

MINUTES
March 16, 2021
Committee of the Whole – Hybrid Meeting
City of Batavia

Please **NOTE:** These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

Chair Wolff called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Wolff; Ald. Miller, Russotto, Beck (online), Knopp (online), O'Brien, Callahan (online), Malay (online), Meitzler (online), Cerone (online) and McFadden (online)

Members Absent: Ald. Baerren, Chanzit and Uher

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Chief Eul, Batavia Police Department (online); Laura Newman, City Administrator; Gary Holm, Director of Public Works; Scott Buening, Director of Community Development (online); Anthony Isom, Assistant to the City Administrator (online); and Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary

2. Reminder: Please speak into the microphone for BATV recording

3. Items to be Removed/Added/Changed

There were no items to be removed, added or changed.

4. Matters From the Public (For Items NOT on the Agenda)

There were no matters from the public at this time.

5. Consent Agenda

a. Approval: COW Executive Session Minutes January 12, 2021

b. Resolution 21-027-R: Authorizing Execution of a One-Year Renewable Contract with Shamrock Hardscapes & Restoration, Inc. for 2021 West Side Property Maintenance (SH 3/11/21) CS

Motion: To approve the Consent Agenda as presented

Maker: O'Brien

Second: Russotto

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** O'Brien Callahan, Meitzler, Malay, Cerone, McFadden, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp, Wolff

Nay:

11-0 Vote, 3 Absent. Motion carried.

6. Discussion: Status Report on Probationary Police Officer Hiring Process (DME)

Chief Eul reported on the selection and retention status. Right now they have one vacancy in the department active since a January retirement. The succession plan is having two to four additional attritions this year due to retirement or departure before January 1, 2022. We have not had much applicant interest right now possibly due to the situation with law enforcement nationwide, the pandemic, and current sworn candidates are reluctant to make a move right now due to economic concerns. Chief Eul discussed partnering with other academies to help fill vacancies, certified candidates, streamlined hiring process for certified candidates, and basic requirements.

7. Discussion: Outdoor Dining on N. River St. and S. Water St.

Newman reported that last year the City created two outdoor public dining areas, one on North River Street and another on South Water Street. Last fall City Council made the decision to apply to IDOT for a permit to make North River Street one way southbound. That application has been pending and staff had received several comments back from IDOT in which staff has to create responses for. Staff is putting responses together. Newman asked the Committee, in the meantime, if they would like staff to do the street closure similar to last year.

The Committee discussed the importance of outdoor dining during unprecedented times to support local businesses, obtaining a legal opinion on IDOT's jurisdiction over that intersection, maintaining a collaborative relationship with IDOT, Abby Beck and Laura Newman were directed to meet with State legislature to explain our situation, and Gary Holm was directed to provide the name of the person in charge of permitting to City Council.

The floor was opened for public comment. Melissa Monno, business owner, addressed the Committee virtually. She shared her experience when the street closed down last year. She stated that she received nothing but positive feedback from those who sat at the outdoor dining tables. She would think that people would expect River Street being closed in a very similar way this year. They would be confused if it wasn't. She has spoke to some of her neighbors and they raved about how the street was closed last year and how their sales doubled some nights. Regular programming was scheduled last year such as dinner with live music, trivia, and bluegrass. Families were out and kids were running about. One-way traffic is terrifying to think about with kids running and playing. She plans on continuing the programming for the entire street. Bar Evolution has live music nights and we will work together and keep the street packed. She said that we could work around deliveries and anyone who needs to be dropped off. Every night without tables outside the restaurants are losing thousands of dollars that turns into the nest egg that we need to move forward.

Knopp noted that the reason the City is looking into one-way traffic is so that we as a City could close off the north end of River Street whenever and as often as we want without having to go through IDOT and wait weeks or months to get an approval. Knopp stated that he would like to see River Street shut down through the summer time like we did last year. Monno asked if the City has permission now to have full closure of River Street. Holm answered that we have a permit for full closure and we planned for that on January 3, 2021. We have that permit in place and the permit was effective yesterday.

John Hammel, owner of Bar Evolution, addressed the Committee. He stated that he always thought closing the street northbound would be the better solution. If it is going to be a southbound closure, if possible for the summer he would be in support of closing the street off completely. Melissa has done a great job programming the street. Having the street closed completely helps give people the ability to spread out. He offered to go through classes to move the barriers so that there is someone who is able to do that on River Street and not give additional work to City staff. Hammel stated that he would like to have semi-permanent bollards. Holm answered that bollards are not an approved closure. Hammel stated that people are expecting River Street to be closed to traffic as it was last year. He would like the street to be open for the annual crawl that happens on May 1st. When One Washington comes online, anything that could be done to keep one lane going west on State Street to bring egress down to the Tea Tree and Tusk would be helpful.

Missy Hartman, owner of the Tea Tree, addressed the Committee. She stated that she had no problems with the closure of the street last year because State Street was open at that time. When One Washington gets developed she would like to continue to have daytime traffic able to get to her business. She loves the closure of River Street. She enjoys the ambiance of the street and loves the lights. She has had no problems with deliveries. She encouraged the Committee to have the street closed again. She is one of the only daytime businesses down River Street but she does enjoy having the road closed.

The consensus of the Committee was to close N. River Street until IDOT makes their decision on a one-way. Holm stated that weather permitting he will plan on closing River Street the week of April 5th including tables and outdoor lighting. The dates would be the same for S. Water Street as well.

8. Project Status

Newman reported on the following:

- The mass vaccination site is going into the former Sam's Club at 501 North Randall Road.
- Tomorrow afternoon there is another meeting with the Park District and Hitchcock Design Group to create the Fox River Master Plan.

9. Other

Callahan asked about the timeline for securing the funding for One Washington Place. Newman answered that sometime in mid to late April the developer is required to have completed their bid drawings. Buening added that mid July is the next step for financing. O'Brien asked Buening to share the timeline information with the Council members.

10. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Chair Wolff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm; Made by O'Brien; Seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary, on April 12, 2021.