

# Council Questions/Comments and Staff Responses Report for September 10, 2012

*as of September 9, 2012 at 10:59pm*

## **Work Session - Aldermanic Subcommittees**

**Alderman:** Robert Fazzini

**Question/Comment:** I am in full support of moving forward toward this proposal. I believe the Finance Director should be a member of the Finance and Administration Committee.

**Staff Response:** City staff should not be members of these committees. Members of the City Manager's staff and appropriate directors for other departments will work with Committees to provide backup reports, prepare agendas, etc.

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Question/Comment:** "Looking forward to the discussion on committees. One question, where would the conversation on Communication/Citizen Engagement/Public Affairs fit?"

**Staff Response:** This has yet to be determined.

## **Work Session - Economic Development Strategic Plan and Incentive Policy**

**Alderman:** Robert Fazzini

**Question/Comment:** The Economic Development Incentive Policy should include some mention of our goal to want an aspect of any incentive to consider the uplifting of a particular area as a result of any incentive granted to a particular business. This may not be required in each situation because other factors may very well justify an incentive, but I would like us to consider what any incentive plan given will do for helping to revitalize an area!

**Staff Response:** The Target Area Map is intended to highlight particular areas within the City that could be considered for non-traditional incentive tools or levels. These zones have typically experienced levels of economic distress beyond the average for the Bloomington-Normal community and represent areas of potential gains in relation to sales and property tax generation. This language can be added to the Economic Development Incentive Policy to more thoroughly reflect the concept.

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Question/Comment:** Economic Development proposal looks wonderful. Very excited about this. Assume we will share (have shared) with EDC at the appropriate time. Way to go, home run.

**Staff Response:** Advanced copies of the economic development materials were provided to the EDC in mid-July for review and consideration. Additionally, two separate meetings were held on July 11, 2012 and August 30, 2012 with Marty Vanags and Ken Springer of the EDC, for the purpose of discussing the proposed economic development materials. The EDC has expressed support of the items provided for Council consideration.

**Alderman:** Mboka Mwilambwe

**Question/Comment:** I like the direction this is going. As the economy rebounds, we should work to implement this and communicating it quickly (in and out of the community), because as businesses become more confident in the economy they will make commitments elsewhere. I am not sure if this is too specific (or outside the scope of this plan), but I would like to know where tourism (whether it's sporting events, festivals or conventions and even people who stop on their way to Saint-Louis, we need to give people many reasons to stop in Bloomington) fits in our economic development. The frequency of visitors can be catalyst for commercial development.

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**Staff Response:** Year after year, the Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) continues to thrive. Through increases in the number of hotel rooms booked and promising trends in the economic impact that tourism has on our community. The CVB as an organization yields impressive levels of hotel sales and a favorable return on the City's investment. Certainly the City should continue to support this successful engine of opportunity through annual funding (\$500,000 allocated in the FY2013 budget) representation on the CVB Board (Mayor Stockton and Alderman Fruin are both appointees) and continued participation in other CVB programs such as the Sports Commission. With that in mind, the International Economic Development Council publishes the following about the role of tourism in relation to economic development, "The tourism industry is extremely sensitive to fluctuations in the business cycle and tends to offer low wages and limited opportunities for occupational advancement. For these reasons, some communities prefer not to make tourism their keystone for economic growth (International Economic Development Council Resource Guide)." As such, and given the limited resources available through the Economic Development Department at the current time, Staff would advise against the addition of tourism as a goal in respect to the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

## **Work Session -Special Events**

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Question/Comment:** Special events, just a few things:

1. Whatever our policy, let's be sure it's easy to find and follow. Front and center on the website and so on. That way no misses the 60 day deadline for a lack of knowing. To make it even more user friendly for all of us, could the application be online?
  - a. **Staff Response:** All documents pertaining to Special Events will be upgraded to reflect Council's directions and policy as well as placing them on the City's website.
2. On cost, it looks like cost recovery is a "mixed bag" among the 3 municipalities you mention. Normal, as an example, has no cost recovery. Some things I think about; why wouldn't groups just go to Normal to hold events? Is Bloomington comfortable with this result should it happen? Are there other strategies that keep costs low other than cost recovery (at one point we discussed a "dedicated" 5K route as an example)?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Staff does work with coordinators of both Non-Profit and For-Profit Organizations for their Special Events. In 2011, Staff approved 40 Special Events and 24 Block Parties. Staff does not know of any event that moved from Bloomington to Normal. There are several 5K special events that request their own route. The coordinators are generally looking for the event to start near their "home base." This is an area that Staff has not been able to designate because event planners then feel that the City is not working with them if that cannot choose a starting location of their choice. For this reason, staff is requesting a credit of \$500.00 for Non-for-Profit Groups and full cost recovery from For-Profit Groups.
3. When I talk to residents, people often use positive experiences at special events to define their quality of life in this city. From the Farmers Market to the BCPA Festival Park, to Miller Park events, to the St. Patrick's run, these events bring people out for fellowship, exercise,

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celebration, and so on. I know we need to balance costs and quality of life in this case, so are there other examples out there of ways communities strike the “right” balance?

