I. CALL TO ORDER

Alderman Jean-Baptiste called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 3, 2006 HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the May 6, 2006 meeting were called and unanimously approved (4-0).

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE APRIL 2006 TOWNSHIP MONTHLY BILLS AND REPORTS

Alderman Moran motioned for approval, seconded by Alderman Bernstein.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked Alderman Hansen regarding the current status of the Township’s budget that is significantly in the black and what is it that she’s doing differently that is allowing us to be in greater compliance than what is expected. Ms. Vance said the last fiscal year was somewhat different than other fiscal years because the anticipated income and revenue actually came in and they got the tax revenue they budgeted for, as in prior years they had not received the amount of revenue they budgeted for. Also, what accounted for some of that was when putting the budget together expenditures were also below their projections, a lot of which had to do with the medical. Last year we did not have a lot of very ill people and did not have to pay out as much in medical. Some reductions in last year’s budget are seen in this year’s budget in personnel and other costs. Anytime you get your anticipated revenue in, and don’t spend as much as anticipated you have a surplus. Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked what the projected savings in personnel is. Ms. Vance responded, this proposed budget has a decrease in personnel cost of $12,000 in one area. She has the same number of positions; however, due to attrition new people were hired at lower salary levels. Some of staff opted out of health insurance benefits, and some opted having a single plan as opposed to a family plan, also decreasing costs. Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked Ms. Vance if the Township health insurance is the same as the City’s, to which Ms. Vance responded.
they are not on the same system. In past they have not been able to get a lot of increases for staff and this year projected 5% increases for all staff salaries, and there is still a reduction in the personnel costs.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked for clarification regarding client payments. Ms. Vance said in this budget she is proposing increasing the client housing payment level of $334 which has not been increased for over ten years. The Township is proposing clients housing payments increase by $25 taking if from $334 to a maximum grant of $359 which is paid directly to the landlord who provides the housing. Mr. Vance said she feels the Township can afford to do that and help our clients in any way that is feasible. This increase is projected to start in October, as leeway time is needed to get our budget approved and in get out certain notifications that this maximum grant will be increased from $334 to $359. This also depends on what the rent charge is as we still have people getting subsidized housing whose rent may be $60 plus which is what we will pay to them.

**Alderman Jean-Baptiste recalled the motion for approval of consideration of the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget for Evanston Township, motion unanimously approved (4-0).**

IV. DISCUSSION WITH THE EVANSTON ALLIANCE ON HOMELESSNESS

Susan Calder, Chairman of the Evanston Alliance on Homelessness, said she came before the Human Services Committee to establish a better dialogue with you. A memo was sent to the committee describing the Alliance and their goal which is to further and discuss the issues of homelessness and figure out how they can have a more vibrant relationship in the future. Ms. Calder proceeded to describe the Alliance, for those in the audience who did not receive her memo. About two years ago the Housing and Urban Development group (HUD) in Washington, determined that any community wanting money for homelessness had to become part of a Continuum of Care so the whole community would be working together to determine what is needed in that community as needs differ from area to area. Ten years ago Evanston determined we would be our own Continuum of Care, the rest of Suburban Cook County and Chicago are other Continuums of Care. Evanston is very small in terms of how we operate and we were wise to be our own continuum because we do get a good amount of money coming in to the City for homeless issues. The Alliance meets monthly and has an active committee of 20 members comprised of professionals from agencies, City staff, some State staff, and sometimes volunteers, like herself. They have 25 agencies, soup kitchens, and ten representatives from government agencies that get their email on a monthly basis. The goal of Evanston’s Alliance on Homelessness is to increase the City’s amount of permanent housing for individuals and families and once people are in permanent housing keep them there where they can get the supportive services they need to continue to work through their issues. They would also like to increase employment and continue to increase moving people through transitional housing, which is up to two years, into permanent housing whether on their own or in supportive housing.

In the past year an achievement of the Alliance was they maintained the funding for their current program and increased linkages between people that are homeless and supportive services. They are linking people that need to go into immediate care to a more structured care, rather than living on their own. Fresh Start, one of the participating agencies, is working with seven real estate firms who said they will not need a deposit because the people being sponsored by Fresh Start are ex-offenders getting out of prison. They would like the people that are homeless to get all the mainstream resources they are entitled to. The state government has prevention funds they can give a family, up to $800 once every two years, as a stopgap measure if they can’t meet their utilities, or if their car breaks down and they can’t get to work they pay to get the car fixed. The proposed state budget is increasing Evanston’s funds, which are very effective in preventing homelessness, from $116,000 to $347,000. Connections for the Homeless is the administrator of those funds. Each year they have to do a survey to find out where the people are and find that 85 to 90% of the people are still in the same housing, which means we’re getting stability for those families that need housing. Most of the money is received from HUD and this year they will apply for $765,995. Unfortunately that money does not pay for the entire service and HUD demands that the local community supports 20 to 25% of their grant. Agencies that receive this money have to seek additional funding from corporations and foundations. They get some funds from the City and the state government to support the rest of these activities.

One of the values of the Alliance is the networking with agencies to share information. This networking is particularly helpful in the issue of discharge planning when a person leaves the hospital or is discharged from prison. The Alliance benefits from working together with the other Continuums and Northern Illinois.

