice.

CALL THE QUESTION by Councilor Hartnett, **SECOND** by Councilor Mason. **VOTING** (on call the question): unanimous; motion carried. Debate ceased.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Bushor – aye, Councilor Deane – nay, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Hartnett – nay, Councilor Knodell – aye, Councilor Mason – nay, Councilor Paul – nay, Councilor Pine – aye, Councilor Roof – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Tracy – aye, Council President Wright – nay (6 ayes, 6 nays); motion did not carry.



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

The public hearing on the proposed ordinance amendments was opened at 12:04 AM. There were no comments. The public hearing was closed.

4.10 Ordinance Amendment: ZA#18-07 (Conditional Use Exemptions) – Planning and Ordinance Committee

MOTION by Councilor Mason, SECOND by Councilor Bushor, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution for the amendment to ZA#18-07 – Conditional Use Exemption.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Mason explained the amendment clarifies that conditional use applications are not exempt from conditional use review.**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

4.11 Ordinance Amendment: ZA#18-08 (Form District 5 Boundaries) – Planning and Ordinance Committee

Removed from agenda.

4.12 Ordinance Amendment: ZA#19-02 (Residential Density) – Planning and Ordinance Committee

Removed from agenda.

4.13 Ordinance Amendment: ZA#19-05 (Density Calculations) – Planning and Ordinance Committee

MOTION by Councilor Mason, SECOND by Councilor Bushor, to place in all stages of passage and adopt the ordinance ZA#19-05 (Density Calculations) as drafted. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

4.14 Increase in Maximum Tax Rate for General City Purposes – Board of Finance

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution to increase the maximum tax rate for general city purposes.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Knodell reported the Board of Finance unanimously approved the resolution which increases modestly the maximum possible tax rate for general city purposes by 1.25 cents and uses the half cent of authorized taxing authority not yet used. The result is an increase to the effective tax rate of 1.75 cents. On a house with an assessed value of \$235,000 the impact is an additional \$40 per year. The Board of Finance is working on next year's budget already and has whittled down the tax increase from 5.3 cents to 1.75 cents by trimming spending and using funding sources other than the property tax. One source of funds is excess money in the unassigned fund balance. Thanks are extended to the Mayor and CAO for the work on the**



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

proposal.

Councilor Mason facilitated the meeting so Council President Wright could make comment.

- **Councilor Bushor echoed the thanks to the Administration, adding City Council has the taxing authority, but the goal is not to use it all.**
- **Council President Wright said the Administration heard the suggestions from the Board of Finance and together the proposal was drafted. Ways to expand the tax base need to be found.**
- **Councilor Dieng asked for an explanation of the \$40 increase per year in taxes. CAO Anderson said the tax increase is to cover increases in costs. Councilor Dieng said City Council should explore asking the departments to cut their budgets rather than asking the residents to pay more taxes. Raising taxes is not needed right now. The taxpayers should not be asked for money when City Council knows there will be money coming in from BT.**
- **Mayor Weinberger said the Administration has not asked for a property tax increase in the past eight years. Despite expenses going up the cost of government has been held at less than the cost of inflation and services have been expanded. The city has a healthy fund balance and what is proposed is to use some of that money.**
- **Councilor Paul said it is not responsible budgeting to ask department heads to make 20% budget cuts and still provide essential city services. Using some of the unassigned fund balance is responsible and a prudent way to spend the money. The Board of Finance did discuss the BT settlement, but that has not yet occurred and the question must go before the voters now. The question can go on the ballot, but the city is not obligated to carry out the increase if other funding is found.**
- **Councilor Hartnett expressed preference to use more fund balance in light of the school tax, water increase, streets and sidewalks in the city being in such bad shape all facing the taxpayers.**
- **Councilor Knodell said the potential increase has been whittled down by a third. All contracts are approved by City Council and the city must be certain of the ability to pay for these contracts.**

VOTING: 10 ayes, 2 nays (Councilor Dieng, Councilor Hartnett); motion carried.

Councilor President Wright resumed facilitation of the meeting.

5.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports.

6.0 CITY COUNCIL – GENERAL AFFAIRS

No report.

7.0 CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT – COUNCIL UPDATES

No report.



Regular City Council Meeting - Monday, January 28, 2019, 7:00 pm, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 1/28/2019

8.0 MAYOR – GENERAL AFFAIRS

No report.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Tracy, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 AM.

RScty: MERiordan

s, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at (802) 540-2505.