- a. **Staff Response:** Staff found that cost recovery in other communities for handling Special Events ranged from full recovery cost of the entire event, to making Special Events a budget line item to cover all costs.
4. Last idea, this seems an interesting area for an ad hoc committee to discuss. It seems to me that the perspectives of event organizers, attendees, residents, etc., would be valuable in thinking this through. I’m not saying we don’t adopt something to have at present, but this seems an area ripe for continued conversation.”
  - a. **Staff Response:** Staff would be happy to put an ad hoc committee together to discuss. Staff would ask for clarification from Council as to what the topics and direction should be.

**Alderman:** Mboka Mwilambwe

**Question/Comment:** I like the effort to recover cost as much as possible. As staff revises the application for special events, I would suggest that they put the city logo on the form (all of forms for that matter should have the city logo and motto on them for branding purposes).

**Staff Response:** Staff is working towards putting the City’s logo and mission on all forms.

## Appointments

**Alderwoman:** Karen Schmidt

**Item 6B:** Appointments –Appointments to the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission

**Question/Comment:** Great to see people being added to our Boards & Commissions, thanks for moving this along.

**Staff Response:** A monthly report of all vacancies will be out this week.

## Consent Agenda

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Items 7E, 7F, 7G:** Consent Agenda –“Liquor Licenses Designations”

**Question/Comment:** Thank you for designating what the change is on the Agenda. This is helpful.

**Staff Response:** Staff is working towards making the Council Agenda contain as much information as possible to help Council understand the exact topic and motion quickly and easily.

**Alderman:** Robert Fazzini

**Item 7I:** Consent Agenda –“Review on the petition submitted by City of Bloomington, requesting the amendment of Chapter 44 (Zoning), Section 44.4-2 by adding a provision for parkland dedication for residential development in nonresidential zoning districts”

**Question/Comment:** I believe the two benefits from adopting these amendments are 1) it will be more equitable to all developers (level playing field concept) and 2) it will provide more parkland dedication. I do not understand the two benefits in the second paragraph in the “Background” section when to relate simply to residential developments whereas the amendments seem to include commercial and mixed use developments!

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**Staff Response:** As land is developed, preliminary plans and zoning are established. The area zoned residential is used to develop the needs for parks based on the number of people anticipated to be brought to the area and used to establish the City's parks master planning. Fees and land dedications are required up front. Recently, there has been a push to develop residential uses in commercially zoned property. With this trend, staff has discovered areas increasing in residential occupancies with little or limited park areas. This action has allowed development of land without the park land fees or land contributions required by other residentially zoned property. This inadvertently provides an incentive for land to be zoned for commercial use and developed as residential use to avoid paying for, or providing for, parks, therefore, leaving areas with higher residential occupancy and limited parks resources.

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Item 7I:** Consent Agenda –“Review on the petition submitted by City of Bloomington, requesting the amendment of Chapter 44 (Zoning), Section 44.4-2 by adding a provision for parkland dedication for residential development in nonresidential zoning districts”

**Question/Comment:** I know that this doesn't address funding for park development from developers; are we considering this as an option in the future? I also have the same questions that Karen has on this item.

**Staff Response:** Yes. See response under Alderwoman Schmidt for 7I.

**Alderwoman:** Karen Schmidt

**Item 7I:** Consent Agenda –“Review on the petition submitted by City of Bloomington, requesting the amendment of Chapter 44 (Zoning), Section 44.4-2 by adding a provision for parkland dedication for residential development in nonresidential zoning districts”

**Question/Comment:** I am concerned that groups such as the Downtown Property Owners and DBA were not contacted for input. Several people – Bobby Vericella, Fred Wollrab, Steve Parker, and David Bentley come to mind right away and I'm sure I am overlooking others – who are actively involved in redevelopment in our downtown and older neighborhoods should have been contacted, in my opinion. I wish to pull this for further clarification as I do not know that I can support this at this time.

