

Wed, Dec 07, 2022 7:00PM

Common Council

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Mayor Jake Woodford 05:04

Good evening, I now call to order the Wednesday December 7 2022 meeting of the Appleton Common Council. Tonight's invocation will be delivered by Alder Jones.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 05:19

I start tonight's meeting with a very, very important and vital question I have for you to ask yourselves. What do you do with your shopping cart? Yeah, shopping cart? Yep. Do you always put it back? Do you leave it for some random associate to wrangle? Do you park it on an island so you're kind of bringing it back? This is a simple shopping cart. It's an—it's an unspoken social contract that states while we may not go out of our way to assist someone, the very least we should not behave in a way that actively impedes the lives of others. By not returning your cart, you're making a clear statement that your life is more important than other's lives, your schedule is more important, you're above that social contract. While the shopping cart task may see simple, it is a much larger representation for how we approach our work, our personal lives, and more.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 06:14

As we are ramping up into the December season, it is easy to get caught up in the stress and the drama and exhaustion of the holidays, while we run ourselves ragged trying to be filled with the spirit of the season. As you go about the month, I urge you return your cart. Literally metaphorically, symbolically. Take that extra step to show others grace and kindness. Recognize that we are all in this together. There are lots of schedules, lots of people are busy, everyone matters. And we can do more when we put our needs in the backseat from time to time. And don't try and say that you shop at Aldi and always return your cart because you totally get your 25 cents back. So, thank you

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:02

please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance.

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:26

Roll Call of Alders.

Clerk Kami Lynch 07:28

All are represented with the exception of Aldersperson Firkus who is excused.

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:33

It's—and roll call of officers and department heads.

Clerk Kami Lynch 07:36

All are represented.

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:38

Okay. Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:54

No buttons to push. [Note: he was talking about issues with the computerized meeting/voting system.]

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Mayor Jake Woodford 08:01

All right. We have a motion and a second to approve. We'll just get that caught up here in the record. Okay. I'm assuming then no buttons to vote either.

Okay, all those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Are there any opposed? Hearing none the motion passes and the minutes are approved.

We'll let Clerk Lynch catch up here. All right, and that motion passed 14 to zero. So, the minutes have been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 08:37

Onto Business Presented by the Mayor. I have one piece of business to present this evening, a recommendation for a new director. We conducted a national search for a Director of Community and Economic Development. And as a result of that search, I'm pleased to bring forward an outstanding candidate for your consideration. She comes to us from Outagamie County where she's held the role of Development and Land Services Director bringing 15 years of experience in Community Planning and Development, with experience at the county, municipal, and regional scales. She specializes in long range planning and project policy development, with particular interest in the areas of land use, community facilities, public infrastructure, and community and economic development. She has a master's of science in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Iowa, and a Bachelor's of Science in Geography from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. And she currently serves as president elect of the American Planning Association, the Wisconsin chapter. It's my pleasure and honor to recommend Kara J Homan to serve as the city's next Director of Community and Economic Development and her resume was included in your materials.

Mayor Jake Woodford 09:50

At this time, I'll entertain a motion. We have a motion and a second for approval. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, the motion passes. Congratulations, Kara. We're excited.

So, Kara will start on January 4. So, we look forward to welcoming her to the city of Appleton then, and congratulations, welcome.

Mayor Jake Woodford 10:34

All right, come now to time of public participation. And we have one member of the public who signed up to speak. So, we'll ask you to step on up to the podium. Your name and association for the record. Welcome, Jennifer.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 10:47

Thank you. I'm Jennifer Stephany. I'm the executive director with Appleton Downtown Incorporated. And I appreciate the opportunity tonight to share a comment in as it really relates to the increase in the downtown parking ramp permits. While I do realize that these rates have been predetermined at the budget deliberation, I would like to share our concerns that we've heard from our business improvement district members and how it relates to the amount of vacant office space within those BID buildings.

As we've come now, to the close of 2022, we're starting to feel the effects of COVID impacts on employee counts employee numbers in our downtown. This year, we've lost significant employees—Salelytics, Principal Financial, and many others that are now working from home. They're not leaving downtown because they don't

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like it. The employees are working from home. But behind it leaves this week of empty office space within our downtown.

Obviously parking rates play a significant role in business recruitment downtown. I ran a calculation this week, taking a look at our catalyst access on our website to see what the vacant properties downtown are tallying in at. We tallied a total of 378,872 square feet. That's a lot of vacant office space. And I gathered a little bit more information for you. I asked NAI Pfefferle to run a report on vacant office space. This is specifically office space now available in the full city of Appleton. And according to costar, the current vacancy rate of office space in Appleton is now sitting at 10.7%, which is compared to just 9.4% a year ago, just a year ago, definitely on the rise. While leasing activity has remained somewhat steady—definitely compared to other larger markets—filling those larger office tenants is very difficult and is going to remain a challenge for some time.

Naturally, an increase in parking meter rates—parking permit rates, excuse me—will be another barrier to attracting and retaining businesses within the downtown. I ask you to please keep this top of mind as you're making decisions on permit rates that will impact the entire downtown. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:20

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? All right, hearing none we'll close public participation and move on now to public hearings. We have one public hearing this evening. This is item 22-1443 public hearing for proposed public needs assessment amendment. This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? Hearing none I declare that public hearing closed.

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:59

We have no special resolutions so we'll establish the order the day. Looks like the buttons are maybe coming back to life. Okay just that one alright. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:13

Thank you chair. from Parks and Recreation 22-1447 The public facility needs assessment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 14:33

Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 14:36

Thank you. From Municipal Services 22-1500 the Public Works fee schedule.

