

FEBRUARY 16, 2015 LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, Members present: A. Hraban, J. Pearson, J. West. Others present: A. Christianson 1, A. Christianson 2, K. Gorsegrner, A. Kenyon.

Call to Order:

Committee Chair Pearson called the meeting to order.

WRA Agreement:

It was noted that, after Adm. Christianson expressed concerns about City staff having time to administer the Environmental Challenge Program, Flambeau School district agreed to take that on. There is likely still an expectation that the City's PW Dept. will assist with specific efforts, but those remain to be determined.

Planning Commission Makeup:

Those present reviewed a draft amendment ordinance to later the makeup of the Planning Commission to eliminate two Council members and replace them with two citizen members. The purpose for doing so is to avoid a situation where the Council sits in judgement of a decision made or action taken by the Commission with two Council members being members of both and not so ethically able to participate in judging their own actions. Such a situation arose recently.

There was discussion of whether or not to revise current language requiring that there be one member of the Planning Commission from each of the seven aldermanic districts. It was decided not to recommend this change even though it appears that requirement has been overlooked as it appears there are currently two each from Districts 2 and 7, and none from District 3 or 6. The hope being that members from Districts 3 and 6 can be added going forward.

Motion was made by A. Hraban, seconded by West and carried by voice vote to recommend Council approval of the amendment ordinance as drafted.

Vacant Property Ordinance:

Main Street Director Alan Christianson briefly reviewed a vacant property ordinance from the Village of Millersburg, as an example of a type of ordinance the Wisconsin Main Street Program likes to see its participating communities adopt. Such an ordinance requires keeping a registry of vacant downtown buildings including requirements for routine inspections and upkeep, and providing for penalties where the requirements aren't met. It is recognized that some property owners will feel put upon to comply with such an ordinance, but that those owners who do inspect and regularly maintain their properties will benefit from better kept nearby properties, which might otherwise have a blighting influence and depress the values of their properties despite their efforts to keep them up. Members will take this sample ordinance home and review it in detail before considering it further at a future meeting. There was speculation that damage to the Old Methodist Church and former Finish Line tavern might have been reduced had such an ordinance were already in place.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at about 5:05 p.m.