

MINUTES
August 4, 2020
Committee of the Whole
City of Batavia

Please **NOTE:** These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

Chair Wolff called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Wolff; Ald. Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp, Chanzit, Baerren (entered meeting at 7:24pm), O'Brien, Callahan, Malay (on phone), Uher and Cerone (joined on phone at 8:46pm)

Members Absent: Aldermen Meitzler and McFadden

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Chief Deicke, Batavia Fire Department (on phone); Kevin Drendel, Legal Counsel; Laura Newman, City Administrator; Gary Holm, Director of Public Works; Peggy Colby, Director of Finance; Griffin Price, Communications Coordinator; and Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary

2. Reminder: Please speak into the microphone for BATV recording

3. Approve Minutes for July 7, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes for July 7, 2020

Maker: Chanzit

Second: Knopp

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Chanzit, Wolff, O'Brien, Callahan, Malay, Uher, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp

Nay: None

10-0 Vote, 4 Absent, Motion carried.

4. Items to be Removed/Added/Changed

Ordinance 20-46 was moved to item 13a to see if other aldermen join the meeting. It was later tabled until the COW 8-18 meeting due to the late hour of the meeting.

5. Matters From the Public (For Items NOT on the Agenda)

There were no matters from the public for items not on the agenda.

6. Discussion: North River Street Options

Newman overviewed multiple North River Street options including adding more tables, permanent closure, one-way traffic, permanent streetscape amenities, festoon lighting,

completion of the alley arch, installation of a video security system, and installation of an area wide sound system for live or recorded music.

The Committee discussed improving the outdoor dining atmosphere, creating a site line down River Street to encourage more patronage, the possibility of removing a barricade to improve the site line down the street, allowable barricades, a more aesthetically pleasing permanent barricade, and signage stating that shops/restaurants/outdoor dining are open.

*Alderman Baerren entered the meeting at 7:24pm.

Holm stated that he would look into barricade location options available for improving the site line on River Street.

The Committee continued discussion on the following topics: IDOT permitting, traffic patterns, signage, one-way southbound/northbound traffic, reducing the number or size of the type 3 barricades, State law and the aesthetics. Chair Wolff opened the floor for public comment.

John Hammel, owner of Pal Joey's and Bar Evolution, thanked the City and Council for their help. This has been a monumental life suck from a business standpoint. Evolution is still in its infancy stage. Our business is down at Evolution 50-60% even with everything that has been done so far. He appreciates what has been done but we have to keep going on. We are trying to do what we can to bring more people to downtown Batavia. River's Edge is doing trivia and bluegrass. James does open mike. Hammel has contracted two high school students to come play two nights a week. We are trying to do everything we can to make it a place that people want to go. The envy of the City right now is Water Street. He did a nice job getting the tables and umbrellas down there. River Street has more potential to look nicer because it is a natural spot.

Hammel stated it is difficult with the temporary closure because the signage is difficult especially on Wilson Street. There has to be a way to let the customers of The Tea Tree know that there is an option to loop around. It would help her business to have foot traffic. The traffic on River Street isn't a ton. Right now we need is as much to go on this street to make it through the next few months. He asked if there are ways to put signage on the Type 3 barriers. The mention of a one-way street going southbound does not do any good for traffic going up and down the street. He asked if there are ways to put speed bumps on the street to slow people down. Could you make a curb to create a one-way strip lined with nice planters to protect people who are sitting out there. If it is a one-way north bound can River's Edge serve liquor and food across the road into that seating area. The One Washington Place, if it does go forward, we will have to make a decision on how to make this as nice as possible because coming off of a COVID-19 summer into a COVID-19 second year summer going into potential construction zone he pleads with the City to talk to the potential contractor who should take the responsibility to make that street stay clean and aesthetically pleasing. Spring Street would be a good staging area for a construction zone. We need to keep the street open. He appreciates the City considering purchasing new tables. Hammel stated that he is planning on a social distanced fundraiser for the Lyons Club with Bingo night on River Street.

Holm stated that he took notes to inquire about shops open signs east of Washington to try to direct people North on Washington to State Street.

James Joseph, owner of The Book Shop Batavia, stated that the River Street closure benefits the local business owners as a communal business space if done day and day out. He asked if the City already owns the tables why are they on the street nowhere near businesses. Is it more efficient to buy more tables or buy a moving truck. The aesthetics are going to a huge part of what would make River Street successful. He understands IDOT regulations. However, if you could look down and see lights, tables, umbrellas because everyone wants that Jimmy Buffett dining experience and we could give it to them. Aesthetics are the most important thing. In order for this to work, you have to have the aesthetics and you have to make people want to go down there and want that experience. There is only so much we could do. We all are walking down River Street cleaning. We are all taking care of River Street and all care about how it looks. If we have the opportunity to get stuff down there let's do it. He does agree that it would be more efficient if it were a one way especially going southbound. We need to give our business districts the best we can.

