

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 23, 1996

7:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

James Hayes, Carolyn Kearns, Esther Patt, Michael Pollock (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Marya Ryan (Chairperson), John Taylor, and Joseph Whelan (arrived at 7:35 p.m.)

Committee Members Absent:

None

Staff Members Present:

Jack Waaler, April Getchius, Bruce Walden, Bruce Stoffel, Bill Gray, Chief Adair, Vacellia Clark, Rod Fletcher, Chief Pessemier, Phyllis Clark, and Mayor Satterthwaite

Others Present:

Neal Witruk, Adrienne Witruck, Earl O'Shea, and Members of the Media

Meeting Location:

Urbana City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, Chairperson Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

Chairperson Ryan stated that the developer had requested additional time and requested that Ord. No. 9697-21: An Ordinance Approving An Annexation Agreement With The Trust Estate Of Ruth E. Smith, Robert E. Strube And Smith Farm Limited Partnership and An Amendment To The Comprehensive Plan Of The City Of Urbana, Illinois (Smith Farm), be removed from tonight's agenda. There were no objections.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

Mr. Hayes moved to approve the minutes of the July 22, 1996 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by a voice

Committee on Environment & Public Safety
September 23, 1996
Page 2
vote.

Public Input

Neal Witruk and Adrienne Witruk, 2112 Easy Street, were present to address the Smith Farm items but preferred to wait for a future meeting when the issue will be discussed.

Earl O'Shea, 606A S. Glover, addressed the Committee on the topic of better government in Urbana and his problems getting information under the Freedom of Information Act

Review of Traffic Commission Minutes

There were no comments.

An Ordinance Authorizing The Sale Of Certain Real Estate Owned By The City Of Urbana And Acquired Under The Community Development Block Grant Program (1307 West Beech Street)

Grants Management Manager Bruce Stoffel stated that on tonight's agenda is proposed donation of property at 1307 West Beech Street to Habitat for Humanity. A new house would be constructed on this lot.

Mr. Stoffel stated that Habitat for Humanity has requested donation of this lot to complete this second, three-lot phase of donations. City Council authorized purchase of 1307 West Beech Street in August, 1996. Staff was scheduled to close on purchase of property September 23.

The City would receive no payment for the lot. Disposition of the lot would eliminate the costs of maintenance currently paid by the CDBG program. A completed house would generate approximately \$900 in annual real estate taxes.

Staff recommends that this item be sent to City Council for approval.

Following debate, Mr. Taylor moved to send to Council An Ordinance Authorizing The Sale Of Certain Real Estate Owned By The City Of Urbana And Acquired Under The Community Development Block Grant Program (1307 West Beech Street). The motion was seconded by Ms. Kearns and carried by a voice vote.

A Resolution Amending The Urbana Home Consortium And City Of Urbana Consolidated Plan For Program Years 1995-1999 (Employment Training

Needs Assessment

Mr. Stoffel stated that the Annual Action Plan for FY 1995-1996, which is included in the Consolidated Plan, allocated \$15,000 for employment training programs. City Council allocated \$12,000 of these funds to Urban League of Champaign County to develop and operate a pilot work force preparation program for unemployed and underemployed young adults. Council also authorized a more thorough analysis of employment training needs.

In the fall of 1995, the City's Human Relations Division began work on the Employment Training Needs Assessment, working along with an ad hoc citizens advisory panel and the Community Development Commission. Throughout the assessment process, Human Relations staff met with employers, social services agencies and persons seeking jobs or seeking to upgrade their jobs to determine their needs.

The result of this endeavor is the Employment Training Needs Assessment, which was included in Committee packets.

Human Relations Officer Vacellia Clark further explained that the ad hoc committee involved 12 members from employers, service providers, and community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Partnership.

Current employment training efforts include: basic skills training, job search skills, interviewing skills, and some training in the area of job retention.

Any program established should focus on the general issue of training the unemployed, both those considered "soft core unemployed" as well as the "hard core unemployed". A primary goal in working with the "soft core unemployed" is to keep them from becoming "hard core unemployed."

In looking at employment projections for Champaign County, it was found that 68.5% of available positions are in the retail or service industry. By the year 2005, 71% of the jobs in the County will be in those areas. The concern with that, as far as liveable wage is concerned, is how people manage on \$5-6 an hour.

There is little growth expected in construction, manufacturing, transportation and public industries in Champaign County. Those jobs that pay better wages have the least growth projection.

There was very little information available with which to compile an unemployment analysis. In 1995, the statistics showed that the unemployment rate in Champaign County was 3.4%.

It is important to note that 3.4% may not be an accurate reflection because this only represents those people 16 years of age or older who are employed or actively looking for work.

Another area examined was service providers, the services offered and the checks and balances in their own system in terms of measuring successes and where things need to be done differently.

In working with the employers in this community, the concern is to find qualified applicants. Most employers feel the basic skills can be taught. It is the soft skills such as the ability to complete an application as well as appropriate dress and attitude.

Employers would like a labor pool made up of people with the ability to adapt to a changing environment, that can handle a broad base of job responsibilities and work independently.

Job applicants would like a liveable wage and benefits, and to be treated fairly within company policies.

