

MINUTES
WORKING SESSION
CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN THE CIVIC COMPLEX
401 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS

February 15, 2022

The Honorable John P. Kahl Mayor of the City of East Peoria called the Working Session of the City Council of the City of East Peoria, Illinois to order at 5:30 P.M. with the meeting having been properly noticed. The City Clerk certifies that notice of the meeting was duly served upon Council Members via email on Tuesday, February 11, 2022, at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Upon the roll being called the following answered present: Mayor John P. Kahl, Commissioners, Daniel S. Decker, Mark E. Hill, Seth D. Mingus and Michael L. Sutherland.
Absent: None.

Mayor Kahl explained that that the Special meeting is called for the purpose of EastSide Centre Capital Improvements discussion. He further explained that no final action would take place at the meeting. Mayor Kahl turned the discussion over to Director of Tourism and Special Events, Doug McCarty. Director McCarty explained that he came before the Council a little over two years ago for upgrades to EastSide Centre, and it went by the wayside with the pandemic. He is now bringing the discussion forward again. Mayor Kahl turned the discussion over to Director of Tourism and Special Events, Doug McCarty. Director McCarty discussed and compared other facilities to see what he believes needs to be done at EastSide Centre regarding upgrades to be competitive. He commented on tax revenues and overnight travelers increasing with changes. He compared a complex in Bettendorf, Iowa, another facility in the Chicagoland area, and a complex in Rantoul, Illinois. Springfield, Illinois has a complex that was approved and is planned for development as well that will be closer than the other facilities.

Director McCarty explained that the location where Splashdown was located is being proposed for an additional indoor gym area that includes four full-size basketball courts with volleyball courts that will allow for gymnastics, tumbling, and cheerleading events. Director McCarty explained that water lines are already located there. This would open EastSide Centre to more tournaments as many events that have been turned away because of the smaller size of EastSide Centre currently. He explained that not many facilities in the area offer large indoor space to have these groups. He explained that there is a facility in Wisconsin that would be similar to the additional indoor gym area that they would like to add on to EastSide Centre. He commented on improving the current gym floor and the rest of the current facility. EastSide Drive and the parking lot need to be improved as well. It is time to make decisions to know how to move forward.

Director McCarty explained that they would like to potentially have turf and a double structure for soccer in the future. EastSide Centre struggles because there is limited space for sports other than softball.

Mayor Kahl explained that part of these proposed improvements are in the current capital plan. If there is a consensus to move forward, he would like to get started on planning and do the current needs and concerns as well as the expansion where Splashdown is located. Director McCarty explained that he feels that we will see things slowly moving away from EastSide Centre if the facilities are not upgraded. Right now, the numbers are estimates and are around \$5,000,000 with complete renovation of the concessions, restrooms, and showers.

There was a consensus in favor of moving forward with the upgrade. Commissioner Mingus explained that he is in favor would be for upgrading and moving forward. He explained that the closest is Bettendorf, IA for travel basketball. He feels that it is needed, and when people travel, they are spending a lot of money. He suggests not going cheap and doing it right on the upgrades. He suggests having nets that come down from the ceiling for volleyball. There is competition and some of the tournaments are going to other facilities. He thanked Director McCarty and staff for doing a great job.

Commissioner Decker explained that any investment will be dollars ahead of anyone else because there is already a building in place and the others will need to build new. He inquired about having monies that will cover a lot of the costs or whether a loan will be needed. Director of Finance/City Treasurer, Jeff Becker, explained that if the entire project is done then a loan is necessary. Director Becker explained that the bond counsel has given estimates for certain loan numbers and explained that if the City were to borrow \$5,000,000, it would be a \$325,000 per year payment; if the City were to borrow \$7,500,000, it would be a \$485,000 payment per year; and if the City were to borrow \$10,000,000, it would be a \$645,000 payment per year depending on how far it is upgraded. Money that is being put away for the upgrades would be dedicated to the loan in addition to increased revenues. There was a discussion about the hotel/motel funds and whether they would be enough to cover the loan. Director Becker explained that with additional revenue, he would be more comfortable with the \$7,500,000.

Commissioner Hill is behind the upgrade because of the competition at Louisville Sluggers and Pekin Dome. \$5,000,000 is for the expansion estimate. He asked about the lights and savings that can be incurred for upgrading to more energy efficient lights. Director McCarty explained that some lights have been upgraded and they have been trying to limit night activities that need lighting. The payback is a little longer than some Southern climates due to the seasonality in our area and not having events in the Winter. He would be in favor of building up the investment at EastSide Centre to ensure other revenues are up.

Commissioner Sutherland explained that he is a fan of EastSide Centre. He inquired as to whether it would be local teams or other teams. Director McCarty explained that it would likely be local during the week and other further teams on the weekend. Commissioner Sutherland asked about money being set aside for the parking lot. Director McCarty explained that money can be set aside for the particular purpose of the parking lot.

Mayor Kahl asked for any comments from the audience. Ric Swan came up to the podium explained that EastSide Centre is the economic driver for the economy. He has never witnessed anyone do more with less than EastSide Centre. It is time to reinvest and have a premier place for the community.

Tom Hulting came up to the podium and inquired about a replacement for Splashdown. He asked why there isn't a replacement for Splashdown and why the Park District is not present at the meeting. Mayor Kahl explained that they are turning the grounds into somewhat of an original condition. Engineers have come in to put it in an original state to do some of those things and some things must be left in the ground. Mr. Hulting inquired about why there is not a pool in East Peoria and what about the citizens of East Peoria. Mr. Hulting feels that every town except ours has a pool. Mayor Kahl asked people to go to the Park District with questions about a pool. Mr. Hulting feels that a pool is something for the citizens. Mr. Hulting asked the City to push the Park District to build a pool. Mayor Kahl encouraged Mr. Hulting and other citizens to contact the Park District with concerns about a pool.

Mayor Kahl asked for any additional comments from the audience. There was no response.

Motion by Commissioner Mingus, seconded by Commissioner Hill; Mr. Mayor, I move you that we adjourn the meeting.

Yeas: Commissioners Decker, Hill, Mingus, and Sutherland and Mayor Kahl.

Nays: None.

Mayor Kahl declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:04 P.M.

/s/ Morgan R. Cadwalader

Morgan R. Cadwalader, City Clerk