

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2017**

PRESENT: Mayor Burns, Ald. Bruno, Burghart, Cummings, Kilburg, Maladra, Marks, Radecki, Simonian, Seno, Singer

STAFF: Admin. Dawkins, Dir. DeGroot, Dir. Babica, Supt. VanGyseghem

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ald. Bruno, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7pm noting all aldermen were present.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 27, 2017.

Moved by Ald. Seno, second by Ald. Maladra V/V: 10-0 Motion carried.

3. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Recognize the Geneva High School IHSA Class 2A State Champion Dance Team

Mayor Burns recognized the team, introducing each member to the audience and unveiled the city welcome sign in their honor. The team also showed their motivational video that helped them achieve their goals. The committee thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

b. Recommend Draft Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 2 (Liquor Control), Section 4-2-13 (License Fees and Number of Licenses) Adding One (1) Class B-3 Liquor License for Livia Italian Eatery at 207 S. Third Street.

Moved by Ald. Cummings, second by Ald. Marks

Co-owner Kyle Arnold was present to answer questions and provide details on the new restaurant that will be open in May.

V/V: 10-0 Motion carried.

c. Recommend Draft Resolution Approving Site Plan (with Conditions) for ALDI, Inc. to Construct a 1,404 Square-foot Building Addition at 975 E. State Street.

Moved by Ald. Cummings, second by Ald. Marks

Aldi representative Peter Thomas was on hand to answer questions, stating that the expansion is part of the company's overall expansion efforts nationwide.

- d. Recommend Waiver of Bidding Process and Draft Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Contract with Centrisys Centrifuge Systems in the Amount Not-to-Exceed \$52,275 for Repairs to Dewatering Centrifuge at Wastewater Plant.

Moved by Ald. Marks, second by Ald. Kilburg

Supt. VanGyseghem provided information on the vendor and need for repairs at the plant.

V/V: 10-0 Motion carried.

- e. Recommend Waiver of Bidding Process and Draft Resolution Authorizing Execution of an Agreement with Huddleston McBride Drainage Company in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$34,044.60 for Maintenance Activities Within the Prairie Green Natural Areas.

Moved by Ald. Marks, second by Ald. Seno

John Ryan of Land and Water Resources provided information on the vendor and overall status of the wetland project.

V/V: 10-0 Motion carried.

- f. Discussion on Places for Eating Tax.

Mayor Burns stated this item was put on the agenda at the request of Ald. Simonian. Simonian expressed his interest in voting to repeal the entire ordinance, stating that it was not fair to put the tax burden on restaurants alone and that the tax was not properly communicated to that group prior to the ordinance being adopted. Burns stated he had met with restaurant representatives along with Ald. Maladra and Ald. Bruno to continue the dialogue and seek alternatives or compromise. Burns noted the last meeting he had was in early February and had not heard from them since that time. Ald. Maladra and Ald. Bruno also shared their recollections of those meetings, with Ald. Bruno inquiring how the city could assist affected businesses with the costs of implementation. Bruno sought more details on what those costs would be of the restaurateurs. Ald. Maladra asked that the council not lose focus on the need for the additional revenues and that he was concerned about delaying action for yet another fiscal year.

Ald. Cummings and Ald. Singer, who both stated they voted in favor of the ordinance originally, now had misgivings based on hearing from the restaurant community and understanding what burdens would be placed on them. Cummings cited an online news article from Marketwatch on a 'restaurant recession'.

Ald. Kilburg expressed concerns on deliberating on the topic during an election cycle and preferred to wait until May to re-examine the ordinance and its implications on the city and restaurant owners.

Mike Anastasio, owner of Fiora's at 317 S. Third, represented the restaurant owners in attendance and asked the council to rescind the ordinance completely, stating that the burden on the owners was too high. Patrick Neary, owner of Wildwood at 477 S. Third, and partner of Bien Trucha at 410 W. State, Al Buchanan, owner of Geneva Wine Sellers at 227 S. Third, and Nancy Luyten, owner of Patten House at 124 S. Second all expressed concern over the tax and urged the council to rescind the ordinance.

Buchanan, Neary and Anastasio stated that a new Geneva Food and Beverage Association had been formed and they pledged to work with the city to find alternative revenue sources where there was more equity amongst all Geneva business, not just restaurants.

Becky Hruby, a resident of Manchester Course and candidate for alderman in the Third Ward, expressed her support for the ordinance but also suggested that any discussion on changes should wait until after the election.

Michael Oleson, owner of Stockholm's Vardshus and candidate for alderman in the First Ward, expressed his opposition to the tax. He also stated if he were to be elected, he would recuse himself from any future discussion on the tax.

Douglas Warlick, a resident of Fox Run Drive and candidate for alderman in the Fifth Ward, stated that all the candidates have given their opinions on this tax through the Daily Herald candidate questionnaire so voters would make an informed decision on April 4 and the council should look towards those results to find consensus.

Ald. Burghart read from a statement Ald. Radecki made at the October 2016 meeting, where he gave his support for the tax. Burghart characterized bringing back the ordinance as 'political football' and stated she supported the ordinance with a sunset clause to rescind if a future sales tax referendum were to be passed. Ald. Simonian stated that since there was clear support of a citywide sales tax, the city should focus on that in 2018. Ald. Maladra once again brought up the issue of dealing with current budget needs noting a future sales tax referendum, if passed, would do nothing to help with this year's budget needs. Ald. Radecki suggested the council focus on closing the budget gap whether it be making the tax 1%, not 2% as currently written; or perhaps there was another scenario that could be agree upon, recognizing that it was a timely discussion due to the upcoming budget schedule.

Steve Rambo, a resident of Forest View Drive, stated his disgust at how this issue was being handled and the disregard for the restaurateurs.

Ald. Seno stated her continued opposition to the tax. Ald. Marks stated that while he did vote in favor of the tax last year, he has now determined more thought should have gone into the process and would support rescinding the tax. Ald. Maladra again reminded the council that their responsibility was to find the revenue to balance the budget and to date they have appeased the library board by not putting our referendum on the November ballot, appeased the restaurateurs by not enacting the PET tax, and we've heard from the Chamber that they do not support the citywide sales tax. Maladra stated at some point they needed to do what was best for the city.

On a motion by Ald. Cummings, second by Ald. Seno, Cummings requested staff to draft an ordinance rescinding the "Places for Eating Tax" for formal consideration on March 20, 2017.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Cummings, Marks, Radecki, Simonian, Seno, Singer
 NAYS: Bruno, Burghart, Kilburg, Maladra

Motion carried.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Admin. Dawkins relayed the information on the rescheduled leaf collection for Zones A & C due to the recent snowfall. The pickups would now commence on March 20. Ald. Kilburg offered condolences to the families of the victims and all those affected by the recent murders in St. Charles.

5. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ald. Simonian, second by Ald. Marks, the meeting adjourned at 10:25pm.

-Submitted by Recording Secretary Fornari