



City Council

City Council Chambers ♦ 524 West Stephenson Street ♦ Freeport, IL 61032

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, February 9, 2015**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Freeport, Illinois, Committee of the Whole scheduled for Monday, February 9, 2015 was called to order by Mayor James Gitz with a quorum being present at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers.

2. ROLL CALL

Present on roll call: Mayor James Gitz and council members Tom Klemm, Shawn Boldt, Ronnie Bush, Jennie DeVine, Dennis Endress, Sally Brashaw, Michael Koester and Andrew Crutchfield (8).

City Staff Present: Corporation Counsel Sarah Griffin, Community Development Director Jim Brown, Finance Director Cynthia Haggard, Public Works Director Tom Dole, Water/Sewer Executive Director Tom Glendenning, City Engineer Shaun Gallagher, Fire Chief Scott Miller, Deputy Chief of Police Jim Drehoble and City Clerk Meg Zuravel.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Alderperson Klemm and he became chairperson of meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES JANUARY 13, 2015

Alderperson DeVine moved for approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Alderperson Endress. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS

There was no one signed on the sheet for public comments this evening.

6. REPORT BY CITY'S LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT REGARDING STATE FUNDING ISSUES/GRANTS AND THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

Matt Hughes was introduced by Mayor Gitz as the City's legislative consultant. He provided an overview of State of Illinois funding issues and grants and the 2015 legislative outlook. Mayor Gitz stated that Mr. Hughes was instrumental in the legislative funding by the State of Illinois for the Clark and Adams Street project that fixed the curve at the Furst McNess building and put in new water infrastructure in the area. Mr. Hughes stated that with the new governor taking office the administration is working on budget strategies. He is hopeful that the depot project will move forward and there will be a commitment to infrastructure projects to aid municipalities that are having a hard time finding funds for improvement projects. There were 250-300 bills recently filed and the new administration will need to work with the legislators when they convene. Council was provided the opportunity to discuss items with Mr. Hughes and to provide input as to what they recommend as priorities for the City.

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7. PRESENTATION ON RIVERFRONT RENEWAL PROJECT PROPOSAL BY TUTTY'S COALITION AND FDDF'S RIVER DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Bob Nickels, Tutty's Crossing Coalition Chairperson and Michele Massoth, FDDF River District Committee members provided a presentation on the Riverfront Renewal Project. They also provided to council members a document containing the combined recommendations by the Tutty's Crossing Coalition and the FDDF River District Committee. Mr. Nickels explained that Tutty's Crossing symbolizes a connecting point between the past and future of Freeport. The Pecatonica River, originally the primary means of transportation and power, now provide recreation for boaters, paddlers and fishermen. The railroads that once transported people, raw materials, and manufactured goods along the same natural corridors now provide trails for outdoor recreation. For over a century, companies located on what was once called "Manufacturers Island" produced products that made Freeport Illinois a place that was known around the world. Tutty's Crossing will share the story of Freeport's past and help to define the future. He provided information on bike-friendly communities with information on Madison gaining a 3% increase in sales tax revenue to their downtown after bike racks were installed. Research shows convenience stores, entertainment, food/drink, coffee houses, bakeries, lodging and boutiques all will benefit. He stated property values increase along trails. Destination trails bring out of town visitors and become anchors for events that draw people to nearby retail businesses. Trails attract young, educated and often entrepreneurial workers. Outdoor recreation promotes wellness and creates health benefits for users of all ages and abilities. Trails allow for safe enjoyment of cycling, walking, running, and other activities in traffic-free environment. The presentation included progress and timelines for: Tutty's Crossing entrance sign, landscaping, picnic area, fishing/observation pier, decorative bridge lighting, parking lot lighting, floating dock, trailhead oasis, restroom shelter, walk of fame, Milwaukee Depot restoration, bicycle lane, bike racks for downtown development, tourism map, banner flags, marketing/education, Pecatonica Prairie Trail as it relates to the Album Street route. The presentation also included pictorial of the evolution past to present and trailhead site plans. Mr. Nickels and Ms. Massoth thanked the countless volunteers for their assistance in bringing the plans for Tutty's Crossing to fruition. The plans for Tutty's Crossing is moving forward as an area that will provide bike and water trails for all to enjoy for years to come thanks to the help from partners including the Northwest Illinois Trails Foundation, the City of Freeport, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, grant funding, and private sector donations and assistance.

Chairperson Klemm asked for leave of the council to hear from the Friends of the Pecatonica.

John Fritz, 312 Carpenter Street, Freeport Illinois spoke as a representative of the "Friends of the Pecatonica" and spoke about their concerns for funding so they worked together on fundraisers in order to provide concrete picnic tables to the proposed site where the boat launch will be placed. They also received donations from Citizens State Bank.

