



City of SANDWICH, ILLINOIS

City Hall Annex · 128 East Railroad Street

Committee-of-the-Whole Council Meeting

February 6th, 2023 immediately following Regular Council Meeting

MINUTES

Mayor Latham called the meeting to order at 8:20 PM. Roll call was taken:

Present: Mayor Latham, Clerk Ii, Aldermen Erickson, Fritsch, Johnson, Killey, Kreinbrink, Littlebrant, Robinson & Whitecotton

Quorum established

Also Present: Attorney Gottschalk, City Administrator Penman, City Treasurer Schwemlein, Chief Bianchi & EMA Director Ciciora

Absent: Building Official Steffens

Mayor Latham

1. Solar Field Proposal / Alex Mendelson will be present at the February 20th for a presentation on a solar field proposal.
2. Beautification Program: The City has approximately 15 planter boxes that will be available for businesses, social groups, or individuals who would like to sponsor and maintain a flower box. The City will provide nursery stock. Anyone interested in participating should contact Mayor Latham.
3. Façade Program Applications: Council has allocated \$6,000 for a façade program. \$500 - \$1,000 grant money will be available for improvements and enhancements to business buildings. A before / after photo will be required, and receipts should be provided to the City.

Foster, Buick, Conklin, Lundgren & Gottschalk Law Group: No report

City Clerk Ii: No report

City Treasurer Schwemlein: No report

City Administrator Penman has been contacted by a resident in Fairwinds Subdivision requesting a "no parking sign" be erected on Southwind Drive. This matter will also be directed to Ward 2 Alderwomen Johnson and Killey for further investigation.

City Department Reports: No reports**Aldermen Reports:**Alderwoman Johnson

1. Re-visit weekly meetings: Several months ago, the Council voted to have Regular / Committee-of-the-Whole meetings on the first and third Monday of each month. Alderwoman Johnson posed the question if the new meeting schedule was working for everyone. Although some aldermen felt the new schedule was a “break even” compared to the past weekly meetings, the consensus of the Council was frustration in miscommunication, lack of communication, and the delivery of aldermen packets on a Friday night for a Monday night meeting. Clerk Li added that less meetings created more work for her and office staff.
2. Discussion on Code 14-14 “Bee Keeping”: Bees are important for pollinating the food chain, and there is a honeybee shortage crisis. Municipal Code states that no bees can be housed within 500 feet of a dwelling and 200 feet of adjoining property or street. Alderwoman Johnson finds the restriction too general, and would like to have the ordinance changed that anyone that neighbors farmland / crops be allowed to keep bees. Mayor Latham suggested Alderwoman Johnson look at properties within her Ward for properties that may benefit by a change in the Municipal Code.
3. Opera House Programming: Alderwoman Johnson, in her stance against the upcoming drag queen program, noted that the Council voted against a cannabis dispensary for fear of the type of people such a facility would attract. She feels the Council is discriminating against the “potheads” and giving a free pass to the pervs. Alderwoman Johnson wanted to play a video that supported her argument, but was advised it would violate the obscenity code. It was noted by several Council members that they never voted against a cannabis dispensary for Sandwich, but discussion had been the location of such a facility meeting zoning requirements. Alderwoman Johnson produced a playbill for “The Sound of Music” at the Paramount Theatre in Aurora (Dec 2022) noting that on the reverse side of the playbill was a suggestive photo advertising the HIV drug, Prep. She explained the reason she broached the paybill advertisement was because of the push for immoral behavior is happening all over the United States. She stressed that the performance will violate the City’s Municipal Code.
4. Liquor License Code: With two Opera House shows on Saturday, February 18th, Alderwoman Johnson wanted to know which authority would be in attendance to assure Codes were not violated. She encouraged that the Mayor and Police Chief be present for the second showing for violation under Section 6-11(b) “prohibited acts”.

Alderman Kreinbrink advised there will be a Budget Committee Meeting on Wednesday, February 8th. He felt the Committee made good progress on the proposed budget FY 2023-2024.

Alderman Robinson made a comment, in respect to the Opera House show, that if a patron feels uncomfortable with the program, he / she is not obligated to attend. He added that there will always be a difference of opinion, regardless of topic.

Alderman Whitecotton, in response to the controversy, said constituents that have contacted him are overwhelmingly in favor of the program. It is a matter of freedom of expression as well as freedom of speech; everyone has that right in this country.

New Business: None

Announcement: Next meeting for the Finance Committee will be on Monday, February 20th at 6:30 PM. The Regular Council meeting will meet at 7 PM on the same date immediately followed by the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.

February 9th Committee Meetings will be held starting at 6 PM with the Historical Preservation and followed by Citizens Advisory Committee at 7 PM . The Technology Committee originally scheduled for 6 PM has been cancelled.

Audience Comments: Under the City's Rules for Public Comments, Mayor Latham advised the audience comments would be limited to three minutes, unlike the five minutes allotted during the Regular Council Meeting. He also emphasized this was a time for comments only, and not a time for a question / answer session. Eight members of the audience spoke, repeating previous comments made during the Regular Meeting held previously against the Opera House programming citing morality, abomination, bigotry, raunchiness, and accusing the City of breaking its municipal ordinances for nudity and obscenity.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Council, **motion made by Alderman Robinson and seconded by Alderwoman Erickson to adjourn the Committee-of-the-Whole council meeting at 9:30 PM. Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.**

/s/ Denise Li – City Clerk