

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 9, 2023**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, held a Regular meeting on October 9, 2023, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Recording Secretary Ruth Scott called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: Alderman Carolyn Zasada, Alderman Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Scott McAdams, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman John Walker, and Mayor Cohen Barnes.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, City Attorney Matt Rose, and City Engineer Zac Gill.

Sasha Cohen was absent.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the Agenda as presented; seconded by Alderman Larson.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Proclamation: Fire Prevention Week, October 8 - 14, 2023.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Fire Chief Mike Thomas.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

**G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the following Consent Agenda items by title only:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of September 25, 2023.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through October 9, 2023, in the Amount of \$1,753,421.68.
3. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through August 2023.
4. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through August 2023.
5. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – September 2023.

6. Resolution 2023-090 Approval of Executive Session Minutes.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the appointments; seconded by Alderman Smith.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**I. CONSIDERATIONS**

There were none.

**J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2023-091 Authorizing Updates to the City of DeKalb Federal Transit Administration Title VI Program Policies.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2023-092 Approving a Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement for City-Owned Property at 807 Oak Street.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the size of the lot. It was also confirmed that the lot is not suitable for rebuilding.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Resolution 2023-093 Authorizing the Dedication of the FY2023 Allocation in the Amount of \$50,000 to Barb City Manor (BCM) for Boiler System Repairs.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Mayor Barnes thanked the BCM staff for their dedication to their residents.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

4. Resolution 2023-094 Authorizing the Payment for Police Academy Training Involving Five New Police Officers to Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center In an Amount Not To Exceed \$41,500.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

#### **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

#### **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2023-043 Approving a Special Use Permit for a Public Elementary School at 1240 Normal Road (DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Walker.

Christopher Boyes, a DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428 board member, spoke in support of the project.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There was a brief discussion between Mayor Barnes and City Manager Nicklas regarding the increase in the equalized assessed value (EAV).

There was a brief review of the site layout of the property. It was noted that students living west of the proposed school would be bused due to safety concerns of them having to cross over Annie Glidden Road.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the tight timeline the School District is facing with regard to the publication of their required Preliminary Official Statement.

Mayor Barnes commented on the City's continued desire to reduce the tax rate in DeKalb, noting that meetings have been held with the School District's leadership, who have expressed the same.

Referencing the site layout, Alderman Perkins asked about bus and student drop off access. Tammy Carson, Director of Facility Operations for the School District, responded both would enter off Normal Road and exit off Garden Road.

Alderman Verbic commented that since 80% of the children will be walking to school, there won't be as much traffic as some of the other schools.

Noting his dislike of portable classrooms, Alderman Verbic asked if the new school would ease enrollment pressures at other buildings. Ms. Carson responded they hope to eliminate four of the five mobile classrooms they currently have. The one remaining would be at Lincoln Elementary because the size of the school isn't sufficient to have appropriate space for a library, music and art.

Brief discussion ensued.

Alderman Walker asked if more teachers would be hired to staff the school, with Ms. Carson responding in the affirmative.

Alderman Walker then asked how many teachers would be hired. Armir Doka, Co-Director of Business and Finance at the School District, replied that the new school would add 28 classrooms with approximately 54 new positions for teachers and a variety of other services such as support staff, social workers, etc.

Mr. Doka also mentioned the agreement the School District and teacher's union just settled on, noting the union is happy about the new school, not only for the class size reduction, but also for other services the school will provide, especially for the community.

Alderman Walker asked City Manager Nicklas if additional School Resource Officers (SROs) would be added since the school will be in a high crime area. City Manager Nicklas replied that the School District will advise what's needed when the time comes.

Alderman Zasada mentioned that citizens in her ward have been asking about changes school boundaries with the addition of the new school. Ms. Carson stated they've just started that planning process.

Alderman Walker asked about a plan to ensure diversity within the new school. Ms. Carson replied it will depend on how the boundaries are drawn, but the plan is to have a diverse population of students.

Alderman Larson noted her concern and the concern of residents within the neighborhood about children crossing the road in a safe manner and not using the path between Fox Hollow and the school building. Ms. Carson stated the path has been closed off by a gate and overgrown landscaping and will not be used, nor is it shown in the site plan. She also noted that the site has been designed in a way to reduce the chance of children being dropped off in an undesignated drop off area.

Mayor Barnes asked which elementary school in the district is the largest. Ms. Carson responded Founder's Elementary.

Mayor Barnes asked if the new school would fulfill just the reduction in class size or will there be room for expansion going forward. Ms. Carson replied there is some room for expansion, but it doesn't create a huge buffer. She also noted that the demographer has projected there won't be significant growth in student enrollment over the next 10 years.

Continuing, Ms. Carson stated there are many phases to the School District's planning, some of which are not up for consideration at this time, including additions to other elementary schools to absorb a potential increase in enrollment. She also stated that at some point the School District will need to address capacities in the middle schools and early childhood and pre-k programs.

Alderman Smith noted his concern over double stacking vehicles on the south side of building, stating the same type of configuration at Little John Elementary is a disaster. He then asked how many cars will be double stacked from Normal Road east. City Engineer Gill replied that 60 cars could fit in the circulation pattern, which was part of the reason for using Garden Road as an exit. There will also be

a traffic calming feature along Normal Road to discourage parents from stopping to drop their children off in a non-designated area.

