

Council Questions/Comments and Staff Responses Report for July 22, 2013

as of July 19, 2013 at 6:46pm

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Alderwoman: Karen Schmidt

“As, as a courtesy heads-up, during Aldermen’s Discussion I will be asking questions regarding the proposed soccer complex, YMCA and ¼ cent sales tax increase. My initial questions are; do we have any indication of when this proposal might be presented to the Council? Is this something we would discuss in tandem with the Normal Town Council? Do we know how those projects became linked? And, as I hear some discussion in our community about a 1 cent sales tax for our public schools, do we know where that proposal is and when it might be discussed in a public forum? David, I realize that you may very well have no answers to these items, but I did not want to surprise you or others with my questions”?

Staff Response: The Office of the City Manager has been approached by select local Superintendents regarding the concept of a sales tax increase as a mechanism for funding the public schools. Recent discussions highlighted a one (1) percent (%) increase which would serve to generate approximately \$16M in annual sales tax revenue for those participating entities. As proposed, this figure would then be divided on a per pupil basis and distributed within the boundaries of McLean County where they would be used for various school maintenance and facility based needs. To date, this method of funding has been placed on numerous other ballots within the State of Illinois, each being considered – and in most cases passed – without any term limit or date of expiration.

Attached please find the current City of Bloomington Sales Tax Rate and a Municipal Sales Tax Rate Comparison.

The school districts are not alone, however, in their efforts to capture a portion of the City’s sales taxes; Connect Transit has discussed a potential sales tax increase in relation to the bus system, Prairie Cities Soccer League and the YMCA are looking for a one (1) percent (%) increase in sales taxes to build new facilities and McLean County is engaging in internal conversations surrounding the need for additional funding to support law enforcement efforts.

Each of these potential sales tax increases has been brought to the attention of various City Staff members in some capacity and ultimately could have an impact not only on the financial viability of our City, but also on its ability to maintain a competitive advantage in terms of retail sales and attraction efforts. More information on this topic will be provided within the context of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting scheduled for August 5, 2013.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 6D: Proposed Amendment to Contract regarding the Clinton Landfill Permit Application to Accept Polychlorinated Biphenyls

Question/Comment: I intend to pull this item for discussion in the Regular Agenda. There are 53 pages of explanation/justification for a change of \$2,000 for the City of Bloomington. I would propose that the City Manager have authority to make decisions of this nature without city council approval. A discussion of City Manager approval levels in general should be discussed in the near future to help encourage efficiency.

Staff Response: In the matter of the contract involving the Consortium Opposing the Permit Application for the Clinton Landfill, the contract approved by the City Council had a specific cap on the dollar amount for which the City of Bloomington was responsible. Since the contract was approved by the City Council, in this particular case it requires action by the City Council to amend that contract.

Staff will be proposing policy amendments to the City’s current Procurement Policy over the next couple of months. Staff would be very agreeable to allowing the City Manager authority to make decisions on change orders up to a certain amount.

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Item 6I: Extension of the existing expired Fox Creek Village Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Preliminary

Question/Comment: Reminds me of the recent Infrastructure Committee minutes that note concern about private roads, the need for sidewalks, etc. I don't know if there is anything like these issues in the original Fox Creek plan, but I am interested in knowing the following as a general rule of things:

1. If a developer seeks an extension, do we have the opportunity to address any infrastructure issues that we may now see differently from the original plan?
 - a. **Staff Response:** Whether to extend an expired (or soon-to-be expired) preliminary plan is entirely within the discretion of the City Council. The City Council has the opportunity to address infrastructure issues differently than it did in the approval of the original preliminary plan.
2. Do we get to renegotiate anything, or is our only option to approve?
 - a. **Staff Response:** If a preliminary plan has expired, or is about to expire, as a practical matter the City has the ability to require the developer to negotiate a new preliminary plan. So long as the new requirements of the City are justified by the language of the Land Subdivision Code (Chapter 24) and are rationally related to the health, safety and welfare of residents, the City may condition approval of a new preliminary plan on the developer agreeing to those requirements. In the case of the Fox Creek Village PUD, the original preliminary plan is only been extended for a maximum of 120 days, and is only being extended in order to permit the developer to obtain approval of a small number of lots which are included in a final plat which needs to be filed. A new preliminary plan for Fox Creek Village PUD (requiring more sidewalks and better access for emergency vehicles) will be submitted to the City Council in the very near future (copy was included in the Council packet under 6I). Staff met multiple times with the developer in an effort to help address the sidewalk and emergency vehicle access concerns. The City Council has the ability to reduce the term of the extension of the original preliminary plan from 120 days to a shorter term if it so desires.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 7A: Presentation of Fire Department Apparatuses

Question/Comment: Did the Aldermen Public Safety Committee discuss the replacement of the Fire Department 100' Aerial Platform Truck at its last meeting? If so, should that be noted in the presentation? If not, should it not go to the committee prior to coming to City Council?

Staff Response: This item was discussed at the July 11, 2013 Public Safety Committee meeting. All of the Committee's members were present: Aldermen Sage, Schmidt and Stearns. The Committee voted unanimously to support City staff's recommendation to purchase and replace its 15 year old platform truck (Truck #3, 1998 100' platform) which best meets the City's needs. Also, a section has been added to the Council Memo template for staff to state whether or not the item has gone before an Aldermanic Committee. The section will also include any discussion or decision made at that time (minutes from the meeting).

Prepared by: Barbara J. Adkins, Deputy City Manager



Bloomington Sales Tax Rate

Sales Tax Type	Percent Collected
State	5.0%
Home Rule <small>(Interstate Center, Capital Improvement Projects, Cultural District, US Cellular Coliseum; see attached report for additional details)</small>	1.5%
Local State Mandate	1.0%
County	0.25%
TOTAL	7.75%

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue; figures based on July 2013 rate

Municipal Sales Tax Rate Comparison

Ranking	City	State	Home Rule/Non Home Rule	Local State Mandate	County	Total Sales Tax
1	Bloomington	5.0%	1.5%*	1.0%	0.25%	7.75%
2	Normal	5.0%	1.5%	1.0%	0.25%	7.75%
3	East Peoria	5.0%	1.25%	1.0%	0.75%	8.0% - 9.0%**
4	Springfield	5.0%	1.75%	1.0%	0.25%	8.0% - 9.0%**
5	Peoria	5.0%	1.5%	1.0%	0.75%	8.25% - 9.25%**
6	Forsyth	5.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.50%	8.5%
7	Champaign	5.0%	1.25%	1.0%	1.50%	8.75%
8	Urbana	5.0%	1.25%	1.0%	1.50%	8.75%
9	Decatur	5.0%	1.5%	1.0%	1.50%	9.0%

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue; figures based on July 2013 rate

*Effective July 1, 2015, the 0.25% sales tax increase for the US Cellular Coliseum is set to expire, thus reinforcing our competitive advantage.
 **Ranges indicate that business districts exist within these municipalities; additional county tax reflects council public safety and/or county school facility tax; further explanation to follow