

DATE: Monday, February 8, 2021

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: *Held virtually due to Governor's and Mayoral Emergency Orders

The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, February 8, at 7:00pm via Zoom.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor; Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: City Council Members (CM) Bill Brown, Bill Colbrook, Shirese Hursey, Jared Miller, Dennis Roberts, Erik Sacks, Maryalice Wu

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jason Liggett, Kay Meharry; Carol Mitten; Lorrie Pearson; Andrea Ruedi, Bryant Seraphin; Lily Wilcock

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: *Public Input via Zoom:* Allan Max Axelrod; Benjamin Beaupre; Elderess Melinda Carr; Tracy Chong; Colin Dodson; Haki; Christopher Hansen; Justin Hendrix; John Kraft; Meghan McDonald; Rev. Dr. Evelyn Underwood

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum virtually present, Mayor Marlin called the meeting of the City Council to order at 7:16pm, following a meeting of the Cunningham Township Board.

B. [Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting](#)

CM Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2021 meeting. Motion seconded by CM Colbrook and carried by roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Brown, Colbrook, Hursey, Miller, Roberts, Sacks, Wu

Nay: None

C. Presentations and Public Input

1. [Comprehensive Plan Website Go-Live Presentation](#)

Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development Andrea Ruedi began the presentation by saying the City has launched its first community engagement tool, which is the [ImagineUrbana.com](#) website. Ruedi showed several videos on the website and said more segments will be added. Planner Lily Wilcock was present, and she and Ruedi responded to questions and concerns from council members.

[Public Input via Zoom](#)

Comments via Zoom included: sees some first steps in the Comprehensive Plan; resolution to end structural racism and achieve racial equity is a great start in publically declaring Urbana's position and the people of Urbana must hold city officials responsible in staying true to the principles in the resolution; academic publishing inaccurate information and it should be retracted; Imagine Urbana log in and registration should not be required; Urbana Police Department has not apologized for Aleyah Lewis incident; City should admit its mistakes in regard to FOIA; support resolution for racial equity; collaborate across systems to end racial disparity; public input during the council and committee meetings is the only means the public has to voice concerns; concern about Emulsicoat applying for a lifetime operating permit at current location; concern about Emulsicoat moving to new location; Edgar County Watchdogs are not trying destroy local governments or install people into local governments; tired of input being reduced to a few concerns; organizations who help people should

be available to do that outside of office hours; resolution does not have any action and actual action should be added to it; new FOIA officer is practicing the same unlawful tactics as the former FOIA officer.

Public input via email is attached.

D. Council Input and Communications

CM Hursey said the resolution committing to end structural racism, as a resolution has nothing actionable in it because resolutions do not include actions. The goal was to reach into the past in order to not repeat it and to have a better future.

CM Wu told council she is working on a resolution that addresses police accountability and de-escalation. It should be on the agenda for the February 15 Committee of the Whole agenda.

CM Brown said he will have a couple of presentations in the future from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission including an annual report and a recommendation on the Kickapoo Rail Trail study from 2018. There will be a new youth member position on the commission for high school youth, from age 14 to 17.

CM Roberts commented on the Emulsicoat information, and said he spoke with Chris Pressnall, the Environmental Justice Officer with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Pressnall told him that lifetime permit does not necessarily mean it will be forever, but will be in effect until further notice or some sort of change, and is only a formality. Pressnall said the outreach officer with the IEPA is considering holding a public input session to allow residents to ask questions and discuss their concerns about Emulsicoat.

E. Additions to the Agenda

There were none.

F. Unfinished Business

There was none.

G. Reports of Standing Committees

Committee of the Whole – *Council Member Bill Brown*

1. Consent Agenda

2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2021-02-005R**: A Resolution Committing to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity

CM Brown moved to pass Resolution No. 2021-02-005R. The motion was seconded by CM Hursey. CM Brown went over the changes made to the resolution by CM Hursey and CM Wu, which were as follows:

- In the seventh paragraph, change WW II to World War II;
- An eighth paragraph was added: “WHEREAS, from its founding in 1867 through the 1940's, University of Illinois denied campus housing to Black students, therefore requiring them to seek out and pay for housing within the black community (north end); creating additional psychological and physical stress to their college experience; and”;
- Paragraph 10 the spelling for Chief Illiniwek was corrected;
- Paragraph 11, after the words “from impenitent individuals”, was added: “Nationwide, Black Americans continue to be marginalized within the health care system and suffer deleterious outcomes, as exemplified by a death rate from COVID-19 that is 3.57 times higher than White Americans¹. Locally, there is widespread community support for an offensive former University mascot, local transportation companies discriminate against

immigrants from Asian countries, and in Urbana, the black community continues to face disparate outcomes in traffic stops”;

- Section 1, in the last sentence, after the words “speak truth” was added “to the hate and bigotry of white supremacy”, which replaced the words “to the power of white supremacy”.

After further discussion and comments, the motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-02-005R was carried by roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Brown, Colbrook, Hursey, Miller, Roberts, Sacks, Wu

Nay: None

H. Reports of Special Committees

There were none.

