

**Special Joint Meeting of the Carbondale City Council and Carbondale Park District  
(Monday, August 12, 2019)**

*Generated by Jennifer R Sorrell on Tuesday, August 13, 2019*

**City Council Members present**

Councilwoman Jessica Bradshaw, Councilman Jeff Doherty, Councilman Lee Fronabarger, Councilman Tom Grant, Councilwoman Carolin Harvey, Councilman Adam Loos, and Mayor John M Henry

**Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM**

1. Roll Call

Procedural: 1.1 **Roll Call for Each Body**

All members present for both bodies

2. Citizen Comments

Procedural: 2.1 **Citizen Comments on Matters Not on the Printed Agenda**

Dawn Roberts commented on the metal detectors at City hall.

3. Joint Resolution Opposing Williamson Energy's Proposal to Pump Polluted Water into the Big Muddy River

Action: 3.1 **Approval of a Joint Resolution in Opposition to Williamson Energy's Proposal to Construct a 12-Mile Pipeline for Discharging Waste Water into the Big Muddy River**

Karen Fiorino shared contact information for citizens to share their individual concerns with the IEPA about this proposal.

Molly Alder inquired if Murphysboro and Carbondale governments had been in touch about this matter.

MOTION: Adopt the Joint Resolution in Opposition to Williamson Energy's Proposal and Forward the Same to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Motion by Jessica Bradshaw, second by Tom Grant.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Jessica Bradshaw, Jeff Doherty, Lee Fronabarger, Tom Grant, Carolin Harvey, Adam Loos, John M Henry (*Resolution 2019-R-43; Exhibit A-08-12-2019*)

4. Items for Discussion: Citizen Expectations as a Result of the Advisory Referendum and Status of Leases

Procedural: 4.1 **Citizen Comments About Their Expectations Following the Advisory Referendum in April**

*Note from Clerk: This agenda item is comprised of citizens' comments to the two bodies; the remarks extend over one hour; therefore, those remarks are summarized below. For full comments please visit the City's website for the recording made of the joint meeting.*

Dorcy Prosser shared her thoughts on the meaning of the vote on the question at the April election; that the bodies look at the best way to ensure park and recreation opportunities be provided to Carbondale citizens; noted that in response to the question from President Flowers as to what "explore" means, she indicated that it suggests 70% of voters are asking that change be considered, and her own expectations of fiscally responsible decisions, and prioritization and tough decisions be undertaken.

Donald Monty commented on the history of Carbondale's exploration of consolidating local government as well as in the State overall; he noted that each body has its own administrative overhead, but also unique functions which may be able to be shared. He commented on the taxing abilities of the two, and encouraged looking at all of the pros and cons of both possibilities.

Ron Stadt commented that a town needs a golf course, that the district should eliminate the Life Center, and do not expect the golf course to be self-sustaining.

Angeline Siomos-Ray, resident of Carbondale, commented that she is a user of and a supporter of maintaining the Life center.

Kathy Jones, Carbondale resident, remarked that her children's ability to utilize park facilities made Carbondale an attractive choice when moving here. She cautioned against eliminating programs or facilities.

Dominic Cittadino, an organizer of the Hickory Ridge Senior Golf Association, shared his thoughts and experiences on the importance of keeping a place for seniors to play.

Sally Wright, Cobden resident, shared results of her research on the benefits of cities' park systems generally, and Carbondale in particular.

Tom Redmond commented that the golf course hosts a number of events for various age groups and organizations.

John Washburn suggested that a faction from the Park District and the City Council get together to consider each possible option and then receive input from the public on each of those scenarios.

Mike Curtis commented on the inevitability of public criticism, a hope for cooperation, indicated his support of the golf course, the challenges park districts face, and concerns about parks departments being the first to be cut during financial crises.

Cole Simpson stated he loves the Splash Park.

Linda Flowers commented on teamwork and working together towards what is important to the citizens of Carbondale.

Ella Lacey commented on the need to inventory what each body has, to identify recommendations, and noted it would be valuable for citizens to know who ownership of which parks.

Jacob Bolton commented on his work with the Park District promoting community-building efforts at Evergreen Terrace.

Priscilla Pimental commented on the need for protections for the Park District when the City falls on hard times and spoke in favor of Kids Corner.

Randy Osbourne, Makanda resident, commented on the various aspects of recreation and parks, the specialized training and skills needed, and encouraged maintaining the recreation opportunities in the catalog.

Margaret Nesbitt commented that this meeting indicates that the two boards can work together, urged consideration of Attucks Park, and suggested the Park District and SIU work together to interest youth.

Mark Hutchins, not a Carbondale resident, commented that he pays to use the Life center and it is a great facility.

Brian Helgren commented that he is not a Carbondale resident, but his son is at Kids Corner, and praised the staff and facility.

Patricia Preston commented on the nature of Carbondale in comparison to other communities; she particularly remarked on the parks/recreation being a critical factor.

Walter Ray commented that he was not in favor of the advisory question and encouraged making sure that parks are protected.

Sandy Litecky remarked that there needs to be a look at the finances of the Park District; that the Park has to make serious decisions; welcomed an inventory of all parks and how much has been spent every year on maintenance versus bonds; and that future meetings need to be public meetings.

