

CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES
July 21, 2020

The City Council met this date in a regular session, via Zoom, which was available to the public via teleconference, at 7:49 pm.

Present at Roll Call: Mayor Gerry Welch
Councilmember Laura Arnold
Councilmember Pam Bliss
Councilmember David Franklin
Councilmember Emerson Smith
Councilmember Karen D. Alexander
Councilmember Sarah Richardson

A quorum was present.

Also present: Ms. Joan Jadali, Interim City Manager
Mr. Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney
Ms. Katie Nakazono, City Clerk

REMARKS OF VISITORS

Jennifer Conrad, Deputy City Clerk, read submitted Remarks of Visitors into the record. Submissions were received from:

- Daniel Bruzzini– (Exhibit A) - Comments and questions on City finances.
- Dave Buck - (Exhibit B) – Comments on loving thy neighbor.
- Janet Noble-(Exhibit C)–Inquiries and opposition to the SG Collaborative redevelopment project.
- Rich Mazzarella–(Exhibit D)–Inquiries/opposition to SG Collaborative redevelopment project.

NEW BUSINESS – MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, CITY ATTORNEY, CITY MANAGER

Mayor Welch stated that Joan Jadali, Director of Finance and Administration and Assistant City Manager, is currently serving as the Interim City Manager.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

BILL #9125 – THIRD READING

On motion of Councilmember Arnold, seconded by Councilmember Franklin, **BILL #9125 – ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO DRA PROPERTIES LLC TO INSTALL NINE (9) CELLULAR ANTENNAS ATOP AN EXISTING LIGHT POLE AS AN ACCESSORY UTILITY FACILITY USE AT MOSS FIELD ON AN APPROXIMATELY 17.30-ACRE TRACT OF LAND AT 630 S. ELM AVENUE IN THE “A4” SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDRED SQUARE FOOT RESIDENCE DISTRICT AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO**, having been introduced and read twice on July 7, 2020, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9125.

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Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9125.

MEMBERS VOTING:

AYES: ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH

NOES: NONE

Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9125 was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

BILL #9126 – FIRST & SECOND READING

Councilmember Bliss introduced **BILL #9126 – ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE PERMITTING THE SUBDIVISION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY AT 116 SUMMIT PLACE AND 120 SUMMIT PLACE IN THE “A3” TEN THOUSAND SQUARE FOOT RESIDENCE DISTRICT**, and at the Councilmember’s request, the Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

Mara Perry, Director of Planning and Development, gave a brief presentation on the subdivision.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Franklin, seconded by Councilmember Arnold, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Welch called for the vote on the Consent Agenda.

MEMBERS VOTING:

AYES: BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD

NOES: NONE

Mayor Welch stated that the Consent Agenda was approved.

The following consent agenda was approved:

- **Approval of Minutes** – July 7, 2020
- **Resolution #2020-29** – A Resolution Restating and Affirming Ordinance #7669 Which Established Section 2.080 of the Code of Webster Groves, “Compliance with the State Conflict of Interest Law”
- **Resolution #2020-30** – Authorizing the City Manager to Purchase Road Salt for the 2020-2021 Winter Season

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Michael Buechter was appointed to the Plan Commission.
- Ed Scholl and Janey Worthington were appointed to the Library Board.
- Jenine Harris was reappointed to the Library Board.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION

Councilmember Arnold made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Franklin, to go into Executive Closed Session per Negotiated Contract [MO Statute 610.021(12)].

Mayor Welch called for the vote to go into Executive (Closed) Session.

MEMBERS VOTING:

AYES: FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS

NOES: NONE

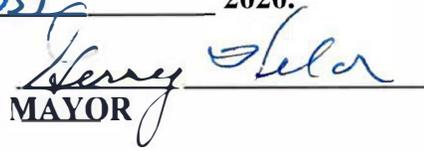
Mayor Welch stated that they would go into Executive (Closed) Session.

July 21, 2020

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. on motion of the Mayor, duly seconded.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 4th day of AUGUST 2020.