The Alliance received a grant to help them do their strategic planning and would ask that you participate in that process as what happens at City government is very important to what happens to the homeless people in Evanston. The committee would have the opportunity to get to know the Alliance better and meet and talk to some homeless people.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked for clarification of the homeless population category called homeless sub-population. Ms. Calder said these are people that are homeless because they have a severe mental illness, have substance abuse problems, or they’re mentally ill and have substance abuse which is MIISA. They could be a veteran; it depends on how
they describe themselves. There is a chronic homeless sub population, which is a HUD definition, for persons who have a 
disability which could be mentally ill or substance abuse and are homeless for over a year or have had four instances of 
homelessness in the last three years.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked if the population served is primarily Evanston residents to which Ms. Calder responded 
the Alliance numbers came from a street count that was requested by HUD and done in January of 2005, people that 
were in Evanston at that time. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said his point was to clarify whether or not we’re serving the 
population that is primarily Evanston residents or are they folks who are transient in Evanston from Chicago and other 
places. Ms. Calder said they can be transient people but were in Evanston that night in January when the street count 
was taken. Alderman Jean-Baptiste wanted to know if those served on an ongoing basis by the Alliance are Evanston 
residents. Ms. Calder said it varies by group. Looking at the available housing, people who live at Hilda’s Place are 
greater than 50% directly from Evanston. The YWCA people are not from Evanston because they’re victims of domestic 
violence who usually move out of their community for safety sake. Victims of domestic violence from Evanston go to other 
places. Connections New Beginning has seven apartments that are all Evanston people. As of last week there were 61 
families, families with a child 6 or under, on the waiting list for those apartments. There is nothing available for people 
with children over 6 years old. The YWCA is transitional housing, the Department of Children and Families Services issues 
vouchers for Evanston. Housing Options are all Evanston residents. The Incline Program is all Evanstonians.

Alderman Holmes said she has always been interested in are those families that move from relative to relative or friend to 
friend that do not have permanent housing, and asked if the Alliance been able to capture any of that? Ms. Calder said 
they know the 61 families on the waiting list at Connections, but they don’t know the people that are doubled up. She has 
seen a census report that there are nearly 1,000 families that live in overcrowded conditions, which means more than one 
person per room in a household, and we would assume that some of those are doubled up families. Ms. Calder said she 
tried to call six to eight clergy as they thought people would be coming to them but they did not have a fix on that either.

Alderman Bernstein asked where the 61 families find shelter. Ms. Calder said they double up and are somewhere. For 
the most part families are not living in unsuitable places for human habitant so they are not living in a car or something like 
that. Alderman Jean-Baptiste thanked Ms. Calder for her report.

V. CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE 65-O-06 PROHIBITING BEEKEEPING IN EVANSTON

Dolan McMillan, 1519 Madison Street, said he was in attendance with his wife Heather, and the proposed aviary at 1517 
Madison Street was his concern. Mr. McMillan said he is a Civil Engineer by trade. He was told by his alderman to come 
and speak his mind and not just let it go so he prepared a presentation that are his thoughts and his opinions that he 
hoped would be an informative opinion. Mr. McMillan proceeded with a power point presentation entitled “Beekeeping in 
Evanston, Illinois”. See Attachment A. for Mr. McMillan’s Presentation.

Susan Dickman and son Gabrielle Jacobs, 1517 Madison Street, this is the home where the bee hive is located, Ms. 
Dickman’s and Gabrielle’s presentation is Attachment B. and includes pictures of Beekeeping, Gabrielle’s drawing of their 
yard and initial proposed sights and a changed proposed site for where they would keep the hive. See Attachment B. for 
Ms. Dickman’s and Gabrielle Jacobs’ Presentation, Attachment B1, for Gabrielle’s Drawing, Attachment B2, for 
Beekeeper Photos.

Ken Haller, 627 Taylor, Elmhurst, Illinois, President of the Illinois Beekeepers Association, completely understands 
someone not used to honeybees as he was once of those individuals and is now a passionate beekeeper. All the 
concerns raised tonight are natural concerns and are easily addressed through the research and writing that has been 
done on honeybees and the Illinois Beekeepers Association is the support for beekeepers and neighbors to help squash 
any concerns. He understands and respects the concerns raised here tonight. Honeybees are highly beneficial insects in 
Illinois; beekeepers have been safely keeping bees both in rural and non rural areas throughout the world for thousands of 
years. Tonight we are mainly speaking to the fact that you are in a relatively densely urban environment. Honeybees 
provide the keepers as well as neighbors of beekeepers with honey which is rich in anti oxydents and has an antibacterial 
capacity when used on minor cuts and bruises. They’re very beneficial and highly docile. Do people get stung, 
absolutely? People get stung by wasps, and bitten by snakes, but the feral population is already in Evanston and spread 
across the state, honeybee populations are pale in comparison with the feral wild populations already out there. Ms. 
Dickman’s and Gabrielle’s adding a single colony of honeybees to their backyard will statistically not increase the amount 
of honeybees in their neighborhood as well as throughout Evanston. Honeybees typically will not fly 50 feet and land in 
the next door neighbor’s yard. They go to where the flowers and nectar are most highly concentrated and would rather go 
to the nearest field and forage on clover. Mr. Haller said he has been keeping bees for over 15 years and has been on 
the Illinois State Beekeepers Association for over 6 years, very rarely do they hear a concern from a neighbor with an 
active colony next door. Why, because the neighboring beekeeper educates those around them. In this particular case he 
does not know if there was enough time to educate the neighbors around Ms. Dickman’s area but can guarantee after a 
couple months of no stinging and reaping the benefits, the education and the wonder of watching the honeybees work not
only in the colony but also in the surrounding area there will be children gathered around to watch the colonies. The fear around honeybees is strictly highly sensational and not based on fact.

