

ICON Membership Meeting Minutes  
6pm, July 26, 2021  
Iles Park

Present: Bill Baskett, Polly Poskin, Sam Cahnman, Tom Raymond, Donna Mathis, Carol Kneedler, Jill Steiner, Marty Vandiver, Ann Vandiver, Jess weitzel, Ald. Erin Conley

1. Called to order at 6:09pm
2. ICON Business
  - a. Review of May 2021 Meeting Minutes
    - i. No corrections
  - b. Treasurer's Report
    - i. Balance as of 7/26/2021: \$8,267.19
      1. Income: one membership renewal - \$20.00
      2. Expenses: \$0.00
    - ii. Q4 2020 Campaign Disclosure Quarterly Report filed January 8, 2021
    - iii. Q1 2021 Campaign Disclosure Quarterly Report filed April 4, 2021
    - iv. Amended D-1 filed 6/22/2020 to record new Chair
    - v. Q2 2021 Quarterly Report filed July 8, 2021
  - c. Problem Properties
    - i. Garbage proposal being pulled from larger Problem Properties platform to be a standalone proposal
      1. Broad proposal: action actively being taken on proposal with City representatives
      2. In process of looking at code changes to tighten ordinances up to allow better code enforcement
      3. Adena Rivas in Public Works is now receiving garbage reports from haulers whereas the Housing Division in Public Works previously received and did not act upon
    - ii. Problem Properties focus is in the spotlight with a Harvard fellow studying ordinances to come up with better way to do things; Nate Bottom is looking at what can be implemented quickly but unsure of when Harvard Fellow's report is due/will be available
    - iii. Discussions at Council-level to focus on rehabilitation of properties; New Orleans example of approach is of particular interest
      1. Possible to change vacant property ordinance from 3 years to 1 year
    - iv. 1500 city residents estimated to be without garbage service since 2015
  - d. City Council Update
    - i. Primary conversations around American Rescue Plan Act dollars to address homeless community; day center, permanent supportive housing, etc..
      1. Ald. Conley pushing for long term solutions; urging support for Continuum of Care and agencies looking to get homelessness to "functional zero"
3. Discussion Topic: Should ICON remain a PAC or become a 501c3?

a. PAC

i. Advantages

1. Can endorse specific candidates
2. Can criticize specific candidates on their record
3. Candidates can publicize ICON as an endorser
4. More political leverage?
5. Marketing stays the same (disclaimers, fundraising messages, handouts, focus areas, website, social media and email, membership forms)
6. No legal change to status / costs.

ii. Disadvantages

1. Inhibiting people from joining because they don't want to be part of a "political" organization
2. Seen as political
3. Donations aren't tax deductible
4. Confusing?
5. Election ads can be expensive
6. Campaign Disclosure tasks quarterly require specific skills; system is not user friendly or transparent for those unfamiliar; potential for fines.
7. Cost of outsourcing Campaign Disclosure
8. More tasks for Treasurer; more difficult to recruit Treasurer.

b. Non-Profit

i. Advantages

1. Could still speak to issues and encourage people to vote for "visionary city leaders", just not specifically.
2. Could still host election forums
3. No expenses for election ads; smaller fundraising requirements.
4. Could still ask candidates to sponsor ads for various events.
5. No Campaign Disclosure tasks or expenses.
6. Less work for Treasurer; easier to recruit a volunteer.
7. Easier to understand by residents?
8. Donations are tax deductible.
9. Could be seen as more altruistic (not political)?

ii. Disadvantages

1. Can't endorse specific candidates
2. No endorsement ads
3. No membership meetings to discuss candidates and issues – could lead to lack of understanding of issues important to membership.
4. Legal change in status, including legal costs and rewriting bylaws.
5. Different legal reporting (Sec of State annual)
6. Changes to marketing
7. Possible changes to committee structure (City Council Committee?)
8. Different perspective; possibly reduced leverage or inclination to advocacy

c. Summary/Next Steps

- i. Will table discussion for now as there is no clear consensus, concerns over lobbying language in Act by Illinois General Assembly (signed by Governor in Summer 2021, to take effect January 1, 2022), concerns over ICON losing its hard-fought reputation for being a thought leader at City-level
    - 1. Need a larger group to discuss further but currently seems like there is no harm in staying a PAC but focusing on advocacy work and education in the community
- 4. Old Business
  - a. None
- 5. New Business
  - a. The next Problem Property Committee meeting Thursday August 5, 5:30 pm Zoom Conference.
  - b. The next Steering Committee meeting Monday August 23, 5:30 pm Zoom Conference.
  - c. The next Membership meeting Monday September 27, 6:00 pm, location TBD.
- 6. Meeting adjourned at 7:46pm