

AUGUST 18, 2020
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called to order the regular meeting of the City of Palos Heights City Council at 7:00 p.m. in the City Administrative Center, 7607 W. College Drive, Palos Heights, IL

II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Mayor led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following were present:

<i>Mayor</i>	Robert Straz	<i>Ward 1</i>	Donald Bylut & Jeffrey Key
<i>City Clerk</i>	Thomas Kantas	<i>Ward 2</i>	Jack Clifford & Robert Basso
<i>City Treasurer</i>	James Daemicke	<i>Ward 3</i>	Dolores Kramarski & Brent Lewandowski
<i>City Attorney</i>	Tom Brown	<i>Ward 4</i>	Jerry McGovern & Michael McGrogan

V. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes: City Council Meeting, August 4, 2020
- B. Approval of Payroll and Voucher List for the period ending August 14, 2020, 2020.

Alderman Kramarski moved to approve the consent agenda seconded by Alderman Bylut.

On roll call, the motion to approve the Consent Agenda was:

Ayes: (8) Basso, Bylut, Clifford, Key, Kramarski, Lewandowski,
McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With eight (8) affirmative votes the motion carried.

VII. OPENING OF SEALED BIDS

127th Street Watermain Project

- Airy’s Inc in the amount of \$63,520.00 with bond attached. Alderman Bylut moved to refer the matter to the Water and Sewer Committee for consideration seconded by Alderman Kramarski. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VII. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

A. Mayor:

- The Mayor urged the use of facial coverings to curb the spread of covid.
- The Mayor requested the presentation of a resolution authorizing the City Administrator to submit an application for coronavirus relief funds provided to Cook County under the CARES Act. Alderman Kramarski moved to authorize the resolution seconded by Alderman Bylut. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
- The Mayor reported on consideration of an ordinance regarding face coverings to be presented at a future meeting.
- The Mayor requested a motion to sell right of way contiguous to the property owned by Daniel Carroll at 12651 68th Court for the amount of \$4,000.00 subject to final review by the City Attorney, Engineer, staff and any necessary public hearings. Alderman Bylut moved to approve the motion seconded by Alderman Key.

On roll call, the motion to approve the sale was:

Ayes: (8) Basso, Bylut, Clifford, Key, Kramarski, Lewandowski,
McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With eight (8) affirmative votes the motion carried.

B. Clerk: No Report

C. Treasurer: Delivered Treasurer’s Report for the month ending July 31, 2020

General Fund:

Beginning cash balance \$4,023,070.22

Revenues \$1,168,094.83
Expenses \$1,255,843.01
Other \$158,699.33
Ending cash balance \$4,094,021.37

Total of All Funds:
Beginning cash balance \$19,387,856.72
Revenues \$2,239,972.23
Expenses \$2,225,151.70
Other \$116,197.82
Ending cash balance \$19,518,830.07

Alderman Bylut moved to approve the Treasurer's Report seconded by Alderman Key. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

D. City Attorney: No Report

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

None

IX. CITIZENS ADDRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL

- Clyde Behrens (11933 Harold) Requested an update on a request for information to Public Safety regarding permitting issued for the demonstration on June 12, 2020 in the City.
- Alderman Key presented on the proposed 7-Eleven/Mobile development at Route 83 and Harlem. The proposed gas station does not present an acceptable aesthetic to the City and will not be landscaped appropriately. A review of photos from existing gas stations in the City indicate that those businesses are not landscaped or maintained in an acceptable manner. The advertisement included in and around gas stations likewise does not present an acceptable aesthetic quality. A gas station on Harlem and Route 83 will likely mirror at some point in the future the nature of the gas stations currently in the City. The miscellaneous items on the premises of gas stations are not maintained and include products for sale, refuse and other items. Alderman Key stated that when the premises were initially under consideration a gas station was not a preferred business to occupy the corner and suggested that the Council suspend consideration of the current proposal. Alderman Key stated that any income derived from this project is not necessary to approve the proposal. A vacant lot will still exist even if the project is approved. The corner has had past interest that involved other commercial projects that did not include a gas station. The parcel is located on a busy intersection and is of value. The Business and Economic Development Committee and other committees have not supported this project and social media comments likewise reject this proposal.
- Alderman McGovern stated that the ZBA rejected the initial proposal offered by the developer in this location resulting in an updated proposal. The land has been vacant for