A little about the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA). The state of Illinois encourages the keeping of honeybees in both rural and urban settings for all the reasons noted here tonight. While the Illinois Department of Agriculture it is not as appropriate with the City of Evanston versus a rural area, Central Illinois for example, every 5 years has passed the Aviary Act, a Congressional act that approves honeybees and their location within backyards as well as the protection of honeybees from illnesses and diseases just as livestock, for example in the case of cattle. The point being honeybees are a regulated insect. Honeybee colonies are to be registered with the Department of Agriculture; an inspector comes by every 2 to 3 years to inspect your colony. Meanwhile the Illinois State Beekeepers Association and Department of Agriculture is their support not only for neighbors of beekeepers but beekeepers themselves. If any questions or concerns come up we’re there specifically and expressly to address those concerns and help educate the public. Additionally, the State of Illinois employs a Chief Apiary inspector who physically manages and supervises a team of 6 to 8 apiary inspectors based on districts. They are a team of permanent, full time individuals who set up appointments with beekeepers and inspect their colonies. The inspectors are primarily there to assure the honeybees are healthy in terms of swarming. Poor heath in honeybee colonies could be a concern for a neighbor. They are there to educate and support those local beekeepers. The Illinois State Beekeepers Association is an optional organization for beekeepers to join, the ISBA exists to raise public awareness to the benefits of honeybees, to support the public’s interest as well as support its membership. Illinois has over 1,200 beekeepers who manage over 20,000 honeybee colonies, 500 of which are here in Cook County the most densely populated county in Illinois. Keep that in mind when you think about the number of concerns you hear on a yearly basis and complaints that he has heard are almost non existent. All 800 members of the ISBA support Ms. Dickman and her son Gabrielle and will be there to assist them in any way that they need. Additionally, he extends his hand to Ms. Dickman’s neighbors, we are there also to support them and to raise any questions or concerns they might have. That is part of our objective, part of our constitution; we’re there to support the citizens of Evanston.

John Hansen, 127 North Madison, Lagrange, current Education Manager of the Cook/DuPage Beekeepers Association and past President of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association. The concerns of the Dickman neighbors are very valid concerns. He would like to point out that if bees are kept even in the first location of the Dickman yard with the oak tree in front of them, those bees will fly up and Mr. McMillan and his family will probably never see the bees as they will be 20 or 30 feet up or if they have a specific location to go to that is providing nectar they’ll go there. Only a third of the bees ever go out of the hive to forage all the other bees are working inside the hive. Mr. Hansen takes care of the 2 observation hives at Lincoln Park Zoo. Often these hives need to be cleaned out but they’re not designed for the bees to clean them out. He takes these outside in a small yard at the zoo about 15 feet from the nature sidewalk where people are walking by and starts cleaning the glass, the bees are flying all around him, he does not have any protection on, no gloves and is in a short sleeved shirt and he never gets stung. The people walking by are in amazement because they can’t believe what he’s doing. He takes a frame of bees over to the people to show them the queen bee, nobody has ever been stung. This sounds foolhardy but he would not do this if he thought there was any danger in what he was doing. There is no report of a visitor to Lincoln Park Zoo having been stung and he’s been keeping bees there for more than 10 years. Bees can be working in a bee hive and most people don’t even know the bees are there if you don’t tell them. A swarm is a different situation but still is not a dangerous situation. A swarm is nature’s way of reproducing the colony which usually happens in the springtime between May, June and the middle of July. When a swarm happens the queen goes out, lights on a tree limb and all these bees cluster around her until they find a new home. They send out scouts and that cluster could be there from 2 hours to 2 days or so and is usually gone after the first day. As soon as they find a new home they are out of there never to be seen again. Mr. McMillan’s other concern, he would like to address, is about not wanting to screen his visitors to see if they are bee sensitive. If you think you know of someone who is going to be visiting your home in the summertime and is concerned about that and you would have to be just as concerned about being stung by a yellow jacket not by a honeybee. A yellow jacket’s venom is more powerful than a bee sting, although either one of them can have an allergic reaction. If bees were unsafe you would not see them in Chicago on Mayor Daley’s City Hall roof garden. The Mayor keeps bees, bees are kept at Lincoln Park, Garfield Park has at least 4 bee hives right next to where people can walk, and nobody gets stung there either. He is here to speak against banning beekeeping in Evanston because it would be disservice to the community if you did that.

Bill Buckley, 6525 Western, Willowbrook, has been keeping bees for 34 years and always has a veil and gloves with him as sometimes you can do something wrong to irate the bees. He has been on the Board of Directors of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association for 12 years, was president of his Local Association for 5 ½ years and is still on the Board of Directors there. Over the years he started about 15 people as beekeepers. In his opinion you would do the whole community a disservice if you enact this ban and this should be seriously considered.