Erin Dickson, Recreation Coordinator at Park District, advocated respect for both organizations and shared her viewpoints as a homeowner and a Park District employee.

Michael Day, Golf Course Manager, commented on the golf course's accomplishments, noted that it would not be self-sustaining, noted that the staff do a good job with what they have, and that he does a good job as manager.

Marissa Ziegler noted she receives a number of questions relating to the advisory question, suggested a study should be performed, and look at the efficiency of the two bodies.

Stephanie Reece noted the recreation opportunities provided by the Life Center for various communities/populations.

Norris Muckelroy spoke in favor of the Life community center.

#### Discussion: 4.2 Discussion About the Status of Leases

*Note from Clerk: The discussion during this meeting ran for nearly 3 hours; the minutes reflect the general topics addressed and what consensus was reached. The full video is available at the City's website. Please contact the City Clerk's Office for details on how to view this archived footage.*

Matters which were covered included the addressing the public's request for an inventory of parks and who owns what, who should be performing the maintenance at Piles Fork, Turley Park, and Evergreen Park, whether to have a master agreement to address either four or five of the leases identified, whether to extend the leases for two, or three, of the properties in question, and for how long. Additional remarks included whether or not the City should be providing financial assistance, performing a feasibility study, the finances of the Park District and the City, and determining who would draft the leases.

#### 5. Summary Comments from Board Members

Councilman Doherty asked about the approach to be taken for the exploration of the feasibility of merging operations. There were suggestions to continue to meet as a committee of the whole and suggestions that smaller groups meet to discuss how to approach this going forward. It was suggested that each board provide a list of things they would like to see as part of the exploration and that any smaller team meetings be conducted in public, so that there would be no question as to what was and wasn't said.

Commissioner Adams asked that there be another joint meeting where all of the data be laid out, suggested utilizing a facilitator who has done this type of strategic planning, and utilizing that to inform the boards and the public know where this is going. After that, it might make sense to have smaller groups to continue meeting. Additionally, she suggested a flexible time table with goals.

Councilman Loos expressed appreciation for everyone gathering, noted the reason for being here was due to the response from the voters for the advisory question, and asked that everyone keep an open mind in order to have good faith negotiations. He agreed that identifying the metrics needed should be the next step. Mr. Loos expressed his disappointment in a handbill which was being disseminated at the Life Center, seeking support for the Park District, noting that this makes the negotiations seem adversarial and shows that people are protecting their own interests. He offered to respond to the speakers, the majority of whom had left the meeting. At a later point, Mr. Loos inquired about the ability to record at off-site meetings and requested a copy of the sign-in sheet.

Commissioner Trimble agreed that more information was needed in order to explore the question, specifically citing what financing the City has available, the inventory of the parks, what the deferred maintenance costs are, what kinds of intergovernmental agreements are possible, and noted that there is more to consider at a future meeting.

Councilman Grant thanked everyone for being at the meeting, noted that there is a long way to go, refuted layoff rumors, and indicated the goal is to ensure the best recreational facilities possible.

Commissioner Suarez stated the meetings should continue as a committee of the whole, expressed support for the use of a facilitator, having an inventory of programs and services, and then looking at feasibility studies, and possibly a consultant. She indicated that she would like to have meetings in every neighborhood for better engagement. Ms. Suarez then responded to her understanding of Mr. Loos' previous remarks, and revisited her own comments from two earlier meetings.

Councilman Fronabarger expressed disappointment that the speakers, attendees, and media had left, commenting that this is an important part of the process. He refuted the assumptions that people were making regarding the loss of facilities, programming, and staff. Mr. Fronabarger noted that in most states, parks are part of city government and work well. He further commented on the common goal of better parks and facilities and indicated a change is needed to stop us from falling behind other municipalities.

Commissioner Sergeev concurred with Commissioner Suarez with regard to various locations and possibly different times, indicated that the referendum results were not representative of the population, expressed interest in ensuring that the funds collected are applied to parks and rec, and asked about what revenue options would be available if the City is no longer home rule following the census.

Councilwoman Bradshaw noted that this is an effort to combine forces, stated that all of us are doing a lot with a little, spoke in favor of a facilitated discussion and suggested Dr. Washburn, suggested a FAQ website to address questions, take comments, and provide updates, and commented on Stephanie's remarks.

Councilwoman Harvey indicated that she was seeking input from the public, thanked them for their input, concurred with Ella Lacey's remarks about a need for an inventory to be established first, and emphasized the need to work together to do what's best for Carbondale.

President Flowers noted the need to continue with cooperative efforts and avoiding adversarial relations, indicated why he asked attendees to define the term "explore", remarked on the small number of registered voters who voted on the matter and whether that represents the full community, and suggested that this might have been considered at an election where a higher turnout could be expected. In response to the last comment about the voter turnout, there were observations about the need to encourage voting, the different types of opportunities to vote that are available, and that if the vote for the referendum wasn't representative, neither was the election of any official at the table.

## 6. Adjournment

Procedural: 6.1 **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the two public bodies, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:52 pm

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Jennifer R. Sorrell, City Clerk

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Date