

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 6:30pm, Council Vice President Sue Sgambelluri presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
August 17, 2022

Councilmembers present: Matt Flaherty, Dave Rollo, , Sue Sgambelluri, Jim Sims (arrived at 6:33pm), Ron Smith, Stephen Volan

ROLL CALL [6:30pm]

Councilmembers present via Zoom: Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Kate Rosenbarger (arrived at 6:32pm), Susan Sandberg

Councilmembers absent: none

Council Vice President Sue Sgambelluri summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:30pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded to approve the minutes of March 03, 2021.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [6:34pm]

March 03, 2021 (Regular Session)

Rollo amended the minutes to correct the word "Historic" instead of "Housing" regarding the Historic Preservation Commission.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Sandberg noted her presence via Zoom due to being infected with COVID-19.

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS [6:35pm]

Volan observed the passing of Owen Johnson, Professor in the former Journalism School, now the Media School. He spoke about being his student and noted his expertise on Ernie Pyle. He also spoke about a resolution he authored which declared council's interest in opening up the Bloomington Transit services outside of the city.

Sims offered his condolences to the family and friends of Owen Johnson. He also offered condolences to Judge Marc Kellams' family for his recent passing. He also welcomed and thanked the attendees there to present on the Bethel A.M.E. church.

Smith appreciated the Utilities department for staff's attention to storm water drain issues in the Park Ridge neighborhood. Staff assessed issues in person in the neighborhood.

Rollo commented on the upcoming budget cycle and noted the importance of keeping compensation up with inflation and appropriate for city employees.

Jeff Jackson, Transportation Demand Manager, Economic and Sustainable Development (ESD) department, presented an update on the Transportation Demand and Management Plan that was prepared in June 2019. He spoke about his experience, budgeting, branding, website development, marketing, community participants, metrics, and goals for 2023. There was brief council discussion regarding the community participants, branding, metrics and goals, promotions, revenue, expansion of services and carpooling, data, registering for carpooling and more, and new funding types like climate-reduction funding.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [6:45pm]

There were no council committee reports.

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES [6:48pm]

Daryl Ruble spoke about his daughter, who passed away, and granddaughter.

- PUBLIC [6:48pm]

Marc Haggerty thanked staff for fixing the rims on the basketball goals at Switchyard Park, and for the pads on the posts. He commented on the need to have lights in Switchyard Park past 11:00pm.

Stephen French discussed staffing shortages across the city and compensation.

Bradley Rushton commented on behalf of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) members on negotiation meetings, agreements, and the city budget.

David Wolfe Bender spoke about the start of the Indiana University (IU) school year and the IU Student Government's priorities including registering for voting.

John Deckard discussed his experience working in the Utilities department and commented on compensation, employee's leaving the city for other organizations with better compensation, and requested a living wage for city employees.

Steve Robertson has worked for the city for twenty-nine years, and urged council to view the budget from a city employee's perspective and ask if compensation was sufficient. He noted that it was important to appropriately compensate experience.

Allan Johnson discussed his experience working with the Streets department over the last eight years. He commented on staffing shortages, turnover rates, compensation and negotiation, and city services.

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to make the following appointment(s):

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [7:30pm]

- For the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission:
 - to appoint Jordyn Porter-Meche to seat C-1
 - to appoint Michael Ross to seat C-3
 - to appoint John Shearer to seat C-4
 - to appoint Emily Alford to seat C-7

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to make the following appointment(s):

- For the Environmental Commission:
 - to appoint Elizabeth McCleery to seat C-4
 - to appoint Conner Wright to seat C-6

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Flaherty moved and it was seconded to make the following appointment(s):

- For the Traffic Commission:
 - to appoint Daniela Moloci to seat C-1

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND
READING AND RESOLUTIONS
[7:36pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded that Ordinance 22-21 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Deputy Clerk Susan Stoll read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Ordinance 22-21 - To Amend Title 8 of the Bloomington Municipal Code, Entitled "Historic Preservation and Protection" To Establish A Historic District – Re: Bethel A.M.E. Church and Parsonage (Bethel A.M.E., Owner and Petitioner) [7:36pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded that Ordinance 22-21 be adopted.

