

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
July 26, 2017, 6:00 PM
City Council Chambers, City Hall

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (Chair), Councilors Anne Watson (via telephone), Ashley Hill, Justin Turcotte, Dona Bate, Jean Olson, and Rosie Krueger. City Clerk John Odum acted as secretary of the meeting.

At 6pm, the Mayor called the meeting to order.

17-231. The proposed agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

17-232. Councilor Bate moved the Council approve the consent agenda. Councilor Turcotte seconded. After a brief discussion, motion carries unanimously at 6:02.

6:02 The Mayor opened the public hearing on the COPS property at 101 Northfield Street (old Brown Derby restaurant building, on the Econo Lodge property) which has been identified as a public nuisance building under the city ordinance. The Mayor swore in City Manager William Fraser, Fire Chief/Health Officer Robert Gowans, and Building Inspector Chris Lumbra as witnesses. Each testified as to their findings, with Mr. Lumbra offering his associated photos (exhibit 1) and reports (exhibits 2 and 3). Discussion and questions for the witnesses followed. There were no witnesses or representatives from COPS (Econo Lodge) present or participating. Mr. Fraser submitted a document detailing his findings.

Councilor Turcotte moved the Council find the real property located at 101 Northfield Street to be in violation of the City Public Nuisance ordinance. The Mayor ruled the motion out of order.

Councilor Turcotte moved the Council enter executive session (and include Assistant City Manager Sue Allen) for discussion. Councilor Bate seconded. Motion carried unanimously at 6:34.

Councilor Bate moved the Council return to open session, and was seconded by Councilor Turcotte. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Turcotte moved the Council find that the real property located at 101 Northfield Street is in violation of Montpelier's nuisance ordinance as detailed in the report, and that the Council adopt the finding of the proposal as recommended by city staff. Councilor Hill seconded. After a brief discussion, the motion carried unanimously at 6:31. The Mayor then closed the public hearing.

17-235. The Mayor opened the discussion of a potential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. Fred Kenney of the Vermont Economic Progress Council shared a power point presentation. Questions and discussion from the Council followed. Consultants from White and Burke (real estate advisors Gail Henderson King and Stephanie Whitney) also participated.

Councilor Bate moved the Council direct the staff to proceed with a TIF application, approve the White & Burke proposal and authorize the City Manager – with review by the city attorney – to sign a contract consistent with the proposal. Councilor Turcotte seconded. Without objection, the motion was amended at Councilor Hill’s request to append “and to review what it yields as a return. The motion as amended was approved unanimously.

The Mayor called a recess at 7:26. The meeting reconvened at 7:32.

The Mayor introduced the master plan/zoning discussion. Public comments were requested to be held to 2 minutes. The Clerk kept time. Testimony was offered by Alan Goldman.

Councilor Bate moved the Council instruct staff and the Planning Commission to begin work to readopt the 2010 master plan and for the council to continue work on the zoning ordinance. Councilor Hill seconded. Discussion followed, including further comments from Mr. Goldman, as well as Mike Reed. Motion carried on a 4-2 vote (Councilors Bate, Hill Krueger and Watson voting aye, Councilors Olson and Turcotte voting nay).

17-237 The Council received an “organics to energy” presentation from Kurt Motyka, Chris Cox, Tom McArdle, Lawrence Roth (Energy Systems Group Senior VP) and Larry Doyle. A power point presentation was offered. Geoff Fitzgerald and Kate Stevenson (of the Energy Committee participated in the discussion, as well as Finance Director Todd Provencher. Discussion followed.

Councilor Bate moved the Council declare its intention is to approve a Project Development Agreement (PDA) with Energy Systems Group for the development of improved organics receiving at the Montpelier WRRF and designation of the City Manager as duly authorized agent to further negotiate and refine the contract and to come back for council review and approval with the goal of March 2018 town meeting. Motion died for lack of a second.

Councilor Hill moved the Council would consider adopting the agreement between Energy Systems Group and delegate responsibility to the city manager to negotiate the final terms of the agreement, and that that agreement be brought back to the Council for consideration and approval. Councilor Turcotte seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:40.

17-238. The Mayor opened the second reading on the proposed ordinance change (revisions/additions to DPW fees) at 9:41. Hearing no testimony from the public, Councilor Turcotte moved to pass second reading and approve the ordinance as presented. Councilor Bate seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:42.

Councilor Bate moved the Council approve the proposed DPW fee resolution. Councilor Krueger seconded. The motion carried at 9:42. The Mayor closed the public hearing.

17-239. Councilor Turcotte moved the Council accept the city goals as posted on the agenda.

Councilor Hill seconded. Councilor Watson left the meeting at 9:46. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

17-241 Councilor Krueger gave a gender neutral restroom work update. Councilor Bate Mayors Innovation Project work underway in Burlington.

17-242. The Clerk updated the Council on his museum project.

17-244. City Manager Fraser noted the coming press conference on housing and lauded the Council for its goals work.

At 9:51, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.