

City of Watseka  
Special Called Meeting  
Witseka City Council  
December 7, 2021

The Special Called Meeting was called to order at 7pm by Mayor John Allhands. Present were Aldermen Rushbrook, Marcier, Cahoe, Barragree, and Miller and Alderwomen Ulfers and Musk. Absent was Alderman Garfield.

No Public Comment

Piggush Engineering-Neil Piggush Presentation-Alderman Cahoe shared that Mr. Piggush is here to discuss a possible Historical TIF District and downtown work.

Mr. Piggush stated it had been a few months since he had spoken to the council on potential things Watseka wanted to do he is in attendance to discuss this more. Mr. Piggush provided the Council with a proposal there are a few buildings downtown that could be looked at. Mr. Piggush is currently working with the City of Kankakee on some projects, discussion was had on a new TIF District for downtown what it might that look like, possible State and Federal tax credits, incentives for developers, possible proposal for a Historic District, Street Scape project. Mr. Piggush shared that you can do a lot with State, Federal and TIF tax credits. Mr. Piggush then allowed the Council to ask questions. Alderwoman Musk asked about the timeframe, Mr. Piggush said we would need to apply for the grant Fall of 2022 we need to get started now to get all of the necessary steps completed to apply depending on what the plan is, then a response from IDOT would be needed approval of the grant hopefully by Summer 2023 Construction 2024. Alderman Miller asked about reestablishing TIF 1 this would last for 23 years with a 12 year extension available after that this can be done however the city would like it. Mayor Allhands shared we have a few locations he is working now with three different state agencies within the next 2 weeks he hopes to hear back from Landmark Illinois, sounds like they would sent a Historical Architect give a quote on the old Opera House/Penny's building the district would define the limits of course. Alderman Marcier asked about if this project gets started will this interfere with work that IDOT will be doing downtown next year, Mr. Piggush stated this should not be an issue. Alderwoman Musk asked about other communities Piggush Engineering works with, Mr. Piggush shared Gilman, Onarga, and St. Anne. Alderman Miller asked about the old City Hall building how does someone determine or decide the criteria most is the age of the building and how much architectural changes have been done or made Mr. Piggush then explained how the tax credits work. Mayor Allhands also mentioned Watseka is an Opportunity Zone, there is also an Enterprise Zone but the city would need to work with the county board on this, Mayor also asked Mr. Piggush if he could get names and phone numbers for the gentlemen in Kankakee that have been a part of the process there so he could talk to them. Alderwoman Musk then asked about the cost, Mr. Piggush shared it would be progress invoicing 2 years of billing from start to finish not a huge lump sum. Alderman Miller asked about what projects are they doing in Gilman, Mr. Piggush said they are fully reconstructing 5 blocks, benches, street lights, curb

bump outs, ADA improvements, and landscaping this should start April/May of 2022. Alderman Marcier then asked for engineering what do we have budgeted, Alderman Barragree stated this is hard to budget for, but right now we are over budget. Discussion was then had about Sleepy's lot, JC penny building, 2-3 burned out lots half block empty from the QuickLube to 4<sup>th</sup> St. what could be done there. Alderman Rushbrook asked where the TIF would be, Mayor shared from the tracks to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, this can change of course it could take 4-6 months for a TIF. Mr. Piggush did share that if there are a lot of residential houses a housing study would need to be done for \$5,000 more. The Council then had discussion if they if they are ready to move forward to get a TIF 1 rolling. Mr. Piggush shared that Public Hearings help with reaching the community and business owners. Alderwoman Musk then asked if this was something that Robinson Engineering could do, no money has been spent with Robinson and no decisions have been made, Ms. Musk asked about Piggush's success rate with applying for grants Mr. Piggush shared they applied for 5 and got 4. Alderwoman Musk then asked where the city would find the funds to cover this for this year if we are over budget already, Alderman Barragree suggested the General Fund for this fiscal year.

A Motion was made by Cahoe, seconded by Marcier to proceed with Street Scape Proposal with Piggush Engineering for 2 years for the cost of \$211,460.00 start to finish with Phase 1 & 2 engineering and Phase 1 & 2 Grant Application assistance. Motion passed 7-0.

#### **Misc. Business**

Alderwoman Ulfers would like to have a Personnel Committee meeting on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm regarding Public Works.

Alderwoman Musk asked broadcasting the meetings so that the public can watch, Mayor Allhands shared the bid to do this is over \$8000 this will make it so the videos can be public they can be seen on YouTube after the first of the year, Amanda left Cathy a note to follow up on this.

A Motion was made by Cahoe, seconded by Ulfers to Adjourn at 7:55pm. Motion passed 7-0.

Amanda Hibbs

City Clerk