Gloria Colom-Braña, Historic Preservation Program Manager, Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) department, presented the legislation. She highlighted the historic district nomination for the Bethel AME Church and Parsonage and staff's recommendation. She noted that the property exceeded the minimum criteria listed in code. Colom-Braña summarized the criteria and explained the reasons for staff's recommendation. She spoke about Mattie Jacobs Fuller, acclaimed singer and organ player and prominent member of the community, who helped raise funding to buy the land where the current church was located.

Volan asked why it had taken so long to bring the petition to council. Council questions:

Colom-Braña said that throughout Bloomington, there were many hidden gems that were assumed to be part of the landmark list, including the Bethel AME church. She explained the two options for requesting the designation; the first was for the owners of the property to bring forth the request, and the second was through the demolition delay process where the city and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) determined whether to designate a building as historic or allow it to be destructed. Staff did not actively search the city for structures qualified to be historic.

Volan asked the petitioners if they had not been aware of the option to designate as historic.

Elizabeth Mitchell, Historian for Monroe County on the African American experience and culture in Bloomington, said that there were many locations on the west side that had been forgotten and needed to be included and saved in order to remember African American sites. She said that Bethel AME was just the start. She spoke about Mattie Jacobs Fuller, who had been born into slavery, then had gone to Bloomington, and became the richest Black woman in the city. She explained that Mattie Jacobs Fuller was just one part of the African American experience in the city.

Volan was pleased that Mitchell had discovered the option of designating buildings as historic.

Rollo said that it was unfortunate that Ms. Fuller's singing had not been recorded. He asked how community members could listen to the interview with Ms. Fuller.

Mitchell said that the Monroe County History Center had the recording and other information on Ms. Fuller. Mitchell was part of Resilience Productions which had done plays about Ms. Fuller. She reiterated that Ms. Fuller's organ was still in the church and that she donated all her earnings to the church. Ms. Fuller was very popular in Bloomington and had even been asked to play in Martinsville.

Rollo asked if a local quarry had donated the limestone for the church.

Mitchell explained that Ms. Fuller had been paid for a performance in Bethany Park near Martinsville and she had donated that money to the church. Mitchell noted that the Showers family loved Ms. Fuller.

Rollo asked if he had misunderstood that a local quarry had donated the limestone.

Ordinance 22-21 (cont'd)

Colom-Braña clarified that according to secondary sources, there were donations from quarries around Bloomington.

Karen Duffy expressed her support for the historic designation of the Bethel AME church and parsonage.

Public comment:

Nicole Bolden supported the designation. She thanked council for their discussion, and Colom-Braña for her presentation. She noted the importance of churches for the Black community and how they reminded incoming students of where to find a community.

Renee Miller thanked Mitchell for her work and appreciated and supported the petition.

Natalia Galvan supported the legislation and thanked Mitchell for her work.

Betty Lewis was a member of the Bethel AME church, and encouraged community members to attend services.

Smith said it was great that the petition came before council, and noted the importance of recognizing the Bethel AME church in the record as a historical property.

Council comment:

Flaherty thanked the petitioners and staff for their work.

Sims mentioned his upbringing which included AME, and stood for African Methodist Episcopal. He thanked Colom-Braña and community members for their efforts. He discussed his experience with Mitchell and with the community. He commented on diversity, equity, and inclusion and the importance of legislation like Ordinance 22-21. He said that Bethel AME had always been inclusive. Sims stated that it was easier to internalize knowledge when knowing and hearing the story.

Volan commented on some public speakers, from ten years ago, who were very angry and disruptive. A councilmember had agreed to limit time for public speaking. He stated that it was rare that community members came to the podium to share their knowledge. He encouraged historians like Mitchell to share their knowledge. He thanked the Bethel AME church's congregation, and Mitchell, for their work.

