

CITY OF BATAVIA
MINUTES OF THE BATAVIA CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
September 16, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. – Remote Meeting

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. Minutes 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. Any references to discussion and /or statements are only to provide greater clarity to the public and they may not reference all, some, or any of an individual speaker’s comments.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Schielke at 7:00 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

10 of 14 aldermen were present.

Aldermen (by ward): Jennifer Baerren (1), Michael O’Brien (1), Alan Wolff (2), Martin Callahan (2), Dan Chanzit (3), Joseph Knopp (4), Mark Uher (5), Abby Beck (5), Michael Russotto (6), and Drew McFadden (7) were present.

Also present were the following:

Mayor	Jeffrey Schielke
City Administrator	Laura Newman
Recording Secretary	Jennifer Smith
Director of Public Works	Gary Holm
Director of Information Technology	Howard Chason
City Engineer	Rahat Bari

Also present from the Batavia Park District:

Executive Director	Allison Niemela
Director of Capital Projects & Contractual Services	Jim Eby
Executive Assistant	Shelley Kouzes

Also present from the Batavia Park Board:

President	Patrick Callahan
Vice-President	John Tilmon
Treasurer	Kevin Riley
Secretary	Tara Gray

2. Matters from the Public (for items NOT on the agenda)

There were no matters from the public at this time.

3. Discussion: City of Batavia and Batavia Park District Cooperation on Development of a River Corridor Master Plan (Laura Newman and Allison Niemela)(GS)

Newman reported that the removal of the Batavia Dam and the preservation of the Depot Pond has been a discussion item since August 2016. Over the years of collaboration between the City of Batavia and the Park District it was found to be a mutual benefit to collaborate on a larger project of developing a master plan for the Fox River corridor. Newman thanked Allison Niemela for coordinating with Hitchcock Design to prepare a scope of work for this project and also to suggest a draft intergovernmental agreement that we hope that the Committee and Board could act on tonight.

Allison Niemela stated that the intergovernmental cooperation between the City and the Park District has benefitted the Community immensely from a visionary standpoint and cost sharing as well. The proposed Fox River corridor will build upon the tradition of visionary planning that we have become so accustomed to.

The Committee and Board members discussed the proposed River Corridor Master Plan. Uher stated that we need to be very proactive in the way that we sell why this is better. The removal of dams improves the river life in a short period of time. We have to be very deliberate in making people understand the benefits of why we want to do this. It is not just about the fish or the safety, it is about everything the river could do for the City including economic development. It would be beneficial to have a river that is accessible without danger. Uher concluded that he is happy that we are looking at this holistically and in one large picture. Patrick Callahan expressed his confidence in Hitchcock Design and as the study unfolds we will have to communicate more with the residents so they understand the value of the work. O'Brien commented that the river should be an economic engine for the City and for all the taxing bodies in the City.

Mayor Schielke stated that back when the Park District was being formed the focus was on what we could do with the Fox River. They felt that the Fox River has never realized the ultimate potential of what it could do to really make the river and the City stand out for people to come out, recreate and enjoy the beauty of the river. Peg Bond, Phil Elstrom, Mary Snow, Matt McCune (first president of the Batavia Park District) were all strong voices in support of developing the river's potential. Mayor Schielke discussed the creation and support of the River Walk utilizing volunteer labor from the community. He hopes that this action tonight will tell those who succeed us in government the importance of the river and that we keep it as a strong focus.

John Tilmon stated that the River Walk and the park in every survey that the Park District has ever had stated that it is the number one place where people go to be near the water. We need to keep in mind to preserve what the community has told us is the number one attraction for the Park District and there are many reasons for that. He is very encouraged by what he hears from everyone on this call about trying to preserve that for the folks who use it and there are a lot of folks who use it.

4. Resolution 20-110-R: IGA with Batavia Park District for River Corridor Master Planning (LN 9/11/20) GS

The Park District Board voted to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Batavia and the Batavia Park District for the development of the Fox River Corridor Master Plan.

Motion by Tilmon and seconded by Gray. Kouzes called the roll. Motion carried 4 yea/ 0 nay/ 0 absent.

The Committee of the Whole voted on the approval of Resolution 20-110-R: IGA with Batavia Park District for the River Corridor Master Planning.

Motion by Ald. Chanzit, seconded by Ald. Wolff, to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried 10 yea/ 0 nay/ 4 absent.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Ald. Wolff, seconded by Ald. Knopp. Motion carried by voice vote. The City Council meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary, September 25, 2020.