

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall on Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 7:30 pm with Council President Susan Sandberg presiding over a Organizational Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL
ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION
January 4, 2012

Roll Call: Granger, Mayer, Neher, Rollo, Ruff, Sandberg, Spechler, Sturbaum, Volan,
Absent: None

ROLL CALL

Council President Sandberg gave the Agenda Summation

AGENDA SUMMATION

There were no minutes at this meeting to be approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Darryl Neher thanked his supporters and said that he was overcome by emotions on taking the Oath of Office on January 1, and noted that he took his responsibility as council member seriously and would work hard during his term.

REPORTS

- Council members

Steve Volan welcomed the new council members and wished them luck in their terms. He added that it was not about the individual persons, but the seats that they represented.

He noted that the mayor had called for People's Park to be vacated by the Occupy movement people who have been staying there. He noted that he was not happy about this action and added that there was not enough understanding about what the movement was about. He said if he had known, and had more time to react to the news, he might have asked for another action. He called for public comment on this issue.

Marty Spechler said a highlight for him was meeting several hundred people in his district, and conversing with them about the difficulty of cities and towns providing services in light of the imposition of values of the Republican administrations in Indiana and Washington. He said most of his constituents were well-off, but that he was concerned with women's and children's issues, and basic expenses that senior citizens might not be able to handle. He relayed that his neighbors and constituents agreed with his priorities.

Tim Mayer welcomed the newly elected council members.

Dorothy Granger thanked the city staff for their welcoming meetings and noted that they went out of their way to help her understand the inner workings of city processes. She also thanked voters by saying she would work hard for them.

Dave Rollo noted that there might be a need for more public comment at this meeting, in light of the chambers becoming filled with citizens. He said he would put off a report until the next regular session.

Chris Sturbaum congratulated the "Occupiers" for raising consciousness and working together. He said there were inevitable problems found, but that part of non-violence was respecting the law and quoted Gandhi: *"Non violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will, its seat is in the heart and it must be an inseparable part of our being."* And Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: *"At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love."*

He said that the movement had a lot of support in the community and the inability to spend the night in the park would not end the movement, commitment and the ability to influence the world. He advised them to take a break and regroup.

There were no reports at this segment of the meeting.

- Mayor and City Offices

There were no reports from council committees at this meeting.

- Council Committees
- Public Comments

Sandberg noted there would be 30 minutes for public comment and asked the first speakers to come to the podium.

Mary Hogue said the Occupy Bloomington group had been in the park continuously for 88 consecutive days. She said that the actions of a few people over the New Year's weekend were not indicative of the non-violence that had been experienced in the Occupy camp in People's Park. She added that what she thought was violent was the city taking away a covered shelter from people who had been kicked out of shelters and had no where else to go but to the encampment in the Park. She said the notice was short sighted.

Joshua Johnson read a statement he wrote regarding the 'eviction' of occupy Bloomington from People's Park. He said the Occupy movement was peaceful and respectful, but not just at the request of the mayor, but as a way of life in the protesting, empowering, learning and educating the community in the disparities of wage, imbalance of power and the lack of direct democracy in communities. He said that news articles had made the community more aware of the homeless situation in the area.

Kelly Thomas said that the actions taken on New Year's Eve were being used to incriminate Occupy Bloomington. She said that the roving dance party was attended by individuals, some associated with the encampment, some not, but that the police actions that night were being used as justification for removing the encampment. She said that police response to the events concerned her by its aggressive and violent nature. She said that similar actions by police were not seen in the area after students rioted, broke car windows, blocked traffic and jumped on cars in intersections while police stood by. She called this a disproportionate response which she said was related to the amount of economic activity related to each incident.

Emma Young said she was present at the roving dance party and said actions there were completely unrelated to the park and not part of any Occupy action or tactic. She said that there was no rug under which to sweep long term recurring issues in the park such as people with PTSD, mental illness, and addictions who went there for warmth, shelter and acceptance as human beings because there were not enough services for these people. She said that clearing the park would be victimizing people who were already the most victimized and it would not bring any more safety to the streets. She urged people to come to a General Assembly to help create diversity and solutions to problems. She thanked Volan for coming to the encampment.

Rachel Geiger said at the Occupy camp she had learned not to fear people who were different that she was, learned that she was a part of Bloomington rather than just a student, and that the movement would carry on. She read a poem written by Mary Hogue, an earlier speaker.

Ryan Conway said he was answering two questions about the Occupy movement regarding what they were doing, and why they didn't have a clear leader. He said that previous social movements did not have this unique situation of autonomous individuals using a tactic, not a group. He said the movement would keep going.

Levi Bolton said the people at Occupy had jobs and lives and that he had made friends and learned to meditate at the camp. He said that people had a right to say what they wanted to say.

• Public Comments (cont'd)

Joseph Callahan said he had formerly lived in a van, because he had been interested in social issues. He said that the Occupy movement broke lines hoping for something better. He said he was occupying for Haiti, foreign wars, and called out for others to come to help solve the problems of the city and the world. He said he wanted Bloomington to be an example for the state and the world.

Nicole Johnson thanked Ruff for coming to the Occupy site, told Spechler that since he wanted to help people, he should know that there were holes in the social service system around the lack of a detox center. She said that they had taken care of people who came back to the park after being released from the hospital who she helped through 'full on DTs.' She said that there was a lack of mental health facilities, also. She said the eviction was not about her not being able to spend the night in the park, but about those who really had no where else to go. She related events of the New Year's Eve dance party.