Newman noted that on Wilson a property owner took the initiative to approach Barco Products because his vision was to, at no expense to the City, create a outdoor dining space out there for all in that area. The umbrellas and lights were purchased by BEI and Barco Products donated the tables. There was forty-eight hours of volunteer labor that went into putting those tables together. The adjacent property owner recruited the volunteers and got all of that done.

The owner of Soma Yoga Studios addressed the Committee over the phone. He suggested hosting a movie night with social distancing on an evening during the week. He shared that he and his wife opened the studio in January and if were not for the Farmer's Market on Saturday it would be very difficult for them to stay in business. He suggested programming in the middle of the week to bring people down to River Street and make that area a little more bright.

The Committee discussed partnering with the Park District to set up additional programming on River Street.

Kasey, owner of Six+Cypress, shared that though she is not a River Street front door these businesses have supported her and she is here to support them. We need to do something and do something fast. We need some kind of all day activity. This is the time of COVID-19, just ask, you might get a positive response instead of just saying no we cannot do that and these are the rules. We need to ask for some change and bend the rules a little bit for this time so that when we are back on our feet and running we are all here still because we want to be here. She asked that the City look into what we could do for the long-term vital activities such as social distancing fun activities for families. We have the perfect platform for that.

Missy Heartman, owner of the Tea Tree, stated that she would like the area to look pretty. She was wondering if the road closed part of the sign could come off. She suggested having a barricade and four planters in front and a-frames that say downtown dining. People need to know that though they cannot drive down there they can go down there. She does notice a lot of people not riding their bikes down there anymore. They come to the barricade and they turn around.

Pedestrians will turn around. They really think that the road is closed. Something needs to be done with that if possible. Extending the sale of liquor past nine would be something we could do once we get more tables out there. It would look like something is really happening on that road. A lot of customers that have gone to her shop have stated driving west on Wilson they see the sign, they pass it up, there is nowhere to turn around and they say they will get there later or another day and then four weeks pass by and that is when they get to the shop. Signage has to happen prior to the road closure. The sign is great on top but your eye does not go there. River Street looks like an abandoned road and we have to fix that.

Newman stated that they have done research on where closed streets are successful and they are in university towns where there are tens of thousands of pedestrian customers walking through the town. The temporary closures and difficult to make aesthetically pleasing and cumbersome to put in place and take out of place at any period of time. Newman stated that it is a Woonerf and it would be nice if all modes of transportation could share it and we could go back to aesthetically pleasing planters and benches and add tables that complement the things we put in the street so we could have more activity.

Sherri Wilcox, Batavia MainStreet, stated that what they are doing with outdoor dining is to help support the restaurants and bar community. In the event the City does decide to make the investment in things like tables it would be her suggestion to use quality materials but be able to move the materials to accommodate changes. She stated that six to eight weeks ago we talked about tables, lighting and shade. Height allows one to see everything that is going on in the street beyond the barricades (tents, lights, umbrellas, rides) and right now there is nothing people can see during the day or at night. The discussion of one-way traffic is positive. She asked that whatever is decided upon to have it done quickly. She asked for something visual both day and night for those driving down Wilson to know there is someplace to go. If we wait to long to make it perfect it is going to fail. Let's get in place those minimums that we know will exist no matter what.

O'Brien agreed with the statements and asked the Council to make a decision. We need tables that could be moved around, lights in the trees, and suggested string lights across River Street 13ft in height because it brings people to it. We could string the lights with cables so there is some integrity to it. We need to start doing this sooner than later.

*Cerone joined the meeting by phone at 8:46pm

The Committee discussed budgeting and how to fund aesthetic improvements on River Street, one-way traffic to remove the barricades and way-finding signage.

Motion: To recommend to staff to work within the grant funding available to purchase tables, lighting (Christmas tree lighting, festoon lighting) and umbrellas on River Street

Maker: Callahan

Second: O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Callahan, Malay, Uher, Cerone, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp
Chanzit, Baerren, Wolff, O'Brien

Nay: None
12-0 Vote, 2 Absent, Motion carried.

Jamie Saam addressed the Committee. She shared that she sent the photos of the garbage accumulation on River Street. One of the reasons why Water Street looks so great is because of ownership. BEI put those tables out there, put the lighting out there, got the garbage cans out there and is keeping it maintained and cleaned up because the company has people who do that. River Street has a lack of ownership. Who's job is it? Do we put it onto the businesses that are strapped right now trying to figure out their day to day? This is our downtown and the main place where people come and we are welcoming them to garbage all over and no one is owning it. She understands that we are all strapped but it is COVID and we need to figure out who needs to step up to the plate to do this. The big thing with COVID is cleanliness and germs and if it is a mess no one is going to want to go there because we are all trying to keep germs away from each other. She was disheartened by the amount of garbage. It is important for all of us to see the City beautiful.

Saam asked who's job is it to program the street. All the businesses are programming but they are strapped and are working so hard. They had to let employees go so not only are they writing programming they are bartending, helping chefs cook, and serving. Small business owners have few people to do all of this. We as a community government and community need to be stepping up so we do not lose them. We need to do our best and take ownership of all of this.

