

Item 24-0312: Request to Reconsider Item #24-0214 Glendale & Whitman Yard Waste Site Hours of Operation

Item 24-0214: Approve the proposed modification to the Glendale and Whitman Yard Waste Site hours of operation

Common Council

Wed, Mar 20, 2024 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:28

So, we do have item 24-0312 request to reconsider item number 24-0215 Glendale and Whitman yard waste site hours of operation on the agenda, but we need a motion and a second before we could take up the reconsideration.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:48

Alder Croatt a point of order.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:15:49

Thank you, and does the motion have to come from someone on the prevailing side?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:53

Yes, it does.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:15:54

Attorney Behrens is saying yes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:59

And given that the item failed...

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:16:05

I believe it was a tie vote, wasn't it?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:06

It was a tie vote.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 1:16:10

Right.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:11

Go ahead. It was a motion—

Attorney Christopher Behrens 1:16:12

Motion to approve those who voted against it then in theory would be on the prevailing side because it ultimately failed.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:16:19

So, the nay votes from last time.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:16:24

Point of order.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:25

Alder Doran.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:16:26

Thank you. Doesn't our—don't our rules also state that a member absent from a meeting can also ask for reconsideration?

Attorney Christopher Behrens 1:16:33

That is correct. That is also an option.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:36

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:37

Okay, so Alder Hartzheim will be our mover and a second from Alder Van Zeeland. Right, so, is there any discussion on the motion to reconsider? Hearing none, we have a motion and a second. Please cast your votes. Motion passes 13 to 2 with Alders Del Toro and Thyssen opposed.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:17:11

So, we will now take up item 24-0214, approve the proposed modification to the Glendale and Whitman yard waste site hours of operation. We have a motion and a second to approve. We'll open the floor for discussion, and Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:17:38

Thank you, Mayor. I was one of the voices that voiced concern about the original motion and voted against it initially. When I saw this on the agenda, I reached out to Dani and Nate with staff to have some further conversations about their proposal, reconsider it, and then also request some data because I was probably making some assumptions previously without any kind of metric for understanding the effects of reducing hours at one of the sites to purely weekdays. So, with some of that information in hand and taking some time to review that, my concerns are slightly—I would say they're alleviated. I'll be interesting to see what happens when we—if we approve this—when we move to strictly weekdays at the at the Whitman yard site. But given some of the data that was presented, it may not be as concerning as it was.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:18:36

You know, I had some concerns by some of my constituents in my community. This—the Whitman yard is in my district. And I shared some of those concerns. Now, I as I've said previously, I use the both sites with some regularity, and if you know the mayhem guy from the progressive commercials, I'm that guy. I'm rolling into the Whitman site at 5:30. I've got a trailer of brush. I've got a pile of construction debris, probably three cans of waste oil, and some paint to get rid of. And as I roll in, the guy's looking at his watch going "Not this guy again." So, part of my apprehension for reducing the hours to five o'clock was that if we take the hours away from what has been typically weekend hours for the Whitman site and strictly reduced them to weekday site—uh weekday hours at that site, will that adjustment be amicable to the people that have used it to the weekend where they can go anytime Friday through Monday, basically to the site now they're being sort of truncated to weekday hours. Still a concern, but I mean, again, I've seen the data so maybe less concerned about that.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:19:51

Had some discussions back and forth about maybe adjusting the hours, but you know, had some great exchanges with staff, and at this point, I'm gonna vote in favor of the original proposal even though I'd like to maybe see some slight hour adjustments for later evening. But as staff has said previously, if they see issues as this changeover occurs, we can adjust to it, and we can do some hour shifting if we see there are issues. So, I guess I'd encourage colleagues to reconsider that initial vote and vote in favor of the yard waste of change of hours.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:20:32

Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:20:34

Thank you. I watched the previous Council meeting, not while I was on vacation—subsequent to that. But I was concerned because there was agreement between two alderpersons that don't generally agree, and then the motion still failed. So that was a was a was a red flag to me, but I also really take into account the work that was put in by the DPW staff to try to determine what are the appropriate times that these should be staffed, and that takes into account all of their staffing needs. So, they're trying to balance all of the things that are needed throughout the city, not just "Can we stay open an extra half hour on a particular day." So, I am grateful for the for the proposal and hope that it works out well.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:21:24

I also want to remind folks that even if any of the city sites are not open, the Outagamie County Holland road landfill takes yard waste as well. And those hours are Monday through Friday 7am to 3:30pm. And Saturday as well, 7am to noon. So that's always an option. Nobody can, you know—nobody should roll in with their 16 cans of paint and a whole trailer full of yard waste and not be served. So, there that is always an option. Thank you so much.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:21:59