almost 30 years. The land is subject to a TIF for another 8 years. The corner has issues with accessibility. Alderman McGovern stated that the gas tanks must be below any other utility lines which will be owned by the parent corporation which is responsible for the installation, maintenance and removal if necessary. Residents at the new residential facility have expressed the utility of having a mini mart within walking distance from their home. The proposed 7-Eleven will be 37 percent larger using the same management as the existing 7-Eleven. The existing 7-Eleven is currently well maintained. The remaining lot abuts MWRD property which restricts the amount of space available for use. Alderman McGrogan stated that 5,134 mailings urging interest in the property were met with 3 responses all of which were gas stations with a convenience store. After the proposal was initially rejected by the ZBA the developer incorporated certain suggestions in order to update the project including landscaping, a walking / biking area and other exterior improvements in close proximity to Richard's bicycle shop.

- Representatives from GW Properties, the developer of this project, explained the development. Photos depicting other gas stations in the City should be subject to code enforcement. The proposed development locates trash in the rear of the building screened off from public viewing. The development is intended to provide a tranquil aesthetic to the City. The renderings of the development include signage with the City logo located prominently and would include a gateway feature. The landscaping and maintenance would be consistent with community standards and good corporate citizenship and would elevate the character of the area. GW is a retail developer and will aggressively seek to develop the remaining lot. Alderman Clifford asked a question regarding the location of electrical boxes on the development and the location of certain signage and its visibility on Harlem. GW stated that southbound traffic on Harlem will be able to view the signage. An 8 foot wide walkway will connect with the Cal Sag Trail. Regarding marketing Mario Malone the real estate broker for the property since 2018 fielded questions regarding marketing efforts to date. Alderman Kramarski asked if there were any interested parties other than a gas station. Mr. Malone stated that the presence of the development will make the remaining lot more attractive to prospective tenants because of increased traffic through the area. The Mayor asked about larger commercial tenants other than gas stations such as Panera. Mr. Malone provided an overview of the marketing efforts for the property. Restaurants have not been receptive to locating to the area due to site characteristics and a lack of traffic flow through the area. Alderman Lewandowski asked about future marketing efforts if the development is approved. Mr. Malone stated that the development would be an anchor to the area. A resident asked about the extent of proactive efforts to approach prospective developers aside from gas stations. Mr. Malone stated that he is a part of a 7 person brokerage team and that prospective tenants also have brokers. Meetings with individuals brokers have taken place in person and feedback has centered on a lack of ingress / egress, the cost of doing business in Cook County and the lack of an anchor tenant. Alderman McGrogan stated that Harlem Avenue contains multiple owners of each parcel causing a difference of opinion regarding future development in the City. A complete redevelopment of Harlem Avenue on each side therefore is a difficult proposition. Each owner has a different financial position. The City's financial health is strong but funding is appropriated for existing needs. The City's financial district is confined geographically, also making redevelopment challenging. Alderman McGrogan stated that all businesses have issues

with maintenance and aesthetics and should be subject to further code enforcement. A resident asked about what the future of the Palos Heights financial district will look like given these conditions and what measures can be taken to collaborate with existing businesses. The Mayor stated that planning on Harlem has included new signage, a facade program splitting costs with businesses and crosswalks. The Mayor stated that there are enhanced signage standards for new businesses and is dependent on a willingness from businesses to invest in these upgrades. The City has attempted to make the area more enticing to prospective businesses who have been reluctant to invest in a redevelopment of the area. The resident stated that social media sentiment is largely opposed to the development under consideration and that a more forward looking approach is necessary.

- John Hanley (7121 W. 130th Street) a member of the ZBA and chairman of the Beautification Committee in Palos Heights and urged the Council not to approve this development.
- Charles Polecaster (12804 Seneca) stated every citizen appointed body has unanimously rejected this proposal and urged the Council to accept this unanimous opinion and reject the proposal. The various committees and work done in analyzing this proposal has unanimously rejected the proposal.
- Tom Stuchly (6721 Golfview) stated that the traffic issues mentioned previously are overstated and that neighboring communities have equally if not more complicated means of ingress and egress. The committees that have rejected this proposal should be respected by the City Council. Once the gas station opens it will affect neighboring gas stations negatively.
- Bob Grossart (12904 Golfview Lane) chairman of the Economic Business Advisory Committee stated that covid should not control the decision to approve this project and that prior proposals have been sound. Mike Coogan, a resident and developer committed to Palos Heights likewise rejects this proposal and urged the Council to respect these opinions.
- Dan Carroll (12651 S. 68th Court) stated that there is no public support for this project and that the residents have overwhelmingly rejected this development.
- Lisa Halko (12849 Shoshone) stated that public sentiment opposes this proposal and asked what City funding is appropriated for and that current City efforts are inadequate.
- John Doody (12303 Harold Avenue) stated that traffic is not adequately enforced on Harlem; that the vacancy from the existing 7-Eleven will have negative consequences; and that residents do not support the proposal.
- Alderman Bylut stated that past efforts to recruit prospective businesses to this area have been extensive. The restaurants, grocery stores and other non gas stations have not responded to locating to this area. Alderman McGrogan stated that the vacancy has cost the City in lost property tax and sales tax revenue.