I. [Reports of Officers](#)

City Administrator Carol Mitten reported that the lifetime operating permit Emulsicoat applied for is something they probably do not need because they can revert back to a prior lifetime operating permit, and added there no part of the application that requires any findings or analysis regarding environmental justice. The City has received some of the information it requested from Emulsicoat and has requested more through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The City is trying to bring the outreach coordinator from the environmental justice section of the IEPA out to the community, possibly at a meeting of Sustainability Advisory Commission (SAC), to inform the public about what is going on at the Emulsicoat facility.

Administrator Mitten said she spoke to American Water officials to check on the status of water shutoffs. American Water began shut offs again last fall. American Water said residents can call 1-800-422-2782 and self-certify that they are having financial problems due to Covid and that should be sufficient to avoid water shut off. There is also a Salvation Army Program called H2O (Help to Others) which will help people pay their water bills.

Administrator Mitten said the Public Works department is short-staffed because of a couple of cases of Covid, and quarantining. Remaining staff is working through trying to clear streets and spread salt mainly on primary and secondary routes.

J. New Business

1. [Mayoral Staff/Board and Commission Appointments](#)

- a. Traffic Commission – Council Member Erik Sacks
- b. City Engineer – Tim Cowan, Interim Public Works Director
- c. FOIA Officer – Ross McNeil

Mayor Marlin presented the appointments and said Erik Sacks would replace former Council Member Eric Jakobsson on the Traffic Commission. Interim Public Works Director Tim Cowan will be appointed City Engineer. Ross McNeil will be appointed the FOIA Officer. City Administrator Mitten clarified that state law requires council to approve the appointment of the FOIA Officer.

CM Hursey moved to approve the staff, board and commission appointments of CM Erik Saks to the Traffic Commission, Tim Cowan as City Engineer and Ross McNeil as FOIA Officer. Motion seconded by CM Colbrook.

CM Miller said he would like to see more information about Ross McNeil and would also like to be able to speak to him before approving his appointment. He added he will try to bring forward legislation to change in the appointment process, giving council the chance to have more input.

After further discussion and clarification, the motion to approve the Mayoral staff, board and commission appointments was carried by roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Brown, Hursey, Colbrook, Roberts, Sacks, Wu

Nay: Miller

K. Adjournment

With no further business before council, Mayor Marlin declared this virtual meeting adjourned at 9:04pm.

Kay Meharry

Recording Secretary

This meeting was recorded and is [viewable on-demand](#).

Minutes Approved: February 22, 2021

From: 
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: public comment
Date: Monday, February 08, 2021 4:19:25 AM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Hello. I live in ward 7. I am writing this as a result of hearing large amounts of false statements, untrue information, and conspiracy theories during public comment at council meetings. Each meeting, the same group of people, some that do not actually live in town, attend public comment and spread nonsense. This is a waste of time for both city council and for residents that want to learn about actual city business. As a result, I think that council needs to change the rules for public comment in order to prevent these people from spreading more lies. Public comment needs to be reserved for residents that have actual comments and ideas, not for conspiracy theorists.

Thank you
Ben Rafter

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: PUBLIC INPUT - Resolution No. 2021-02-005R (February 8, 2021 City Council Meeting)
Date: Monday, February 08, 2021 1:11:08 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Dear Mayor Marlin and Members of the Urbana City Council:

Resolution No. 2021-02-005R – A Resolution Committing to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity is a great start in publicly declaring the City of Urbana’s general position, and the intent has been stated to bring awareness of this practice in the history of the City of Urbana.

Based on the explanation at the February 1 Committee of the Whole meeting, my understanding is there will not be specific or future actions included at this time for the City of Urbana.

Therefore, the People of Urbana must continue to hold our city officials accountable to stand on the principles outlined in the Resolution to ensure that racial equity is achieved. Both now and in the transition to new leadership, we know that you have an awesome responsibility in guiding city government for the People of Urbana. We appreciate the service of our city officials in working toward this end.

I am suggesting stronger language in a few more areas and other minor edits (highlighted in red in the following information copied below) for your consideration in the final approved Resolution.

I would like this information to be included in the record of Public Input for tonight's meeting and I hope to share verbally as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elderess Melinda Carr
Resident of Urbana
Address: 1308 West Tremont Street

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-02-005R

A RESOLUTION COMMITTING TO END STRUCTURAL RACISM AND ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY

Page 1 of 4

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana endeavors to lead the pursuit of racial equality and justice; and

WHEREAS, equality does not come at the expense of another, but ensures that everyone gets what they need to be a full participant in their community; and

WHEREAS, white supremacy defies what it means to be American by denying the ideals prescribed in the Declaration of Independence and Civil Rights enshrined in the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, in order for our community to heal and achieve racial equity, it is necessary to recognize and confront the history of injustice; and

WHEREAS, in the City of Urbana, the history of white supremacy and racial oppression began with the first white settlements by the French, with slavery being legal and present in the territory through British and colonial rule until the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. From then on, territorial black laws and unlawful practice purposefully perpetuated slavery and racial oppression, and this practice continued despite the exclusion of slavery when the State was established in 1818. By an 1824 referendum for a constitutional amendment, 42% of the vote was still in favor of slavery; and

