

## MINUTES

### WORKING SESSION CITY COUNCIL 401 WEST WASHINGTON STREET EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS

September 15, 2020

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.

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 the City Council is meeting for a Working Session and that no formal business will be conducted by the City Council at the meeting. He explained that the purpose of the meeting is to have a Working Session regarding the East Peoria Drainage and Levee District presentation by representatives from the East Peoria Drainage and Levee District. Mayor Kahl turned the discussion over to Director of Planning and Community Development, Ty Livingston, who explained the drainage and levees in the area and that there are three groups that oversee the levees and drainage. One of those entities that oversees the levees and drainage is the East Peoria Drainage and Levee District. Director Livingston introduced members of the East Peoria Drainage and Levee District that were present, including Derek Winchester, Erich Michelfelder, Monica Whetstone, and Kevin Kempa.

Ms. Whetstone gave an overview of the Drainage and Levee District (the "District") that includes the area that is covered and drainage areas. They are governed by a Board of Commissioners, and there are no paid employees. The District is funded through annual maintenance assessment by property owners. She gave a history of the District that was built in 1911. She went through flood histories that included the highest Flood in 2013 at just over 29 feet and explained the annual maintenance assessment history that included an increase in 2015. Typical maintenance costs are between \$105,000 to \$264,000 a year. She commented on PL84-99 and its importance. PL84--99 is a federal program administered by the Army Corps of Engineers that allows federal funding for certain items. Ms. Whetstone went through the budget that include routine maintenance, non-routine maintenance, and insurance/legal/auditing costs. She shared pictures of the levee, pumphouse, and screens that are part of the District. Federal funded Levee Riverfront Repair work per PL84-99 allowed for flood repairs and did not have to be paid for by the assessments. Ms. Whetstone shared pictures of the 2015 flood where the District had to use their own funds to pay for it because the District was not in the federal program (PL84-99) at the time. She showed pictures of the May 2020 flood and commented on other high rainfall intensity events in 2020.

Ms. Whetstone commented on drainage ditch actions to date that included four steps. There is one last step to create a lasting solution. She explained that there was a survey of the drainage ditch, and the drainage ditches appear to be draining more water than they were designed to handle. The ditches have silted in 12% in 43 years. There is estimated to be quite a bit more non-routine maintenance in the next few years to be able to stay in the PL84-99 program. The District would like to dredge from Center Street to Franklin Street. However, the District cannot do the dredging without assistance from grants and others. Ms. Whetstone explained that a drainage study is needed to ensure that the District is effectively using the funds with projects most efficiently. Ms. Whetstone commented on continuing issues and concerns that include FEMA Certification, past due maintenance assessments, dredging of ditches and others. Ms. Whetstone having concluded her presentation asked for questions or comments.

Mayor Kahl asked what the District does if people do not pay their portion of the levee assessment. Ms. Whetstone explained that the District has placed liens against various properties in the past.

Commissioner Decker asked about dredging and some other issues, including the drainage systems moving more water than they were supposed to move and about an estimate of the total money needed for repairs. Ms. Whetstone explained that the District needs to do a drainage study so that they can determine fixes, possible solutions, and costs. The study is estimated to cost \$23,000. Commissioner Decker inquired about concerns and needing to walk the levee to determine needs. She explained that the District does walk the levee to determine needs.

Commissioner Hill inquired about the annual need and the annual assessment amount. Ms. Whetstone explained that the annual assessment was \$188,000 this year, and up until 2015, the District was only bringing in \$68,000.

Commissioner Mingus thanked the representatives for presenting and informing everyone.

Commissioner Sutherland asked about the area and outlets that go into the Illinois River. Ms. Whetstone explained that there is a culvert around the Railyard Area by Wesley Road, the Richland Area that goes by Caterpillar, and the Wetland Area that is drained by the pumphouse.

Mayor Kahl asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to make comments.

Bill Basam came up to the podium and expressed several concerns. He inquired about survey done and the costs of the survey. Ms. Whetstone explained that the cost of surveying the ditch was \$7,500. Mr. Basam believes that the \$7,500 would have been better spent on dredging the ditch. He explained that Center Street is plugged up and every bit of money should be used to clean the ditch. Mr. Bassam inquired about the costs to River City Construction; about diesel fuel for pumps and their locations; and mowing of the levee. Ms. Whetstone explained that the pumps are set up at the 84-inch culvert to close the valve that doesn't allow the storm water to out of the protected area, so the pumps pump the storm water over. River City Construction helps keep the screens clear at the pump house so that the pumps can be used to keep the stormwater out of the drainage ditches. Commercial Irrigation mows for the District. Ms. Whetstone explained that the amount paid to Commercial Irrigation is not only for mowing but also for removing debris and reseeding the levees. Mr. Bassam further inquired about the Park District assisting in mowing and explained that residents covered by the District may be willing to volunteer to help. Mr. Bassam inquired as to how the ditch got clogged up and the trees that are large. Ms. Whetstone explained that there are no trees in the drainage ditch and that the area to which Mr. Bassam is referring is not the District's responsibility.

A woman that owns property in the district came up to the podium and expressed concerns regarding the ditch having not been dug out in more than fifty years. She feels that until it is dug out that the water problem will continue. Ms. Whetstone explained that the District is trying to catch up with funding and do more. More money has been spent on the levee to ensure that river water does not come in. The District will also be doing a study to determine the future actions to fix issues.

Mayor Kahl thanked everyone for their comments and explained that after the meeting the District would be available in the atrium to discuss further issues

Motion by Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Sutherland; 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 5:59 P.M.

/s/ Morgan R. Cadwalader

Morgan R. Cadwalader, City Clerk