Mayor Jake Woodford 14:52

Any others? Okay, hearing none, we'll first pick up the item from Municipal Services. Okay, item 22-1500 to approve Department of Public Works 2023 fee schedules. We have a motion and a second to approve. Open the floor for discussion. Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 15:24

Thank you. Just because we have a guest here for this, I thought it's worth separating out. But also, just to kind of make all of our colleagues aware, having been on the Municipal Services Committee for the past few years now, this is something we've kind of been watching and seeing. I think we're all pretty well aware of how much we've had to backfill the parking utility in recent years, and how much we've been setting some projects off into future years, because of kind of the lack of revenue.

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Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 15:55

As heard tonight, this is a complicated issue. And every action we take has some potential consequences. Just want to make our colleagues aware, and this is something that we really need to be kind of watching carefully and seeing as kind of the year ahead comes and you know how the impact of fewer businesses downtown may impact our parking utility and revenue and how that affects kind of the work that we do here as well. I think, you know, just given what we've seen over the last couple of years, we're trending in a troublesome direction here. So just want to make everyone aware that's something I think that bears watching for us.

Mayor Jake Woodford 16:38

Alder Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 16:39

Thank you, Your Honor. I just—if I might, ask the Public Works Director to speak on the relative elasticity of demand for those monthly permits. I mean, what, like, do we have an estimate of the effect that raising the price of the permit \$5 is going to have on the number of permits that we sell?

Mayor Jake Woodford 17:03

Director Block. Oh, we'll get you a microphone. Thank you. Director Harkness. Okay. Director Block.

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 17:15

Thank you. In terms of, I guess, a sensitivity analysis related to the monthly parking fees—er permits—and what we could experience with a rate increase of \$5, I do not have a sensitivity analysis or, you know, estimated number on what that may or may not impact.

Mayor Jake Woodford 17:42

Any further discussion? Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 17:47

Thank you, Mayor. Just a related question. Do we have a sense of the value of that increase of \$5? How many permits do we allocate annually and what does that dollar figure amount to?

Mayor Jake Woodford 18:03

Director Block?

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 18:04

Thank you. Yes. Included in the budget on page 352, the estimated revenue is \$76,560. I would have to do a back calculation on how many estimated permits versus this year but the delta there is \$76,560.

Mayor Jake Woodford 18:25

Any further discussion? Just to check in, do you have voting buttons? I can't see your button. So okay. So, we have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor, please signify by saying Aye. Any opposed? Okay, we'll mark Alders Del Toro and Meltzer as voting "nay". Oh, uh Fenton also. Okay. Schultz is also opposed? Okay. Otherwise, we'll have everyone else marked as voting "yes". Motion passes 10 to four with alders Meltzer, Del Toro, Fenton, and Schultz opposed.

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Mayor Jake Woodford 19:24

Okay, we'll move on now to the item from Parks and Recreation. This is item 22-1447. Approve the public facility needs assessment. We have a motion. We have a motion and a second for approval. All right. We'll open the floor for discussion. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 19:59

Thank you, Chair. Way back on November 7, if anyone can remember that back that far, we talked about this at Parks and Rec. When it was brought forward to us, the memo that you see attached to the agenda gives a little bit more information that is really being voted on tonight. What we're talking about tonight is approving the assessment, not the fee schedule. The fee schedule is yet to be determined between the Parks and Rec Department, and community and economic development, etc. So, they're still—that's still in discussion and is not a part of what you would be approving tonight. And I just wanted to make that clear, because that was a question that I had for Director Gazza at the time. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 20:47

Any further discussion? Hearing none, we have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, the motion passes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 21:05

All right. I need a motion on the balance of the agenda. All right. We have a motion and a second to approve the balance. Is there any discussion? All right, hearing none, all those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Opposed? Hearing none, the motion passes. The balance of the agenda has been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 21:35

All right, we have no consolidated action items, no items held. Need a motion on the ordinances. Okay, we have a motion and a second to approve. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, motion passes and the ordinances have been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 22:03

All right, license applications and communications referred to committees of jurisdiction. Resolutions submitted by alderpersons referred to committees of jurisdiction. Have there been any resolutions submitted?

Clerk Kami Lynch 22:14

Yes, there's one resolution submitted by Alderspersons Croatt, Hartzheim, and Doran. Whereas the 2023 adopted executive budget and service plan Council budget business unit 10000, line 620600 contains \$7,200 for parking ramp permits for common council members, And whereas this non-essential benefit has been reviewed, discussed and debated for several years, And whereas the past discussion and debate involves differing viewpoints and includes positions that view the taxpayer funded parking ramp permit benefit as excessive, Therefore Be It Resolved, the 2023 budget is amended to completely remove the line item for parking permits in the Common Council budget. And the \$7,200 is moved to the Public Works Department concrete budget business unit 17014 line 680901.

Mayor Jake Woodford 23:09

That'll be referred to the Finance Committee.

Mayor Jake Woodford 23:16

All right. Other Council Business. Director Gazza, you wanted to make an announcement. Let's get him the mic if you would please. Thank you.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 23:26

Thank you very much. The desktops on all your desks will be replaced tomorrow. So, we're just asking if you take any of your valuables or anything that you want stowed away. If you could do that before you leave tonight. You can leave the stuff in the drawers, just this the surface itself. So, thank you very much.

Mayor Jake Woodford 23:49

We'll note that in the record, Alder Siebers, there's candy in your drawer, all right. Is there any other business. Before you check your desks is there any, is there any other business? All right, hearing no other business, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Have a motion and a second to adjourn. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? All right, motion passes. We are adjourned. Thank you everyone.