Scott Wells, former county council member, said he could speak directly of the power of the state, and noted that the police were very powerful. He said that he had spent \$128,000 of his retirement money and 9 years trying to get justice in his case. He equated that to the attempt to quash the Occupy movement by the BPD. He said that the Occupy movement was worthy in its attempt to save democracy, and that the people involved there were good people.

Carissa McKelvey, an IU student, related the October march from People's Park to the courthouse and Chase Bank and back. She said they disrupted very little traffic. She said she had experienced much while living with Occupy, and added that most of the group felt that government didn't act in the best interests of the people, but rather to propagate the viewpoints of those in power, to impose upon the working class an indentured servitude to corporate interests. She said slow and steady degrading of government's integrity was the evidence of a long planned plutocratic takeover of government. She blamed Citizens United for allowing elections to be bought by corporations. She said that discussions about this were the core of Occupy and were held in a number of ways, including social media.

Marc Haggerty said the newspaper got smaller and smaller and more filled with fluff all the time, with no time for investigative journalism. He said that it was more interested in selling newspapers than telling the truth. He called Scott Wells the greatest county councilman because he was against the unregulated development of the county by the rich. He said that the Occupy group did not expect to deal with the homeless and troubled when they came to the Park, and he noted that Josh Johnson was suffering at the hands of people who were taking advantage of the movement. He said he did not support the behavior of those who disrupted peace and said that the police arrested the wrong person.

Sturbaum moved and seconded that the following slate of officers be elected:

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Tim Mayer
Vice President: Susan Sandberg
Parliamentarian: Andy Ruff

The slate was approved by a voice vote. Members changed seats as assigned by the new president. Council President Mayer thanked outgoing President Sandberg for her service, and presented her with an engraved gavel to commemorate her term as president.

It was moved and seconded that the following appointments to various council positions be approved.

BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (Community Development Block Grants)	
-Social Services	Susan Sandberg
-Physical Improvements	Timothy Mayer
Commission for Bloomington Downtown	Chris Sturbaum
Economic Development Commission (City)	Darryl Neher
Economic Development Commission (County)	Regina Moore
Environmental Resource Advisory Committee	Dave Rollo
Metropolitan Planning Organization	Andy Ruff
Plan Commission	Chris Sturbaum
Solid Waste Management District	Stephen Volan
Urban Enterprise Association Board	Chris Sturbaum
Utilities Services Board	Timothy Mayer
Bloomington Economic Development Corporation	Susan Sandberg /Tim Myer (share)
Bloomington Commission on Sustainability	Dave Rollo

The nominations were approved by a voice vote.

President Mayer appointed the following council members to the Council Social Services Funding Committee:

Granger, Mayer, Neher, Sandberg and Spechler

President Mayer appointed the following council members to the Council Sidewalk Committee:

Granger, Rollo, Sturbaum and Spechler

This being the first meeting of the year, there was no legislation for consideration for final action.

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING

Ordinance 12-01 To Amend the Outline Plan and District Ordinance for Parcel 1 of the Woolery Planned Unit Development (PUD) – Re: 1480 W. Tapp Road (Tommy and Lesli Berry, Petitioners)

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING
Ordinance 12-01

Jackie Witmer-Muton said that the permit to Occupy Bloomington was the Bill of Rights. She said the children and students in Bloomington would now learn that the essential American rights were now superseded by the petty brutality of a police state in our own town. She asked the mayor and police to think about this as the Occupy message would continue to be voiced.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Lauren Hall said she was one of the first persons to pitch a tent at People's Park, and she did so for the underserved and underrepresented in the community. She relayed stories of her experiences and said that Occupy would not stop or take a recess, as had been suggested, but that it might look a little different.

Claire Dietrich said that it was her duty as a citizen to 'pay it forward' but that she was troubled by the face of the police that she sees now. She asked that the officers reflect on the actions of New Year's Eve. She encouraged citizens to reflect on how their actions and words could inspire change.

Aaron Pollitt said that the Occupy camp in People's Park had evolved and changed and that the experience had meant a lot to him personally. He said that the commons had been reclaimed rather than existence with walls that block off people from each other. He worried about the future of humanity if the system continued as it had been. He said that the eviction notice was an opportunity to rededicate to act against injustice.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT (cont'd)

Daniel Bingham said he was a former occupier, but was horrified by the treatment of people by police on New Year's Eve. He said he remembered student behavior related to IU Basketball and reminded council that students tried to overturn a car without an arrest. He said he expected better from the police.

Michael Lukens a Bloomington native said he had learned how to speak because of Occupy Bloomington, and that many people now have that ability, too, and that they would continue to do so without a physical space. He said he had recently attended a MPO meeting where he watched the public comment and said the experience did not compare to the exchanges of dialogue at the Occupy General Assemblies.

Sandberg moved and Ruff seconded that the Annual Schedule for the Common Council be amended to correct two deadlines for submitting resolutions as indicated in the Meeting Notes for this meeting.

COUNCIL SCHEDULE

Dan Sherman, Council Attorney/Administrator explained the two minor changes to the calendar.

The motion was approved with a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0. (Rollo was out of the room when this vote was taken.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm. It was followed by a Committee of the Whole meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

APPROVE:

ATTEST:



Tim Mayer, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

Regina Moore, CLERK
City of Bloomington