

In Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 6:30pm, Council President Jim Sims presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council. Per the Governor's Executive Orders, this meeting was conducted electronically via Zoom.

COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
October 20, 2021

Councilmembers present via Zoom: Matt Flaherty, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Dave Rollo, Kate Rosenbarger, Susan Sandberg, Sue Sgambelluri, Jim Sims, Ron Smith, Stephen Volan
Councilmembers absent: none

ROLL CALL [6:32pm]

Council President Jim Sims summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:32pm]

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to cancel the Committee of the Whole scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2021. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to cancel Committee of the Whole [6:35pm]

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to amend the agenda to set aside the time limits for reports from City offices and to add a report from the Clerk's office. The motion to amend the agenda received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 1 (Volan).

Vote to amend agenda [6:37pm]

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to approve the minutes of December 02, 2020 and October 13, 2021 as corrected. The motion to approve the minutes received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [6:38pm]

December 02, 2020 (Regular Session)

October 13, 2021 (Special Session)

Sandberg spoke about her attendance at the National Conference on Public Safety Social Work. She congratulated the organizers, Melissa Stone, Brittany Murphy, and Chief Mike Diekhoff for a great first conference.

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS [6:38pm]

Smith recognized the 100th birthday of District Three resident, Dickie Scott.

Sims also wished Scott a happy birthday.

Sgambelluri echoed Sandberg's comments about the conference and announced her next constituent meeting.

Rosenbarger announced her upcoming constituent meeting.

Flaherty gave an update on accessibility and transportation safety issues.

Sims spoke about the death of General Colin Powell, recent newspaper articles about mortgage lending to Black residents, and systemic racism like red-lining.

Adam Wason, Director of Public Works, gave a Public Works Sanitation and Fees Report. He presented information on the quality and analyses of city services, data collection, tracking trucks, and more.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [6:50pm]

There was council discussion following the report related to average number of household pick-ups per month, pay per-tipping pickups, as well as challenges the sanitation department faced. Council also discussed waste reduction incentives and successes, waste stream management, reopening the city landfill, information on carts, rates, sanitation subsidies, and accessibility.

Alex Crowley, Director of Economic and Sustainable Development (ESD) department, and Lauren Clemens, Assistant Director of Sustainability, presented the Climate Action Plan Update Report. The report covered ongoing and future programs, emissions, city operations, climate change and adaptation, energy and the built environment, and transportation. Additional information was provided on waste, water, food and agriculture, greenspace and ecosystem health, climate economy, and health and safety. Crowley acknowledged and thanked Clemens for her work and then noted the proposed path forward. Additional discussion included investments in the city’s reduction of carbon and additional data, clarification on the public engagement platform, water conservation goals, sustainability efforts, composting, mulching, and solar power. There was a brief discussion pertaining to annexation impacts.

- The Mayor and City Offices (cont’d)

Clerk Nicole Bolden made the following statement to the council:

“During consideration of a piece of legislation two weeks ago, I was dismayed when a member of your body said that ‘the Clerk and her staff would thank you upon passage of the ordinance.’” I take issue with that statement. The person who said that seems to have assumed they knew what my opinion would be. They did not.

To be clear, if the Office of the Clerk has something to say about an ordinance, I will make a statement directly to the council, or ask a member of the Clerk’s staff to do so on my behalf.

I, or any member of the Clerk’s staff, would never presume to speak on behalf of the council as a whole or for any individual member of the council. We would never assume we know what opinions are held by the members of your legislative body. I would request and expect the same courtesy. Please do not assume you know where the Clerk’s office stands on legislation. If I feel it is appropriate to weigh in, I will do so.

I truly appreciate the work that you all do, and the time and care that you take when you are considering matters that come before you. I know that we all have a lot of work ahead of us, and I look forward to continuing that work with you. Thank you.”

There were no council committee reports.

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Renee Miller expressed concern regarding the upcoming colder weather and its effect on the unhoused, and the winter shelter.

- PUBLIC [8:18pm]

Smith commented that there was still a need for applicants for the Traffic Commission.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [8:20pm]

Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to appointment Eliza Carey to seat C-10 on the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to appoint [8:23pm]

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS [8:25pm]

Flaherty moved and it was seconded that Ordinance 21-35 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Clerk Nicole Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis giving the committee do-pass recommendation of Ayes: 4, Nays: 0, Abstain: 4.

