

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL, Fifth Floor
6801 Delmar Blvd.
University City, Missouri 63130
Monday, October 14, 2019
6:30 p.m.

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Regular Session of the City Council of University City held on the fifth floor of City Hall, on Monday, October 14, 2019, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay
Councilmember Paulette Carr
Councilmember Steven McMahon
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
Councilmember Tim Cusick
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose, and City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Rose requested that Consent Agenda Item J(2); Habitat for Humanity Lot Donation Contract be tabled until the October 28, 2019, Council meeting and placed under the City Manager's Report.

Councilmember Hales moved to approve the amendment to table Item J (2), it was seconded by Councilmember Carr and the motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Smotherson moved to remove Item J (1); Economic Development Strategic Plan Consultant Selection from the Consent Agenda and place it on the City Manager's Report for a brief discussion.

Councilmember Carr seconded the motion to move Item J (1) to the City Manager's Report, and the motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember McMahon moved to approve the agenda as amended, it was seconded by Councilmember Carr and the motion carried unanimously.

D. PROCLAMATIONS

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 9, 2019 – Regular Agenda Minutes were moved by Councilmember McMahon, it was seconded by Councilmember Carr and the motion carried unanimously.
2. September 23, 2019 – Joint Study Session (LSBD) Minutes were moved by Councilmember Carr, it was seconded by Councilmember Cusick.

Mayor Crow asked that the minutes be amended by changing all references to members of the LSBD as Commissioners to Board Members.

Voice vote on the motion to approve the minutes as amended, carried unanimously, with the exception of Councilmember Smotherson who abstained from participating in the vote.

F. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

G. SWEARING IN TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

1. Mark Harvey was sworn into the Plan Commission on September 24th in the Clerk's office.

H. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (Total of 15 minutes allowed)

Garrie Burr, 750 Kingsland, University City, MO

Mr. Burr stated on behalf of the Municipal Arts & Letters Commission, he would like to invite everyone to attend their 2019 Tradition of Literary Excellence Awards on October 26th at 7 p.m. here in Council's Chambers. The Tradition of Excellence Award was established in 2014, to honor the work of living local authors whose literary achievements have won national and international acclaim. The recipient of this year's award is Howard Schwartz, a noted poet, essayist, editor, and expert on Jewish folklore and mythology. Other honorees include young poet laureates in the St. Louis area; I See Me Bookstore, and U City High School Drama Teacher, Catherine Hopkins, for her work in teaching students Shakespeare through performance.

The Commission's Annual Reception for Returning Artists will be held on Wednesday, November 17th at 7 p.m. at the U City High School's Pruitt Library. This year's award recipient is Christopher J. Watkins, a St. Louis-based songwriter, producer, and Music Director.

Aren Ginsberg, 430 West Point Court, University City, MO

Ms. Ginsberg stated a former stray cat from U City just found his forever home at the Heritage Veterinary Hospital. Local cat advocates hope that one day soon U City will adopt a TNR Ordinance to help control the feral cat population, and both cat and dog owners look forward to the day when U City welcomes the OpSPOT's Veterinary Van to provide low-cost neutering and vaccines.

Ms. Ginsberg stated she would like to thank Council for their initiative to address some of the imbalances in Wash U's relationship with this municipality, especially as it relates to the City's parking allowances. Her hope is that Council will rescind the Parkview Garden's Plan and figure out a way to receive some form of compensation for Wash U's tax-free status, whose students benefit from the City's police, fire protection, infrastructure, and other municipal services at the expense of taxpaying residents.

Barbara Heiss, 6041 Kingsbury Avenue, St. Louis, MO

Ms. Heiss stated before moving to Kingsbury, she was a resident of U City for thirty years; she has been selling real estate in the St. Louis area for over thirty-five years and has a dotting admiration for the services provided by Habitat of Humanity.

So she was appalled when she heard that U City was preparing to abuse this program by building seven homes on one block of Plymouth in the northeast portion of this neighborhood. Over 30 percent of this area's population lives below the poverty level. Its racial makeup is 85 percent African-American; the elementary school population is 98 percent African-American; the neighborhood's vacancy rate is 13 percent, and only 49 percent of the homes are owner-occupied; which means this neighborhood meets all of the characteristics of a distressed area with concentrated poverty.

