Meeting Minutes

Human Services Committee

Monday, September 16, 2013
6:00 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present: Ald. Tendam, Holmes, Braithwaite, Fiske, Burrus, Grover

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Joseph McRae, Chief Richard Eddington, Commander Diane Davis, Henry Ford, Bob Dornerker, Evonda Thomas-Smith, Melissa Parker, Sarah Flax, Nicola Whyte, Stephanie Levine, Marty Lyons, Matt Swentkofske, Suzette Robinson, Wally Bobkiewicz

Presiding Member: Ald. Holmes

Declaration of Quorum
With a quorum present, Chairman Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2013

It was moved and seconded the minutes of the August 5, 2013 meeting be approved. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved 5-0.

Citizens Comment

Mr. Herb Harms of 2133 Crawford stated the Harley Clarke Mansion should be taken down because it was built to be used as a residential place it should not have been converted for public use. More parking for the beach could be gained by removing the garage.

Ms. Barbara Janes of 802 Colfax is the Cofounder of NoParkSale. She encouraged the Committee to do only the basic repairs needed for the Arts Center occupancy and that the Arts Center could contribute to the upgrade of the Mansion. She does not see the need to hire consultants to evaluate the building for occupancy. No Park Sale 1st community meeting will be held on September 18th at 7:00 p.m at the Civic Center, Parasol Room.

Ms. Linda Damashek of 1318 Judson encouraged the Committee to be mindful and respect the existing parameters i.e. zoning ordinance for the Harley Clarke Mansion. The Mansion should remain open for public use.

Ms. Linda Slavik of 1319 Greenwood is the President of the Actor Gymnasium Board. There has been some uncertainty of their continued tenancy in Evanston and at Noyes. They have been in the community for 18 years and plans to remain in Evanston. They do need additional space to fill their growing needs.
Virginia Nugent the new Executive Director for the Actors Gymnasium supports the proposal to have the Evanston Arts Council and the Noyes Tenants Association determine the use of the Arts Center; this collaboration will accommodate many needs and the arts community will have input.

Sam Fishkin of 1420 Grove is a Board Member of the Actors Gymnasium. The Actors Gymnasium has grown and also expanded their afterschool program. They have been asking for more space for a while, they require an additional 450 sq. feet of space. They are willing to pay their fair share.

Bill Schwinner of the 4th ward supports the Actors Gymnasium, he stated Evanston is all about the arts; it is an integral part of the community.

Yolanda Vanderlaan of 1329 Monroe is a board member of the Actors Gymnasium; however, she spoke as the parent of participants of the Gym. The Actors Gymnasium has been her son’s home away from home. “Please retain the Actors Gymnasium for the benefit of us all”.

Larry DiStassi of 1111 Noyes, is the Co-Artistic Director of the Actors Gymnasium, he thanked the Committee for their support of the arts. He is excited the Noyes Tenant Association has proposed taking over management of the Noyes Center; he believes the City will benefit from the self-management proposal.

Maggie Weiss said on behalf of the Noyes Tenant Association they are looking forward to working together to create a vibrant center for the arts.

David Reynolds of 204 Davis Street asked that the committee give thought to two criteria for increasing the annual event number, the duration of the event and amplification.

Rodney Greene 2016 Brown Ave pointed out the Township Clerk position is missing on the Townships’ organizational chart. He also informed the Committee the Township Clerk will not be in attendance at the upcoming Township meeting and he requires permission from the Township Board to appoint a deputy in his absence. His concerns are as follows for the Township budget, clients who are medical disabled and unable to work cannot be in the job training and workfare program, on page 268 of the packet the membership dues are missing for FY13, on page 269 the training expense of $2000.00 seems inadequate, no allocation for glasses under Client Medical, and under Emergency Assistance-EAS Expenses food assistance is not funded.

Betty Ester of 2031 Church St stated she has reviewed the Township Audit and Budget and she asked the Committee to make a budget and approve it. She also spoke on the pending elimination of the Township of Evanston and requested the decision is put to the resident. She asked can something be left for the poor to rely on. She also noted the report from Novak was not discussed and hearing the opinions of the Committee would be beneficial to the public. “Why do we always try to fix things that don’t need fixing?”

