



MINUTES

Monday, June 24, 2019

Work Session

Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved: July 24, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Mayor Sharon Konopa and Councilors Bessie Johnson, Alex Johnson II, Dick Olsen, Bill Coburn, Rich Kellum, and Mike Sykes

Councilors absent: Councilor Rich Kellum arrived at 4:23 p.m.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

City Attorney Sean Kidd reminded the council that the Seigner property issue will be before them on June 26, 2019, for a decision. The record was closed at the end of the October 10, 2018, public hearing. The council may not consider any verbal or written evidence submitted since then. If the councilors respond to any information presented tonight, they run the risk of having to hold a new public hearing. The council can't hold a public hearing on June 26, 2019, because no public hearing has been advertised.

Michael Thomson, 1291 Elm Street, vice president of Friends of Historic Albany (FoHA), and Rebecca Ziegler, 728 6th Avenue SW, president of FoHA, introduced themselves. Ziegler read a statement from the FoHA board requesting that the record be re-opened for HI-12-18. She said she was submitting the statement into the record. Kidd said the council cannot accept the statement into the record because the record was closed on October 10, 2018. The items were not entered into the record.

Camron Settlemeir, 230 Seventh Avenue SW, read a statement expressing his concerns about the decision regarding HI-12-18 and changes proposed to be made to the Landmarks Advisory Commission (LAC). He asked that his statement be submitted into the testimony for HI-12-18.

Kidd said the council cannot accept the statement into the record because the record was closed on October 10, 2018. The items were not entered into the record.

Bernadette Niederer, 1116 11th Avenue SW, read a statement. She asked that the statement be submitted into the record for HI-12-18. She explained the reasons for filing an appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). She expressed concerns about the City's public hearing process.

Kidd said the council cannot accept the statement into the record because the record was closed on October 10, 2018. The items were not entered into the record.

Tina Siegner spoke about the LAC. She said historically the LAC was strictly an advisory group, a resource for people who wanted to restore a home. She believes the proposed change to the LAC is a positive one.

Mark Siegner said he thinks it's important to let people know that they have received calls from both sides about the property where the old houses are. The Siegners' intention is to make the community better. He spoke about what he perceives as bias on the LAC.

David Abarr, 625 Fourth Avenue SE, said the LAC made their decision based on three criteria. He questioned how Councilor Alex Johnson II could vote in Wednesday's decision, since he was not a councilor at the time of the public hearing in October.

Councilor Rich Kellum arrived at 4:23 p.m.

LANDMARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

4:23 p.m.

Planner III Laura LaRoque, the staff liaison for the LAC, presented two options for the council's consideration. She said it sounds like the council wishes to resolve the conflict between the Albany Municipal Code (AMC) and the Albany Development Code (ADC), by making the LAC strictly advisory to the council. She said this would add about 30 days to the review process. It would require additional staff time to support two public hearings, which would affect the planning division's ability to review other types of applications. Staff is also concerned that people would bypass the review process if it seems burdensome.

A second option is to have the council review all demolition decisions. Demolition reviews are the most controversial.

LaRoque said either option would require amendment of the ADC. The second option would also require amendment of the AMC. The amendments would take six to nine months.

Councilor Bill Coburn asked about the time between a LAC hearing and referral to the council for decision. How long is that time period? LaRoque said a staff report must be available to the public at least seven days before a hearing. The LAC meets the first Wednesday of the month, so the window is too short to allow proper noticing before the next council meeting on the second Wednesday.

Coburn asked if there's enough time between the first Wednesday and the fourth Wednesday, which is the council's second meeting date. LaRoque said it's possible. Coburn said the delay between hearings would be at least three weeks, and if the earlier opportunity was missed, it would be at least five weeks.

Councilor Bessie Johnson asked Kidd what he thinks is the best way to hasten the process without holding back the applicant.

Kidd said the fastest option would be to not do anything. If nothing is changed, the council's role will stay the same. Any case that goes to the LAC can be appealed to the council, and the council can pull up any case at any time on their own motion. He believes a lot of the concern about LAC decisions has been eliminated by the change in the appointment process.

Planning Manager David Martineau agreed that this is the best option for preserving the LAC's good work without burdening the council.

Kidd said the second fastest option would be for the council to review all demolition applications.

Coburn asks if it would be possible for the council and the LAC to meet jointly to make decisions. Kidd said it's possible, but it would be an additional meeting every month for the council. And the council can call any item at any time.

Councilor Dick Olsen asked if the council can also call up any decision of the Planning Commission. Kidd said yes. Martineau said the council can also call up staff decisions.

The council discussed timing of calling up a case.

Coburn said he isn't upset with the current process. It bothers him that the council could make a decision that would be directly appealed to LUBA, which costs time and money. As it is now, applicants can appeal to the council before going to LUBA. He also said if the way commission members are appointed is changed, it will be at least three years before all of the current members are either reappointed or replaced.

MOTION: Councilor Mike Sykes moved to use option 3, leaving things as they are. Coburn seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL

4:42 p.m.

Coburn said he wants to start now to consider putting a bond measure on the ballot next May to fix roads. It isn't too early to start planning a specific presentation to the voters.

Konopa thinks a utility fee is fairer than a bond, and doesn't require going to the voters.

Johnson II said he's talked to people in the community about a sugar fee when people buy sweet drinks. It would capture people driving through who stop for a drink, and it would be a constant stream of money. People who don't want to pay can avoid it by not buying a sweet drink. Coburn said he thinks New York tried it and had problems with it. Johnson II said we should get all ideas on the table.

City Manager Peter Troedsson said Deputy City Manager/CIO Jorge Salinas and he have captured all the ideas put forth and are putting them together so that they will be easier to compare. They will present it at the July 22, 2019, work session.

Kellum said that whatever is decided, it must be presented to the voters.

Olsen said the house at 732 Fourth Avenue is still in poor condition and he would like Kidd to comment. Kidd said the house was auctioned off last year. The City has liens, and we can foreclose on them to force the bank to clean it up relinquish it to the City. If the council directs, Kidd will start foreclosure proceedings.

Coburn asked how much the liens amount to. Kidd said about \$100,000. Coburn said he would like the City Manager proceed with foreclosure. The other councilors agreed.

Kellum said the Albany Revitalization Agency (ARA) and the Central Albany Revitalization Area (CARA) Advisory Board have recently authorized spending the public's money without the members being allowed to say where it's being spent. It rubs a lot of people the wrong way. He understands why the information hasn't been made public, but we need to sure it's absolutely necessary to keep information from the public.

Konopa said she thinks it's time to re-evaluate ward boundaries.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

5:04 p.m.

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Cameron Broadbent
Recorder

Peter Troedsson
City Manager