- Alderman Lewandowski stated that every proposal deserves due consideration and that this proposal under consideration is privately financed and does not rely on any public funding. The marketing effort thus far suggests that the gas station response is an accurate depiction of the interest of the business community for this area.

X. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Finance—*Chairperson Alderman McGrogan*: Discussed the sources of public revenue from real estate taxes, permit revenue and sales tax. The State referendum at issue in the next election will have an impact on public financing.
- B. Public Safety—*Chairperson Alderman McGovern*: Reported on fraudulent social security schemes circulating.
- C. Municipal Grounds and Property—*Chairperson Alderman Basso*: Stated that covid has restricted public debate on the issue before the Council and opposes the project under consideration.
- D. Planning and Zoning—*Chairperson Alderman Clifford*:
 - Alderman Clifford moved refer to the Planning and Zoning committee an ordinance allowing a 7-Eleven/ Mobile Mini-Mart Gas Station to operate as a Special Use at 7150 W College Drive, on the northeast Corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive and to allow for a Planned Unit Development consisting of a two-lot subdivision with a 7-Eleven/Mobile Gas Station containing an approximate 4,000- SF Mini-Mart convenience store located on Lot 1, and a retail building on Lot 2. The proposed PUD is located at the NE corner of Harlem Ave and College Drive seconded by Alderman Bylut. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
- E. Recreation—*Chairperson Alderman Key*:
 - Alderman Key moved to approve a first installment payment of \$44,299.00 for the 2020-2021 membership contribution to the South West Special Rehabilitation Association seconded by Alderman Bylut.

On roll call, the motion to approve the payment was:

Ayes: (8) Basso, Bylut, Clifford, Key, Kramarski, Lewandowski,
McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With eight (8) affirmative votes the motion carried.

- Alderman Key moved to approve updated hours of operation for the Recreation Center in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan beginning after Labor Day seconded by Alderman Bylut. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

F. Roads and Construction—*Chairperson Alderman Kramarski:*

- Alderman Kramarski moved to approve the installation of 168 LF of 18” PVC drainage pipe on Richard Avenue and College Drive with Alry’s Inc. in the amount of \$18,150.00 seconded by Alderman Clifford.

On roll call, the motion to approve the installation was:

Ayes: (8) Basso, Bylut, Clifford, Key, Kramarski, Lewandowski, McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With eight (8) affirmative votes the motion carried.

- Alderman Kramarski moved to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with Cook County to complete miscellaneous repairs on Ridgeland Avenue and other Cook County Right of Way within City limits seconded by Alderman Key.

On roll call, the motion to approve the agreement was:

Ayes: (8) Basso, Bylut, Clifford, Key, Kramarski, Lewandowski, McGovern, McGrogan

Nays: (0) None

With eight (8) affirmative votes the motion carried.

G. License, Permits & Franchises—*Chairperson Alderman Lewandowski:*

- Alderman Lewandowski moved to direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance updating the City Code with regard to permits for door-to-door solicitors seconded by Alderman Kramarski. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

H. Water and Sewer—*Chairperson Alderman Bylut:* No Report

XI. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Business/Economic Development: Alderman Key - No Report

B. Ad Hoc Cable TV: Alderman McGovern - No Report

XII. OLD BUSINESS

- Alderman Kramarski inquired on property tax rebates from schools given covid. Alderman Kramarski stated that there are no suggestions from the community regarding an alternative use of the premises at Route 83 and Harlem. The Mayor stated that converting the land at Route 83 and Harlem to a park is not feasible.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

None

XIV. CITIZENS ASKING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EVENING'S BUSINESS

None

XV. CLOSED SESSION

None

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:45 p.m. the Mayor requested a motion to adjourn that passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
PALOS HEIGHTS CITY CLERK

Thomas Kantas

Date