Alder Alfheim.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:22:00

Thank you, chair. I appreciate this body reconsidering this. I was one of those that was gone. This whole idea came up initially from a cost savings question, and it morphed into something that I think was even better. Our goal was to look at it from a cost perspective, but in the end, we looked at services, we looked at staffing, we looked at a compromise. And I think this is a great example of how we can make that happen. By adjusting the hours, we now actually have more access on days that we had none before. There are options available, and we are addressing the staffing issues that we have. So, I think this is a great example of good work by the city and this body. So, I look forward to us moving this forward with a yes.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:22:45

Alder Croatt.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:22:47

Thank you, Mayor. Oh, I remembered—after the last vote at the last meeting, I believe you made some important comments about us looking at these things, and if we don't look at this, we need to look at something else as you look at budget, expense tightness, call it. Would you be willing to repeat those comments?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:23:10
Well...

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:23:11
Do you remember them?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:23:12
Given that it was recorded, I think you've really summarized the, the gist of it. But you know, the point—the point was and remains, we are going to have to talk about service levels as a city. We are going to have to talk about expectations. That is—that's something we've been in the process of doing through multiple budgets, and that will continue to be a challenge. and so, the point that I made when this tied was that even if the Council decided to not take action, the problems—the underlying problems—remain, and so that was the point.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:23:52
Thank you. I appreciate you repeating that because I know you tried to stay out of the discussion and debate and influencing it one way or the other, but I thought those were important comments as we look at these types of things going forward.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:06
Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:24:09
Thank you. I voted against this last time, and I am at now making a motion to amend. And if I can get a second, I will be willing to vote for the proposal with my amendment. My amendment is—so my biggest concern before I get to my amendment—my biggest concern is that this proposal—

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:34
Alder Melz, Alder Melzer, just for purposes of order, if you would please put your motion and if it gets a second, then you can get into your concerns and rationale for putting forward.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:24:47
Okay, thank you. Sorry about that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:49
That okay. That's okay.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:24:50
Okay, so my proposal is for the winter hours to add the last Saturday of each month for November, January, February, and March. So, we'll skip December because a lot of people have, you know, holidays and vacations and stuff. But the proposal is to have the last Saturday of each month in November, January, February, and March continue to have open hours at the Glendale site. Is anyone willing to second my motion?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:25:26
I'll take care of that. So, a motion has been made. Is there a second? All right, we do have a second. So, we'll open the floor for discussion. Alder Meltzer, you have the floor. Please, go ahead.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:25:37

Okay. Basically, my concern is just that with this new proposal, there are no more weekend hours for any site in the city under the new proposal, and some people weekends are their only opportunity to get to the yard site and it was—weekend access was expressed as a priority from my district and from some other people that I spoke to in other districts. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:10

For the discussion on the amendment. Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:26:17

Thank you, chair. Is that button still not working?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:19

Not sure. Yeah. It's nothing personal. I assure you.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:26:23

I'll just keep going. Thank you, Chair. I—my concern is that this has not been vetted through staff. So, I would be interested in some feedback in that regard. But I would like to repeat please that the county Holland Road landfill site is open from 7am to noon every Saturday regardless of the month of the year. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:52

Alder Hayden.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:26:54

Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the amendment that Alder Meltzer has brought forward and I think it only adds four or five days on so I would encourage people to vote for this.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:27:08

Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:27:11

Thank you, chair. I too I guess I support this one. That was one of the primary concerns for the original nay vote that I cast because of that reduction of winter hours. We did hear that the sites get relatively light use during the winter and much of that use was for dumpsters that were going to be removed from the Glendale site. So not particularly a huge concern.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:27:34

But I guess, given the proposed amendment, I'd like to hear (and maybe it's a little tough to ask the question) but hear from staff about the impact of adding that extra day once a month. I mean, I see by the proposed changes we have like 37.5 hour man hours for the new hours at Glendale. So, there's maybe a little wiggle room in there given that the others are—previously it was 39 hours at Glendale for winter. So, I guess just a question, what kind of impact would that be? Is it something you can manage? Or are we dealing with some overtime hours that I guess present the same challenge as what you're trying to ameliorate with these new hours?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:17

Director Block?

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 1:28:18

Thank you, chair. It would have an impact on overtime. I don't think this proposal would be cost neutral any more. That was kind of the approach to this compromise that we made out of the initial resolution. I would note that currently on average, we see 13 customers per day on winter weekends. And the predominant use is the garbage dumpsters. Garbage dumpsters will now be eliminated. That change was made during budget. So how many of those are bringing yard waste? When we asked staff, it was approximately one to two on weekends.

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 1:29:08

A major benefit of freeing up an employee who could respond to snow plowing events on the weekend was a huge benefit as well. So, adding to our snow plow crew as we respond to winter snow and ice events is a major benefit and improves public safety. So initially, those are my comments on it.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:29:34

Alder Doran.