Nancy Smith, 2724 Harrison, a lot of people have covered the subject very well on how beneficial bees are to our environment. She would reinforce that in Evanston we pride ourselves on being a green City encouraging City trees and
garden, bees are integral to that. The bee population throughout North America is stressed with pollutant, pesticides and invasive mites. Anything we can do to support the resurgence of bees is ultimately good for our economy, good for our agriculture and if there is a minimally down side to it she thinks we should support bees. She grew up with bees, if you exercise the same common sense with bees as you use with a dog if you don’t know if they are very safe. Bee’s density is so low the danger is minimal. We can’t erase all danger from the world. If the City begins to see a trend of a lot of people wanting to keep bees it would make sense to think about allowing only so many hives for a certain amount of space and people would have to get permits. If someone set up a hive with bees right by a fence next to a kid’s swing set on the other side of the fence, she would say the hive needs to be back 5 or 10 feet, something sensible. There are sensible limits we can get around to make beekeeping acceptable in the community, but to ban it is kind of reactionary.

John Black, 1503 Madison, lives down the street from Ms. Dickman and Gabrielle and brought some petitions opposing the beekeeping. He does not think this is the right area for beekeeping because this is a pretty congested suburban residential area where the houses are very close to each other, they have porous fences, and there are children in the neighborhood. His next door neighbors are seniors that have the nicest garden in the neighborhood and he has the feeling these bees are going to land there. He does not know if they are allergic to bee stings but does not think being allergic is a condition for not allowing it, as being stung by a bee is generally an unpleasant experience. Mr. Black said he did a little checking on the internet and looked at sites that are pro bees authored by people who are beekeepers and just a simple inspection is going to show you that there is a lot of precaution needed. He saw pictures of bees swarming and the sites tell you the bees don’t just stay in your yard they fly around and go to neighbors and interact with the plants and gardens. If he could be guaranteed that his neighbor’s bees weren’t going to be in his yard or his neighbor’s yard interacting with our property he would be okay with this, but he does not see anyone being able to control the bees. After reading Ms. Dickman’s letter in the Review where she stated there is no specific code against beekeeping in Evanston, if you look at codes 841, 844, which deals with nuisances, if there is a swarm of bees in his yard any objective reasonable person would say that constitutes a nuisance. It’s interfering with his right to use and enjoy his property. If people can keep bees in Evanston and do it in a way which doesn’t impact their neighbors that would be fine, but he cannot support this.

Debbie Hillman, 1118 Sherman, has a peach tree in front that last year was not well pollinated and hopes some bees are finding their way to it this year. She is here to speak in support of beekeeping in Evanston, she is a professional gardener, has been a professional organic gardener for about 26 years, she has seen, and is seeing on a daily basis, ecological destruction in Evanston as we are seeing in most urban areas on an unprecedented level not only because we’re not allowing bees but because it’s our basic array of practices of thinking that we don’t have to live with nature. We are nature, we live in nature, it is our heritage to have and live with nature, to have animals, to have insects, to have plants, to have fresh air, to have clean water, and a diverse ecosystem is the only way to do this. To be afraid of the world that we live in is to really miss out on what life is all about. Yes, we need to always be aware all the time of danger, of dogs, of bad people, of cars. We need to keep our intelligence and alertness but animals, insects, plants, are part of life and they are the staff of life that we need to feel that we are alive. The beekeepers have testified very eloquently and factually that bee hives are not going to be a problem; in fact the Evanston Food Policy Council, of which she is a convener, is proposing an urban farm in Evanston. We do not have any particular site and will be having a community meeting in the next few months to discuss this. One of the components of any urban farm or any good gardening ecosystem is bees and pollinators, grow your own food and be part of this incredible life we live in. We are denying ourselves if we think we can put up a fence and a wall around Evanston that will keep natural things out. She will be very sorry if we are so afraid in Evanston that we cannot live with life.

Martin Geraghty, 1527 Washington, lives about 150 yards from where this bee hive is proposed for. He lives on the corner of Florence and Washington and proceeded to show a picture of the garden his wife keeps which will be gone because he will have to mow it down if this is where some of these bees conclude they can find something nice to help produce their pollen. Listening to the statistics if you have 70,000 people in Evanston 301 people will get stung. When his grandchildren and their cousins come to his home he does not want to have to tell them don’t worry the likelihood that you’ll be one of the 301 people who might get an anaphylactic bee sting in Evanston is pretty slim and he doubts that the beekeeper association is going to come and do that either. Of course there are problems and dangers in nature, in spiders and snakes and wasps but there is no reason to ask his neighborhood to become the place where we increase that likelihood even slightly. It’s not worth to him nor is it worth it to his neighbors. He’d be surprised if many people who live near this bee hive have signed the petition in favor.

