

CITY OF BATAVIA – CONFERENCE MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021

Present were Council President Jankowski and Councilmembers Bialkowski, Briggs, Pacino, McGinnis, Canale, and Christian. Councilmembers Karas and Viele were absent.

In attendance from the City of Batavia were Ray Tourt, Chief Napolitano, Chief Heubusch, Lisa Casey, Lisa Neary, Chris Camp, Bill Davis and Dawn Fairbanks.

Call to Order

Council President Jankowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Briggs led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Bob Gray, 8922 Fargo Rd, Stafford, e-mailed a letter asking Council to support the proposed ice arena improvements listed in the capital plan in this upcoming budget.

Amy McClellan e-mailed a letter explaining how her sons grew up playing hockey at the Batavia Rink, the lessons they learned from it, and friendships made. She stated that the rink was an essential part of the community and positively affects the lives of all the players regardless of age. She noted that tournaments at the rink meant people staying locally at hotels, eating at restaurants, and purchasing food at the rink. She questioned if that all stopped when Firland took over management of the rink.

John Roach, 116 Grandview Ter, e-mailed a letter asking Council how they could consider laying off a worker and not fill public safety jobs but could fund the salary of an employee who works for the Batavia Development Corporation. He asked what justification they could give to take away a Code Officer's job and stretch the public safety employees with a hiring freeze but pay someone who doesn't work directly for the City. He suggested cutting the \$70,000 from the BDC and use the money to keep the Code Enforcement Officer or hire a police officer or fire fighter.

Ed Ward, in conjunction with Elizabeth Carr, sent an e-mail thanking Council for their hard work during the pandemic. He noted that the Farmer's Market Board of Directors will meet on 1/28/21 and they are working to improve the local food supply system. He noted that Batavia stood to benefit greatly by changing our food system because that is now a national concern. He asked for transportation assistance to a new location of the Farmer's Market, noting that many employees and senior citizens depend on the Market for their daily, healthy food. Mr. Ward noted that the Market members would ask Beth Kemp, BID to bring Mrs. Tabelski up-to-date after the board meeting.

Council Response to Public Comments

None.

Communications

None.

Council President's Report

Council President Jankowski announced the next regular City Council Business meeting to be held on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7:00pm at the City Hall Council Board Room, 2nd Floor, City Centre.

Council President Jankowski announced the budget work sessions as follows:

Monday, January 25th after Conference Meeting (DPW)

Monday, February 1st at 6:00pm (Police, Fire, General Gov't & Admin)

Wednesday, February 3rd at 6:00pm (if needed)

Batavia Development Corporation 2021 Presentation

Andrew Maguire, noted that last year he discussed demographics, indicators, and housing stock. This year, he was going to address the success history of the BDC, current projects, and future goals. He reviewed a case study of the Eli Fish Brewery noting the assessed value increased from \$250,000 to \$987,000, 30 new jobs were created and it brought people downtown. He noted the BDC helped secure \$11 million in grants funds plus private investment for a total investment of over \$65 million. He highlighted how the City has or will benefit financially from the BDC's efforts. Mr. Maguire showed the BDC's support during COVID-19 like creating a COVID-19 webpage and economic recovery task force. Mr. Maguire anticipated projects of over \$50 million in investment to be completed in 2021. He noted that the City is known as being an economic development friendly community and our programs are attractive to developers. He concluded by stating that these projects create a quality of life the residents want and need. Councilmember Christian asked where we were with Ellicott Station. Mr. Maguire noted they were poised to close by the end of this quarter and start construction in early spring. Councilmember Bialkowski asked how many businesses he thought would move forward with projects on their own without grant funding from the BDC. Mr. Maguire thought not many and that it would be very difficult to get all the funding together without grant help. Councilmember Bialkowski asked how much in grants was received in 2020. Mr. Maguire stated they received a \$300,000 grant but there was over \$20 million in investment projects that broke ground in 2020. Mrs. Tabela asked how much of the grants go towards BDC administration. Mr. Maguire said that almost none goes toward the administrative costs of the BDC. Council President Jankowski noted that we are getting a 5:1 return on investment, which is pretty good. Councilmember Canale asked if the Fresh Lab was still in existence. Mr. Maguire explained that the City was a pass through for that program for the first five years and now it's been taken over by the owner of Eli Fish. Councilmember Canale felt it was unfortunate the general public couldn't see what goes on behind the scenes and how much the BDC does, which benefits the entire community. Councilmember Briggs thanked Mr. Maguire for the outstanding update which should help inform the community of what we do. Council President Jankowski thinks the City needs to find other ways to generate money besides just raising taxes and these investments aren't immediately realized but will be in 5-10 years when the property values go up.

