

Collinsville City Council
Special Meeting/Strategic Session of 8/24/15

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Miller called the special meeting/strategic session to order at Collinsville City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council members present were: Jeff Kypta, Nancy Moss, Jeff Stehman, Cheryl Brombolich, Mayor John Miller, Acting City Manager Mitch Bair, and City Clerk Kim Wasser. Also present were Department Heads: Mark Emert, Tamara Ammann, Dennis Kress, Rod Cheatham, Erika Kennett, and Leah Joyce.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Miller referred to Ordinance 4765.

No speakers participated.

CITY COUNCIL

1. **Telecommunications Tower Study for Eastport Business Park**

Acting City Manager Mitch Bair addressed the Council in regards to the need of a telecommunications tower within the Eastport Business Park area. He indicated there is a lack of service within this area due to the distance of the nearest towers and low capacity. He stated the Gateway Center is mostly being affected as their vendors are having difficulty utilizing their cellular devices for credit card purchases. He further stated the gap in cellular service presents a negative impact to the business development in this area and needs to be addressed to create an environment that is attractive to economic development.

Hurst-Rosche, Inc. conducted a study regarding the need of a telecommunications towers and identified the best location should one be constructed. Acting City Manager Bair discussed Hurst-Rosche's cellular coverage study. They identified 5 towers in the area but all were out of range and created a large gap in coverage that including Collinsville Crossing, Eastport, Gateway Center and potential future development areas.

Councilman Moss inquired of the ownership of the existing cell towers to which Acting City Manager Bair advised they are privately owned by telecommunication companies. She also inquired if any telecommunication company is interested in building a cell tower in this area. Acting City Manager Bair indicated he is not aware of any private interest but the potential revenue would benefit the City, if the tower is City owned.

Acting City Manager Bair explained the study identified 3 publicly owned properties that may be suitable for a tower location – Gateway Center, Animal Shelter and right of way area on Eastport Plaza Drive. All 3 sites were evaluated, based on accessibility, site size, development cost, coverage and aesthetics, to determine the best location for a telecommunication tower. Huste-Rosche, Inc. recommended the Gateway Center as the most beneficial location as it provides the most coverage; although, it is the second highest cost site.

Economic Development Director Erika Kennett advised that, along with Gateway Center, Lindenwood University, Eastport Plaza area, LaQuinta and Doubletree would benefit from this telecommunication tower as they all are in this “dead zone.”

Acting City Manager Bair discussed the potential lease rates that a tower in this area would command. He estimated a \$2,000-\$4,000 per month user fee. The proposed tower could house up to 4 users with a 20 year contract per user on a 5 year renewal basis. He elaborated on the projected revenue.

Acting City Manager Bair indicated the costs associated with developing the site is TIF eligible as it is within the TIF District or Madison County also is offering a low interest infrastructure loan for such expenditures. Director Kennett advised the Madison County loan rate is 3% with a 7 year term for economic development projects.

Acting City Manager Bair spoke of O’Fallon, IL who just liquidated one of their cell towers. Councilman Stehman advised the advantage of this process was the substantial amount of money up front in an ever changing environment but the disadvantage is not having the continuous revenue.

Councilman Brombolich inquired about installing fiber in the area. Acting City Manager Bair confirmed that needs to be done also and this telecommunication tower does not replace fiber optics.

Consensus of the Council was to allow staff to move forward with researching the development of a telecommunication tower in the Eastport Business District area.

2. Strategic Plan Update and Discussion

Acting City Manager Bair updated the Council on the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan also establishes other policies, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Fiscal Budget, and Service and Operations Strategy. All of these make up the Business Plan for the City. Together, these documents provide guidance and direction to the City Council, employees, and public when considering programs, projects and legislation that may impact and shape the future of the City of Collinsville.

Acting City Manager Bair discussed the Strategic Plan for 2012-2013, Draft Strategic Plan for 2015-2020, evaluation letter from Julie Stone of East-West Gateway Council of Governments and his memo regarding comments and edits of the Draft Strategic Plan from Community Development. He summarized his memo related to the Draft Strategic Plan. He indicating it

should include goals and objectives along with general strategies and performance measures as guidelines on how to achieve such. The goals and objectives related to Customer Service should be added back into the Plan. Objectives for Goal #1 needs to be clarified as well as implementing codes, planning tools and an effective inspection process. Employee engagement is mentioned but lacks objectives that reinforces the organization's commitment.

He informed Council that the Strategic Plan is the guiding policy for the City which is under the purview of the City Council. Feedback and guidance from Council is needed. He suggested reaching out to a consultant for assistance in establishing a well balanced Strategic Plan.

Councilman Stehman agreed with the need of a consultant for feedback, guidance and staff assistance when implementing the Plan.

Councilman Moss indicated she would not want to spend a lot of time or money to just tweak the Plan, especially since we are in a time crunch. She also inquired if a comparison had been done with other cities. Councilman Stehman advised that a Strategic Plan is conducive with the specific needs of the City making it difficult to compare with others. Councilman Brombolich suggest making it a 2 year plan that is in line with the budget but a 5 year plan may require additional time and a consultant to oversee the process.

Councilman Brombolich highlighted the fact that Department Heads and Staff is being consulted in the process as Council needs their input. She also agreed that performance measures needs to be incorporated as part of the Plan. Discussions were had regarding the performance measures and comparing the results to national standards.

Acting City Manager Bair inquired from Council direction as to whether they prefer a 2 year plan versus a 5 year plan. He indicated he believes a 2 year plan that mirrors the budget cycle is doable for Department Heads to accomplish without the assistances of a consultant. He will consult with the other Department Heads and report back to Council.

3. City Council Boards and Commission Liaison Discussion

Acting City Manager Bair discussed the issue of establishing a City Council member as a liaison to the Boards/Commissions. He reference this process had been utilized in the past but has since been discontinued resulting in a disconnection between the members of the Boards and Commissions and that of the Council. Per ordinance, the Mayor is an Ex-Officio member of the Economic Development Commission. He asked the Council to consider re-establishing this liaison program for the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Uptown Development Commission, Community Appearance Board and perhaps the Gateway board.

Councilman Stehman and Councilman Brombolich agreed with the idea. Councilman Moss addressed concerns regarding the City Manager form of government and indicated a clear understanding would be necessary as to the role of the liaison. It was discussed that Corporate Counsel should be consulted since some of the boards hold public hearings during their meetings.

4. Current Department Staffing Update

Discussion regarding this item will take place during the next Strategic Session. However, Acting City Manager Bair briefly informed Council they will be updated on present staffing levels, budgeted for positions that are currently vacant, and future staffing needs.

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Moss, seconded by Councilman Brombolich at 7:12 p.m. with roll call: Ayes - Stehman, Brombolich, Moss, Kypta, Miller; Nays - None; Absent – None.

PENDING APPROVAL