Pricilla Giles is not in favor of the abolishment of the Township of Evanston, she requested the language used on the referendum to abolish the Township to be simplified unlike the language on the last referendum which was vague, to ensure understanding for all. Fleetwood Center is not handicap accessible.
Madelyn Ducre stated the City’s plan after the Township is dissolved needs to be shared with the residents so that they can get a better understanding and a more informed decision can be made.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Review of Police Complaints**

*It was moved and seconded to accept the Review of Police Complaints. A voice vote was taken and the review was approved 5-0.*

**Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)-Substantial Amendment to the HUD 2013 Annual Action Plan minor allocation of funding.**

The City of Evanston’s 2013 ESG grant of $115,781 is approximately 24% less than the estimated grant used in the Action Plan. Because the reduction is more than 10%, a substantial amendment to the 2013 Action Plan is required.

*It was moved and seconded to approve the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)-Substantial Amendment to the HUD 2013 Annual Action Plan. A voice vote was take, approved 5-0.*

**Ordinance 80-O-13 Amending Title 3, Chapter 14 “Cigarettes and Tobacco Products” to add Restrictions for Use of Electronic Cigarettes and Liquid Nicotine**

Health Director Evonda Thomas-Smith gave a summary of the proposed ordinance. The Ordinance calls for amending the Evanston Clean Air Act which would 1) prohibit e-cigarette use wherever use of other smoking materials are prohibited and 2) include e-cigarettes in the definition of “smoking materials.” In addition, it would change the city code’s definition of “tobacco products” to encompass e-cigarettes. This would then enable the prohibition of e-cigarette sales to minors.

*It was moved and seconded to approve Ordinance 80-O-13 Amending Title 3, Chapter 14 “Cigarettes and Tobacco Products” to add Restrictions for Use of Electronic Cigarettes and Liquid Nicotine be approved. A voice vote was take, approved 6-0.*

**Report on Structural Issues at Harley Clarke & Next Steps**

City Manager Bobkiewicz gave a background summary of the Harley Clarke Mansion. The mansion is currently occupied by the Evanston Arts Center and is in need of basic repairs to continue occupancy. The City Manager is requesting $270,000 in which $170,000 would be used for basic life safety repairs and the remaining $100,000 would be used for additional study for the building. The improvements that would be addressed would be the ventilation system, plumbing, electrical and the fire alarm system. Also talks are needed to understand if the kilns can be removed from the basement to ensure safety of the building.

City Manager Bobkiewicz would like to start a discussion with the Evanston Arts Center to get a better understanding on their tenancy, if they are staying in the building and what part of the improvements would they contribute to or if they have decided to relocated, when would that occur.

Ald. Burrus is concerned about spending $270,000 to repair the Mansion and believe it is a waste of money due to the other issues the building has i.e. asbestos and lead. She asked if there have been any discussions with the Evanston Arts Center to instead use some of the
$270,000 to help them relocate. The City Manager replied he is waiting for direction from the Committee before having that discussion with the Arts Center.

Ald. Fiske asked how long would they stay if they remained in the building and if they choose to relocate do they have a building in mind and also can they operate without the kiln? The answers from the Arts Center will direct how the committee will move forward. The City Manager stated they do not have a proposed new home. The cost of demolition is approximated $100-120,000 and that figure takes into consideration the safely issues surrounding asbestos and lead in demolition.

Ald. Grover is not ready to consider demolition of the Mansion she suggested getting the opinions of the community for possible use of the building

Ald. Tendam doesn’t believe money should be placed in the Mansion at this time; however, the building is worth saving due to the architectural features of the interior which cannot be duplicated in this era. He asked what it would entail to board up the Mansion to preserve the contents from the environmental, human, and animal elements. He stated the funds could be used for other recreational centers which are being neglected at this time.

Ald. Fiske stated the City acquired the property to increase their parkland, the house was a bonus but the house should be respected because it is a landmark. She would like to hear the outcome of the upcoming NoParklandSale committee meeting.

