

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, August 21, 2024 at 6:30pm, Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
August 21, 2024

Councilmembers present: Isak Nti Asare (arrived at 6:34pm), Courtney Daily, Matt Flaherty, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Dave Rollo, Andy Ruff, Hopi Stosberg
Councilmembers present via Zoom: Kate Rosenbarger, Sydney Zulich
Councilmembers absent: none

ROLL CALL [6:31pm]

Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith gave a land and labor acknowledgment and summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:31pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded to approve the April 17, May 01, and May 08 of 2024 minutes, with corrections. The motion was approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [6:33pm]

April 17, 2024 (Regular Session)
May 1, 2024 (Regular Session)
May 8, 2024 (Regular Session)

Piedmont-Smith reported on her recent constituent meeting. She noted the upcoming Capital Improvement Board (CIB) meeting which would provide updates on the Convention Center expansion.

REPORTS

- COUNCIL MEMBERS [6:35pm]

Stosberg provided information on three petitions heard at the recent Plan Commission meeting. One was on Post Road in the Grandview neighborhood, second one was a subdivision proposal off of Kinser and Acuff, and last one was in response to Title 20 updates due to changes at the state level pertaining to steep slopes.

Asare spoke about supporting a regional Economic Development District (EDD) in Counties of Brown, Monroe, and Owen. Asare moved and Daily seconded to authorize and distribute a letter of support to the United States Department Administration (USDA) for the Economic Development District for the state of Indiana.

Stosberg asked about administrative burdens, resource constraints, and fiscal impacts for each governing body.

Council discussion:

Asare said the cost could be around \$50,000 to \$100,000 that would be split amongst the bodies.

Jennifer Pearl, President of the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), said it was a multistep process. There were seven counties in Indiana that were not in an EDD, including Monroe. She gave examples of some EDDs' work and described the process of becoming an EDD like determining regional goals and more. There would be both private and public funding to cover costs.

Stosberg asked when the fiscal impact would happen.

Pearl said it would be in the coming months or early next year.

Ruff asked for clarification on the current stage of the process.

Pearl said it was gathering letters of support in order to explore goals and more. She referred to the memo submitted in the packet.

Ruff asked if Lawrence and Green Counties were already in an EDD.

Pearl confirmed they were.

Rollo asked how success would be measured.

Pearl referenced the USDA’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and said that metrics would be collaboratively developed by those in the EDD.

Asare concurred and described how metrics could be developed.

There was no public comment.

Rollo expressed hesitation with having growth as an economic development goal, with no clear intentions. Not everyone benefitted from growth, and equity needed to be considered. He was concerned with sustainability impacts like increases in usage of materials and energy. There could not be infinite growth on a finite planet. It was important to consider qualitative measurements and climate crisis. For example, data centers used an extensive amount of energy and water. He supported well-paying jobs, and more, but believed it was important to consider the other items he noted.

Ruff concurred with Rollo and said it was important to clearly define economic growth and economic development. It was not ideal for costs of living to increase, but not wages too. It was possible that Brown County and Owen County may have different goals and the proposed EDD could be a good opportunity to better collaborate.

Stosberg clarified that supporting the initial proposed step with the letter did not automatically initiate next steps. It would be interesting to see how goals might overlap or be very different.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Daily stated she needed to reschedule her upcoming constituent meeting.

There were no reports from the mayor and city offices.

Stosberg reported on the Ad Hoc Salary Committee meetings where applicants for the Deputy Attorney/Administrator position were discussed. The committee determined that three phone interviews would be held that evening and there would be an upcoming executive session followed by a public committee meeting.

Piedmont-Smith said the Special Committee on Council Processes (SCCP) met to review Title 2 regarding boards and commissions including their powers, duties, and reporting. Next steps included updating and clarifying duties. The committee would later discuss code of conduct for board members and commissioners, and also revisions to the format and process of Regular Sessions. Equity in council processes would also be discussed.

Greg Alexander spoke about riding bicycles in the city, and the urgent need for safe routes to schools. The first step in that process had still not begun.

Daily moved and Ruff seconded to appoint Latonya Wilson to seat C-3 on the Dr. Martin Luther King Birthday Celebration Commission. The motion was approved by voice vote.