Ordinance 21-35 - To Amend the City of Bloomington Zoning Maps by Rezoning 1.31 Acres of Property from Mixed-Use Employment (ME) to Mixed-Use

Flaherty moved and it was seconded that Ordinance 21-35 be adopted.

Medium Scale (MM) - Re: 135,
201, 215 S. Westplex Avenue
(Wheeler Mission, Petitioner)
[8:25pm]

Eric Greulich, Senior Zoning Planner in the Planning and Transportation department, summarized the rezoning request.

Piedmont-Smith asked if the Environmental Commission (EC) reviewed the petition.

Council questions:

Greulich stated the EC had not since the request was for land use.

Piedmont-Smith asked if there would be additional greenspace in the plan.

Greulich responded there would be, in compliance with landscaping standards. With the removal of some parking, there would be additional shrubs planted. The petitioner had done a tree inventory as well and would likely add trees, and a bike rack, too.

Sims asked how the parking would be removed, and if the asphalt would need to be dug up.

Greulich said that the asphalt would need to be removed. There were many options and the city would work with the petitioner to determine parking needs, greenspace, and more.

Sims asked Dana Jones, petitioner, Wheeler Mission (WM), for clarification on the request for the number of police calls to the property by year. He listed the numbers of police calls from 2016-2020. He also asked for clarification on the petitioner's efforts in meeting and collaborating with neighboring business owners.

Jones said that they had discussed mitigation at a previous council meeting and had already implemented some efforts. Wheeler Mission staff was sensitive to the concerns of the local business owners but it was unrealistic for Wheeler Mission to take the lion's share of policing the entire area. He described meeting with local businesses on October 5 which was attended by several city staff members, Mary Morgan from the Chamber of Commerce, as well as local business owners around the area. Another meeting was currently being scheduled.

Sims hoped that he had not insinuated that it was exclusively WM's responsibility. He intended to initiate meetings and collaboration with local business owners.

Jones commented on the number of police calls, and that they did not pertain only to concerns with WM. The number of calls should not be misread as being from business owners.

Rollo said the number of calls was astounding. It was the city's responsibility, but Wheeler Mission also needed to collaborate with the city.

Jones responded that Wheeler Mission worked with the city regularly. Wheeler Mission was a regular attendee of the weekly Downtown Resource Officers (DRO) meetings. They also worked with the Centerstone outreach team who went to the site often. He noted the history of Wheeler Mission and said that the increase in calls, in 2019, was due to Wheeler Mission taking on the winter shelter. They had invited the DROs to meet and worked together that year. They also worked with Indiana University (IU) Health to reduce the amount of emergency calls. They obtained grant funding to hire a case manager to actively work on calls. He noted that many calls were due to chronic health conditions as well as mental health assistance calls. Jones explained this was all continued into the pandemic, too.

There was no public comment.

Public comment:

Sgambelluri commented on some concerning behaviors and the city's statement on actions to improve safety in public places. She reminded everyone that the petition was for rezoning and those concerning behaviors were not acceptable in any zone. She would support Ordinance 21-35.

Council comments:

Sandberg stated that she would support Ordinance 21-35 and noted that it had the support of the planning department staff and the Plan Commission. She commented on calls for emergency services and some of the behaviors which could be handled by DROs, or others, if the incident did not involve criminal activity. She said that the goal was to provide wrap-around programming to help individuals move from a position of crisis to one of sustainability. She commended Jones and Wheeler Mission staff for their work. She acknowledged and empathized with the concerns of neighboring businesses.

Rollo thought that the rezone was separate from problems and concerns in the area. He appreciated learning more about the collaboration between Wheeler Mission and the city. He noted the increasing pressure put on the police department, and that the police force was already strained. If the need in that area increased, then more officers were needed too.

Sims thanked Greulich and Jones. He said that the rezone was simple and straightforward. He believed that council had an obligation to discuss and consider the concerns of the local business owners. He praised WM's collaborative efforts.

The motion to adopt Ordinance 21-35 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to adopt Ordinance 21-35 [8:50pm]

There was no public comment.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT [8:50pm]

Heather Lacy, Council Assistant Attorney, reviewed the upcoming council schedule.

COUNCIL SCHEDULE [8:51pm]

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to adjourn. Sims adjourned the meeting with no objection.

ADJOURNMENT [8:55pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this 02 day of August, 2023.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Sue Sgambelluri, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

Nicole Bolden, CLERK
City of Bloomington