**Staff Response:** The proposal was published as required and notification was sent to land engineers and developers that are routinely involved with this type of development. This Ordinance is not applicable to buildings zoned for commercial use that already have residential uses in them. It is intended to cover all areas of the City since the older portions of the City are some of the areas most lacking in parks.

**Alderman:** Bernie Anderson

**Item 7I:** Consent Agenda –“Review on the petition submitted by City of Bloomington, requesting the amendment of Chapter 44 (Zoning), Section 44.4-2 by adding a provision for parkland dedication for residential development in nonresidential zoning districts”

**Question/Comment:** Is the city looking at equipment for these parks also as part of the requirement? It seems like the city always gets left holding the big ticket being to develop the park's equipment which ends up at times being the largest expense.

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**Staff Response:** The money collected by parkland dedication is intended to provide land and improved parks per the Parks Master Plan. The fees collected are not intended to pay for annual maintenance and upkeep.

**Alderman:** Mboka Mwilambwe

**Item 7I:** Consent Agenda –“Review on the petition submitted by City of Bloomington, requesting the amendment of Chapter 44 (Zoning, Section 44.4-2 by adding a provision for parkland dedication for residential development in nonresidential zoning districts”

**Question/Comment:** What is the current fee structure? Could we see a hypothetical scenario so we get a sense of the actual costs a prospective development would have to incur?

**Staff Response:** The current fee structure is a people-to-land and land-valuation equation. One acre is required for each 100 people of anticipated population. This can be done by a donation of land or by a fee equal to the value of the land. Example: 5 acre development with 50 dwelling units:

- 50 dwelling units x 2.34 people/dwelling unit (based on census data) = 117 people
- 117 people ÷ 100 people/acre = 1.17 acres to be donated or
- 1.17 acres x \$40,000/acre (presumed for example) = \$46,800 fee

NOTE: The Parks Department has the option of choosing the land or fee.

**Alderman:** Robert Fazzini

**Item 7L:** Consent Agenda –“Analysis of Bids and Approval of the FY 2013 Traffic Signal Maintenance Contract (City Wide). (Recommend that the prices be accepted from Laesch Electric and a contract be executive in the amount up to \$100,000 and a budget amendment be incorporated into the FY budget”

**Question/Comment:** Per recommendation of City Attorney, I will pull this item in order to recuse myself from voting.

**Staff Response:** None.

## Regular Agenda

**Alderman:** Robert Fazzini

**Item 8A:** Regular Agenda –“Application of Setinthebar, d/b/a Gat’s Jazz Café, located at 424 N. Main St., for a TAS liquor license, which will allow the sale of all types of alcohol by the glass for consumption on the premises seven (7) days a week”

**Question/Comment:** Should we delay consideration on this until the proposed Qualified Liquor License is established? With all the restrictions in this proposal, is this similar to what the Qualified Liquor License will be?

**Staff Response:** Mayor Stockton will need to address this topic.

**Alderwoman:** Jennifer McDade

**Item 8A:** Regular Agenda –“Application of Sethinthebar, d/b/a Gat’s Jazz Café, located at 424 N. Main St., for a TAS liquor license, which will allow the sale of all types of alcohol by the glass for consumption on the premises seven (7) days a week”

**Question/Comment:** I will share my comments publicly.

**Staff Response:** None.

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**Alderman:** Mboka Mwilambwe

**Item 8D:** Regular Agenda –“Purchase of one E-ONE HP75 Rear Mount Aerial Truck. (Recommend the purchase of one E-One HP75 Rear Mount Aerial Truck from Banner Fire Equipment, Inc. in the amount of \$675,955 be approved, and the Purchasing Agent be authorized to issue a Purchase Order for same).”

**Question/Comment:** I am glad to see that we are replacing equipment with more regularity. I believe our unaudited results at the last meeting showed significant savings in our repair budgets because of investments in new equipment. So we know that it is more financially sensible to spend money on giving staff the best tools to work with rather than costly repairs. It is also great for morale. We must work our hardest to not let our equipment to come to such a state of disrepair. I know much of it had to do with the recession but I hope the plans that we are putting together for equipment will take into consideration how we can give staff quality equipment even in the worst case scenarios. At some point, it would be nice to get a progress report so we know how much progress we've made in equipment in all departments.

**Staff Response:** Progress Reports will be made available during Budget Work Session(s).

Prepared by: Barbara J. Adkins, Deputy City Manager