Studies have illustrated that crime, delinquency, education, psychological distress, and various health problems, are impacted by a neighborhood's characteristics. 2015 statistics suggest that the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging these negative outcomes for individuals appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds above 20 percent of the poverty level. Whereupon the externality effects grow rapidly until the neighborhood reaches an approximate 40 percent poverty level. Housing values and rents are key indicators of neighborhood decline and show a similar pattern. Therefore, based on all the rentals in this area these statistics are probably much worse in 2019 than they were in 2015.

Ms. Heiss stated she simply could not pull enough statistics together fast enough to paint a clear picture for this Council. There is no shortage of housing in this area. So, adding new housing stock with limited or low-income restrictions in an area with a 13 percent vacancy rate, instead of initiating a policy to rehab the homes in this area that are in decline is nothing short of negligent. These new homes need to be added to Wards 1 and 2, where there are growth opportunities for the people who will be buying them. *(Ms. Heiss asked that a copy of her written statement be attached to the minutes.)*

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

J. CONSENT AGENDA – Vote Required

1. Economic Development Strategic Plan Consultant Selection; (Removed)
2. Habitat for Humanity Lot Donation Contract; (Tabled)
3. Community Center Roof Replacement
4. 5 Electric Inspector Vehicles
5. HR Software – Applicant Tracking & Onboarding
6. St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste Management District Grant Amendment and Closeout
7. New World Maintenance Agreement
8. U City in Bloom Agreement

Councilmember Clay moved to approve Items 3 through 8 of the Consent Agenda, it was seconded by Councilmember Smotherson and the motion carried unanimously.

K. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Economic Development Strategic Plan Consultant Selection

Mr. Rose stated staff is recommending that Council approve The i5 Group as the consultants to develop the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan, for an amount not to exceed \$103,960.

Councilmember Smotherson moved to approve, it was seconded by Councilmember Hales.

Councilmember Smotherson stated while he was impressed with The i5 Group and is agreeable to this selection, he was also impressed by Future IQ's innovative ideas and vision for the future.

So he was curious to know whether there had been any supplemental discussions about the two companies working together to develop the Strategic Plan? Mr. Rose stated the bid submitted by The i5 Group did not indicate a desire to establish a partnership with Future IQ. However, he would remind Council that the Comprehensive Plan Update, which is an impending project primarily focused on the City's vision going forward, might be an ideal opportunity for Future IQ, should they decide to participate in the RFP process.

Voice vote on Councilmember Smotherson's motion to approve carried unanimously.

2. Crown Center for Sr. Living Planned Development – Amended Final – 1 Year Extension

Mr. Rose stated staff is recommending that Council consider a request from Crown Center for a Senior Living Planned Development that would amend the final approved Plan Development Mixed-Use District for one year.

Councilmember Cusick moved to approve, it was seconded by Councilmember McMahan.

Clifford Cross, Director of Planning & Development, stated the Zoning Ordinance permits an applicant the opportunity to apply for a one-year extension for a planned development that has previously been approved.

Crown Center has not initiated the construction phase of this project but has expressed a desire to seek Chapter 353 Tax Abatement, which necessitates this request for an extension. No changes have been proposed to their original plan.

Councilmember Carr asked how Chapter 353 would be utilized for this development? Mr. Cross stated at this point, Mr. Mulligan is working with the developers, so he is not aware of the specifics. But a 353 Corporation is the partner who secures funding for the project because as a part of the ten year period for abatement that partner becomes a for-profit partner which then would require the abatement of taxes. At that point, they would revert back to the non-profit entity which then becomes automatically eligible for the tax exemptions. Councilmember Carr asked if this land is one of the areas listed in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan for tax abatement? Mr. Cross stated his belief is that it is. Councilmember Carr asked if this was a Federal Program? Mr. Cross stated that it was. Councilmember Carr questioned whether that meant that the abatements would not necessarily come from U City? Mr. Cross stated that the abatement would come from U City and his thinking is that's because to be eligible for a 353 the State requires the City to have real property that has been found to be a blighted area. The City has already conducted a study of this area and made such a determination.

Voice vote on Councilmember Cusick's motion to approve carried unanimously.

3. City Logo (DISCUSSION and DIRECTION)

Mr. Rose stated on September 12, 2019, the Arts & Letters Commission voted to recommend restoring the City's historic logo. New logos for the City's vehicles will be phased in, while entry signs would be a priority for immediate replacement. Staff concurs with the Commission's recommendation and is asking that Council provide further direction on how to proceed with this matter. The initial estimated cost is \$20,000.

The Commission cited the following concerns with the current logo:

- Grammatically incorrect
- Poor color scheme
- Possible copyright infringement
- Inferior process used to make changes

Councilmember Smotherson moved to approve the Commission's recommendation, it was seconded by Councilmember Carr.