Alderman Chad Doran (District 15) 1:29:36

Thank you. I'm going to urge my colleagues to vote down this amendment. It does sort of go counter to what we were trying to accomplish here, which is sort of a balance of reducing costs and service. As Alder Hartzheim had mentioned, there are other options for people here. And while I appreciate our colleagues when we say that we hear from our constituents and we listen to our constituents and we take their feedback into account. There are times where we have to—we're elected to make decisions on behalf of our constituents. Even with their feedback, that might go counter to what we think is the right thing to do for the city; we have to be comfortable in telling them that. And this, I think, is one of those situations.

Alderman Chad Doran (District 15) 1:30:21

We realize the situation that we're in with the lack of staffing and the budget constraints that we have, and will continue to face going forward that the right thing to do here is to start looking at ways to cut. And these are some of what will probably in the future be some of the least painful cuts that we can possibly make. And if we're not prepared to make these, boy are we gonna be in trouble in the future. So, I urge my colleagues to vote down the amendment and approve the agreement as was originally proposed.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:30:55

Alder Firkus.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:30:58

Thank you, Mayor. I'm going to agree that we—support to vote this down. It's added hours, which means added expenses, and opening for three extra shifts in a time of year where there just isn't a whole lot of yard work being done that's going to create a whole lot of yard waste. I just—it seems really hard to justify this. We're talking maybe about 12 hours of extra open for not even that many people that are going to end up utilizing this. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:31:28

Alder Alfheim.

Alderman Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:31:29

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The paragraph in the article that—or that Director Block just reviewed, "we're currently 13 customers per day on winter weekends expect closer to one to two per day." So, I respect my colleagues that have been listening to constituents about the fear of a loss of a service. But the reality is, it's only one or two

people per day on the weekend now, as opposed to the complaints that I believe all of us get in the lack of plowing. We need help plowing, clearing the snow; we all get those complaints every snowstorm for days and days and days. So, where the while there is a sacrifice to a few people in not having access on a specific day of the week, we are gaining a service that actually affects far more people. So, with respect, I would turn down the opportunity to do this amendment and go to the original Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:32:26
Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:32:28
Call the question on the amendment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:32:29
All right question's been called. One speaker in the queue. Is there a second call the question? We have a motion and a second to call the question. All those in favor of calling the question please signify by saying aye. Opposed? All right, the ayes have it. The question has been called. We have a motion and a second. This is on the amendment. We have a motion and a second to approve the amendment. Please cast your votes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:33:05
Motion fails three to 12 with Alders Meltzer, Hayden, and Schultz in favor. So, we're back to the item as presented in your agenda. Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:33:19
Thank you, Chair. I had requested to speak for a follow up to my last question. But that opportunity has passed. So, if you'll just allow me, I'll just direct a question to you, but it's essentially just looking at the hours as a tally because what we're talking about is a cost neutral change in service hours, and if I just—and apologize if I'm doing this incorrectly, but if I just tally up the hours from the current Glendale site hours, I have 39. If I tally up the proposed, I have 36 hours. I do the same for the Whitman site current is 39. The proposed changes gets to 36 hours. I go to the winter hours, it's a little similar. It's 39 versus 37.5. I'm seeing an overall reduction of seven and—eight and a half hours I guess overall for from a weekly hours reduction for the staffing on these sites.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:34:12
Now I understand that those people if they're not at the site are gonna be doing other work, but strictly from the operational hours of the sites, I'm seeing a reduction of hours, which to me says there may be opportunity to have one other staffing period over the weekend. Now, again, opportunity's passed; we voted on it. But if I could understand a little bit better, how that zero—if we're if this is what we're doing, it's on but a zero increase or decrease in cost, but we're seeing a reduction of hours overall. How does that work out?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:34:50
Director Block?

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 1:34:51
Thank you, chair. Previously at committee meetings, we had talked about how the earlier closure allows staff to maintain the site, button up the site, while not dealing with the traffic coming in and out creating unsafe conditions and not being responsive to the customers that are coming through. So, although the site might show closed, our staff is still there doing the maintenance and the work to finish out the day.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:35:23

Alright, folks, we got a couple of people in the queue here, and I'm just going to ask if you have something novel to add to the discussion that has not yet been shared, please do stay in the queue and make your point, and then let's get on with it. Alder Hayden.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:35:41

Thank you, Chair. I kind of would just like to say I had a similar experience to Alder Scholtz, where after talking with other alders—I think Alder Van Zeeland took the time to talk to me about statistics. While I would have preferred the amendment this is perfectly acceptable to me now. So, I'll be voting for this.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:35:58

All right, there being no further speakers in the queue. We have a motion and a second to approve. Please cast your votes. Motion passes 14 to one with Alder Meltzer opposed.