Matt Termolen, 2144 Pioneer Road, said he’s been a beekeeper for 19 years. He grew up in Evanston, has some experience in the City and served on the Environment Board for 2 terms. He wants to address the City’s ordinance banning beekeeping. What you as officials have to do is not to ban beekeeping in Evanston but look at reasonable limits of what beekeeping could be. As you found out tonight there are people who already keep bees in Evanston. He currently keeps bees but they are not within the City limits. As he researched this topic he found the City has reasonable laws concerning how many dogs you can have, he would suggest the City also approach beekeeping in a very reasonable
manner. It’s always incumbent on a neighbor to have a good neighborly approach about what it is you’re hoping to accomplish then the City can back it up with an ordinance to address beekeeping in Evanston. Mr. Termolen brought model beekeeping ordinances from Florida and from Louisiana. These ordinances address some of the issues discussed tonight. These model ordinances address the number of bees that can be kept on your property, for example the density they proposed for sites less than an acre is a maximum of 2 bee hives. These ordinances also address flight line issues which can be very easily addressed by raising the fence line or by closing off the bees with a fence, which could be a plastic fence at a very minimal cost. They also address inspection, general maintenance, and responsibilities of the beekeepers. He would suggest Evanston look at these model beekeeping ordinances not as a ban on beekeeping. You’ve heard from both sides but there’s a reasonable approach to beekeeping in Evanston. If you ban beekeeping you’re still going to have bees in the City of Evanston. However, to address the neighbors close by and other individuals who spoke, he thinks it incumbent on the beekeepers to provide more appropriate levels of safety and security for the surrounding neighbors including distance set aside from other properties, type of fencing used, and number of colonies that can be kept in one given area. See Attachment C, Florida Ordinance and Attachment D, Louisiana Ordinance.

Joe Koller, 6353 North Hiawatha Avenue, Chicago, has been keeping bees for 25 years and does it primarily for fun. He does a lot of educational talks with children in the North Park Village in Chicago and can understand Mr. and Mrs. McMillan’s feeling. It’s not easy, but once the hives are set up and they see there is no harm done they probably will change their mind. It’s a wonderful experience for a young person to look at the wonderment of bees, how the queen works and how the workers work. When September comes you have the honey, which he thinks the neighbors will enjoy.

Linda Kruhmin, 1422 Greenwood Street, has lived in Evanston for 15 years and does not currently have bees but has been studying them for a year and a half at the Garfield Park Conservatory. There is a small patch of clover on the side of her house that is a buzz every summer with wild bees coming from wherever. There are a lot of kids, different ages, in her neighborhood that come by this little patch of clover buzzing with bees and stick their noses right in it, they’re not afraid of it and have never been stung. It’s fascinating for all of us in the neighborhood and this has never been an issue. People who spoke before said some wonderful things about bees. The key word is to be judicious about placement of the hives and to have somebody who has studied and knows something about beekeeping, and have a wide support of people behind them if there are any questions about it. It can definitely be done in an urban environment and has been done for a lot of years. It’s a very positive thing.

John Zbesko, 1120 Noyes Street, for the past 10 years has been the Community Gardener at McCormick Gardens. Tonight he came here he had no idea that this was an issue between different property owners in South Evanston. He came here because he was dismayed that the various hives on McCormick by the roadwork are gone and as a gardener it affected him because he knows bees do a lot of pollination. He also has fruit trees and knows the problems with pollination of the trees. He wanted to say as somebody in the neighborhood and another random person in Evanston, there are beneficial externalities of keeping the bees that affect all the neighbors in a wide area. He too has gotten a lot of education tonight as he is sure the aldermen have and nothing he has heard so far makes him in the least bit concerned or worried about the keeping of the bees. In fact he wishes there was a hive in his neighborhood.

Wendy Miller, 2418 Noyes, is a beekeeper in Evanston. Her father, who is 88 years old, is a beekeeper in Pennsylvania and loves his bees as there’s not much he can do anymore. Someone brought up their concern about the elderly in the neighborhood. When she first decided to get bees she did talk to her neighbors. Some did not like the idea but were willing to give it a try and she made an agreement with them what she would do if it didn’t work out it. One of her neighbors is in her 80’s, another neighbor is in her 70’s and there a lot of small children on the block. We have a few people on the block who have anaphylactic reactions to bees, they have an epi pen, that’s what you do if you know you’re allergic to bees you carry an epi pen. Do honeybees sting, yes; she gets stung by them and doesn’t like it. The only time she has been stung is when she bothered the bees. There was a swarm in her neighborhood last summer which was one of the most exciting experiences she’s ever had. Bees in a swarm are most docile because they don’t have a home to protect. They picked up 1000’s of bees on a stalk of bamboo and carried them to an old hive they set up and watched them march into the new hive. We have friends and neighbors come over all the time because the bees are so fascinating to watch. It is amazing what miraculous creatures bees are. She does live in Evanston and she does have bees and her neighbors have come around to appreciate them, she also gives them honey every year.