Councilmember Carr stated her recollection is that the last time Arts & Letters submitted a recommendation to restore the historic logo it was suppressed, and the previous Council went forward making these current changes with little or no input from others. So because of their charge, I think it is more than appropriate for the Arts & Letters Commission to make this recommendation, and she is grateful that they recognized the importance of this symbol and took the time to resubmit this once again. For those reasons, Councilmember Carr stated she is positively in favor of approving their recommendation.

Mayor Crow stated as a member of Council who was seated at that time, he would concur with Councilmember Carr's recitation of the events that took place, and therefore, appreciates the efforts put forth by staff and the Arts & Letters Commission.

Councilmember Hales stated a number of years ago; he had the opportunity to meet Bob Smith, the designer of this historic logo, who created a set of excellent branding guidelines that covered everything down to how the trash trucks should be branded. So as someone who has been in the graphic design industry for over twenty years, it was really frustrating to see the inferior process and lack of standards that accompanied this new change.

Of course, Mr. Smith created this logo back in 1973 or '74, so they may need to be slightly updated. But he feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to not only meet him but to be provided with a copy of the original logo which he keeps on his desk. It really is a historic piece of work by a very talented and creative man that he is pleased to see being restored.

Voice vote on Councilmember Smotherson's motion to approve carried unanimously.

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. BILL 9393 - AN ORDINANCE TERMINATING THE UNIVERSITY CITY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS. Bill Number 9393 was read for the second and third time.

Councilmember Smotherson moved to approve, it was seconded by Councilmember Carr.

Citizen's Comments

Patricia McQueen, 1132 George Street, University City, MO

Ms. McQueen stated as a strong proponent for social justice, her belief is that the Commission in its current form does not bear out that same sentiment. In fact, while the Commission's roles and responsibilities described in Section 3 of the Ordinance sound good, their power to enforce any type of discrimination is weak. And after Googling other cities to examine their Human Relations Commissions, it confirmed those beliefs. This Bill, written in 2011, puts something in place that makes U City a nice place to live in, but it has nothing to do with an individual's human rights associated with nondiscrimination protections in housing, employment, public accommodations for sexual orientation or gender identity.

Redlining still impacts the 3rd Ward, and based on some of the recent comments she's heard about some of these protected classes; especially as it relates to religious beliefs or sexual orientation, it's clear that this community has some problems. So, while she is open to Council's decision on this motion, her hope is that in the near future Council and staff will work on drafting a new Ordinance; and perhaps a new name for this Commission, that has more direction, and a focus that makes residents aware of things that are going on nationally, and from a local level, helps the City determine how to better protect itself from some of these discriminatory practices.

Jerrold Tiers, 7345 Chamberlain, University City, MO

Mr. Tiers stated in the face of it, the fact that Council's agenda contains a provision to abolish the Human Relations Commission, at the very least, is bad publicity. Especially when in the wake of very obvious violations of basic human rights, the City of Clayton is seeking to establish such a commission. What a stark contrast. Perhaps, if the City was planning to replace the Human Rights Commission with something more relevant than its current ineffective and toothless Commission, that could be seen as progress and something he would be very much in support of. Unfortunately, since there is no mention of a new Bill, the only thing left for residents to conclude is that the City has simply decided this Commission is no longer needed.

Is the idea behind this move to abolish Bill 9393 really based on the notion that the entire matter of human rights is unimportant? Mr. Tiers stated he finds it hard to believe that this current Council would exhibit such an attitude, so his assumption is, that is not the case. However, since it is very appropriate to have a citizen's oversight commission on these issues and other cities within the St. Louis metropolitan area are attempting to establish their own entities, he is puzzled as to why this City's Commission is being abolished, rather than updated. This action has terrible optics, both to the citizens of U City and the surrounding communities. Therefore, he certainly hopes that not only will Council have a split vote, rather than the customary block vote, but that there will be some meaningful explanation provided of exactly why; in times like these, the City believes such a Commission is unnecessary and worthy of being discarded. Mr. Tiers stated he looks forward to hearing Council's rationale.

Council's Comments

Councilmember Carr stated she would like to take a couple of minutes to provide everyone with a little history behind this Commission. When Mayor Welsch decided to reactivate this Commission she offered to become its first Council liaison. At the time, they didn't have a mission, so the first couple of years were spent trying to develop exactly what their roles and responsibilities would be. During that same period of time, a transsexual woman filed a complaint against the former City Manager, and the result was an admonition from the City Attorney to the Commission about what they could not do. Couple that with the fact that the Commission still had no mission, along with her instructions to stop participating in the Commission's discussion, and the fact no consideration had been given to what the City's problems were at the time or what they might be in the future, and what you ended up with is exactly what you see today; a Commission without substance or a real purpose.