MAYOR

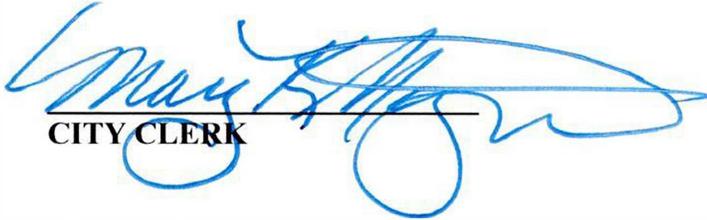

CITY CLERK



Exhibit A

Katie Nakazono - Remarks of Visitors

From: Daniel Bruzzini
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 7/20/2020 6:54 PM
Subject: Remarks of Visitors

Given the financial dependency of the City of Webster Groves on sales tax collections, former Council Member Bud Bellamo sounded the fiscal responsibility alarm to address the impending financial crises as a result of the economic shutdown that began on 21 March. Bud Bellamo's financial analyses projected a worst-case scenario of 85% sales tax collection reduction. Unfortunately, the reality is much much worse. Webster Groves businesses are at 25-40% of normal thus greatly decreasing sales tax collections. Director of Finance Joan Jadali promised Bud Bellamo she would provide regular updates on the City's finances. Major Gerry Welch said adjustments to the budget would be made based on data. We now have 3 months of financial data – What is the financial status of the City of Webster Groves regarding the taxes it collects versus its expenditures? With so many Webster Groves employees and businesses likely to lose their jobs and livelihood, does it still make sense to spend taxpayer money like normal when things are far from normal? What is the City saying to its citizens who have lost their jobs and businesses when it continues to have them pay for the usual twice a year pay raises for city employees? Is the 1 million dollar deficit projection for fiscal year 2021 too optimistic? Where is the city of Webster Groves at financially? More importantly, what are you doing and going to do about it?

Dan

Daniel B. Bruzzini

Exhibit B

Katie Nakazono - Dave Buck's "Remarks of Visitors" for July 21, 2020, City Council Regular Meeting

From: Dave Buck
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 7/21/2020 8:49 AM
Subject: Dave Buck's "Remarks of Visitors" for July 21, 2020, City Council Regular Meeting
Cc:

Mayor, City Council & City Staff,

I have shared this before but, in these turbulent and divisive times we live in, it begs repeating again and again.

First, at the end of the movie classic, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington", Jefferson Smith says to senior Senator Joseph Paine, "Lost causes are only causes worth fighting for. And you fight for them for the only reason any man fights for them. Because of just one plain simple rule: **Love Thy Neighbor.**"

Second, our churches are pretty important in Webster Groves. Most of them are a demonination of Christianity with the Bible as their foundation. Matthew, Chapter 22, says "Thou shalt Love Thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, "**Love Thy Neighbor** as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Third, no child is born a racist or with hate in their hearts. Instead, they are taught this, learn this, and mostly practice and role model this from family and friends. So family generation after family generation passes down these teachings and beliefs and perpetuates such racism and hate. We have to break this sinister cycle by teaching our children and ourselves well, better and differently.

And just think if every child and family believed in and practiced just one plain simple rule, **Love Thy Neighbor**, think what a wonderful world it would be.

Fourth, as such, whenever Council begins its strategic planning process for 2020-21, I would suggest that the current Visional Directions move down one spot to insert a new #1 Visional Direction: "To Teach, Instil & Inspire ALL Residents to **Love Thy Neighbor.**"

And its associated Council Goal & Action: Say "**Hello**" to those you know and are strangers as a way to create a real human connection, if only for a moment, and make the other person feel good and valued.

PEACE.

Exhibit C

Katie Nakazono - remarks of visitors-please read all of it before answering

From: Janet Noble
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 7/21/2020 3:12 PM
Subject: remarks of visitors-please read all of it before answering

my questions/comments to the Council regarding project with SG Collaborative/Old Webster

1. the two project guys- appear to be focusing on the "sizzle of the sale" instead of the problems to be overcome that this project will create and bring to those businesses and residents who live in the immediate areas. I thought that was what these meetings were about. I asked several questions/comments at the last meeting on July 14 and my questions were never answered properly and were sidestepped. He could not give an answer as to environmental concerns-soil erosion, silt runoff, harm to Deer Creek-plants, animals, water, etc, big trees that now prevent the erosion and hold the soil in place etc. Trees that absorb carbon, and take away the pollution of the traffic, how will this effect the creek upstream and down stream.

2. Traffic issues-putting or adding another lane inside the project area will not help the traffic that will be sent to Gore, Kirkham, Marshall, etc. It may add more parking spaces but otherwise do nothing to help with the traffic congestion. What is not being said is, this project will greatly increase the chances that all of these streets will need to be widened, some sooner, than later, depending on how much opposition is coming from those being immediately effected whether they be residents or businesses.

3. What is this going to cost Webster, when all is said and done? People do not frequent any retail businesses in Webster to spend a consistent, substantial amount of money week after week, except for grocery stores. None of the suggestions over the last several weeks at these meetings will do that. So what, if we put in a new coffee shops, restaurants, small retail store, book store etc. We had a farmers market that the citizens did not support. We have numerous coffee shops, restaurants, dress shops in this immediate area now. How many shops like this do you think the residents can support, some may go out of business because of this. Unfortunately a big box store(and I want to say up front, I try not to buy at big box stores) & would solve this problem, should be located next to a major highway, such as 1-44 close to Hixson, where people can get to it. Too bad we lost out on Costco. There is also the question as to if the physical store for retail is even an option anymore due to online sales for anything.