Mimi Peterson, 748 Wesley, came to this meeting to show her support for the legislation banning beekeeping. She lives about 300 feet from the proposed bee hive and asked what constitutes an affected neighbor. In our zoning code we have affected neighbors if you live within 500 feet. A quick look at the zoning code will take you only as far as the health and sanitation clause regarding nuisance animals. Evanston regulates the number of bird feeders we can have in our backyard, we regulate the ground feeding of squirrels and pigeons, we also do not allow farm animals in the City of Evanston. You have to figure out what constitutes a farm animal in regards to a comment made this evening about setting up a farm. In listening to everybody’s comments she would be the first one to agree it sounds very interesting, fun and
fascinating. Everyone from the Illinois State Beekeepers Association worked in places such as Lincoln Park Zoo, or a Conservatory, or a nature place, where they have bees behind glass and people can walk near them. She remembers a few years ago there was an issue regarding roosters or hens in someone’s backyard but does recall how that worked out and was curious how that was resolved. There was also beekeeping going on at the McCormick Gardens and wondered how that ceased to exist. Mr. Terry said his understanding is there was some action taken by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry as the hives were placed there without getting prior permission from the staff that administers the gardens and there were complaints from other gardeners about the hives. It was the determination of the staff that administered the Community Garden Program that since the appropriate procedures had not been followed and there was a concern as the gardens are on leased property from the Water Reclamation District whether or not the hives being present on that property was consistent with our lease. Ms. Peterson said the Department of Agriculture regulates county lines and state lines and the trailing of bees that we are not equipped in Evanston to deal with. This effect raises many questions not out of fear and ignorance but flows logically from our existing ordinances already on the books in Evanston. Recently there was a photo in the Evanston Review that prompted her to see what she could learn about honeybee keeping because talking a closer look at the photo one can see there was a vast amount of property in the background. This was not in somebody’s 30X100 yard lot. Furthermore, the person in the picture was in full protective gear as was in most of the pictures she’s looked at on the internet. This looks like a fun, interesting hobby and she realizes this is good for the environment but she can’t see how regulation of honeybees could work. If you allow beekeeping in our neighborhood on one block you need to open that up for every single person in this room and wonders how that could be done well because most of the ordinances she has seen regulate between 50 feet up to as much as 300 feet from other property that is contiguous which would mean we would not be able to have beekeeping in Evanston just based on those guidelines. Its cool Mayor Daley is a beekeeper and he’s doing that in the City of Chicago, but that is not a comparable situation to somebody’s backyard. These lots are all on top of each other with little tiny true link fences stacked on top of each other. This situation is different than owning a dog, or a cat, or a rooster or a hen because in most situations the City has a handle on it, being able to license or have permits for them. Those homeowners have been responsible and accountable for the actions of those animals. She had heard about and did research on honeybees that they are endangered in some parts of the country and it’s true that there are insects infesting their nests, etc. However, we do not live in California and we’re not jeopardizing the ability for pollination. She’s a gardener and is concerned the feral wasps and bees out there will be in competition with the domesticated bees. She has nothing against this idea but thinks it has to be in conjunction with the Ecology Center and someway confined to an area that is not in somebody’s backyard in a residential dense, urban, single family neighborhood. This is not a policy to be decided by a majority of neighbors. Property owners should not have to arm themselves with epi pens and full protective gear to enjoy their backyard. These are logical health and sanitation issues that flow from the City ordinances on the books and it is questionable whether or not bees are a farm animal. The members should take the advice and follow the lead of the City Manager and the direction of City staff and ban beekeeping in Evanston.

Marty Mercer, 2127 Forestview, he’s not a beekeeper but thinks it would be a shame to do something based on fear. The thought of getting stung by bees is scary. Mr. Mercer said his 11 year old daughter has an inordinate fear of being stung by stinging insects a fear he too had. Over the years he has come to realize through trial and error that every stinging insect does not want to sting him. He now can actually relax and observe, with being afraid, these marvelous insects. In every yard, every park, in the air we breathe are all kinds of creatures, insects, mammals, birds. The chance of getting stung by a honeybee is very slim they are really docile creatures. Chances of getting stung by a yellow jacket are much higher because they are aggressive. The real issue is people as it often is in our conflicts with our natural world. If you really want to protect the children and the citizens of Evanston against inherent danger outlaw the cars as people get hurt by cars. People who are allergic will have a bad reaction to a bee sting don’t have to have an epi pen because the City of Evanston allows people to keep bees, they keep the epi pen because of all the stinging insects that create allergic reactions. He feels strongly about this, life is beautiful because we’re diverse; some people think honeybees are nice, some people think they’re dangerous and scary.

Mr. Buckley commented that 98 and 99% of stinging insects are not honeybees. They all have stinging stingers and can sting you up to 6 to 9 times. A honeybee stings you once and dies.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste called for a motion of approval for Ordinance 65-O-06 and opened this for discussion. Alderman Moran moved approval of consideration of Ordinance 65-O-06 Prohibiting Beekeeping in Evanston.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste called upon Alderman Rainey and asked if she wished to make a statement at this time. Alderman Rainey said her only statement is she supports every statement that the pro beekeeping people made.

Alderman Bernstein wanted to know what interaction is there between feral bees and honeybees and asked Mr. Haller if the concerns of the neighbors were valid. Mr. Haller responded without education and understanding the insects he would have to say there was concern, but with some basic understanding of the benefits and how docile these bees are as insects concern seems to vanish. Alderman Bernstein said the material staff has presented to the committee says
Alderman Bernstein had some concern about swarming insects that are looking for a new home. He does not understand the relationship between the aviary and a new home and wondered if they are finding a home in somebody’s tree next door, to which Mr. Haller responded that is possible. A beekeeper that is in basic understanding of beekeeping biology behavior can prevent the swarming instinct of a honeybee and can either prevent the swarming or capture the swarming once it’s left the colony. A swarm usually 20,000 to 30,000 bees is very gentle and leaves the colony and clusters on a local tree limb anywhere between 50 to 100 feet from the colony. That swarm could absolutely end up in a neighbor’s yard, or with awareness you would call the local beekeeper and the swarm would be removed immediately without any harm to anybody. Alderman Bernstein asked why do the bees move the aviary. Mr. Haller said it’s their fascinating way of dividing and multiplying just as we have babies. A colony will divide in two usually between June and July which is how honeybees propagate themselves. That’s a manageable process. Alderman Bernstein asked if the bees require water or do they get water from the flowers. Mr. Haller said nectar as it’s gathered from flowers is about 70% moisture and in the summertime unless the colony is overheated honeybees do not require water. If they overheat they’ll gather water from the air conditioning inside their colony and responsible beekeepers keep a small dish of water nearby about 50 or 60 feet away from the colony to encourage the bees to use that water source versus the local stream or puddle or birdbath. Alderman Bernstein remarked then you don’t require a pond which could generate mosquito larva.