Fast-forward to last spring, there was mass dissatisfaction with the survey approved by someone with no background in this area, and the end result was a group consensus to bring the Commission to an end. Councilmember Carr stated she even waited to see if this would blow over and people would see the need to continue, but that never happened. So tonight's action is neither capricious nor arbitrary, it's Council's reaction to a Commission that was abandoned by the people who served on it because they had not been given any meaningful direction by Council.

And quite honestly, there may be other commissions to be considered in the future; for example, when is the last time the Youth Commission held a meeting? Here again, this Commission was largely abandoned by its appointed members. So this is not about turning our attention away from existing problems, this is a considered action. And the suggestion of a substitute Ordinance without public engagement or the creation of a task force to conduct a needs analysis and make the appropriate recommendations, in her opinion, would be foolish. Councilmember Carr stated she certainly thinks this is a worthwhile cause because people need to know they have somewhere to go when they encounter issues that warrant some type of action. But going forward, this cannot be a knee-jerk reaction become some other municipality is doing it; it has to be substantive and real.

Councilmember McMahon stated he was also a liaison on this Commission. And for roughly two years, a good part of their time was spent working on a survey designed to seek direction and guidance from the residents of this City. These meetings would literally last for hours, only to result in nothing being accomplished. At various stages, the members would become frustrated and attempt to come up with smaller projects, but they just couldn't seem to get on their feet. And believe me, this is not a knock on the folks who were there because they all had good intentions and worked tirelessly to get something accomplished. But as Councilmember Carr stated, the charge they had been given was very amorphous and they simply could not get their hands around what their exact roles and responsibilities consisted of.

So the question before this Council tonight, is whether this City has a Commission that works? And if the answer to that question is no; the answer is no, and that's the simple way to look at this issue. Councilmember McMahon stated he would venture to say that everyone sitting on this dais is totally committed and in support of human rights, or human relations; or civil rights; or the desire to help those people whose voices have been silenced. But that's not the question before this Council, and to suggest otherwise really does not hold water. It simply does not serve anyone well to have citizens volunteer their time and keep getting no results. So at some point, we have to be willing to admit that this is not an effort worth saving.

Councilmember Clay stated his support for the dissolution of this Commission is less historical and more practical. According to the City's website and other documentation, this Commission was supposed to meet on a monthly or quarterly basis. Either way, the members have not held a meeting in over a year. So the question in his mind is if this Commission was, in fact, doing needed work, were there not other things they could have discussed or tried to address? But the bottom line is that he is uncertain of what could have been done to make this Commission more effective once the members themselves elected to discontinue their meetings.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he is the current liaison who actually witnessed members make the decision to terminate their discussions and no longer conduct meetings simply because they were totally confused about what they were supposed to do or could do. So he is absolutely in agreement with this Ordinance. But on the other hand, he also supports the citizens who spoke at tonight's meeting and looks forward to their input and the opportunity to sit down with them and put together a new mission and defined purpose so that this can become a functioning Commission.

Mayor Crow stated there was a time when he could sit here and say that he was not a part of this Commission's history because he was the new kid on the block.

But that time has long gone and the basic premise is that the mission and responsibilities of this Commission were not clearly defined when it was originally created. It is what it is, and now we need to move forward. Although he must admit that it has been interesting to hear how people have associated the Human Relations Commission with human rights. In fact, the Social Justice Committee from Christ the King actually recognized some of the issues brought forward this evening and took the time to come to his office in order to gain a better understanding of how this Commission works. He appreciates that visit, as well as the comments made here tonight, and therefore, would be happy to meet with anyone interested in moving this important issue forward.

Oddly enough, there have only been five residents who made outreach to him and expressed concern about the termination of this Commission. He would like to attribute that to the fact that as the fourth largest city in St. Louis County, with a population of 34,000, U City has demonstrated a strong commitment to keeping its residents informed about what's going on. Which he believes has been clearly confirmed by having seven members of Council who are accessible; a City administration that does an excellent job of getting information out, and of course, the extensive process that was undertaken with the TIF, where everyone was provided with an opportunity to speak and be heard. And it goes without saying that everyone is always striving to do a little bit better.

