

Mayor Charles L. "Skip" Lee called a virtual meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, June 1, 2020. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Retha Elston, Josh Johnson, Joe Martin, John Stauter, Christine Wilen, and Jim Wise. Absent: None.

Also attending were City Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Superintendent of Building and Zoning Amanda Schmidt, Superintendent of Public Works Brad Schrader, Fire Chief Gary Cook, Police Chief Tim Morgan, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Mayor Lee noted comments were received from Kay Ferris with concerns about riots in her hometown. The email was forwarded to the Council for their information.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- A) Minutes of May 18, 2020 and Special Meeting Minutes of May 26, 2020
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$482,435.10
- C) Pay Request #5 for Dillon Avenue Reconstruction Phase 2 to Civil Constructors in the amount of \$109,249.89
- D) Pay Request #3 for Johnson Avenue to Twin City Construction in the amount of \$106,452.14
- E) Pay Request #1 for Roundabout at Lynn Boulevard/LeFevre Road to Martin and Company Excavating in the amount of \$107,314.31
- F) Pay Request #10 for Sterling Public Market to Porter Brothers in the amount of \$122,247.10

Motion seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mayor Lee read a letter from Jenny Hayden, MCI President, recognizing Marie Rombouts for her service to the Municipal Clerks of Illinois.

Alderman Wilen made a motion to approve the Resolution recognizing Clerk Rombouts for her 39 years of service to the City; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried. Mayor Lee read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Lee opened a public hearing at 6:39 pm for the Shovel Ready Site Rebuild Illinois Grant Application. The State of Illinois has allocated \$13,000,000 in Rebuild Illinois funds to the competitive Shovel Ready Sites (RISRS) component. A grant ceiling of \$2,000,000 per project has been established. The Governor's Five-Year

Economic Development Plan recognizes there are sites across Illinois with great economic development potential that require additional investment in order to become "shovel-ready." Redevelopment in infill locations can use vacant buildings, parking lots, empty schools, or other underused sites for new amenities and businesses near existing neighborhoods.

The City of Sterling intends to apply to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for a grant from the Rebuild Illinois program. These grant funds are to be used for a community development project that will include the following activities: Environmental Site Assessment work, Architectural Planning and Design, Roof Replacement, Building Improvements, and other Site Preparation and Improvements to prepare the former Lawrence Brother site for redevelopment.

The total amount of Rebuild Illinois Shovel Ready Sites grant funds to be requested is by the City of Sterling is \$1,523,861.25. These funds will be utilized for Environmental Site Assessment work, Architectural Planning & Design, Roof Replacement, Building Improvements, Excavation, Site Prep, and Demolition activities to prepare the former Lawrence Brothers Site for redevelopment.

The City of Sterling also proposes to expend \$507,953.75 in non-Rebuild Illinois funds on the project. These non-Rebuild Illinois funds will be derived from the Capital Fund. These funds will be utilized for the Building Improvements that will take place to prepare the former Lawrence Brothers site for redevelopment.

The former Lawrence Hardware site is an abandoned industrial complex of buildings along the Rock River that have been vacant for over 20 years. The City of Sterling received the property in 2011, and in subsequent years has completed several studies to redevelop the property. Financial constraints and environmental concerns have been the greatest deterrent in renovating this unique set of buildings. The former Lawrence Brothers site is adjoined to the north by Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way followed by commercial development; to the east and west by remaining portions of the Lawrence Brothers Hardware facility; and to the south by the Rock River. IL-40 and IL-2 run through Sterling, with IL-40 passing directly by the former Lawrence Brothers site. The location of the former Lawrence Brothers site is included in the City of Sterling's TIF and Enterprise Zone. While most of Sterling falls into the Opportunity Zone and are designated as DCEO Underserved Areas, the specific Lawrence Brothers site does not.

As the City of Sterling faces a challenging economic climate and an underutilized, blighted downtown/riverfront area, it has identified the redevelopment of the Lawrence Brothers Hardware site along the Rock River as a key component to its economic recovery and growth. The City of Sterling is seeking Rebuild Illinois Shovel Ready Sites grant funding for Environmental Site Assessment work, Architectural Planning and Design, Roof Replacement, Building Improvements, and other Site Preparation and

Improvements to prepare the former Lawrence Brother site for redevelopment. These initial site improvements would substantially mitigate the unknown issues that would deter developers and potential tenants from being interested in the building. Sealing the building perimeter and making the building more watertight to prevent further deterioration is paramount in securing its future. The improvements included in this application would accomplish major recommendations within the study that is currently being completed by Gary W. Anderson Architects for the City of Sterling. Each of these components demonstrate a pragmatic, systematic approach to redevelop these buildings in a way that not only reflects Sterling's vibrant industrial past and growing industrial sector, but also enhances Sterling's visual image at one of its gateway entrances.