Alderman Bernstein asked if there is minimal or no concern as to why we limit density of hives. Mr. Haller said it is based primarily on fear by communities. There are no studies that show that certain critical mass density of honeybees results in problems. That’s typically a result of a board such as yourselves wanting to put some restrictions on honeybee colonies but not willing to ban the practice of keeping hives, a practice we would support as an association.

Alderman Holmes asked if we have any idea how many beekeepers we have in Evanston. Mr. Terry said until 6 or 8 weeks ago when these two situations developed his department had not received any information at all about beekeeping. Alderman Holmes asked if there is an association in Evanston or members of a beekeepers group. Ms. Dickman said she is told the organization meets pretty far away and she has never gone to a meeting. Mr. Haller said the closest group is in DuPage County at Oak Brook but associations can pop up at various places. Mr. Termolen said he presented at District 65 Schools on beekeeping as there have been swarms of various kinds of bees and has also worked with Linda Lutz of the Ecology Center when questions have come up. There is an informal network for bees in Evanston and for schools where they can come to the Ecology Center.

Alderman Moran appreciated all the remarks from people who have spoken here tonight. He wrote a paper in high school about bees and agrees that they are fascinating. His concern was of all the things that we tend to sanction in the City he cannot think of another situation where a non human participant in the natural system such as dogs, cats, etc., are literally let loose into a neighborhood. He appreciates that many in attendance tonight love bees and thinks he knows why, but he also has an appreciation that this could be a problem for people. He also knows there has been heavy emphasis in the remarks of the bee experts and advocates about how some fears can arise and with education the fears can be dispelled, but this still concerns him. You may be right that with education the sense of anxiety or fear that might arise if you are living next door to 80,000 bees could be reduced and probably in some ways could be eliminated. His own sense is it won’t be eliminated on a community wide basis as there are some people who would live next to a bee hive and legitimately be concerned that they or their children or guests or pets may get stung by a bee. That sting might be a minor inconvenience or it may have major consequences. The situation we have here in a residential neighborhood is not a place where we should encourage this. He has no desire to discourage beekeeping as he thinks beekeeping is wonderful, but his own sense of community is those who want to keep bees should be able to keep bees and we should think about how to create an environment somewhere in Evanston where people can keep bees. Alderman Moran proceeded to use this as an example to liking dogs and said he and his family like dogs but there are people who don’t like dogs and are afraid of dogs which presents a problem. As was stated this evening these are docile bees and by just using common sense around them and being calm they won’t attack. However, this is something children don’t know and dogs don’t know. We should focus on a community aspect of this as it would be great to have some kind of beekeeping project but it would need to be put in an environment where those who are concerned about beekeeping aren’t directly next to them.
Having bees next door to a neighbor that does not want them there imposes too much. Alderman Moran said he understands all the percentages and what is being told about the low possibility of getting hurt which he is sure is true. It was also brought up to educate the neighbors but maybe that’s not where they’re at. Most of what this committee does is try to reconcile the interests of numerous residents in Evanston in a way that’s harmonious to most if not all the people and he cannot see how under these circumstances this can be done. That is not to say it could not be done in some circumstances. Chicago City Hall was mentioned, and at some time we will probably build a new Civic Center and it would be great to have bee’s hives on top of that building. He would be happy to have other places in town in other environments where the concern and the risk is reduced to a very small level, somewhere regardless of how large or small the hive is it is not eminent right at your gate, on your fence, or next to your garage where a bee may come and sting someone. He would not force people to accept this and would vote for this ordinance but suggests we have people like Linda Lutz, of the Ecology Center, come and talk about this where people interested in keeping bees might be able to do it in a way where it would not be an imposition on direct neighbors.

Alderman Holmes said we could be talking about some regulations rather than prohibiting the bees. Alderman Moran said his concern is if we don’t have this ordinance than people can proceed in a way that has been suggested.