Mayor Crow stated he would like to end, where he started, by encouraging anyone who would like to see a reconstituted commission to bring their ideas and drafts forward. There has to be a level of involvement from our citizens because clearly what we have today, is not working. The bright side of putting this item on the agenda brought out some interesting comments that sparked an interest in doing something better. And his belief is that all of his colleagues are willing to listen and move forward with trying to make those improvements.

Roll Call Vote Was:

Ayes: Councilmember Carr, Councilmember McMahon, Councilmember Hales, Councilmember Cusick, Councilmember Smotherson, Councilmember Clay, and Mayor Crow.

Nays: None.

M. NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

BILLS

Introduced by Councilmember McMahon

1. **BILL 9394** – AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO PIT BULLDOGS. Bill Number 9394 was read for the first time.

N. COUNCIL REPORTS/BUSINESS

1. Boards and Commission appointments needed
2. Council liaison reports on Boards and Commissions
3. Boards, Commissions, and Task Force minutes
4. Other Discussions/Business

Councilmember Smotherson thanked Garrie for being here tonight and making the announcement about the upcoming Arts & Letters events.

He stated he thinks both of these are important events and would encourage everyone to come out and support all of the folks being honored for their literary and artistic contributions.

He stated he would also like to thank members of the Human Relations Commission because they need to know that in spite of the outcome, this Council truly appreciates their efforts and desire to volunteer their time in support of the City's initiatives.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he attended the Municipal League's Conference and found some pretty funny objects that he brought back for each of his colleagues.

O. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (continued if needed)

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember McMahon stated he would like to thank the students and faculty that invited Council and staff to participate in the District's Homecoming Parade. He believes everyone had a really good time marching in the parade and greeting all of the people in the streets; even those who took this opportunity to express some of their concerns right there on the spot.

Councilmember Cusick stated he thinks everyone is dismayed and saddened by the recent letter from the Loop Trolley Company indicating that if they did not receive \$200,000 in the next month, they would no longer be able to continue operating this year and that another \$500,000 would be needed to continue their operations throughout 2020. He stated the letter also mentioned some of the positive effects the Trolley has had since starting its operation; which in his opinion has not been substantiated by clear and convincing evidence:

1. *"Contrary to the critics, the real estate investment and retail businesses have prospered along the path of the Trolley".*
2. *"According to investors, the Trolley is a key element in their decision to invest in the projects along Delmar and DeBaliviere".*
3. *"The sales tax revenues along Delmar and DeBaliviere have grown steadily".*

Councilmember Cusick stated the reality is that the City has seen a decrease in these revenues, which are down to about 17 percent this year versus 20 percent in previous years. But the main thrusts of his comments are related to these dismal facts:

1. In 2007 the EDRST Board; which means this City's taxpayers, paid \$250,000 for a Feasibility Study to examine this project.
2. An additional tax was passed wherein 80 percent of a 1 percent sales tax was levied against all of the businesses along the Trolley's path.
3. To date, the Trolley has received \$51.5 million dollars consisting of a grant, along with State and Federal funding; mostly from taxpayer's dollars, to get this operation up and running.
4. The Trolley has been partially up and running for ten months and now they are asking for additional funds in order to keep this operation afloat.

For starters, Councilmember Cusick stated he does not think U City should come up with another penny. And his belief is that not only has the City of St. Louis said no, but it appears that County Council has announced that they have no intention of placing this item on their agenda for tomorrow. So it sounds like the Loop Trolley may be shutting down. But the lingering question is how can an agency receive \$51.5 million dollars and be in this kind of trouble after only ten months of operation? Councilmember Cusick stated he thinks this is something that needs to be investigated. So he will be submitting a request to place this item on Council's next agenda, with the goal of seeking approval to ask the Federal Transportation Administration to conduct an investigation.

He stated while he fully understands this may not be U City's responsibility, at this point, there does not seem to be any other governmental agency that has expressed a need or a desire, to look into this matter.

Councilmember Hales stated over the years, we've all heard the term "*block vote*" and many of us even know what that looks like from sitting out in this audience. However, he would like to make sure everyone understands the differences between the time when a "*block vote*" was a real issue, and what exists here today.

A major distinction is related to the fact that for the most part, this Council tends to see eye to eye on many of the issues being presented, and when there are differences of opinion, they are handled in a respectful manner. The second distinction is directly related to the man sitting in the chair next to Councilmember McMahon. Councilmember Hales stated regardless of where a member of this Council might land on an issue, they are afforded the exact same access and respect by the City Manager. He answers all of our questions; takes all of our calls; returns all of our calls, and if there is a question about something in our packets, he takes the time to listen and walk us through it prior to the meeting. That is the type of leadership this City has needed for some time, and he is extremely pleased to have Mr. Rose here in U City.