Information was also requested on the adjacent coach house, the liability to the City if the Arts Center remains in the Mansion, additional information was requested on demolition, and since the building is not ADA compliant would that prevent the City from qualifying for Federal/State grant funds for repairs..

City Manager will be back at the next meeting with a status report of the information requested by the Committee.

Report on Downtown Arts Center Next Steps
City Manager Bobkiewicz asked the Committee to recommend to the City Council to ask the Mayor to appoint a Taskforce to look into a downtown performance arts center. We know there is an interest by arts organizations and potential location; however, it is unknown how much it would take to construct and to support ongoing maintenance of this project, he said.

It was moved and seconded to recommend to the Mayor to establish a taskforce with regard to a downtown arts center. 6-0

Report on Noyes Cultural Arts Center Next Steps-
With the Piven Theater Workshop proposal withdrawn City Manager Bobkiewicz asked for direction to complete an engineering evaluation of the building and to request from the Evanston Arts Council and the Noyes Tenants Association to consider new criteria for tenancy. He referred to page 164 of the meeting packet regarding future planning.

…. Issues that should be considered include:
- The role of Evanston residency. The Center is an Evanston tax supported facility. Preference should be given first to Evanston residents and organizations.
- The balance of performing versus visual artists.
- Tenure of tenants. To what extend should the Center be an incubator of artists and arts organizations versus a long term creative home for artists and organizations? How can
we insure that fresh creative energy continuously flows through the Center with the introduction of new artists and arts organizations?
- Rents. Should rents be scaled based on different factors? New versus continuing tenants? Should rent be reduced for new tenants or new arts organizations and then raised as the tenants become more established?
- Community Service. What is the continuing role of service at the Center?
- Activity at the Center. How should activity at the Center be measured for individual artists and arts organizations to ensure that the Center remain active and vibrant?
- Office space versus active arts space. There should be a maximize percentage of space at the Center allocated for offices. If organizations need additional office space, is there a point when the Center is no longer an appropriate home for the organization and other space in Evanston be identified?

Ald. Burrus asked about the percentage of not-for-profits vs. businesses at the Center, City Manager Bobkiewicz reported that information will be included in the information given to the Tenants Association.

The Arts Council participated in past discussion; Ald. Grover like what they would bring to the discussion. She is grateful for the tenants who have remained and supported the Center.

Ald. Tendam is concerned about the management proposal Mr. DiStassi put forward, management also include who unlogs the toilet when needed not just who rents the space. He would like a strong understanding of the boundaries of the City vs. the Tenants Association. His other concern was who would determine the allocation of the vacant space. City Manager Bobkiewicz has appointed Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Serviced Joe McRae to work with the Tenants Association to review pending request for existing tenants request for space.

Ald. Holmes recommended to all involved to “look carefully” when making space allocation to be fair.

The City’s arts program is currently not citywide and removing the staff currently at the Noyes Center will help in promoting the program.

*City Bobkiewicz will be back to the Committee in February of 2014 with the recommendations from the Tenants Association and the Evanston Arts Council.*

**Park and Recreation Board Lakefront Special Event Policy Recommendation**
The change would include increasing the annual events from 12 to 33. In the summer months there would be 16 (6 high impact and 10 low impact) and during non-summer months there would be 17 (5 high impact and 12 low impact).

*It was move and seconded to approve the modification to the special events policy for lakefront use as a three year pilot, approved 6-0*

**Discussion of Dempster Street Beach Boat Rack Policy**
This item came to the attention of Ald. Burrus from a resident who was not chosen to receive a rack; however, a non-resident received one. He would like the policy to be amended to have resident receive racks before non-residents.
TOWNSHIP OF EVANSTON
Assessor Bonnie Wilson’s report see attached

Township of Evanston Financial Audit
*It was moved and seconded to accepted the audit, motion approved 5-0*

Township of Evanston Budget for Fiscal Year 2013
*It was moved and seconded to approve the Budget for FY2013 for the Township it was approved 4-1*

2T-O-13 an Ordinance calling for Binding Referendum Question to be Submitted to the Electors of Evanston Township to Discontinue and Abolish Township organization in Evanston Township

City Manager Bobkiewicz stated the ordinance for the election is dictated by the statute which was passed by the Illinois General Assembly the questions have been answered by the Illinois General Assemble they have directed if this initiative is approved those functions will become the responsibility of the City of Evanston. The reason it is not included in the ordinance is because it is in the Illinois State Statute.