Council was provided an opportunity to asked questions of the presenters and they thanked them for the informative presentation. Alderperson Brashaw made a motion to place the combined recommendations from Tutty's Crossing Coalition and FDDF River District Committee on file, seconded by Alderperson Koester. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

8. REVIEW OF CITY OF FREEPORT 2015 DRAFT COMMUNITYWIDE PROJECT LIST

Mayor Gitz presented the following 2015 City Project List (02/09 draft)

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- Infrastructure Improvements
 - Implement 7.9 million IEPA loan for water main improvements.
 - Prioritize energy efficiency investments for W & S system; evaluate fee structure
 - Implement East side drainage improvements from U of W recommendations
 - Approve resurfacing program for water improvement streets (Harlem, South/Burchard, etc.)
 - Retain & prioritize pavement preservation programs (crack filling, micro surfacing, patching, etc.)
 - Build new Airport maintenance hangar (& terminal building -- resources permitting)
 - Landscape additions and improvements to corridors & select downtown parking lots
- Economic Development
 - Extension of Jane Addams Trail to downtown; planning & engineering for Pecatonica Prairie Path
 - Complete grant funded Tutty's Crossing improvements; improve East Stephenson corridor
 - Develop a focused and measurable strategy for City economic development
 - Market Freeport economic development sites
 - Improve retail development options, focusing on vacant stores
 - Develop Route 26/US 20 interchange
 - Finish JoAnn Fabrics shopping center
 - Job retention & expansion initiative for existing employers
 - Approve a Mill Race Crossing site plan for medical marijuana that meets City Code
 - Implement wholesale food & energy initiative (HUD grant)
 - Finish HUD grant on small manufacturing opportunities; expand manufacturing initiatives
 - Obtain DIPIT grant for Rawleigh transportation building, if possible
- Neighborhood Redevelopment
 - Re-adopt fee structure for rental properties; expand landlord training program
 - Continued emphasis on corridor clean up (Okie Dokie building and residences)
 - Demolition program (expand with I.D.N.R. help)
 - Enhance code enforcement & foster housing upgrades
 - Create community initiatives to combat blight, channel resources & increase public involvement
 - Create expanded anti-litter & clean-up campaign; involve schools
 - Implement workfare program with Freeport Township
 - Create awards for stand-out homes in blighted areas
- Public Safety
 - Work with State's Attorney's Office to bring charges on homicide cases
 - Attack the "culture of silence" on crime issues
 - Create public campaign on personal accountability
 - Update community safety plan
 - Hire K-9 Officer
 - Evaluate community policing program for effectiveness & improved strategies of deployment
 - Update and expand street lighting; phase in LED lighting
 - Install cameras in high-crime traffic areas
 - Enhance neighborhood links to job training
- Additional City Initiatives
 - Rehab Carnegie library for City Hall & stabilize old City Hall building
 - Refinance additional GO bonds for projected savings of \$800,000
 - Streamline permits & customer service related functions; put permits on-line

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- Implement court fine reforms
- Pass State legislation on unpaid water bills

Discussion was held on the above stated items. Mayor Gitz suggested that this listing be discussed at a special council meeting or a Committee of the Whole meeting on February 23, 2015.

Alderpersion Endress asked for an item to be added for cleanup or demolition of the old Union School vacant property.

Alderpersion Brashaw made a motion to refer the 2015 Citywide Project Listing discussion to the Committee of the Whole on February 23, 2015, seconded by Alderpersion Endress. Motion prevailed by voice vote without dissent.

9. CITY COUNCIL 2015 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
DISCUSSION

Mayor Gitz stated next will be discussion of the 2015 economic development goals and objectives. At this time there are three different partnerships with the City that are subject to contract renewal and those are the NIDA contract, FDDF contract, and the CVB contract. He stated each of these contracts have implications for economic development. He asked for council input as to the City's position in terms of economic development. He asked what the activities are that you would like us to focus on to find a way into the contract. He stated he would like input as to funding goals because there is a limited amount of money especially in the general fund for this coming year. He explained that funding for FDDF comes out of the TIF, the CVB comes from the hotel motel tax, and the NIDA contract is a combination of the general fund and the TIF fund. He stated there is a limited amount of money, so one of the things that we hope the council will discuss and give guidance on is what are the priorities and what the level of funding that we want to allocate to different activities. He explained the information related to retail strategies since that is not related to a particular organization. Mayor Gitz stated that the City is interested in capturing retail strategy in key intersections, especially Route 26 and 20. He asked council to consider if this is a priority.