The Tuesday concluding Rosh Hashanah, Councilmember Hales stated he was headed west down Delmar and as he approached the crosswalk at Young Israel he noticed a woman on the south side of Delmar trying to cross. As a member of the Traffic Commission for five years, the crosswalks at Delmar and North and South were such a major issue that he has become exceedingly cautious whenever he approaches one. There were no cars in the parking lane in front of her, and no cars either beside or behind him, so as she attempted to make her way across Delmar, Councilmember Hales stated that he stopped. But as he sat there and waited he could see a car in his rearview mirror speeding over the crest of the hill in the right lane next to him. It was about 6:30 p.m., so there was no way this lady would have been able to see this car, and apparently, he had no concern for why Councilmember Hales was stopped at the visibly marked crosswalk. It was one of those moments where you could see that something terrible was about to happen, so as the car came barreling down the road he decided to pull his car across the right lane. When he did that, the car hit his brakes, went around him crossing the double yellow line and started honking his horn to convey his frustration.

Councilmember Hales stated this is really a plea to everyone listening to please be observant of the crosswalks and their neighbors who are trying to use them. He stated he was so shaken by this experience that he has decided to write a letter to the City's representatives on County Council because he strongly believes that it is time for them to address this issue. And at the next City Council meeting, he will be asking his colleagues to show their support of this action by appending their signatures to this letter. He stated we need to find a solution that works for everyone because at any moment someone in our community could be seriously injured or killed. So, he is open to any suggestions or feedback regarding this matter.

Q. Motion to go into a Closed Session according to Missouri Revised Statutes 610.021 (1): Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and any confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives or attorneys and (3) Hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting of particular employees by a public governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded, and (13) Individually identifiable personnel records, performance ratings or records pertaining to employees.

Councilmember Carr moved to go into a Closed Session; it was seconded by Councilmember McMahon.

Roll Call Vote Was:

Ayes: Councilmember Hales, Councilmember Cusick, Councilmember Smotherson, Councilmember Clay, Councilmember Carr, Councilmember McMahon, and Mayor Crow.

Nays: None.

R. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow thanked everyone for their attendance **and** closed the regular City Council meeting at 7:35 p.m. to go into a Closed Session on the second floor. The Closed Session reconvened in an open session at 8:38 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk

Jerrold Tiers

7345 Chamberlain

I see that Bill 9393 is on the agenda, abolishing the "Human Relations" commission. This is, on the face of it, very bad publicity at the ~~very~~ least. When Clayton is establishing a similar commission, in the wake of various obvious violations of basic human rights, University City has decided that this matter is of no importance. What a contrast.

Perhaps if the City were planning a replacement "Human Rights" commission, that would be more relevant than the somewhat ineffective and toothless existing commission. That would be progress. Then we would expect to also see Bill 9393 establishing the replacement commission with a more appropriate set of responsibilities. I would be very much in support of updating the commission to be more relevant to current events.

Unfortunately, we do not see such a Bill coming. All we see is that University City has decided that there is no need for any such commission. Is the idea here that the entire matter of human rights is unimportant? I find it hard to believe that the Council, as currently constituted, would have this attitude, so I must assume that is not the case.

But, why then abolish the commission with no replacement? It is very appropriate to have a citizen oversight commission of this type. Other local cities have, or are now establishing their own. Why is University City choosing to abolish ours at this, or any, time? Why not update it?

This action has terrible optics, both to the citizens of U-City, and to the surrounding larger community.

I certainly hope that, for once, this council will have a meaningfully split vote. I think many will be extremely disappointed if we have another 7 to 0 block vote in favor. It seems that public debate is unknown in University City, and this is one vote which should have debate.

It should not only have a debate, but some meaningful explanation of exactly why the City has chosen to take this action. To explain why, in these times, the City believes such a commission is un-needed, and worthy of being discarded.

I look forward to the debate, and the explanations.

Thank you.

My name is Barbara Heise. I live at 6041 Kingsbury Avenue, St Louis Mo 63112. I lived in University City for 30 years and now live in Skinker DeBaliviere. I have been selling real estate for over 35 years.

