Northwestern University / City Committee

Tuesday, March 20, 2018
7:00pm
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center
Joan Barr Smith Aldermanic Library, Room 2750

MINUTES

Members Present: Judy Fiske (Alderman for City of Evanston), Nim Chinniah (Northwestern University), John D'Angelo (Northwestern University), David Schoenfeld (Community Representative)

Staff Present: Alan Anderson (Northwestern University), Bruce Lewis (Northwestern University), Erika Storlie (Deputy City Manager), Susie Hall (City Manager’s Office)

Presiding Member: Judy Fiske

Citizens: Carolyn McNulty, Tina Garrison

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
With a quorum present Judy Fiske, 1st Ward Alderman, calls the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
Meeting minutes from December 19, 2017 are approved.

3. NEW BUSINESS
Alderman Fiske asks if Northwestern University has any new business. Nim Chinniah, Executive Vice President of Northwestern University (NU), says the University does not have anything new. NU is taking a relook at its capital plan and reassessing projects. The only likely projects/renovations will be the Jacobs Center, Deering Meadows and the Black House. Uses would stay the same, but the interiors would be renovated.

David Schoenfeld, Community Representative, states that he and residents are okay with NU altering the interiors, but objects to changes that may be made for truck deliveries which could block traffic/exits for residents in nearby areas. Alderman Fiske says that the City can assist with blocked routes.
Alderman Fiske notes that things work more smoothly when it is a collegial process. An example of this was the request for changes to the Chabad House. People worked together to voice their concerns, and worked with Rabbi Klein to contact the City to move the project forward. The new ERUV project/discussion is a new project for the City, NU and residents to work on together.

Mr. Schoenfeld asks how long the contract is with NU and the company that handles its bus system. Bruce Lewis, Associate Vice President Safety and Security and Chief of Police, says that NU has a 3 year contract with 2 one-year extensions. Alderman Fiske asks if NU can request the company get zero emission or smaller buses.

Alderman Fiske mentions a recent accident at the corner of Sherman & Colfax involving a NU student. There are signs up that state Cross Traffic Doesn’t Stop. Trucks and buses run on that road at all times of the day and night. Some residents requested a 4-way stop, but it doesn’t meet the warrants to have a stop installed. Other residents are concerned about installing a 4-way stop as buses would be stopping/starting sending out emissions. This is a good reason why zero emission buses would be ideal.

Alderman Fiske further notes that there have been less taxis idling in the area as fewer NU students are taking taxis. She is interested to see now that there will be more students back living on campus how that may change the area.

Alderman Fiske asks if NU can track how many students get on the NU bus. Mr. Chinniah says they do track through their Wild Card. He notes that bus drivers are told to use their discretion at night if a student doesn’t have their card with, and allow the student to board.

Alderman Fiske asks if the renovation projects currently taking place are almost completed. John D’Angelo, Vice President of Facilities Management at NU, says Orrington is almost done. He further states that NU wants to pause on projects and make sure they are thoughtful moving forward on new construction. NU doesn’t have any plans for this summer. Alderman Fiske asks NU if they have considered buying the house for sale on Library Place. Mr. D'Angelo says they are not looking to buy anything. Mr. Chinniah says that NU is always approached first when a home is put on sale, but that doesn’t mean they are interested in purchasing it. Mr. D'Angelo says NU only buys places as they need them. The last home purchased was for the new Provost, as the last Provost already owned a home in Evanston.

Alderman Fiske mentions a request made by Alderman Rainey pertaining to the 1700 block of Sherman. She mentions this item is outside of the realms of what normally should be discussed at this committee. Mr. Schoenfeld asks what the situation is for that property. Mr. Chinniah says that NU owns the land and leases it out. The 99 year lease is up in 2022, and NU is not interested in changing the intentions for the property/will continue to lease it out.
Alderman Fiske says she has been asked if NU owns the land for the Caste Tower Apartments. Mr. D'Angelo says he will look into this but does not believe NU owns that land. Mr. D'Angelo mentions that NU owns one other small parcel near Robert Crown, but has sold off most other similar properties over the years. (Mr. Anderson emails committee on March 26 confirming that the “Castle Tower Apartment Complex at the southwest corner of Sherman Ave. and Noyes St. is not on land that the University owns and there is no land lease with the University at that location.”)

Alderman Fiske notes that the work is done on Sheridan and the stop signs on Orrington have been taken down as they no longer warrant being up. Alan Anderson, Executive Director of Neighborhood and Community Relations, asks about the next phase of Sheridan Road construction. Erika Storlie, Assistant City Manager, says that Sat Nagar, Senior Project Manager with the City of Evanston, gave a presentation of the project last Thursday. Alderman Fiske notes that after years of urging pedestrians to walk in the crosswalks, the new layout seems to have helped. Pedestrians are staying on the sidewalks and not cutting across the bike lanes and traffic.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS- None.

5. COMMUNICATIONS- None.

6. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Submitted by:
Susie Hall, Executive Assistant