Present:

Evanston High School District 202
Pat Savage-Williams, School Board
Mark Metz, School Board
Eric Witherspoon, Superintendent
Mary Rodino, Chief Financial Officer
Pete Bavis, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Marcus Campbell, Assistant Superintendent/Principal

Evanston/Skokie CC School District 65
Paul Goren, Superintendent
John Price, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

City of Evanston
Eleanor Revelle, 7th Ward Alderman
Mark Tendam, 6th Ward Alderman
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager
Janice Bojda, Librarian III, Library
Jason Garner, Sergeant, Police Department
Savannah Clement, Housing Policy & Planning Analyst, Community Development
Katherine Knapp, Transportation & Mobility Coordinator, Community Development
Richard Eddington, Chief of Police, Police Department
Mark Muenzer, Director of Community Development
Lawrence Hemingway, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Susie Hall, Executive Assistant, City Manager's Office

Others
Ally Mauch
Yarilet Perez

The October 19, 2016 City-School Liaison Committee meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by 6th Ward Alderman Mark Tendam. Introductions were made and Mr. Tendam welcomed everyone. A quorum was present.

Approval of May 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes
The minutes of the May 11, 2016 meeting were approved as submitted.
Review of Summary Activities Provided by the City of Evanston

Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director Lawrence Hemingway gave a presentation recapping the summer programs provided by the City of Evanston. Over 46,000 summer program meals were provided, and over 23,000 beach tokens were sold (and over 800 tokens were given to non-profits, and over 500 were given to income eligible residents). The Gibbs-Morrison Cultural Center opened this summer. Other exciting programs included the Teen and Special Recreation programs. The Fire Department teamed up with the Parks and Recreation Department to offer Flag Football and Bocce programs to special recreation participants. The Farmer’s Market had an average of 7000 people per week, and Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre put on 3 theatre performances, 2 concerts and a black tie gala. There were numerous special events, including music festivals and movies in the park. The Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program had 685 students attend the job fair, and the City provided several other outreach events which included the Mayor and Outreach workers walking the streets at night to speak and connect with residents.

Janice Bojda from the Library informed the Committee that there were over 2000 participants in the reading program this summer, and that approximately 50% of the students completed the program. The Library partnered with Evanston Cradle to Career for the Everybody Reads! Book Drive, and with District 202 and District 65 on a teen reading program. The City also partnered with the Youth Job Center to offer teens a way to volunteer to help younger children gain literacy skills, as part of the ABC Booster program at Fleetwood-Jourdain.

Equity Update

Marcus Campbell, Assistant Superintendent/Principal at District 202 thanked the City and Paul Goren, Superintendent for District 65, for participating and helping with the Black Summits that took place at Evanston Township High School (ETHS).

Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager, informed the Committee that the City has added an Equity Empowerment position for the FY2017 Budget. Eric Witherspoon, Superintendent for District 202 and Dr. Goren requested that the employee connect with their district coordinators.

Police Update

Police Chief Richard Eddington updated the Committee that it was an improved summer for violence as shootings were down and 85 illegal guns were taken off of the street (from a crime scene, rather than with a voluntary turnover program).

A more pressing concern was brought up regarding the recent clown scare. Sergeant Garner reported that there have been clown reports, but no actual encounters of clowns approaching children. He asks the schools for their opinion on the situation. Mr. Witherspoon said that with Halloween approaching it will be more saturated. ETHS does not allow costumes as it can be too disruptive in the classroom, and they need to be able to identify all persons at all times. Dr. Goren said that the middle school does not
allow costumes either. Dr. Goren mentioned how one of District 65’s schools did have a scare, and that they were able to notify parents of how the situation was being handled. Chief Eddington mentioned that he is working with Sergeant Garner to serve warrants for arresting suspects. Mr. Witherspoon asked if the amount of reports of gunfire has also gone down. Chief Eddington says that the reports are the same, but that after an investigation many reports are not actual gunfire (fireworks, etc.). Chief Eddington said that they have also had a successful relocation program in Evanston. They are voluntary and can help remove the potential for violence. Mr. Witherspoon added that the program has helped save lives, and asked if they could get additional assistance from the Mayor’s Youth Taskforce.

Bike Transportation Issues
Katie Knapp, Transportation & Mobility Coordinator for the City thanked the Districts for their participation in the Pedal Bright program. They were able to triple the amount of lights that were distributed, which allowed for bikers to have lights on the front of their bicycle and on their front and back wheels. She discussed how she would love to schedule a meeting to discuss bicycle education for students. Mr. Witherspoon mentioned that ETHS built a bike compound and that it is already out of room, and credits this increase in part to the City doing a good job accommodating bicyclists. Mr. Bobkiewicz referenced the City Council’s concerns about the Dodge Avenue bike lanes, and how the reality is that there are fewer incidents on that road than people think.

Dr. Goren advised that the kids on bicycles near Nichols Middle School do not wear helmets, and that they would like to better educate kids on bicycle safety. Mr. Bobkiewicz informed the Committee that the City is working on a new plan for Sheridan Road (including bicycle lanes, pedestrian paths, etc.) from Central to Davis, and that construction will commence the 3rd week in June.

Alderman Tendam pointed out that many students are on bicycles at night without lights, and Mr. Witherspoon confirmed he has seen the same. Mr. Bobkiewicz referred the Committee to the Pedal Bright program, and Mr. Witherspoon stated that they should try to get a similar program of their own.

Homelessness
Savannah Clement, Housing Policy & Planning Analyst at the City of Evanston said that there is an influx of refugees in the City (approximately 1/3 of children served by Evanston School Children’s Clothing Association are refugees). It is a wide challenge to figure out what organization to refer them to depending on their situation. Refugees are getting housing, but it is only temporary housing. Mr. Witherspoon said 159 students at ETHS are considered homeless (includes refugees). A year ago ETHS started a committee to look at these needs for a full service approach. Each student is assisted in a case management style, to get them the individual support they might need. Mr. Witherspoon suggested the Districts and City should pull their resources together and give people one place to go for assistance. Mr. Witherspoon further stated that the ELL/Refugee numbers have tripled in recent years. Dr. Goren said that they have approximately 150-160 homeless in their schools (including refugees). They have a
team that helps all of the schools within District 65. Mr. Bobkiewicz mentioned that all organizations should continue their conversation on this topic.

In addition, Ms. Clement mentioned that she spoke with Betty Bogg at Connections for the Homeless. Ms. Clement stated Ms. Bogg’s concern around a lack of money from the state. Furthermore, Connections’ day program is no longer operating, which has increased the amount of homeless on the streets. Ms. Clement said that Ms. Bogg talked about City’s need for more affordable housing units. The City has assisted 22 families through its Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program (the program offers two years of rental assistance to families with children under the age of 18 in order to help families achieve housing stability and self-sufficiency once they graduate from the program). TBRA was renewed in 2016, and 11 families have already been enrolled this year.

Other Items:
Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that the City of Evanston has never budgeted for assistance to Cradle to Career, but has done so for 2017.

Alderman Tendam stated that general assistance requests for housing have tripled.

Mr. Hemingway mentioned the Zombie Scramble on Saturday, October 23rd and invited everyone to join.

The next regular City-School meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at ETHS.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm

Submitted by Susie Hall
Executive Assistant, City Manager’s Office