First I would like to say that Jimmy Carter is one of the few presidents in my lifetime that I admire. I especially admire his association with Habitat For Humanity. When I heard this weekend that University City is preparing to abuse this program by building 7 homes on Plymouth in the Northeast Neighborhood I was appalled by the lack of concern/knowledge of the Ucity Council and the City Manager. This area of Ucity has over 30% of its population living below the poverty level. The racial makeup of the neighborhood is 85% African American and the elementary school makeup is 98%. There is no shortage of housing in the area. The vacancy rate is 13%. Only 49% of the homes in the neighborhood are owner occupied.

The neighborhood meets all of the characteristics of a distressed area with concentrated poverty.

Studies have illustrated that crime and delinquency, education, psychological distress, and various health problems, among many other issues, are affected by neighborhood characteristics. In a recent review of research... studies suggest "that the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging negative outcomes for individuals like crime, school leaving, and duration of poverty spells appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds about 20 percent poverty, whereupon the externality effects grow rapidly until the neighborhood reaches approximately 40 percent poverty; subsequent increases in the poverty population appear to have no marginal effect."⁴ Housing values and rents, key indicators of neighborhood decline, show a similar pattern. Using data from the 100 largest U.S. metro areas from 1990 to 2000, Galster, Cutsinger, and Malega find little relationship between neighborhood poverty rates rates and decline in neighborhood housing values and rents until poverty exceeds 10 percent, at which point

values decline rapidly before becoming shallower at very high poverty levels.

To add new housing stock with limited income restrictions in an area with 13% vacancy instead of initiating a policy to rehab the homes that are in decline in the neighborhood is nothing short of negligent.

New housing with income restrictions need to be added to wards 1 & 2 which are opportunities of growth.

Understanding Neighborhood Effects of Concentrated Poverty

Highlights

- A core challenge of neighborhood effects research is distinguishing the role of individual and family circumstances from the effect of the neighborhood itself.
- Nevertheless, many neighborhood level indicators are linked to important outcomes for people residing in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, including crime and delinquency, education, psychological distress, and various health problems.
- HUD's Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration found that those assigned vouchers restricted to low-poverty neighborhoods typically experienced better physical and mental health at the five- to seven-year followup than those with unrestricted vouchers or continued project-based assistance.
- Collective efficacy, as represented by measures of informal social controls, social cohesion, and trust, can help buffer communities against the negative effects of concentrated poverty.



Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty can isolate residents from the services and supports they need. Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty isolate their residents from the resources and networks they need to reach their potential and deprive the larger community of the

neighborhood's human capital. Since the rise of inner-city poverty in the United States, researchers have sought to interpret the dynamic between neighborhood and residents in communities of concentrated poverty. Through articles and books such as *The Truly Disadvantaged* and *When Work Disappears*, sociologist William Julius Wilson has been a key figure in first popularizing the discussion of neighborhood effects. Wilson emphasizes that a "spatial mismatch" between increasingly suburban job opportunities and the primarily minority residents of poor urban neighborhoods has magnified other challenges, such as crime, the movement of middle-class residents to better neighborhoods, and a perpetual shortage of finance capital, stores, employment opportunities, and institutional resources.¹ This combination of barriers creates communities with serious crime, health, and education problems that, in turn, further restrict the opportunities of those growing up and living in them. Wilson also consistently addresses the effect of family structure on the outcomes of residents in such communities, cautioning against both "culture of poverty" arguments and the assumption that individuals are helpless victims of racism.

As the study of neighborhood effects of concentrated poverty has developed, researchers have also confronted significant challenges. These hurdles include properly defining the boundaries between neighborhoods, conducting detailed longitudinal studies, and accounting for resident choice in neighborhood selection. Although technological advancements and increased research funding can address many of these challenges, distinguishing between neighborhood effects and family effects remains difficult. Researchers can control for basic family characteristics such as race, income, and education, but other, unobserved variables can result in either over- or understating neighborhood effects, which further complicates the interconnected nature of many neighborhood factors.² As Margery Austin Turner, an expert in poverty research with the Urban Institute, tells *EM*:

- The major question that continues to be asked is, does living in these places harm residents in and of itself? [Neighborhood effects are certainly not] the only factor; individual and family circumstances can overcome the effects of concentrated poverty but can also leave a family vulnerable. What is worrisome is that we don't know enough about the interaction between vulnerable families and their neighborhoods. These families are the most likely to live in poverty areas but are also the most likely to have bad outcomes no matter where they reside. We need to learn more

about the process by which a neighborhood transitions from low to high opportunity and, similarly, how that process influences individuals already affected by concentrated poverty.³



Working together to accomplish goals, strong neighborhood networks can lessen the effects of concentrated poverty.

