

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
CITY of BLOOMINGTON TOWNSHIP

Tuesday, April 8, 2008
6:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers
109 East Olive Street, Bloomington, Illinois

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order: Tracey Covert, Town Clerk
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Introduction of Town Officers
- IV. Nominations for Moderator
- V. Election and Swearing in of Moderator
- VI. Remarks by Moderator on Conducting the Meeting
- VII. Approval of Minutes of 2007 Annual Town Meeting
- VIII. Reports
Assessor: Michael Ireland
Supervisor: Ruth Ann (Sikora) Fraker
- IX. Public Comments
- X. Setting of time for Next Annual Town Meeting
- XI. Other Business
- XII. Adjournment

TOWN OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON TOWNSHIP
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
APRIL 10, 2007

The Meeting was called to order by the Town Clerk, Tracey Covert. She asked that everyone rise and join her in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The Town Clerk announced that the nominations for Moderator would be in order.

Motion by Karen Schmidt, seconded by John Hanson, that Jim Fruin be nominated as Moderator.

The chair called for further nominations from the Floor. There were no further nominations.

Motion by Kevin Huetter, seconded by Skip Crawford that the nominations be closed.

Motion carried.

Motion by Karen Schmidt, seconded by Mike Ireland that Jim Fruin be elected Moderator by acclamation.

Motion carried.

The Chair announced that Jim Fruin had been elected as Moderator.

Jim Fruin came forward and was given the Oath of Office as Moderator by the Town Clerk.

Mr. Fruin indicated that Robert's Rules of Order would be followed in this meeting. He thanked those present for welcoming him back to act as the Moderator. It was an honor and privilege to serve. He recognized Mike Ireland, Township Assessor, Ruth Ann Sikora, Township Supervisor, and their staffs. The quality of leadership at the Township was reflected in the services provided. He also acknowledged the elected officials who were present at this evening's meeting: Mayor Steve Stockton, and Aldermen Steven Purcell, John Hanson, Karen Schmidt, Skip Crawford, Kevin Huetter, and Jim Finnegan.

Ruth Ann Sikora, Township Supervisor, acknowledged the appointed officials who also were present at this evening's meeting: Gene Lorch, Gene Keiser and Tom Jennings, Township Cemetery Trustees. She noted that the published agenda would be followed.

The Moderator directed the Town Clerk to read the "Notice of the Annual Town Meeting."

Tracey Covert, Town Clerk, read the Notice as published.

The Moderator requested all present to sign in. Records prepared for the Annual Town Meeting were available.

Town Clerk, Tracey Covert, presented the 2006 Annual Town Minutes.

Motion by Ruth Ann Sikora, seconded Randy Hoffman, that the minutes be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

Mike Ireland, Township Assessor, addressed those present. His comments would be directed at the assessing function. He had prepared a PowerPoint presentation. All of the slides presented were also available on the web site. He introduced the staff members who were present Brian Davis, Randy Hoffman, Terry Joyce, Cindy Schultz, and Steve Scudder. Dee Brines was unable to attend. He publicly expressed his gratitude to his small staff who handled a comparatively large parcel base. He described them as wonderful and talented.

He planned to present the assessment process and provide an education about same. He described the property tax system as taxation without explanation. The laws appear to be ambiguous. It was based upon a fair cash value system, i.e. fair voluntary sale. The property tax system addressed fairness. Property owners are given notice of changes and an opportunity to appeal at the local level. Property taxes also supply local governing units with a stable revenue source. The key players in the process were the taxing authority, the assessing authority, and the taxpayer.

Mr. Ireland summarized the Final Abstract, (Annual Report on Assessments Town of the City of Bloomington, see page 9). He reviewed the numbers, there were columns for the Supervisor of Assessments and the Board of Review. He acknowledged that there was some reduction. (See the Growth in Assessed Value bar graph on page 14.) There had been growth in assessed value, residential growth was stronger than commercial. He also addressed the 2006 Board of Review Report Summary, (see page 10). He addressed the Abstract contained therein. He noted that from an assessment standpoint the Township was not identical to the City. He cited the litigation settlement. The City's assessed value was approximately \$1.7 billion.

Mr. Ireland addressed the tax levy amounts for the major taxing entities. See Major Users of the Property Tax with Levies and Equalized Assessed Value, (see page 16). The Unit 5 School District had the largest tax levy. He cited the recent tax referendums to support the growth within the district. McLean County had the largest growth in EAV, (Equalized Assessed Value). The Township's EAV surpassed the District 87 school district. District 87 was landlocked. There were limited opportunities for growth. A key area was the City's Downtown Central Business District.