The handout was marked (02/09/2015) 2015 Focus for Freeport Economic Development. It included the following focus: Attract, Retain and Expand Midsize Manufacturers; Expanded Marketing & Advertising Campaign; Downtown Improvements; Develop IL Route 26 and 20; and Redevelop Vacant Properties. The chart was broken into the following categories with 2015 Focus:

NIDA

- Create recurrent contact schedule for existing mid-size manufacturers
- Develop written and digital industrial/commercial marketing materials
- Coordinate promotion of Honeywell Plant 4, K-Mart building & old Farm & Fleet site
- Develop marketing strategy utilizing Albertus and surrounding parcels
- Build regional coalition supporting US 20 4-lane development
- Establish a business newsletter highlighting City/Business achievements

FDDF

- Complete vacant property inventory for downtown buildings
- Market downtown through special events, including one new event

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FDDF (cont.)

- Organize & complete beautification and clean-up projects within the downtown
- In cooperation with CVB, promote downtown business relating to trails
- Continue and enhance new business mentoring program
- Interface with & promote downtown businesses
- Work with City to prioritize buildings for exterior building grant program

Visitors Bureau

- Establish partnerships with local agencies for promotion of City events
- Coordinate advertising along the US 20 corridor
- Promote recreational activities, trails and parks
- Co-sponsor & Assist with Freeport Independence Day fireworks display & activities
- Create State-wide promotional campaign and materials
- Assist schools, local organizations & facilities with promotion of tournament & events

City

- Enhance infrastructure in key marketable industrial & commercial areas
- Finish key projects, i.e., Jane Addams Trail and corridor improvements
- Build a database of sites showcasing shovel-ready development in key areas
- Market business relocation incentives (TIF/Ezones)
- Review local codes, ordinances, and permits for efficiency and customer ease
- Coordinate development at Rt. 26 & US 20
- Facilitate and coordinate new E-zone application with regional partners

Retail Consultant

- Market the City of Freeport at retail trade shows & arrange interviews
- Develop & implement strategies for attracting new retail to City
- Develop marketing outreach that fits our demographic and existing sites
- Compile database of markets, consumer base, building & site inventory
- Develop a specific strategy for development at Rt. 26 & US 20

Mayor Gitz stated at the last meeting there was discussion on this chart. He has a meeting with NIDA tomorrow and they will work to align resources and there will be minor changes to the focus items. Alderperson Endress asked if the council could hear from representatives from the entities present this evening.

Chairperson Klemm asked for leave of the council to hear from FDDF and the Visitors Bureau.

Danielle Rogers, executive director of Freeport Downtown Development Foundation, 604 W. Galena, Freeport, Illinois, spoke in support of the focus for FDDF. She stated that a meeting was held with herself, Mayor Gitz, Brian Borger (FDDF president), and Tom Klemm. They discussed the goals and were able to assist with creation of the list. She stated overall it was a good meeting.

Connie Sorn, executive director Freeport/Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau, 107 E. Pershing, stated she was able to discuss with Mayor Gitz the CVB small staff limitations as it relates the goals of the City. Although the CVB board has not taken a vote she is agreeable to the listing of

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items for focus for the CVB. Mayor Gitz stated Connie Sorn, Alderperson Klemm and Alderperson Boldt had an open and candid discussion. Mayor Gitz noted this list was updated since that meeting. She discussed the fireworks and stated the CVB is willing to co-sponsor and assist with Freeport Independence Day fireworks display & activities. There would be many more planning activities if it was going to happen in 2015.

Council was provided an opportunity to weigh in on their thoughts on the listing.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA OR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Andy Dvorak, 1211 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois, spoke about the mayor's newspaper article on Sunday. He asked if Mayor Gitz is interested in transferring City services to the Carnegie Library then should that decision first be brought before the City Council. He spoke about open and honest government and the council's input in policy decision.

John Fritz, 312 Carpenter Street, Freeport, Illinois, spoke in support of the Tutty's Crossing Coalition. He stated he is a member of the Friends of the Pecatonica and they have had river cleanups. He stated they are working on fundraising for future river cleanups. They appreciated the support of their fundraiser held at Applebee's and hope to have a good turnout at the Rock Hollow fish fry. They will also hold an event at Rafters Restaurant called the Spring Thaw and it will be held on March 28, 2015.

Steve Carroll, 811 S. Oak, Freeport, Illinois, spoke in support of renewing the landlord registration fee and he would recommend doubling the fee. He stated that Heather Lancaster and Mike Lehmann do a fine job for the part time hours that they put in and he would recommend making that a full time job. He stated you need revenue to have this program work properly.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion (Endress) duly made and seconded (Brashaw), the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

S/ Meg Zuravel

Meg Zuravel, City Clerk