Neighborhood-Level Characteristics Affect Individuals

Despite this limitation, researchers have found that for people residing in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, a number of neighborhood level indicators are linked to important outcomes. Studies have illustrated that crime and delinquency, education, psychological distress, and various health problems, among many other issues, are affected by neighborhood characteristics. Thresholds, or tipping points, also prove important. In a recent review of research, Galster notes that studies suggest “that the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging negative outcomes for individuals like crime, school leaving, and duration of poverty spells appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds about 20 percent poverty, whereupon the externality effects grow rapidly until the neighborhood reaches approximately 40 percent poverty; subsequent increases in the poverty population appear to have no marginal effect.”⁴ Housing values and rents, key indicators of neighborhood decline, show a similar pattern. Using data from the 100 largest U.S. metro areas from 1990 to 2000, Galster, Cutsinger, and Malega find little relationship between neighborhood poverty

rates and decline in neighborhood housing values and rents until poverty exceeds 10 percent, at which point values decline rapidly before becoming shallower at very high poverty levels.⁵

Several HUD studies have also contributed significantly to neighborhood effects research. One of these, the Moving to Opportunity study, has been a rare occasion to use random assignment, allowing researchers to better distinguish neighborhood effects from the selection bias that neighborhood choice creates.⁶ Volunteer families in five cities who lived in public or assisted housing were randomly assigned to one of the following groups:

- The treatment group: Participants received a voucher restricted to low-poverty census tracts and assistance in locating and moving to housing.
- The comparison group: Participants received a standard, geographically unrestricted voucher.
- The control group: Participants received continued project-based assistance.

After five to seven years, families who participated in the treatment group lived in better neighborhoods, and adults experienced better physical and mental health compared with the control group. Girls in these families showed significant mental health improvements, although boys may have fared worse.⁷ Despite these improvements, the MTO study has not shown gains in economic self-sufficiency, which was initially expected to be the primary outcome. Results of the final evaluation will be published by early 2011.”

Benefits of Shared Community Efforts

Another key question in understanding the relationship between neighborhood and family effects is whether protective factors are family- or neighborhood-based. A major interdisciplinary study, the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, tested this through the concept of collective efficacy, a shared belief that a neighborhood’s residents can accomplish important tasks, such as preventing crime and delinquency, by working together in formal or informal neighborhood organizations. Communities that share expectations effectively and collectively exert social control over neighborhood conditions and behavior appear better able to counter the negative effects of concentrated poverty.

As a component of the project, which combined an intensive study of Chicago neighborhoods with coordinated longitudinal studies of randomly selected individuals, Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls surveyed residents of neighborhood clusters on informal social controls, social cohesion, and trust.⁸ The researchers found that, even when accounting for factors such as personal characteristics, concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential stability, collective efficacy was strongly linked with decreased violence and weakened the relationship between violence and the neighborhood's social composition. Such evidence supports the notion that, just as parents can buffer their children against the effects of violence and other negative outcomes, strong neighborhood networks can collectively lessen the effects of concentrated poverty. The project, which was jointly funded by the National Institute of Justice and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, also explored neighborhood effects on health, crime, education, social processes, and other topics, yielding more than 100 publications.⁹



Choice Neighborhoods will coordinate with other place-based programs to improve housing, education, communities, safety, and services in areas of concentrated poverty.

HUD Strategies Address Neighborhood Effects

HUD recognizes the importance of creating neighborhoods of opportunity, and its Choice Neighborhoods initiative is designed to deconcentrate poverty and address the interconnected problems caused by living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. The initiative's goal is to strengthen the underlying social structure of neighborhoods through competitive grants, which will encourage strong local partnerships and allow some funding flexibility to catalyze local improvement of key neighborhood assets.

Choice Neighborhoods will ensure that HUD-assisted housing is financed and managed in a way that attracts a mix of uses, incomes, and stakeholders, recognizing that the program must simultaneously address housing and public safety, education, employment, well-being, and institutional resources. Choice Neighborhoods will also coordinate extensively and leverage resources with place-based programs at the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services, among others. This partnership will help empower communities to address many of their most pressing social problems.

Because the relationship between neighborhood and family structure remains complicated, supporting mobility is also crucial. The Transforming Rental Assistance initiative, a companion to Choice Neighborhoods, will enhance tenant choice and access to a broader range of neighborhoods. As the interrelated nature of neighborhood effects shows, a comprehensive set of strategies and partnerships will be necessary to help promote opportunity in neighborhoods struggling with poverty