In reviewing the communities work force development efforts there are five areas which appear to be undeveloped:

1. A centralized means for employers to identify qualified job applicants.
2. A comprehensive assessment procedure to evaluate job readiness of applicants.
3. Case management support for participants in training programs and a formalized follow-up system after placement.
4. A System to track effectiveness of the training program.
5. A formalized support system for employers working with trainees.

Mr. Hayes questioned what would motivate a person to go through a two week training period with no pay if there are no guarantees of a job?

Mr. Stoffel stated that in that particular program there are more jobs being opened than there are people signing up for the program. That should be a big incentive for people to enter that program.

Mr. Hayes stated that he understands that there are problems

Committee on Environment & Public Safety
September 23, 1996
Page 5

with this program and, when the evaluation is done this year, he would like those problems and all the facts presented.

Mr. Whelan questioned the statement that one of these goals is to enlist the assistance of the Economic Partnership in increasing the number of jobs in the community paying liveable wages through focusing on Economic Partnership business attraction and retention efforts on businesses providing higher wage positions and through reducing efforts to attract retail/service jobs? Is that the purpose, to reduce retail/service jobs in Urbana?

Ms. Clark stated that it is not an attempt to curtail retail business. What the report reflects is that in addition to retail and service industries, there is a need for the types of industry that will bring in higher paying jobs with better benefits.

Mr. Stoffel stated that the recommendation is that there be a redirection toward non-retail jobs that have better wage levels and better benefits. The retail/service expansion will happen. Where we have limited public resources, the recommendation is that those are directed toward the type of jobs that can also help in the anti-poverty effort which is to provide gainful employment.

If resources were unlimited, we would say go after everything, but since resources are limited, the recommendation is on the non-retail sector.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that most of what the Economic Partnership does is focus on the non-retail sector jobs. When Lincoln Square did not have an anchor, it took a Board vote of the Economic Development Corporation to suspend their rules to help with trying to locate the anchor tenant for that location.

Mr. Whelan questioned what industries are being suggested to favor in place of retail? Mr. Stoffel stated that the Economic Partnership has targeted a series of industries: high tech, medical, and warehousing distribution. Retail is not being excluded. Where resources are scarce, the recommendation is to focus on other targets.

Alderman Hayes moved to send A Resolution Amending The Urbana Home Consortium And City Of Urbana Consolidated Plan For Program Years 1995-1999 (Employment Training Needs Assessment to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt. Following debate, the motion to send to Council carried by a voice vote.

An Ordinance Amending The Annual Budget (U-Cycle)

Public Works Director Bill Gray and Environmental Manager

Committee on Environment & Public Safety
September 23, 1996
Page 6

Rod Fletcher addressed the Committee to discuss funding for the U-CYCLE Program.

Mr. Gray stated that the ordinance transfers monies that were originally budget in Contractual line items for the collection of U-CYCLE materials to Personal, Supplies and Operations to account for the continued U-CYCLE service by our in-house employees. The total bottom-line dollar amount does not change.

Mr. Pollock moved to send An Ordinance Amending The Annual Budget (U-Cycle) to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Patt and carried by a voice vote.

Railroad Right-of-Way (East Urbana Section)

Mr. Pollock stated that he has been working with staff over a period of months regarding the difficulties of one section of the old abandoned right-of-way that runs from Main Street to Washington Street. The northern section of that right-of-way is in dispute.

Mr. Pollock moved that the Urbana City Council requests that staff bring to a Committee meeting within 30 days options and a recommendation on what actions the City may take to secure a permanent easement for infrastructure and resolve property disputes concerning the abandoned railway property between Main Street and High Street. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan and carried by a voice vote.

Discussion Regarding City Subsidizing Cost For Railroad Right-of-Way In Southeast Urbana

Mr. Whelan requested that Council consider A Resolution Respecting Reimbursement Of Survey Costs. He stated that this deals with the property that at one time was considered for a bicycle bath. When the grant for that project was not approved, the City bought the property with the purpose of making it available to the people who have adjacent property.

Mr. Whelan requested that the Committee give consideration to this resolution because we could end up with property that could be checkerboard and the City might have to maintain some it because the neighbors did not buy it and because of the crime problem that is related to this property.

Mr. Whelan asked that this item be considered at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Whelan moved to ask staff for their consideration and recommendation on this issue. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt and

Committee on Environment & Public Safety
September 23, 1996
Page 7
carried by a voice vote.

**A Resolution Directing Staff To Notify Residents Of Blocks Where
Parking Meters Are Proposed**

Ms. Ryan stated that this issue grew out of the discussions over the summer regarding putting meters on residential streets. The resolution is essentially to notify people when the City is considering putting meters on the streets in their neighborhood.

Ms. Ryan moved to send **A Resolution Directing Staff To Notify Residents Of Blocks Where Parking Meters Are Proposed** to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patt. Following debate, the motion carried by a voice vote.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that there is a joint meeting with the Urbana School District Board on Thursday, September 26, 1996 at 7:30 p.m., the purpose of which is to discuss the possible impact of tax caps on the school districts.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that since Monday, September 30 is the fifth Monday of the month and there will not be a City Council/Committee meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairperson Ryan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Taylor
Recording Secretary

*This meeting was taped.
**This meeting was broadcast on cable television.