Newman stated that it would take two full time employees, one for the public properties and services because we don't have people who work on the weekends and events coordinator position. We would have to increase the levy in order to afford two full time employees. Wolff stated that he was not in support of closing the street unless we had programming and things going on out there. He does not want the street closed and empty. One of the things suggested when considering closing River Street was having MainStreet and the businesses could come up with things that are going to happen every weekend then we would be more than happy to close the street. That is still on MainStreet and the businesses to come up with things for the street. Wolff explained that programming is not the City's job. We are doing the best that we can to provide whatever we can do for that street to make it the best that it can be for the businesses out there. Newman stated another good partner with programming would be the Park District who typically have different types of programming.

Callahan suggested MainStreet put together a time slot period for volunteer clean up times. Signing up for a shift to pick up garbage would enable the community to help. Beck stated that it is like an adopt a highway program. Callahan stated that we should do different things that we would not normally do. Mayor Schielke stated that there at least should be a dedicated clean up service on Monday mornings that sweeps the area there. Garbage cans overflowing, weeds and garbage laying around sends a really bad message about the community. We have to maintain the area.

The Committee discussed one-way traffic on River Street. Holm reported that northbound traffic could happen instantly because we do not need IDOT's intervention. The southbound requires a different approval by IDOT. Holm recommended for the long-term a southbound closure.

Motion: To direct staff to get approval for one-way southbound traffic on River Street
Maker: Uher
Second: Knopp

Discussion was held on the motion. Chanzit asked for clarification that this would be to only do a southbound traffic pattern on River Street and not northbound changing to southbound. Chanzit stated he does not want to confuse travelers. Uher stated that this motion is to approve one-way southbound traffic on River Street only. Wolff stated that we would leave the road closed until the change in traffic pattern. Baerren noted that way finding signage will still be needed for southbound one-way traffic.

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Uher, Cerone, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp Chanzit, Baerren, Wolff, O'Brien, Callahan, Malay
Nay: None
12-0 Vote, 2 Absent, Motion carried.

7. Ordinance 20-43: Limiting the Number of Video Gaming Sites in the City of Batavia (LN 6/30/20) GS

This item was moved to agenda item 13a. Due to the late time and some absent, this item was tabled until the 8/18 COW meeting.

8. Ordinance 20-46: Amending Title 8, Chapter 1 of the Municipal Code related to Interconnecting Small Photovoltaic Systems (GH 7/29/20) PU

O'Brien overviewed the memo.

Motion: To recommend approval of Ordinance 20-46: Amending Title 8, Chapter 1 of the Municipal Code related to Interconnecting Small Photovoltaic Systems
Maker: Beck
Second: Miller

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Beck, Knopp Chanzit, Baerren, Wolff, O'Brien, Callahan, Malay, Uher, Cerone, Miller, Russotto
Nay: None
12-0 Vote, 2 Absent, Motion carried.
CONSENT AGENDA

9. Presentation: Mid-Year Review Communications

Griffin Price presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Communications Midyear Report to the Committee. The presentation included the following:

- Electronic Media Analytics
- Website Analytics
- YouTube Channel – Mayor Weekly Updates
- Coronavirus Communication Response Timeline
- Planned Protest Communication Response Timeline
- National Community Survey

- City of Batavia Logo Implementation
- Communication Goals and Benchmarks

10. Project Status

Newman reported on the following:

- Next week there will be a One Washington Place discussion on the Redevelopment Agreement, TIF inducement resolution, Redevelopment Plan for TIF 6
- Prairie Street is still one-way southbound but switching from east to west side of the street
- No update on the CARES Act today but there is an Executive Committee meeting tomorrow. She will update everyone on that meeting.
- No update on Colony Bikes but she will contact Colony tomorrow and send out an email on when we could expect delivery.

11. Other

Callahan requested the memos for next Tuesday's meeting arrive earlier than late afternoon Friday.

12. Executive Session: Purchase and Sale of Electricity (GH)

Motion: To enter into Executive Session

Maker: O'Brien

Second: Knopp

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** O'Brien, Callahan, Malay, Uher, Cerone, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp, Chanzit, Baerren, Wolff

Nay: None

12-0 Vote, 2 Absent, Motion carried.

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 9:58pm and left Executive Session at 10:19pm.

13. Resolution 20-95-R: Approving Task Order #6 with Avant Energy Inc. for a Financial Analysis of Electric Utility Purchase Power Cost (GH 7/29/20) PU

Motion: To recommend approval of Resolution 20-95-R: Approving Task Order #6 with Avant Energy Inc. for a Financial Analysis of Electric Utility Purchase Power Cost

Maker: O'Brien

Second: Chanzit

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** O'Brien, Callahan, Malay, Uher, Cerone, Miller, Russotto, Beck, Knopp, Chanzit, Baerren, Wolff

Nay: None

12-0 Vote, 2 Absent, Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

14. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Chair Wolff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:21pm; Made by O'Brien; Seconded by Knopp. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary, on August 14, 2020.