WHEREAS, despite nominal legal progress, Jim Crow laws and white supremacy continued to be prevalent in Champaign-Urbana. The Ku Klux Klan maintained a significant local presence, operating out of the Illinois Theater in Urbana and holding events with upwards of 3,000 members at a time when the County's population was less than 60,000; and

WHEREAS, issues of segregation and racial oppression became particularly acute in the decades following World War II (WWII), following the increase in the black population of Champaign-Urbana. Black citizens were systematically and illegally excluded from white neighborhoods through subdivision covenants, developer, realtor, landlord, seller, and lending practices and were de facto confined to the

Page 2 of 4 'north end'. Residents were further exploited by predatory rents in slum rentals and would-be homeowners faced inflationary supply constraints that actively diminished wealth creation. By 1961, the community was the most segregated community in the State. Furthermore, the north end neighborhood was underinvested in public infrastructure, with unpaved roads, unlit streets and other lacking infrastructure making life more difficult, unsafe, and expensive for residents; and

WHEREAS, the racial oppression of white supremacy was expansive, including more than just housing and was prevalent and punishing for employment opportunities. Regardless of qualifications, black workers were systematically discriminated against in hiring, where the only jobs made available were: lower paying, manual labor, more insecure, and segregated. In 1968, the unemployment rate in Champaign-Urbana was 2.6 percent for whites, and between 12 and 20 percent for blacks, depending on the season. Especially oppressive was the lack of employment opportunities for black professionals. Local black residents, having completed a college degree, were unable to find employment in Champaign-Urbana and were forced to leave the area to find appropriate employment. As late as 1968, there were no local black doctors, lawyers, firefighters, and only recently had bona fide black police officers been hired. The lack of black professionals meant that the black community faced systematic discrimination, with no alternative local option, from professions pertaining to wealth, health, public safety, and the law; and

WHEREAS, the history of white supremacy also extends to the racial discrimination of all non-white people. The land now known as Champaign County was originally home to the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. Many were removed from the area in 1819 with the remaining native population forcefully removed in 1832 following the Black Hawk War. This history was then White-washed and the native population was caricatured in a racist demeanor for decades by the Chief Illiniweck mascot representing the University and our community; and

WHEREAS, white supremacy and racial discrimination continue to this day, both institutionalized and from impenitent individuals, where there is widespread community support for

Page 3 of 4 an offensive former University mascot, and where local transportation companies discriminate against immigrants from Asian countries, and in Urbana, where the black community continues to face disparate outcomes in traffic stops; and

WHEREAS, repercussions of this history and current practice run deep. Community, social, educational, and economic outcomes for non-whites all suffer from the physical and psychological consequences of racism; and these outcomes sustain themselves long after the original sins and sinners perish; and

WHEREAS, the effects of racism are still profoundly felt today in Urbana. It affects the health and wealth of individuals and the entire community, having been declared by the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District to be a public health crisis¹. It will not be overcome without a concerted and sustained **effort commitment** by all.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. The City hereby rejects the institutionalized legacy of racism and white supremacy that is our

history and afflicts our community today. While our community and government ~~have continued to~~ evolves away from the habitual practice and widespread acceptance of racism and white supremacy and is ~~today becoming~~ a more loving community seeking to fulfill the promise of a more perfect Union, we are all inhabitants of an inherited prison of institutionalized inequalities of free and fair existence. If the City is to actualize the commandments principles, rights, and powers of Our Constitution, we must be conscious. The City of Urbana will strive to purge the perpetuation of discrimination that is institutionalized in our society through the power of its policies, procedures, and attitudes. The Mayor and City Council will henceforth speak truth to the power hate and bigotry of white supremacy and shall publicly denounce it whenever its attitudes or effects become clear within our community. [1] See CUPHD resolution. Much thanks to City of Evanston, Illinois Resolution for inspiring the format of this resolution and for the Champaign County Historical Archives staff at The Urbana Free Library, especially Tom Kuiper, for the historical research, including providing the dissertation Injustice sheltered: race relations at the University of Illinois and Champaign-Urbana, 1945-1962. Their research allows this resolution to speak truth to history of white supremacy in Urbana and Champaign County.

Page 4 of 4 Section 2. The City of Urbana recognizes that it will take additional effort commitment, courage, and determination to align our actions with our aspirations in order to carry out the vital needs expressed by the People of Urbana. The subversiveness of white privilege includes the double standard of imposing responsibilities and restrictions when there are unequal rights and inequitable opportunities. The City resolves to recognize and value diversity in its policies, personnel, and investment; the City will seek to ensure that there is harmony between equal and fair processes and equitable results. In the pursuit of equity, wherever it is feasible and just, the City shall use all methods and methodologies at our disposal through our Departments, City Council, Boards, and Commissions. The City shall resolve to constantly challenge ourselves ~~and~~ to become a strong leaders in creating a government, community, society, and economy unshackled by the past, unleashing progress and prosperity to their full potential for all of our residents and business owners so that we may continue moving forward to form a more perfect Union here in the City of Urbana.