Piedmont-Smith also thanked the congregation at Bethel AME church, Mitchell, and Colom-Braña, for their work. She had believed that the church was already historically protected. She was glad that the parsonage was included, as part of the fabric of the neighborhood and for its' stone work. Piedmont-Smith said it was impressive to learn what she had about Mattie Jacobs Fuller and was glad that it had been brought to the public's attention. She believed that Mitchell also contributed to the important history of the city and her work shined a light on Black history and community in the city.

Sandberg said it had been a pleasure to learn about the petition, and thanked Mitchell for her passion, dedication to history, and for her work. She said it was important to protect historic buildings. She mentioned her friends having attended Mitchell's tours. She hoped

that the discussions about the city’s history continued. She thanked all those who worked on the petition.

Ordinance 22-21 (cont’d)

Rollo said that Mattie Jacobs Fuller had been diligent in raising funds for the Bethel AME property and did so during a shameful time in Indiana. He was impressed by her courage and the congregation’s perseverance in constructing the beautiful building.

Sgambelluri added that Bloomington was richer and better when these stories were told.

The motion to adopt Ordinance 22-21 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to adopt Ordinance 22-21 [8:12pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded that Resolution 22-15 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. (Flaherty out of the room)

Resolution 22-15 – Expressing Support for the Protection of Reproductive Rights [8:13pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded that Resolution 22-15 be adopted.

Sandberg presented the legislation and discussed the effects of recent events and concerns in the nation and state. She commented on Roe v. Wade and its protection for women and their privacy. She discussed women’s health, unsafe abortions, and marching for women’s’ rights. It was devastating the way Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) had ruled. She highlighted the risks to the health and safety for women and the community.

There were no council questions.

Council questions:

David Wolfe Bender read a statement by the Indiana University Student Government’s (IUSG) President and Vice President. The statement referenced SCOTUS’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade and IUSG’s disdain for that decision and recent bills at the Indiana General Assembly.

Public comment:

Shelby Ford, Community Advisory on Public Safety (CAPS) commissioner, supported Resolution 22-15 and provided reasons. She noted a resolution that CAPS commissioners were drafting in support of women’s health in the community as well as other issues.

Council comment:

Sims commented on the local official’s statement that was made on July 01, 2022. Resolution 22-15 was similar to that statement. He would support the legislation.

Rollo thanked the sponsors and said that the reversal of Roe v. Wade was a major step backwards. It was an abrogation of the equal protection clause and was a blatant attack of reproductive autonomy of women. He supported current efforts to lobby the state and federal governments to reverse the decision.

Piedmont-Smith thanked the cosponsors and said there were many reasons to actively fight against the Dodds decision in Senate Bill 1. The wide impact the restrictions would have on the community, and not just women. She commented on the difficulties some community members faced when they became pregnant and the impacts and hindrances it could cause, especially if it was an unplanned pregnancy. Piedmont-Smith said it was egregious that lawmakers could impede on community members’ healthcare.

Sandberg said that women would decide their fate, not the church or state. She noted chanting that throughout the decades. There were several options moving forward including family planning, affordable birth control, and programs to help women obtain healthcare. She was not as optimistic that the reversal would change in the near future. It was abhorrent to take away hard-fought, basic rights. The council had the opportunity to support Planned Parenthood birth control options, and All-Options assistance to the community. It was necessary for the city to provide as many healthcare services to help families.

Resolution 22-15 (cont'd)

The motion to adopt Resolution 22-15 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to adopt Resolution 22-15 [8:31pm]

There was no legislation for first reading.

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING [8:31pm]

There was no public comment.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephen Lucas, Council Attorney, reviewed the upcoming council schedule and possible legislation.

COUNCIL SCHEDULE [8:31pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded cancel the Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, August 24, 2022. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 9, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to cancel Committee of the Whole [8:32pm]

Rollo moved and it was seconded to adjourn. Sgambelluri adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT [8:39pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this ____ day of _____, 2023.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Sue Sgambelluri, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

Nicole Bolden, CLERK
City of Bloomington