

Springfield ICON Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2014

Guest Speakers

Rianne Hawkins, Deputy City Clerk

Rianne said the City Clerk is the official record keeper for the City and reviewed responsibilities of the City Clerk's Office, highlighting information of interest to ICON. The City Clerk's Office is the contact point for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Their website lists all of those inquiries, and FOIA reports may be downloaded with the exception of police and fire department reports, which are not publicly available on the website.

Birth and death certificates are certified by the City Clerk's Office.

Recaps of City Council votes may be obtained the day after the council meets, including on Twitter @spfldcityclerk. Old photos of Springfield can be found on Throwback Thursday, #tbt. Actual minutes of City Council meetings are not posted until they are approved two weeks after the council meeting. Minutes are not verbatim, but a meaningful summary of the discussion.

Springfield ordinances in process cannot currently be tracked on-line, but internal tracking by the City Clerk's Office is an option. Existing Springfield ordinances can be searched online at <https://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=12414>.

Cory Jobe, Ward 6 Alderman

Cory Jobe spoke about his vision for Ward 6 and the City of Springfield, emphasizing the importance of ICON involvement in the 2015 mayor and aldermanic races. He mentioned that recycling doesn't go far enough, and he expects garbage to resurface as an issue in the 2015 campaign since there are still a significant number of people without garbage service. Letters sent to 3,000 presumed garbage scofflaws were based on addresses provided by haulers and caused problems for the city due to poor quality of the lists.

Cory talked about problem properties, mentioning the former Esquire Theater property and the possibility of fines would provide an incentive for the owners to sell at a reasonable price.

Cory stated that a revolving loan fund could help rebuild older neighborhoods. He noted that viable problem properties could be saved instead of demolished with the help of a city seed program to pay for improvements along with a good rental program and good landlords.

The street and sewer improvements funded by the hike in the sales tax are an important step forward, but he stressed that Springfield still needs to fund an aggressive maintenance program.

Cory said an electronic tablet program with wireless communication would greatly improve the property inspection process, allowing housing code violations to be tracked more efficiently and proactively. The ability to track payments owed to the City across departments in near real-time using a universal communication system is needed by the Treasurer's office. He emphasized the importance of working effectively and respectfully with City staff to get work done, and suggested the need to explore public / private partnerships to improve the city.

Cory discussed the possibility of an Inspector General, a position created by former Mayor Hasara, but left unfunded. He affirmed the need for an independent resource to which taxpayers and city employees can turn with concerns - to insure open, honest, and transparent government.

Cory was asked for an opinion on possible overuse of executive sessions held by the City Council. He felt there might be slight overuse, but stated executive session is needed for personnel matters and litigation issues. According to Cory, open government can best be maintained by communicating with constituents and the other aldermen on a frequent basis. The number one priority for a public official should be constituent services.

Cory concluded by stating that Springfield needs a City Planner, noting that almost all major cities in Illinois have a planning department, and a solid economic development strategy.

By-Laws Changes Approved

ByLaws changes were approved adding at-large members to the Steering Committee. See attached By-Laws and online at <http://springfieldicon.org/dontmoveimprove/wp-content/uploads/ICON-ByLaws-20140519.pdf>.

City of Springfield Ward Redistricting

Ward Map vote is scheduled for May 20.

Meeting Minutes & Financial

The April 28, 2014 minutes were approved as presented.

A balance of \$1,778.05 was reported for the ICON account.

City Council

ICON unanimously voted to support a video gambling ordinance that would limit new video gambling permits to those businesses making more than 60% of their revenue from non-gambling sources.

Outreach Committee

10 people from ICON attended the Mayor's Historic Preservation awards.

Picnic June 8, Center Park, Lake Springfield – a volunteer sheet was passed around. Jeanette Eichhorn was thanked for designing the event flyer.

Attendees

Jamie Adair, Jen Aholt, Mark Anderson, Ruth Anderson, Jeanette Eichhorn, Bud Farrar, Rianne Hawkins, Michael Higgins, Bryan Johnsrud, Carol Kneeder, Kevin Mihelcic, Marilyn Piland, Polly Poskin, Darrel Riffey, Sharon Riffey, Marty Vandiver, Larry Vinson

Guests

Cory Jobe (Alderman Ward 6), Tom England

Submitted by: Martin Vandiver, Secretary