We do not seem to have found the answer yet to solve this dilemma about bringing in more money for Webster. Dense housing may help with this money problem but will the housing be affordable for all people in Webster, esp the people who live in North Webster who live there now ? If some units for housing are affordable it will probably be a small number of units, not the majority of units. I have yet to see any affordable ranch houses go up in Webster at all in the last 20 years. They are all McMansions. Webster is going to be

in real trouble if various levels of housing regarding price and size in the years to come are not required to be built. Young people getting out of college do not want, nor can afford an expensive condo, apartment or house. They are looking for 1 or 2 bedrooms houses that are affordable, with little upkeep or maintenance. The other part of this question, issue is, how much money or tax relief will SG ask Webster for ? Webster Citizens already needs pay enough taxes for the school district funding. The last time the school district asks for money it didn't go through and they extended the life of the loan. Will City services and management and budget be decreased due to Covid-19? My answer is, undoubtedly it will. So why decide on this project NOW? We should wait until we have all of these answers.

4. Communication of the SG project- I do not like the way residents are able to communicate-"send your questions in and we will ask them." -I do not want my questions paraphrased by someone who works and is being paid for by SG. The FOCUS and INTENT of my question was not being expressed and therefore I never got an answer. Most of the time was spent on answering questions to the "sizzle part of this project" I realize in person contact/ meeting can not take place due to Covid, but the Citizens of Webster have a right to ask their own questions and get detailed answers to their questions, not a summary of a number of questions that fit that category or issue.

5. The proverbial phrase-"the nose of the CAMEL is in the tent" comes to my mind with this project. We need to pull the tent back and see the size of this camel before committing to anything on this project. Webster would be wise to do so, especially in our uncertain times of the present.

Janet Noble, RN, BSN, CCM Nurse Consultant

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Exhibit D

Katie Nakazono - Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

From: Richard Mazzarella
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 7/21/2020 3:55 PM
Subject: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

My name is Rich Mazzarella. My wife and I have been residents of Webster Groves for more than 32 years at 135 Dornell Dr and we own about a dozen properties on Dornell Dr and St John Ave which directly border the Old Webster development project by SG Collaborative. My wife is the CEO of a Fortune 500 company (the only one who resides in Webster Groves) and we recently decided to plan for retirement here instead of Florida as many of the CEOs do. We are currently pursuing a 1.5 million dollar addition/renovation project of our "retirement home" at 135 Dornell Dr. The reason it cost so much is that we are making/remaking everything to match the original home. This house was owned by C.R. Comfort (Sim Comfort) which is one of the names on the plaque in the Webster City Hall entrance since he was one of individuals involved in its construction. We will have almost 4 million dollars invested in this area.

So it breaks my heart that we are going to great pains to preserve the history and character of our home and that the current SG Collaborative Project is so out of character with the rest of downtown Old Webster. The "public hearing" process has been a mess from the start and it has been under the shadow of the COVID-19 crisis when the majority of people are primarily worried about their jobs and their health and the health of their family.

1. I own multiple properties adjacent to this project and I was not informed of the first two meetings. How does that happen? I was informed a few hours before each meeting by my daughter who is active on social media.
2. According to the latest US Census Statistics for Webster Groves less than 90% of the residents have broadband access. How do the other 10% participate in these virtual meetings?
3. The questions which are answered in the meeting are at the liberty of the people running it. If they choose to not ask your question (screen your question) or give you a vague answer or effectively a non-answer then there is no opportunity to ask the question or ask a follow-up question. There is also no opportunity for open discussion and healthy debate. The contrary opinion has no voice.
4. Have we not learned anything from COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)? Density is a problem. We are becoming a denser world. Pandemics will spread more easily. We are fortunate to have avoided SARS1, MERS and Ebola. By my calculation there will be more than 1000 people living and working in effectively a one city block area. That is equal to about 5% of the population of Webster Groves.
5. Do you need 7 story buildings at the cost of greatly increased density, traffic problems, wider roads, destruction of the creek environment, less green space overall and greater noise. Won't three story buildings preserve the character of downtown better if the project is done at all. I like the character area and don't want to see it completely destroyed.

All of these points should be openly debated in public when this crisis is over and should not be swept under the rug under the overhang and secrecy of the current crisis.

Thanks,
Rich Mazzarella