Alderman Bernstein asked if Mr. McMillan was aware of Gabrielle’s desire to raise bees. Gabrielle responded Mr. McMillan was in his yard with his dog and asked him what he was building to which Gabrielle said it was a bee hive as he would taking beekeeping. At that time Mr. McMillan seemed pretty interested in it and Gabrielle told him about it because he figured he aught to know. Alderman Jean-Baptiste noted Mr. McMillan found out about this by accident. Alderman Bernstein asked if Gabrielle affirmatively went to Mr. McMillan and said this is what I’m proposing to do as Mr. McMillan came into the yard while Gabrielle was building the hive. Gabrielle said he did circulate a survey by hand and the McMillans would have gotten it except they weren’t home at the time. Ms. Dickman said in the survey they asked people in the neighborhood on the block what was their perception of bees as she knows this has been done before. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said he was concerned because the experts tell us that education is very important. He appreciates the survey but would have appreciated a more definitive request of the neighbor first because that is what neighbors should do.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked Mr. Termolen why he does not keep bees on his premises. Mr. Termolen responded because his neighbor is aggressive so he moved them to Hawthorne Woods which is about 40 to 45 minutes from Evanston. Alderman Jean-Baptiste wanted to know more about Hawthorne Woods to which Mr. Termolen said it has about a 90 acre beekeeping farm where they have apple trees. He has a smaller backyard and knows a neighbor that’s concerned about bees so he moved his bees there. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said his reason for asking that question was he is trying to find someway for Gabrielle or anybody to keep bees, but also to balance the interests of Mr. McMillan who does not want the bees next to him because of his fears of bees. Sometimes people may say the fears are unfounded but that’s an external kind of observation because how you perceive fears is very subjective and may be based on direct experience or what you’ve heard. Maybe at some point in time Mr. McMillan will come to understand bees better but right now he is fearful of them. Alderman Jean-Baptiste said he too is in a dilemma because he wants people to be able to pursue their interests. Perhaps Mr. Termolen can talk to them to see what can be done then maybe we can find an alternative place to have this in Evanston. In the case of the neighbor who is keeping bees in Evanston she was able to form some kind agreement with her neighbors to go forward and do that. In this case if there was an agreement you would have proceeded and done what you wanted to do but at this particular point in time he would not be inclined to open the possibility that anybody in Evanston who wanted to keep bees wherever they wanted to keep the bees can do so.

Alderman Holmes asked staff to look into the possibility of having some hives in the community gardens that the City runs because there are several around the area. Mr. Terry said staff will look into this, the people to respond to that would be Linda Lutz or Doug Gaynor. He knows there was some concern about the community gardens on our Reclamation District Area and he can certainly direct that question to the appropriate staff. Alderman Holmes also asked if we perceive there is a problem or is there actually a problem with bees being on the metropolitan property. It seems to her a feasible area for having bees would be along the canal bank.

Alderman Hansen remarked we’re talking in terms of regulation which is a great idea but she does not think we should look at location. As Mr. Termolen said it is incumbent on the beekeeper to be mindful of safety. If we’re going in the direction of other areas than in somebody’s back yard to keep bees she would also ask staff to look at other regulations in Chicago as they do not have an ordinance prohibiting beekeeping but may have some type of regulation. In regard to the State of Illinois Beekeeping Agricultural Department, when you register your hive do they require any type of training. The people who spoke tonight all have years of experience, not to say Gabrielle wouldn’t have that 10 years from now, but what she is hearing from these beekeepers is its not only location but its the experience, training and the knowledge that the person has in beekeeping. She would be interested in knowing if some of these communities that allow beekeeping have regulations or even if the State of Illinois Agriculture communities have regulations, and what they actually are.
Mr. Terry said more investigations can be conducted. In the investigations staff conducted it was found that there are some cities that have very, very detailed beekeeping regulations. Concern about the Department of Agriculture is that the primary goal of their regulations to a layman appeared to be the quality of the bees and making sure the bees were well. Neighbor relations was not necessarily a priority for state regulators as they look to local authorities to regulate issues of that nature.

Alderman Bernstein asked what was is the cost to set up an aviary. Gabrielle said including shipping and equipment the cost was about $400.00. Alderman Bernstein asked Ms. Miller if she would mind a road trip to her place, to which Ms. Miller responded, not at all. Ms. Miller said her history is we don’t legislate something based on a neighborhood problem or ask all of Evanston because of one neighborhood problem. On the other hand she was told that this is a nuisance ordinance and the reason she sought the permission of her neighbors was that she wouldn’t be declared a nuisance. As far as the whole issue of beekeeping per se you have to get along with neighbors and she finds it very sad that we have let the exception rule.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste announced everyone on the speakers’ list has made their statements and the committee will deliberate over the matter to either come to a conclusion or hold this in committee. Alderman Bernstein said he did not know enough to vote effectively tonight and wants to go to Ms. Miller’s property to look around and educate himself about this issue. He is not ready to ban this nor is he ready to give everybody carte blanche authority to raise bees as he does not know enough about this to vote today and would move to hold this if that is agreeable to the committee. Alderman Jean-Baptiste noted the direction to staff is to further investigate regulations that are in place in other communities, one of which is Chicago, and also to talk to Ms. Lutz to explore the possibility of beekeeping at a specific location in Evanston with the possibility of determining some type of regulation that may be focused on beekeeping etiquette at the location.

Alderman Rainey asked it copies of a few local municipal ordinances could be obtained. Alderman Jean-Baptiste noted we have 2 already and are looking for others. Alderman Bernstein asked if any of the experts in the audience tonight could provide any material that would be helpful to Mr. Terry. Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked if those experts who spoke tonight could provide Mr. Terry with their email addresses or phone numbers to be able to obtain further information that would help us in making a wise decision.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Trotsky, Department of Health and Human Services