

Minutes - October 20, 2003 - Committee-of-the-Whole

Minutes of the Committee-of-the- Whole Meeting

of the City Council of the

CITY OF DARIEN

OCTOBER 20, 2003

1 CALL TO ORDER

The Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Darien was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Mayor Carmen D. Soldato. In attendance were Mayor Soldato, City Clerk Coleman, Treasurer Monaghan, Aldermen Biehl, Cotten, Marchese, Poteraske, Tikalsky, and Weaver, Administrator Vana, Community Development Director Dreyer, Public Works Asst. Directors Mengarelli and Rodgers. Mayor Soldato explained that this was an informal Committee-of-the- Whole meeting to discuss topics not completed at the Goal Setting Session.

2. GENERAL ANNEXATIONS

Mayor Soldato stated that the City has Boundary Agreements with surrounding municipalities but some unincorporated pockets existed within the perimeter of the City. He gave background information on the City's policy for annexation; he said that the City did not force people to annex. Mayor Soldato turned the meeting over to Director Dreyer. Director Dreyer displayed the unincorporated areas on a map and also identified the boundaries of surrounding municipalities.

Alderman Weaver inquired if any of the areas were surrounded on three (3) sides and were under 60 acres; Director Dreyer stated that some were. She suggested forced annexation of those parcels to square off boundaries and to aggressively pursue annexation. Mayor Soldato stated that the purpose of discussion was for unification, in order to outline cost benefits for being a part of the City and to increase home values, which would also increase City revenue from property taxes. Alderman Poteraske stated that there were many parcels within the unincorporated area that were contiguous to Darien; he suggested pursuing these parcels, state why it would be beneficial for them to become a part of Darien, have informational meetings, and distribute literature. Alderman Marchese stated that years ago during a Goal Setting Session cost benefits were discussed for individuals, as well as the costs the City could incur; he stated that annexation might be cost prohibitive. Alderman Weaver inquired why the City would have to make improvements if over many years the Township had not made improvements. Alderman Tikalsky stated that residents objected to the additional Darien Park District tax; there was discussion that some unincorporated areas already belong to the Darien Park District. Alderman Poteraske stated that he would rather not force annex the large area between Ward 3 and 7; he felt that they should have the opportunity to annex. Alderman Tikalsky asked Administrator Vana what the estimated population was for the unincorporated areas; Administrator Vana stated that the issue had not been addressed. Alderman Biehl commented that he was not in favor of forced annexations; he said that if a resident became part of and paid taxes to Darien, they should receive the same consideration for improvements as any other resident. Alderman Cotten stated that he was not adverse to an active campaign to pursue residents for annexation; he did not support forced annexations; he suggested pursuing annexations prior to the Special Census and particularly if redistricting was necessary. Alderman Weaver expressed concern that the Darien Police Department provided services to unincorporated areas without compensation; she stated for unification purposes that she would be willing to force annex the smaller parcels.

Mayor Soldato reaffirmed the City's policy, which was not to force annexation. Staff was directed to develop a process that would include an educational campaign with follow-up. There was discussion about the benefits the City provides, which would be extended to those who annex.

3 MARION HILLS SIDEWALK REQUESTS

Mayor Soldato stated that during one of his "coffee" he had been approached by a couple of residents to consider the placement of sidewalks in the Marion Hills neighborhood. He invited those residents to address the Council.

Michelle Peterson, 321 Janet Avenue, was concerned because there are no lights, curbs, or sidewalks in the Marion Hills neighborhood. She felt this was a safety concern as younger children are moving into the area. She presented a petition for sidewalk with 31 signatures.

Heather Morford, 342 Janet Avenue, requested the City put sidewalks in her neighborhood; she noted that sidewalks have been installed on Midway Drive in Willowbrook. Ms. Morford felt this was a safety concern as children have to walk on the street to get to their bus stop and that the high school traffic was "insane."

Administrator Vana provided the City Council with a cost estimate of \$411,000 for 16,459 linear feet of sidewalk. He also suggested an alternative asphalt walkway that was used in other communities.

Discussion ensued concerning the best way to accomplish a task of this magnitude, the possibility of having to meet DuPage County's Stormwater requirements, and the inability to have straight sidewalks due to the trees in this country setting. The Council also considered the possibility of developers acquiring parcels for teardowns, instituting a special assessment for the sidewalks, and the realization that not all the residents in Marion Hills favor sidewalks. Before any further consideration could be given to this request, it was determined that a survey should be sent to the Marion Hills residents to inquire if they all had an interest in having a sidewalk on one side of the street.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee-of -the-Whole, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Carmen D. Soldato, Mayor

W.F. Coleman, City Clerk -JFC/jr

All supporting documentation and report originals of these minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk under File Number 10-20-03 Committee-of-the-Whole.