Mr. Ireland reminded those present that the Tax Levy plus the Equalized Assessed Value equaled the property tax rate. His office analyzed the real estate market. Each parcel was appraised and each property was given an EAV. The real estate market must be monitored. His report contained an Addendum entitled Comparison of 2005 to 2006 Sales, Sales Analysis Com-

parison. The addendum contained a series of charts. The data contained in each chart was presented either by month or by quarter. Transactions were compared on a monthly basis. He expressed his opinion that the data was easier to interpret when looked at quarterly. Overall there had been a slight decrease in sales price. He also addressed total sales volume.

There were charts regarding New Construction. Data was presented monthly. There was a Median Price by Quarter chart. He noted that prices spiked during the third and fourth quarters. However, there also were fewer transactions. There were charts which addressed Existing Homes. He addressed the chart entitled Total Sales Volume Existing Homes by Quarters. The price for Year Home Construction was computed on a price per square foot basis. The Median Sales Price of Existing Homes was presented by neighborhood. His office used GIS (Geographic Information System). This system gave his office the ability to look at values geographically. The Median Sales Price was also tracked to the assessed value. Residential sales were compared to EAV. By statute, each property should be assessed at one third (1/3) of the market value over a three (3) year period. Eighty percent (80%) of the assessments were within the statutory level. He described the property assessments as a good tight range. He noted that there were four (4) exemptions available: 1.) Homestead, 2.) Homestead improvement; 3.) Senior assessment freeze, and 4.) Senior citizen.

He stated that the entire report would be available on his office's web site, (www.assessor-blm.com).

Ruth Ann Sikora, Township Supervisor, welcomed those present. She acknowledged the City of Bloomington's elected officials who were present. These individuals also served as the Township's Trustees. Financial statements for both the Town Fund and General Fund had been prepared. These reports had not been subject to audit. She presented the Annual List of Meetings. She noted that in township government the primary duty of the Township Supervisor was the General Assistance program. She recognized the staff members who were present. Some were employed with the Township while others were employees of John Scott Health Resources. The following individuals were present: Tammie Turner, Dianne Beverly, Patti Fitzgerald, Joe Gibson, and Cathy Hadden, Township staff; and Stephanie Uzueta, Scott Health Resource. She described them as an exemplary team of dedicated public servants. Her staff was efficient, effective, and caring.

Ms. Sikora reviewed what services Township government provided: 1.) General Assistance; 2.) Property Assessment; and 3.) Road and Bridge Maintenance. She noted that the City Township was a coterminous urban township. Its boundaries match the City of Bloomington. The City Township has no road and bridge responsibility. Ms. Sikora noted that the new township building opened in October 2003. The new building is accessible and easy to find. She described the building as a great space.

Ms. Sikora addressed the General Assistance (GA) program. This program provided assistance to families and individuals. Orientation sessions began in October 2004. She described these sessions as informational. The idea for orientation sessions was copied from the state's Office of Rehabilitation Services. Individuals are given a folder during the thirty (30) minute meeting.

She reviewed the Types of Assistance. The monthly grant was \$265. This amount was set. The individual had a choice of how to use these dollars. Vouchers can be issued and there are also benefit cards. Hair Masters offers free hair cuts for GA clients. GA provided medical, dental, and vision services. GA operated like an insurance policy. The GA staff must determine eligibility. She noted that medical services can be very expensive. The medical service providers must accept the public aid rate. Emergency Assistance is offered. An individual is eligible once every twenty-four (24) months. The individual must present an eviction notice or a utility shut off.

Ms. Sikora presented GA Fund Expenditures for the past three (3) years. The data was presented in a bar graph chart. She noted that GA expenses must be paid (statutory requirement). She also provided data regarding Number of Cases vs. Dollars Spent Fiscal Years 2005 - 2007. She compared the number of individuals served versus the cost of GA. She attempted to forecast the number of GA clients in order to forecast the budget.

She presented GA Expenses by Percentages. She noted that GA staff worked hard to house people. Thirty-nine percent, (39%) of GA expenses were allocated towards rent. GA clients generally qualify for food stamps and/or local food pantry programs.

She presented the Average Cost per Recipient for the past three (3) years. These costs addressed the monthly grant plus the cost for medical and transportation services.

Ms. Sikora addressed the ODC/Job Connection program. This partnership had been in place for years. She described this program as work fare. Services provided included job search, job training, and community work. ODC was a private not for profit company. It accepts the GA office's referrals and finds the work sites. The program provided GA recipients with job skills. GA recipients worked a number of hours at minimum wage and received the monthly grant. GA recipients gained skills and recommendations for employment. She noted that this program was not a free ride.

