

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GENEVA
July 13, 2020**

Information regarding the Special City Council Meeting scheduled for July 13.

Visitors are welcome to all City meetings; however, pursuant to Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-43 limiting gatherings of no more than 50 persons (or 50% of room occupancy) and a requirement to wear a face covering in public places, physical attendance at public meetings may be limited or restricted. Meetings will be livestreamed for the public to provide the ability to contemporaneously hear all discussion, testimony and roll call votes of the open meeting in real time. Please visit the City website for details on how to watch the meeting live. As it is anticipated that there may be a large number of individuals desiring to attend this meeting, a satellite meeting location will be located at the City of Geneva Public Works Facility at 1800 South Street. For more information please see the "Notice Regarding Meeting and Public Comment Rule Modification Due to COVID-19".

CALL TO ORDER

The Geneva City Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Kevin Burns.

Aldermen present: Mike Bruno, Michael Clements, Gabriel Kaven, Craig Maladra, Richard Marks, Robert Swanson.

Aldermen and Clerk attending by video or teleconference: Dean Kilburg, Tara Burghart, Jeanne McGowan, Becky Hruby, Roger Godskesen.

Aldermen absent:

Also attending: City Atty. Ron Sandack, City Administrator Stephanie Dawkins, Community Development Director David DeGroot, Assistant City Administrator Ben McCready

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Mike Clements

NEW BUSINESS /PUBLIC COMMENT

Alderman Clements announced that he would be resigning his position as alderman effective at the end of tonight's meeting.

Mayor Burns described procedures for the meeting, and explained what the vote tonight would be; which was only to decide on the sale of the land. Burns then invited members of the public to come to podium to address the Council.

Robert Coleman asked a question about the percentage of votes needed to pass the measure. Mayor Burns explained the 2/3 requirement and noted that a 100% vote was never required.

George and Susan Harker stated they felt the decision-making process was done without input from the community, and asked what tonight's vote would represent. Ald. Bruno and Mayor Burns clarified what was being voted on tonight.

Carmen Santiago-Keenon related her experiences growing up, and gave her feelings about the advantages of a diversified community.

Amy Mayer stated that answers have been provided by the City, and disputes the notion by some that answers have not been provided.

Andrew White asked for more transparency, felt the project was not a good fit for the land are, and asked for a delay on the decision.

Sarah Holing stated she supports and is in favor of the project, and that she trusts the process.

Greg Otsfeld, an attorney representing the Sterling Manner homeowners, stated concerns over the sales process, transparency, suggested that aspects of the Open Meetings Act regarding notification of tonight's meeting were not met, and that the residents of Geneva need to know that public resources are being used for the public good and not for personal gain.

Mayor Burns strongly responded to Otsfeld's comments and disputed any notion of personal gain by any elected official, backed up by an open query to all members of the City Council confirming such. Burns questioned whether Otsfeld had read the distributed timeline of events for the project, and stated, to correct the record, that notification of tonight's meeting did in fact meet the required 48 hours' notice, and further explained how all the Aldermen were contacted to ensure understanding of the need for a ¾ majority vote. Otsfeld ended by asking to delay the vote, and for full disclosure and transparency.

Alexia Ellett, a member of SPAC, spoke in favor of the sale.

Holly Heimlich spoke in favor of the sale.

In response to a question from Ald. Kilburg whether the council would have the same liberty to discuss the matter as the public had so far, Mayor Burns and Atty. Sandack related the Mayor's approach to public statements and gave the council the opportunity to amend this approach if they wished. There being no response from the Council, the public comment continued.

Denise Pallavajjala spoke in favor of the sale.

(At this point, those at the Public Works location were invited to speak).

Mary Scherschel spoke against the sale and asked for a delay.

Karen Rinowski spoke against the sale.

Mike Chennelt spoke against the sale and asked for a delay.

Mr. Dixon spoke against the sale and asked for a delay.

Mrs. Dixon spoke against the sale and asked for a delay.

There being no further comments from the Public Works location, a new group of the public entered the City Council Chambers and were invited to speak).

Scott McCloud asked why the process had changed from a donation to a sale, and asked for a delay.

Andrea Jenniches spoke against the location of the project and asked for a delay.

Lindsey McCall spoke against the sale and asked for a delay.

Bethany Steward spoke against the sale, and the amount set for the sale.

Steve Bryan asked why affordable housing should be built in Geneva, and spoke against the project. In response, Ald. Bruno and Mayor Burns spoke of the SPAC recommendations and of the long-time public interest in promoting affordable housing in Geneva.

Abigail Earhart spoke in favor of the sale.

John Bowe spoke against the sale.

Rafael Lucas spoke against the sale.

Margo Hoovel asked for a delay.

Martha Paschke spoke in favor of the sale.

Cookie Olsen spoke in favor of the sale.

Tom Schershel asked for a delay.

Karen Demaris spoke against the sale, but that she would be OK with a smaller project on the site.

Peter Quigley, attorney for the Burton Foundation, noted that the vote tonight is not to buy the property, but to enter into an agreement in order to do so after a 180-day process during which there will be opportunity for concerns to be discussed and addressed.

Tracey Manning, president of the Burton Foundation, addressed some of the questions and concerns that had been raised. Manning added that people often say they want affordable housing in a city, but “Just not here”, adding that a common feeling by the public is that there is never a good place for it in any city.

There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, Mayor Burns invited members of the City Council to give comment.

3. Consider approval of Resolution 2020-43 authorizing the sale of publicly-owned surplus property (parcel no. 12-08-200-073) to the Burton Foundation an Illinois not for profit corporation, at the proposed sale price of \$576,000, subject to the terms and conditions stated in the Real Estate Purchase Agreement.

Moved by Ald. Bruno, seconded by Ald. Maladra.

Ald. Kilburg asked a series of questions including the reasons for a change from donation to purchase, scheduling of the meeting, required majority to pass the measure, clarification of the meaning of an offer VS a bid, and whether the matter should be decided tonight. Burns and Sandack addressed and answered, and Burns read the complete time-line, which had been distributed, of all recent events regarding affordable housing which led up to tonight’s vote.

Ald. Maladra, Marks, Bruno, Kaven, Swanson, Burghart, McGowan, Clements and Hruby asked questions and gave their views of the pros and cons of the measure. Topics included: the process leading up to this vote, comparison of this project to others in the city, questions about sewer/water fees, feedback from the community, that Geneva has long advocated for affordable housing, but that Burton has been the only entity to step forward with a plan to provide it, the notion that this project would get the vacant property back on the tax roll, thereby generating income for the city, and the need to recognize and address public concerns for development projects in the City.

There being no further comment or discussion, the matter was put to a vote.

NOTE: a 2/3 majority of the corporate authority, including the Mayor, was required for passage, equating to 8 of the 11 holding office.

Roll Call:

AYES: 10 (Ald. Bruno, Burghart Clements, Hruby, Kaven, Kilburg, Maladra, McGowan Swanson, Mayor Burns)

NAYS: 1 (Ald. Marks)

ABSENT: 0 MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

Ald. Burghart, Marks, Kilburg and Bruno thanked Ald. Clements and recognized his contributions to the City. Clements thanked the City and Council for the opportunity to serve his community.

There being no further business, moved by Ald. Marks to adjourn the Geneva City Council meeting.

Roll Call:

AYES: 10 (Ald. Bruno, Burghart, Clements, Hruby, Kaven, Kilburg, Maladra, Marks, McGowan, Swanson)

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0 MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 PM.

City Clerk
Roger Godskesen