- COUNCIL MEMBERS (cont'd)

Public comment:

Council comments:

Vote to approve letter [6:40pm]

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES [6:56pm]
- COUNCIL COMMITTEES [6:56pm]

- PUBLIC [7:00pm]

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [7:05pm]

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND
READING AND RESOLUTIONS
[7:08pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded that Resolution 2024-16 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion was approved by voice vote. Clerk Nicole Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Resolution 2024-16 – Approving the Issuance of Refunding Bonds of the City of Bloomington Redevelopment District [7:08pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded to adopt Resolution 2024-16.

Larry Allen, City Attorney, stated that the legislation would authorize the issuance and refinance of existing bonds given by the Redevelopment Commission (RDC). In 2015, consolidation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts resulted in bonds issued against those districts. He described the timeline, interest rates, and savings. It was strictly a refinancing process for savings with all costs included. Statute required maximum parameters so the total bond maximum was \$30 million and the maximum interest rate was 4.25%. The term for the bonds would be fifteen years. He provided information on the background of the bonds and projects.

Buzz Crohn, OW Crohn and Associates, added the total amount of bonds in 2015 was \$41,435,000 and the outstanding principal amount was \$29,745,000. He described timeline options such as flexibility to obtain the best rates. Gross savings could be up to \$1.66 million and net \$1.2 million. The approval of the refinancing was up to council and more details were in the RDC's resolution.

Flaherty supported financial savings. He asked about the mechanics of consolidated TIFs. He asked if individual portions of the consolidated TIF could be sunset.

Council questions:

Crohn said yes and that was what would happen. Actual figures would be in the official statement. He provided specific details on the TIFs.

Flaherty asked how it was determined which individual TIFs would be sunset.

Crohn provided the background of TIF districts and sun-setting, as well as changes done by the state. The sunset date depended on when the TIF district was established.

Flaherty asked if the sunset for individual TIFs was based on the statutory expiration date.

Crohn confirmed that was correct.

Rollo asked about the expiration of the newest TIF.

Crohn said the last TIF bonds were issued in 2019, so it could be 2044 but likely earlier.

There was additional discussion on the potential timeline, closing, and call dates for the bonds.

Stosberg asked for a TIF district map including the establishment and sunset dates.

Crohn said that map existed and he would send it to council.

Piedmont-Smith said the public likely did not understand the items being discussed. She asked for clarification on a TIF and funding.

Crohn explained TIF districts and stated the assessed value was frozen at that level. Moving forward, any incremental value revenue was captured by the RDC, excluding school referenda. He gave additional details.

Piedmont-Smith asked what the bonds were issued for and what was done with the funding. She asked for a list of the outstanding bonds and their purpose.

Jessica McClellan, Controller, stated that 80% of the bonds were used to build Switchyard Park. Other projects included the Trades District, renovating and expanding the Animal Shelter, part of the multiuse path and other improvements on 17th street, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades to the Allison-Jukebox Center, and affordable housing at the former Night Moves business.

There was no public comment.

Flaherty expressed concern with the lack of transparency on what projects were funded when consolidating individual TIFs. TIFs were formed to develop opportunities for additional revenue, or increase property values. Revenue from TIFs went to the RDC and not the other taxing units. He wanted to better understand the downside of TIFs and would follow up with experts, and report back to council.

Rollo said that when the TIFs were consolidated, it was for specific projects. He wondered if areas had been equally invested into.

Piedmont-Smith appreciated the discussion that evening. It was important to recall what the TIFs and bonds were issued for.

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0

Ash Kulak, Interim Council Attorney/Administrator, read a chat submitted via Zoom from Lee Grundhoffer, urging elected officials to oppose the supersized jail proposed by Monroe County.

Piedmont-Smith reviewed the upcoming council schedule including presentations on city budgets and the Consensus Building Activities.

Piedmont-Smith adjourned the meeting.

Resolution 2024-16 (cont'd)

Council questions:

Public comment:

Council comments:

Vote to adopt Resolution 2024-16
[7:39pm]

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT
[7:39pm]

COUNCIL SCHEDULE [7:40pm]

ADJOURNMENT [7:43pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this
____ day of _____, 2024.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Isabel Piedmont-Smith, PRESIDENT
Bloomington Common Council

Nicole Bolden, CLERK
City of Bloomington