Ms. Sikora presented information about the Skills for Success Program. The Township had entered into a partnership with Heartland Community College, (HCC). Currently, the Housing Authority for the City of Bloomington provided the facility. The Second Presbyterian Church participated in the program through the church's clothing ministry. State Farm employees volunteer to assist with resume writing and job interviewing skills. This program has operated from May 2005 through March 2007. The program consists of six (6) sessions each of which was four (4) weeks. There have been eighty-four (84) participants. These were bright individuals who had been faced with a variety of obstacles and with limited opportunities. Some have gone on and taken classes at HCC. Those who successfully complete Skills for Success are eligible for HCC's Business Essentials program.

The GA office also offered Basic Life Skills classes at the Township building. This program involved a partnership with the Baby Fold. The Baby Fold had also used the Compassion Center. This program involved a twelve (12) week series of classes. Forty-four (44) individuals, (an average of nine people per class), had participated in this program.

The Township offered light duty work for GA recipients who had filed for SSI disability. She noted that these individuals can do some work tasks. She cited assists with mailings and compiling packets as examples.

Ms. Sikora addressed Transportation. In 2004, the Township authorized bus passes for clients. She compared the value of the pass versus the cost per ride. The pass was valid for a month. She expressed her opinion that the GA recipients seemed to appreciate this service.

Ms. Sikora addressed the Transportation to Work Program. She noted the YWCA Wheels to Work program. She cited the need for Sunday transportation. She introduced a new Pilot Program. She recognized Father Tom Shea's efforts. The new program would provide transportation to work sites east of Hershey Rd. She noted that the two (2) services, (YWCA and Bloomington Normal Public Transit System) could not overlap as both programs would receive federal dollars. The Pilot Program would commence on Monday, April 16, 2007. The Township would provide the local match dollars. She cited the program's boundaries, (GE Rd., Ireland Grove Rd., and Towanda Barnes Rd.). She also cited the businesses within this area. She added that developers needed to provide sidewalks and pull offs. The MCC's, (McLean County Commerce), Transportation Committee would look at this program. She added that there was media interest. BNPTS was discussing the possibility of expanding its service. Providing this service would not be simple.

Ms. Sikora addressed Community Agency Funding. There were three (3) key areas: 1.) General Assistance Client Service Funding; 2.) Youth Services; and 3.) Senior Services. She addressed GA Client Service Funding. The primary goal and focus was education and training. Fifty percent (50%) of GA recipients do not have their high school diploma nor a GED, (General Equivalency Degree). The Township remained committed to a variety of employment opportunities. Education was the key.

Ms. Sikora noted that it had been a pleasure to serve the Township during the past six (6) years. She enjoyed the challenge and looking for solutions. Her goal was to help GA recipients improve their circumstances. This goal required that she be creative.

Ms. Sikora recognized John Pratt, Township attorney, Jim Fruin, Moderator, Tracey Covert, Township Clerk, and Mike Ireland, Township Assessor. She expressed her appreciation to the Township Trustees for their support.

Mr. Fruin thanked Ms. Sikora and Mr. Ireland for the wealth of information. He acknowledged the new initiative. The Township provided a tremendous amount of service with limited visibility.

A Resolution for Authority of Township Board of Trustees to give Authority to the Town of the City of Bloomington Township Trustees to Renovate the Evergreen Cemetery Mausoleum and Chapel was presented for adoption and approval.

Motion by Tina Crow, seconded by James Drake that the Resolution be adopted.

Motion carried.

Gene Lorch, President of the Board of Trustees for the Evergreen Cemetery addressed those attending the Annual Town Meeting. Evergreen Cemetery consisted of eighty-seven (87) acres. It was located close to Gene's Ice Cream. He recognized the Cemetery's crew members. The Cemetery would be hosting a Memorial Day event from May 25 through May 28, 2007. The Cemetery Board had involved the McLean County Historical Society and the Genealogy Society. There would be trolley tours. He described the Cemetery as beautiful and rich in history. He encouraged all to attend. In September 2007, the Cemetery would host its annual Cemetery Walk.

Mr. Fruin noted that the next Annual Town meeting would be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Randy Hoffman, seconded by Mike Ireland to hold the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion carried.

Motion by Steve Stockton, seconded by Skip Crawford to adjourn. Time: 7:23 p.m.

Motion carried.

Tracey Covert, Town Clerk