The proposed project will not displace any residents or businesses in the project area or within the City of Sterling.

The City of Sterling's detailed, prioritized list of community development and housing needs include the following:

- Increase Affordable Rental Housing opportunities for lower income households through an increase in the supply of decent, safe and affordable rental housing through new development and rehabilitation.
- Increase Housing Ownership opportunities for all income status to enable a stable and diverse economy
- Encourage Affordable Housing Preservation by maintaining and preserving affordable housing stock in the core neighborhoods
- Diversify and modernize housing opportunities to enable job creators to attract and retain employees
- Historic Preservation: Preserve and protect historic properties to keep the community's history alive, eliminate blight and create a public use for all citizens, including those of lower income
- Revitalization of the City's former industrial riverfront core to reverse the negative impacts the loss of manufacturing has caused to lower and middle working-class citizens of our community
- Economic Development and job creation to reduce the number of persons below the poverty level and provide expanded economic opportunities for low and moderate-income residents, and increase the viability of neighborhood commercial areas.
- Infrastructure/Public Facilities: Maintain and create quality recreational spaces, public facilities, and adequate infrastructure and ensure access for the mobility impaired.
- Accessibility Improvements: Continue to identify and address physical access barriers to public facilities and infrastructure as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Fair Housing: Continue to promote fair housing activities and ensure all residents have a safe housing environment.

There were no comments from the Council or audience. Mayor Lee closed the public hearing at 6:42 pm.

Alderman Wise made a motion to approve **Resolution #R2020-06-14 Committing Local Funds for the Rebuild Illinois Shovel Ready Site Grant in the amount of \$507,953.75 from the Capital Fund**; seconded by Alderman Martin. Alderman Stauter realized local funds were committed to this and asked if they would be used for the project if the grant was not received. Manager Shumard stated it is the required local share. Alderman Wise asked if this is pre-development work would be done even if we did not receive the grant. Manager Shumard left that decision to the Council. Stauter believes it is dependent on financial conditions of the City. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance #2020-06-19 Annexing Certain Territory Contiguous to the City of Sterling (Steelton Subdivision – Group 6)**; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Wise made a motion to approve **Resolution #R2020-06-15 to Refer Consideration to Annex Certain Territory Contiguous to the City of Sterling (Steelton Subdivision – Group 7)**; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Attorney Zollinger stated there are five more groups for annexation in Steelton. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Stauter made a motion to approve **Ordinance #2020-06-20 Amending the Zoning Map to Reclassify Property Owned by Roger Colmark, from Community Business (CB) to Community Business with Special Use (CB-SU) at 609 West Third Street for a tattoo studio**; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Elston, Johnson, Martin, Stauter, Wilen, and Wise. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chief Morgan reported that a police officer had pulled one victim from the fire at the Western Apartments this morning. The fire investigation continues. Morgan does not foresee civil unrest in Sterling following the death of George Floyd, but Sterling is prepared. Four officers were in Springfield today with (ILEAS) Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System for a gathering of possibly 1000 activists. ILEAS would be contacted if Sterling needed help. Morgan stated State Intelligence keeps local departments informed.

Chief Cook was proud of the operations of all local emergency services during the fire. Cook stated firefighters will be monitored for adverse effects.

Alderman Martin thanked Public Works crews for their quick clean-up after Wednesday's storm. Martin hopes the officer who pulled the victim from the building will be recognized at a future meeting.

Aldermen Elston thanked Amanda and Brad for helping her with an abandoned building in her neighborhood. She also thanked emergency services for their work on the fire.

Stauter reported a few overgrown lawns in Douglas Park Subdivision. Stauter asked if restaurants are permitted to serve inside because he was asked about an establishment that permitted people indoors. Mayor Lee stated that he advised people to contact the State Liquor Commission because it is in violation of the Governor's Orders. Police Department has no jurisdiction. Mayor Lee had contacted the owner urging him to be careful.

Alderman Wise thanked Chiefs Cook and Morgan for their response to the fire at Western Apartments.

Alderman Johnson thanked Police and Fire along with all first responders, as well as Public Works for clean up after the storm. Johnson thanked the Council for the picnic tables to put in Dale Park. They should be in place in four to six weeks.

Mayor Lee and the Council congratulated Clerk Rombouts on her retirement and expressed appreciation for all that she has done.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk