

**MINUTES OF THE MAJORITY OF THE QUORUM  
OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS  
AT AN  
OPEN TOWN MEETING**

A Majority of the Quorum of the City Council of Peoria, Illinois attended a Town Hall Meeting that was held at Von Stueben School, 801 E. Forrest Hill, Peoria, Illinois, on April 28, 2004, beginning at 6:40 P.M.

In attendance were: Mayor David P. Ransburg, Council Members Ardis, Sandberg (Arriving 7:50 P.M.), Thetford, Turner – 5. Those not in attendance were Council Members Gulley, Grayeb, Morris, Nichting, Spears and Teplitz - 6.

Also in attendance were City Manager Randy Oliver; Director of Planning and Growth Management, Patricia Landes; Superintendent of Police John Stenson, Assistant Superintendent of Police Gary Poynter, Lt. Phil Benne, Peoria Police Department; John Kunski, Director of Inspections; Kent Tomins Assistant Fire Chief; Karie Friling, Assistant, Director of Economic Development; Stephen Van Winkle, Director of Public Works; Alma Brown, Public Information Officer, members of one of the POP Units (Problem Oriented Police Unit) and City Clerk Mary Haynes.

Also in attendance were City Treasurer Reginald Willis, approximately 30 interested citizens and representatives of the media.

Council Member Thetford welcomed the people and introduced Mayor Ransburg, Council Members Ardis and Turner and (at 7:50 P.M.) Council Member Sandberg.

Mayor Ransburg then welcomed the people and stated the Council was coming to every District with the objective to communicate to, listen and to find out concerns. He stated that the Council as a whole is very interested in keeping neighborhoods strong. He introduced City Manager Randy Oliver.

City Manager Randy Oliver gave a brief overview of the City in a slide presentation (on file in the Clerk's Office). A summary of the initial presentation followed: Mr. Oliver explained that out of the tax money on a \$100,000 house, 12% or \$316 went for City services. He added, \$231 or 9% went for Park District, the County utilized \$286 or 10%, and "other" was \$253 or 10%. He said that schools, District #150 and ICC, received 59% or \$1,554. He said that 12% provided Police, Fire, Public Works, and other City services. He said out of approximately \$97 million in operating revenue, 20% came from property tax and 39% came from sales tax. The remaining, he said, came from other sources. He added, on the expenditure side, 29% went for Police, 22% for Public Works and 20% for Fire, with the remainder for support services.

Mr. Oliver explained some of the City's strategies, such as the Enterprise Zone and the City's three-cell growth strategy. He spoke of the Medical Technology District and encouraged participation by both those in and out of the Medical Technology District. He invited those present to attend planning meetings to be held on May 19 and 20. He stated that development had to be in a logical and supportive manner and he explained the new Enterprise Zone would go down Western Avenue. He added this law presents some challenges in that the zone needs to be contiguous, but it is a good tool to develop areas where the City wants to spawn

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development. He further explained the O'Brien Stadium project that leveraged \$6.5 Million for every \$1 the City contributed.

Mr. Oliver addressed the Heart of Peoria Plan and stated it recommended connectivity to the neighborhoods and increased density downtown. He explained that the Heart of Peoria Commission had been appointed. He added the plan is to strengthen linkages between downtown and neighborhoods.

Mr. Oliver explained the Museum Block (formerly the Sears Block), applauded the early sponsors of the Civic Center, and spoke about the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation programs for multi-and single-family housing. Mr. Oliver added that involvement by the residents makes neighborhoods second to none and the City wants to focus on neighborhoods, block by block.

Mr. Oliver explained the new structure of City Council Meetings, whereby the Council would have regular business meetings the first and third Tuesdays in Council Chambers and would conduct study and policy sessions on the second and fourth Tuesdays in Room 404, unless the crowd necessitated going into the larger Council Chambers. He added there would be no final action, only advisory votes. Mr. Oliver stated that the City will develop partnerships to work smarter, such as having members from the Mayor's Advisory Committee for the Disabled take pictures of people parking illegally. He stated we are in the process of automating the inspection program and have partnerships with the various communities for such things as pavement marking, sealcoating and street light installation. He stated the City is pushing up traffic enforcement for public safety and revenue. He spoke about the red light camera system some cities use. He further addressed the NEAT team and POP team policing efforts the Council implemented and stated they are very effective. Mr. Oliver stated the Peoria's new website should be up and running within the next 90 days. Mr. Oliver's PowerPoint presentation covered statistics on all City Departments and is on file in the Clerks' Office.