Ald. Tendam wants a clear plan of how services will be continued.
Ald. Grover supports the dissolution of the Township only if there is a plan as to the continuation of the services.

Ald. Holmes does not support abolishing the Township; she never has and never will be. She asked her colleagues to be responsible as the Trustees to have a meeting to educate the voters.

Ald. Braithwaite does not support the abolishment of the Township. He struggled with this decision and feels "when it comes to those with less resource or black we don’t listen with the same sensitivity, and it is really really really painful". He feels it is irresponsible to move forward without a discussion with the current clients and the community.

*The introduction of Henry Colquitt to the microphone was not recorded. Mr. Colquitt stated each client is assessed for job readiness during their intake process. The criteria for job readiness are psychologically stable; he is literate…with at least a high school diploma. Once clients are deemed “work ready” they are placed in an ongoing 6-week curriculum of Job club, where he meets with them 3 times weekly; 9 am - 11. Job club involves resume building, cover letters, interviewing on camera, etc. There are particular sites in Evanston that will hire clients for work training. Some have been sent to the Human Resource Department at the City of Evanston. That is a component of the Work Opportunity Program.*

Mr. Colquitt summarized the process of client “John” who has come into the Township to request services. “John” is mentally ill with a substance abuse history, due to his mental illness he can be referred to Peer or Behavioral Services Center for services. John has to be seen within 30 days, needs assessed, and placed on GA. Total grant can be $500.00. If there is a landlord that will take $200.00 for a place to live, $200.00 goes to landlord, $300.00 to John in two installments of $150. Mr. Colquitt has to follow the Township Officials of Illinois handbook to ensure he is compliant with its requirements.
Mr. Colquitt estimates there are approximately 35% of his clients who are homeless; Connections for the Homeless allows client to use it as a mailing address. Some of the services provided depending on the client’s needs are home visits for address verification, crises intervention, and referral for rehab. There is also the exempt client whom is pending disability. Documents are sent to the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Social Security offices. If and when the client is approved he is removed from GA. A check for the amount of financial assistance from the Township is then refunded back to the Township. There are two files kept for every client an electronic and paper; both have to be maintained as set forth by the Township Officials of Illinois handbook.

There are currently 160 active GA clients and 28 on the waiting list. There is currently one case worker assisting the 160 clients. The Township also offers Emergency Assistance and Adult Basic Education/GED.

Ald. Holmes stated the summary was helpful to understand General Assistance is only one component of the Township services and the number of clients reported each year tends to only give the number of clients on General Assistance.

Ald. Braithwaite asked for a total number of clients impacted in a year, every person who walks in their door for service, not just the GA clients.

*It was moved and seconded to forward to City Council 2T-O-13 an Ordinance calling for Binding Referendum Question to be Submitted to the Electors of Evanston Township to Discontinue and Abolish Township organization in Evanston Township; approved 4-2*

Township Communication
- **Township of Evanston Trustee memo**
  Ald. Holmes asked the Township for a list of their day to day duties due to the elimination of the Executive Director. The current case worker Mr. Colquitt is the only staff person who follows the clients due to the elimination of that position; she assisted with the case load.
- **Township of Evanston elected officials job description**
  Ald. Holmes hopes that the elected job description will assist everyone to understand the responsibilities for all positions.

**COMMUNICATION**
**Change of Staff Memo**
Ald. Grover, Tendam, Holmes and Braithwaite thanked Ms. Whyte for her years of service with the Human Services Committee. Mellissa Parker was introduced as the new support staff person to the Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**
It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicola Whyte
Executive Secretary, Health Department

Revised October 28, 2013