01/25/2021

Police Reform Presentation

Mrs. Tabela started by thanking Chief Heubusch, Assistant Chief Camp, the PBA president, Council, especially Councilmember Briggs, and citizens and community leaders for attending the meetings and working hard on the executive order issued in June 2020 regarding police reform. Chief Heubusch noted that the group was formed in September 2020, they had seven meetings and created a survey and focus group meetings. He noted that the group reviewed policies, procedures and training of the police department and employees and that there was a lot of conversation on race relations. He reviewed the community survey results in addition to demographics and support rate data. Chief Heubusch discussed the plan recommendations and action items including training, community engagement, transparency, and civil service reform. Chief Heubusch noted that the plan was released that day for public comment and updates would be made to the plan, if necessary, based on those comments. He explained that a plan would be brought to Council on March 8, 2021 for adoption and the plan would be reviewed, if necessary, updated, by the Batavia Police Department and the City Manager on an annual basis. Chief Heubusch thanked everyone who participated. Councilmember Bialkowski asked what kinds of costs there would be in conjunction with the plan. Chief Heubusch noted they would be personnel costs for meetings, a liaison, and things like that.

Appointing Member(s) to City Committees/Boards

Councilmember Pacino noted that this was for a Youth Board vacancy and she was the right person. Council agreed to move the item to the business agenda immediately following.

Introducing 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance and Scheduling a Public Hearing

Mrs. Tabela noted that this was just to move the budget ordinance to the next meeting so it could be introduced and a public hearing scheduled. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Introducing a Proposed Local Law No. 1 of the Year 2021 Amending Section 184-41 (A), (B), (C), and (O) of the Batavia Municipal Code to Establish New Water Rates, Meter Fees and Capital Improvement Fee and Providing for Public Notice and Hearing

Mrs. Tabela noted that this was to move the water local law to the next meeting so it could be introduced and a public hearing scheduled. Councilmember Christian stated that former City Manager Jason Molino said that rates wouldn't need to increase after five years so why do they always go up. Mrs. Tabela noted that she would look into that and get back to her. Council President Jankowski thought that Mr. Worth, former Director of Public Works, had addressed that exact question last year and explained the need for the increase as it related to infrastructure. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Introducing a Proposed Local Law No. 2 of the Year 2021 Entitled "Amending the Business Improvement District Plan" and Providing for Public Notice and Hearing

Mrs. Tabela noted that this was to move the local law to the next meeting so it could be

introduced and a public hearing scheduled. Beth Kemp, BID, went through the BID's goals and planned events for 2021 including free downtown wifi and speaker system. She noted that events would be based on what is allowed with COVID restrictions. Councilmember Bialkowski was concerned with the capital project plans as he thought those could be one-time purchases and felt capital projects should be longer-term plans. Mrs. Tabelski noted that OSC's definition of capital project for a municipality was different than the BID law definition which was much more broad and, in fact, included items like holiday decorations. Council agreed to move the item forward.

Introducing the City of Batavia's Police Reform Plan Under Executive Order No. 203

Council President Jankowski noted that this would add the police reform plan to the March 8th business meeting agenda for adoption after the public comment period. Council agreed to move the item to the March 8th business meeting.

Batavia City School District – My Brother's Keeper Initiative

Mrs. Tabelski noted that the City had been working with the school who was applying for a grant from NYSED to support male students of color from birth through graduation with better opportunities. She noted that the school needed to apply by January 29th and need a municipal partner. Councilmember Christian asked by it's just for male students of color and why not help everyone. Julia Rogers, Assistant Principal, noted that is started under the Obama administration, and is a partnership to help a specific group of students based on data of who needs it most. Councilmember Bialkowski noted that the resolution stated that the City would provide homework assistance and wondered who would do that. Mrs. Tabelski noted that we do that already so it's just a continuance of what's already being done. Mr. Van Nest noted that everything, of course, is subject to COVID restrictions so there doesn't necessarily need to be language in the agreement to that extent. Council President Jankowski asked why it took five years to apply for this and we are learning about it one week before it's due. He noted that he researched the initiative and most communities doing this were about twice the size of Batavia. Ms. Rogers noted that it was an *additional* program they had the opportunity to be a part of that would help bridge that gap for that group of students. Mrs. Tabelski noted that the City amended the agreement to only list those items the City could support. Councilmember McGinnis didn't think they could proceed without public input. Council President Jankowski stated that the timing was problematic since the City didn't even have its own budget in place and concerned that we couldn't meet our obligations based on what was decided on the budget. He felt it was a great program and we could offer moral support but didn't like being rushed. Councilmember Canale wanted to confirm that it wouldn't cost anything additional to what we already budget for youth. Mrs. Tabelski said that was correct. Councilmember Canale asked if we could say "if" we have the funding we will provide the service and we support the program. Mr. Van Nest noted that the language could be added if Council wanted to do that. Councilmember Pacino noted that the key word was that the school was "expanding" and this was just one more great thing that could be done for the kids, not that the school hadn't been doing a lot already. She felt it was one more tool to help the kids. Councilmember Canale stated that if we invest in our youth, those previously underserved youth that stay in Batavia would serve our community better and sometimes Council has to make quick decisions. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting

immediately following.

Scheduling a Public Hearing to Introduce a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Mrs. Tabelski noted that this was for a 2020 CDBG program for infrastructure projects for the City. She asked to move the item to tonight so they could have the public hearing, now required to be in front of Council, on February 8th. Council agreed to move the item to the business meeting immediately following.

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Conference Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Heidi J. Parker
Clerk-Treasurer**