At 7:30 P.M. Mr. Oliver answered questions the audience had submitted on 3 x 5 cards. Some of those questions and the discussion are outlined below.

Mr. Terry Knapp, President of the Teachers Union, asked to speak about using the funds the City receives from the Riverboat gambling for education, as it was originally intended. He said if there was a partnership between the schools and the Park District, and we placed our children at a higher level, things would improve. He gave examples of how East Peoria has used the money to improve services for the students. Council Member Thetford requested that all questions be submitted by card and she gave Mr. Knapp a card.

Mr. Oliver stated that Peoria gets \$2 million, but he would have to get some information for Mr. Knapp and send it to him. Mr. Oliver added that the City does not do social services. In response to a question regarding the multiplier on the tax bills, Mayor Ransburg stated it is added by the State and is supposed to adjust the assessment to market value.

Another citizens asked about whether there was money in the budget for a sidewalk improvement which has been approved and she was referred to Mr. Van Winkle to discuss this after the meeting. Her question about a stop sign at Rouse Avenue was similarly referred.

Following a brief discussion on placement of stop signs, Council Member Thetford stated she did not agree with Mr. Oliver's philosophy on this.

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Mr. Oliver did promise to send traffic enforcement to monitor the area and issue tickets, if appropriate.

In answer to another question regarding forcing businesses to have signs, Mr. Oliver stated there is nothing in the code to require signage.

In regard to a question about fire response to 911 calls, Mr. Oliver stated the City is having discussions at the current time and he wants to develop a 10-20 year strategy regarding fire station location. He stated the list for handling calls has been trimmed to three companies and something should be coming to Council soon.

Regarding questions about pension costs, Mr. Oliver stated this is an unfunded mandate laid upon the cities by the State Legislature. He stated this needed to be addressed at the State level.

A citizen remarked that the City had some control over choices, such as that which approved the City's early retirement program.

Regarding questions about the impact of the Cub Foods TIF (Midtown), Mr. Oliver and Council Member Thetford agreed it was time to do an analysis of all the TIF's.

Regarding the amount of time the City spends on broken neighborhoods, Mr. Oliver agreed we need to address all neighborhood issues together and recognize the signs of early decay and turn it around.

In answer to a question regarding business retention, Mr. Oliver stated he had implemented a business retention program and that discussions had been held with officials of Sheridan Village and Bergners. He said there is an effort to encourage businesses to rehab their current space, rather than abandoning it for other locations and leaving behind blight.

Regarding the PHA Section 8 program, Mr. Oliver stated this is a quagmire and the PHA needs problems and properties identified. He said that Mr. Roger John, Executive Director of the PHA, has an aggressive program regarding problem tenants and landlords.

Proper deployment of fire equipment was discussed and Mr. Oliver stated they have had discussions regarding when to use ladder trucks and how to use jump crews. He said the City is working on that.

Regarding District #150, Mr. Oliver stated that taxes on the growth cell properties go to Dunlap School District. In fact, he said, 70% of the taxes on City property for schools goes to Dunlap School District. He said this needs to be addressed at the State level.

Mr. Oliver stated, in response to a query regarding City services, that through Peoria Cares, the phone service where citizens can call to report things like potholes, services are handled quickly and there is on-going department training for customer service. He stated he is advocating that departments tell citizens if they cannot meet the request to avoid false expectations in the event that the City does not handle the service or the service cannot be provided.

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Mr. Oliver agreed to send one citizen fire statistics.

In regard to a written question pertaining to how Council Member Thetford voted, Mr. Oliver stated he did not know and the citizen could speak with Ms. Thetford after the meeting.

Council Member Thetford and Mr. Oliver thanked those attending. Ms. Thetford stated she would speak privately with some of the attendees regarding their concerns.

Seeing no one else wished to address the gathering, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

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Mary L. Haynes, MMC  
City Clerk of Peoria, Illinois