

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 at 6:33pm, Council President Dave Rollo presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
May 29, 2019

Members present: Ruff, Chopra, Piedmont-Smith, Granger, Rollo, Volan, Sims, Sandberg
Members absent: Sturbaum

ROLL CALL [6:33pm]

Council President Dave Rollo summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:34pm]

There were no minutes for approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Steve Volan noted the passing of bicyclist Michael Brooks and musician David Koontz.

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS [6:35pm]

Rollo commented that Koontz was also a talented writer.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [6:36pm]

Mayor John Hamilton introduced the second biennial citywide survey. He told the Council that the first survey in 2017 helped to establish a baseline of information, gathered data for resource deployment, and increased transparency by sharing the results. He said that he hoped the city would be able to continue to the survey every two years so it could continue to use the data to improve services. He invited Damema Mann, National Research Center, Inc. (NRC), to the podium to summarize and review the survey results in more depth.

City Survey Report

Volan asked to what extent NRC accounted for students in the survey results.

Mann said the NRC did not sample dormitory housing but any student who lived off campus would have had an equal eligibility to respond to the survey.

Volan asked why the survey results used the terms “excellent, good, fair, and poor”, and did not use the term “neutral”, which would have allowed for a more evenly weighted scale.

Mann explained why the scale was written that way and that there was an option for people who did not know how to respond.

Volan asked if there were peer benchmarks.

Mann said there were.

Councilmember Jim Sims asked if more than 610 people responded to the survey.

Mann said the scientific survey data came from those 610 people. She said there was an opt-in survey that had 132 respondents with separately reported data.

Councilmember Isabel Piedmont-Smith asked where people could find the survey results.

Mary Catherine Carmichael, Community Engagement Director, said they could go to bloomington.in.gov/communitysurvey.

Councilmember Andy Ruff asked for more information on employment and affordability compared to other communities.

Mann explained that communities like Bloomington were highly desirable places to live and thus had more scarcity.

Ruff asked if there were similar cities that did not have problems of affordability.

Mann said she could think of communities where affordability was a larger problem than it was in Bloomington, but not a smaller problem.

Rollo asked if living in a desirable community meant that more people moved to the community, which would add to a housing shortage.

Mann said that was correct.

Rollo asked if the survey asked any questions about the desirability of growth.

Mann said that she would have to look at the customized questions for Bloomington.

Councilmember Susan Sandberg asked if NRC had any suggestions on how to improve the response rate.

Mann said a shorter survey might help with the response rate but it was a trade off. She said the response rate was not a source of concern for the company.

Rollo asked if NRC studied whether wages were keeping up with housing costs.

Mann said that was not the type of research the NRC typically did.

Gwendolen White, Bloomington Commission on Sustainability, presented the annual sustainability awards. The commission considered initiative, impact and innovation in making award decisions in each of three categories: individual, business and nonprofit. The sustainability award winners received statues made of 100% bio-based recycled waste materials by Ryan Mandell, Digital Fabrication Labs Coordinator at Indiana University. The Individual Sustainability Award recipient was Anne Hedin. The Business Sustainability Award was given to Bloomington Cleaners. Sycamore Land Trust and Hoosier Hills Food Bank tied for the year's Nonprofit Sustainability Award.

Sustainability Awards

Brian Payne, Assistant Director of Small Business Development, gave the Annual Tax Abatement and Economic Development Commission (EDC) Report to the Council.

Tax Abatement Report

Rollo asked for clarification on the criteria.

Payne explained the change in criteria for granting a tax abatement.

Volan asked if the city was allowed to make tax abatement guidelines that were not in line with the state.

Payne said the definition was a modification of the tax abatement guidelines the city passed in 2010. He said the state allowed local governments flexibility to add additional factors.

Volan asked to see the changed language.

Sims asked who defined what a significant increase in wages was.

Payne said it would be defined by the EDC and the Council.

Piedmont-Smith asked why the Council had not received a resolution with the recommended changes in criteria.

Payne said that he was not sure who was responsible for presenting a resolution to the Council for action.

Dan Sherman, Council Attorney, said that he had not shared the recommended changes with all of the councilmembers.

Piedmont-Smith asked how the Council missed that Milestone Ventures managed to hire a full time employee at a salary of \$23,200, which was less than a living wage.

Payne said he would have to go back to the original tax abatement application but he would let the Council know.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [cont'd]

Ruff asked if there was anything in state code that required analysis of investment without tax abatement.

Payne said he was not aware of any state requirements.

Rollo asked if the tax abatement guidelines could also include some considerations for carbon impact reduction.

Payne said that he thought it was accounted for in the guidelines and that there was room for the Council to consider those things in its deliberations for tax abatements.

Rollo asked how many people were being locally employed.

Payne said the Council had done a good job of expressing a preference for local hires.

Sandberg asked if there had been any discussion about providing housing assistance for workers in the form of vouchers.

Payne said that it had not come up in the EDC yet.

Sandberg said that she was concerned about the living wage criteria as well.

Payne said that, even if the criteria changed, the applications would still ask what the salary of any positions would be.

Councilmember Allison Chopra moved and it was seconded to accept the Tax Abatement Report. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Vote to accept Tax Abatement Report [8:03pm]

There were no council committee reports.

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES

There was no public comment.

- PUBLIC

Councilmember Dorothy Granger moved and it was seconded to appoint Ian Yarbrough to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission. The motion was approved by voice vote.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [8:04pm]

Granger moved and it was seconded to appoint Caitlin Watkins to the Traffic Commission. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Piedmont-Smith moved and it was seconded to appoint Tracy Gates to the Parking Commission. The motion was approved by voice vote.

There was no legislation for second reading.

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS

There was no legislation for first reading.

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING

There was no additional public comment.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no changes to the council schedule.

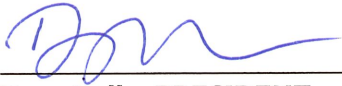
COUNCIL SCHEDULE

Chopra moved and it was seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT [8:06pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this
12 day of June, 2019.

APPROVE:



Dave Rollo, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:



Nicole Bolden, CLERK
City of Bloomington