Alderman Smith then stated that stacking of vehicles on Normal Road will cause difficulty for transit buses and asked if their routes will be altered. City Engineer Gill replied that consideration will be given to transit schedule changes if it becomes problematic.

Alderman Smith asked about the influx of vehicles coming off Garden Road down to Normal Road when all the schools in that area are letting out. City Engineer Gill replied that drivers will need to make a decision once they come to Hillcrest Drive whether or not to make a right hand turn to circulate back into the neighborhood.

Alderman Smith noted his support of the new school.

Brief discussion ensued between Alderman Smith and City Engineer Gill.

Alderman Walker complimented City Engineer Gill for the work he does for the City.

Alderman Zasada noted that extending the drop off time at Jefferson Elementary has made a difference in how much the cars pile up. Ms. Carson commented that drop off times were expanded after the pandemic.

Alderman Zasada expressed her excitement for the new school and feels this is a big opportunity for residents of the First Ward and very much needed. She also noted she's happy to see the reduction of class size and happy that students will have a school close to their homes.

Alderman Walker commended the School District for this project.

Ms. Carson stated the School District is also happy that students will have a school close to their homes, especially since it will help them, and their parents, participate in more activities. The School District is also hoping the school can also be used as space for community events.

Alderman Zasada stated as the project proceeds, it's important to be proactive in identifying problems early on, resolving them quickly, and finding the changes needed with the support of the City to make it a safe space for students.

Ms. Carson noted the positive relationship the School District has with the DeKalb Police Department, with communication taking place when changes are needed.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

Mayor Barnes reminded the Council of the School District's tight timeline with regard to their bonds and asked for a motion to waive Second Reading of the ordinance so they can move forward with the project.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance and approve; seconded by Alderman Walker.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

Mayor Barnes stated everyone is unanimously looking forward to a school being built in that neighborhood. He further stated that students should be able to go to school with their friends and neighbors, and parents should be able to be involved with their children's school activities because that's what helps build a community.

Mayor Barnes further stated he's proud to be a part of this decision and looks forward to the continued cooperation between the City and the School District on the different agendas each has, one of them being the reduction of the property tax rate.

2. Ordinance 2023-044 Amending Chapter 23 "Unified Development Ordinance", Article 5.09 "Central Business District", as it Pertains to Automobile Sales.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance, seconded by Alderman Verbic.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Zasada asked if the building where the Classic Auto Haus will be located would be open to the public for viewing of the vehicles being stored there. City Manager Nicklas indicated it would.

It was clarified there will be no painting of vehicles in the building.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance and approve; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Ordinance 2023-045 Approving a Special Use Permit for Automobile Sales in the "CBD" Central Business District at 215 N. Fourth Street (Classic Auto Haus, Inc. – Steve Turner).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Smith asked how vehicles will get into the building. Steve Turner, the owner of the Classic Auto Haus business, stated the owner of the building, Chuck Shepard, will be installing a 12-foot wide garage door off the alley.

Mayor Barnes asked if the vehicles will be visible through windows on the building. Mr. Turner stated he wasn't sure.

Alderman Walker asked what types of vehicles would be on display, with Mr. Turner indicating vehicles from the 1960s and 1970s, especially Mustangs. Mr. Turner also indicated the building will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and open by appointment only on Saturdays.

Mayor Barnes commented on reimplementing cruise night downtown. Brief discussion ensued.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance and approve; seconded by Alderman Larson.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

4. Ordinance 2023-046 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Schedule C "Parking Prohibited", as it Pertains to Minor Alterations of Parking Restrictions for Various Routes Impacted by Roadway Modifications.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Walker.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance and approve; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Council Member Reports.

Noting she sits on the Illinois Lieutenant Governor's Military and Economic Development Committee, Alderman Zasada reported that a speaker at one of their recent meetings addressed the importance of cyber security and the importance of ensuring government business isn't susceptible to risk.

Alderman Walker thanked City Engineer Gill for his assistance recently regarding a safety issue concerning children and their access to a park across a busy road.

Alderman Verbic thanked the Airport Advisory Board for welcoming him as Council Liaison at their most recent meeting. He also reported his attendance at the recent Back Alley Market event, noting he was impressed with the turnout and the increase in vendors.

Alderman Perkins reported he was also impressed by the Back Alley Market event and an event he attended at the Egyptian Theatre.

Mayor Barnes reported on recent meetings and events he's attended, including the DCEDC annual dinner/retirement party for outgoing Executive Director Paul Borek and the installation of their new Executive Director, Mark Williams. He noted he was also impressed with the turnout for the Back Alley Market.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas reported on the City's recent bond upgrade to A1, noting the Council's fiscal prudence made it possible. He also reported that SunVest will have a press conference and ribbon

cutting ceremony on October 10, 2023, for the community solar project at Gurler Road and S. First Street.

#### **N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Barnes read the following Executive Session exception for the record:

1. Approval to Hold an Executive Session in Order to Discuss Collective Bargaining as Provided for in 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to recess for Executive Session; seconded by Alderman Walker.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and recessed the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Following adjournment of the Executive Session, Mayor Barnes opened the meeting to the public at 8:16 p.m.

#### **O. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to adjourn the Regular meeting; seconded by Alderman Smith.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on October 23, 2023.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the October 9, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the October 9, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting.