

**CITY OF OAK FOREST**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**Tuesday**

**March 23, 2021**

---

Mayor Kuspa called the City Council meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Roll Call as follows:

*Present:* Alderman Gray (via telephone)  
Alderman Simon  
Alderman Wolf  
Alderman Selman  
Alderman Emmett  
Alderman Hortsman  
Alderman Danihel

*Also Present:* City Clerk John F. Janozik  
City Administrator Timothy Kristin  
Building Commissioner Mike Forbes  
Community Planner Paul Ruane

---

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A huge congratulation shout out to athletes and coaches at Oak Forest High School. Believe it or not, through COVID and everything else our local athletes have been performing and doing quite well.

- Cheer won State for only the 4<sup>th</sup> time in school history
- Dance/Pom took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in IDT State
- Boys Bowling took 1<sup>st</sup> place in their Conference
- Girls bowling took 1<sup>st</sup> place in their Conference
- Boys Basketball went 11-2 and won their Conference
- Girls Basketball went 12-1 and won their Conference
- Boys Swim took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Conference

\*\*\*\*\*

City Hall does remain open to the public, but face coverings and social distancing are still required. However, the payment of water bills must be done by mail, online at [www.oak-forest.org](http://www.oak-forest.org), or dropped in the night depository box.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 2**

The sale of vehicle stickers will be carried out in the same manner as last year. Seniors will receive their stickers in the mail. Others purchasing stickers will do so online, by mail, or drop off in City Hall's night depository box.

\*\*\*\*\*

Early voting for municipal, school district and other local elections will be held at City Hall starting Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> through Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. Detailed information is available online at [www.oak-forest.org](http://www.oak-forest.org) or by calling City Hall.

\*\*\*\*\*

**4. MOTION TO ESTABLISH CONSENT AGENDA**

Alderman Simon made the motion to establish consent agenda.

Alderman Wolf seconded.

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			

The motion to establish consent agenda carried 7/7.

\*\*\*\*\*

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

1. City Council - March 9, 2021

**B. Consideration of the following Lists of Bills dated:**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**23 March 2021**  
**Page 3**

- 1. Regular Bills: FY 2020-21 - March 23, 2021
- 2. Supplemental Bills: FY 2020-21 - March 23, 2021

C. Consideration of the following minutes:

- 1. Crime Prevention Commission (via Zoom) - February 16, 2021
- 2. Planning & Zoning - February 17, 2021
- 3. Executive Safety Committee - March 9, 2021

Alderman Selman made the motion to approve Consent Agenda.

Alderman Danihel seconded.

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			

The motion to approve Consent Agenda carried 7/7.

\*\*\*\*\*

**6. ADMINISTRATION**

---

- A. Discussion of amending the City of Oak Forest's liquor licensing ordinance to allow video gaming at varied places of business. The attached memo from Mayor Kuspa, dated March 18, 2021, provides supporting details.
- 

Alderman Hortsman made the motion to open the discussion.

Alderman Danihel seconded.

Mayor Kuspa sent a memo to the Aldermen because the Mayor's Office has been receiving numerous inquires and requests from many businesses in

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 4**

town above and beyond local restaurants and taverns. There has been contact from the corporate office of 7-11 for gaming machines. Food 4 Less grocery store has a partner and they are also inquiring about gaming machines. Oak Forest Marathon Gas Station, Milex Complete Auto Care, The Barber Studio, Stop 'n' Go Liquors, and Captain Jack's. He feels this is an excellent opportunity for everyone to weigh-in and plan a direction moving forward. He opened up the topic for general conversation. He introduced a gentleman named Dominic representing Food 4 Less, which has a business model if Council would like it presented. Mayor Kuspa offered Alderman Gray start the conversation as she was on a few second delay via telephone.

Alderman Gray reminded Council of the steps taken when the City was beginning to allow gambling in establishments. She then stated she would like to stick with the original codification. She would like to discuss the original codifications/classifications and stick with those. She also feels that once you say yes to this, you'll never be able to say no. She is not in favor of including any business in the categories for liquor licenses.

For clarification, Mayor Kuspa announced that as people have been calling in requesting the liquor license, which is required for gaming, they are being told the abridged version that they are required to have a legal bar with men's and women's bathrooms, with proper sanitation and hand sinks, and everything a bar is required to have. This also what he told the 7-11 corporate office, and any of the business owners requesting this. He felt that kept the city within the original vision of having liquor license and gaming to a legitimate bar. Some business have larger square footage, and they may want to divide their business and create a bar area which is something that can be discussed. Other businesses are coming forward not wanting to serve alcohol, but needing the license for gaming machines.

Alderman Simon thinks it should be left the way it is; things are fine now and he doesn't think they should change anything.

Alderman Emmett is pro-business but thinks this will give a bad look to the community. He feels bad about the taxes in Southern Cook County, and for the businesses not surviving, but he feels this is a bad look for Oak Forest at this time. He feels they will be all over the place, and when will the city say no.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 5**

Alderman Danihel would like to see the proposal from Food 4 Less. Mayor Kuspa would like to give all the Aldermen a chance to speak first.

Alderman Hortsman understands what was done in the past, but pointed out there are facilities right now that have gaming machines that do not have a bar, and there is one in his ward that doesn't have a permanent bathroom. He feels the consistency of what is happening has put a light to the businesses to say there are revenue streams that other businesses are utilizing; the issue is does the city want to allow them to do this. He has had conversations with business on 159<sup>th</sup> Street and they are trying to hang on any way they can and are being told by people in the community to install gaming machines. He has explained the ordinances and rules to them, but has also told them if they want to talk to the Mayor's Office, do so. His intention is to be as open as he can. In his mind, he understands that the city doesn't want to set the precedent, but it may also help the city's revenues. It's not bad to listen to the businesses and see if they have a business plan that will meet city standards.

Alderman Wolf understands the position the business are in, but is wondering if this will just be a quick fix; what will happen in the future. She feels there needs to be control over this, and to say where they should and should not be. She is agreeing with Alderman Emmett, Alderman Gray, and Alderman Simon.

Alderman Gray added that Tinley Park took longer to bring video gaming into their town because it was a matter of how does it fit with their plan, and what they want their town to represent. They have stuck to their vision of bars and restaurants and they have limited the amount of video cafes. She pointed out that Oak Forest had a vision when this was first codified, but it keeps changing as we go; we're not sticking to what we said our plans, goals, and dreams for the future of our town (should) look. If the businesses are suffering can we think of other ways to give them a break?

Alderman Wolf brought up the strategic planning meeting, and thinks that will give more of a vision of what we want for our city. She does not feel this is the time to make a decision. Mayor Kuspa agrees, but because so many businesses have been requesting the city reconsider he wanted to bring it to the Aldermen.

Alderman Selman sees this leading to possibly less than family friendly establishments; he sees it as a contrast to the original

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 6**

intent of the ordinance, allowing gaming in select places. He is a fan of consistency and following the rules, and as someone not here when the ordinance was put together, he has respect for the process Council went through. He thinks it should be a supplement to a business plan, not a main revenue source. Alderman Hortsman would agree with Alderman Selman, but he has spoken regularly to Milex about this, and they are trying to make their building a multi-use building. They are having music affairs in one of their back bins. He had told them to talk to Economic Development to see what was needed to be a multi-use facility.

Mayor Kuspa called forward Dominic Hewett from Kuro(sp) Group 1045, a partner with Food 4 Less, and asked for the abridged version of their business model. They are looking to add an extra liquor license in the enclosed area where the bank had been located. This room, with the addition of an ID scanner at the entrance to the gaming area, and will be one of the most secure gaming rooms in Illinois. Mayor Kuspa asked if the room would only be allowed entry by swiping an ID to prove being over 21. Mr. Hewett affirmed, and added in addition, a Food 4 Less employee will have hourly walk-throughs in addition to the cameras. Mayor Kuspa asked what would happen if someone of legal age bought alcohol and went into the room. Mr. Hewett explained that since 1045 will hold the room liquor license, and Food 4 Less will hold the off premise liquor license legally that is not allowed. Alderman Emmett asked if there are any places now that 1045 operates that can be seen as examples, and have any other towns given them this license or approval yet. Mr. Hewett explained that 1045 and Food 4 Less are having these same types of conversations throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. As soon as something is approved he can direct Council to that area.

Alderman Emmett says he understands what Alderman Gray is saying about what was done years ago, he has no problem giving things a fresh look, but he doesn't like the idea of people just "hanging out". He feels for places like gas stations and 7-11 you don't go there to hang out, you go to buy something and leave.

Alderman Hortsman is not looking to make changes per se, but in the discussion with businesses that have gaming machines they are not a secondary source of revenue. He sees business in the early morning with a lot of cars outside and it's gaming that's bringing them there. If we talk to the people in this town, gaming has gotten them through COVID in a lot of cases. Gaming is one of the largest revenue sources in Illinois.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 7**

**7. FINANCE**

---

A. Discussion of the City of Oak Forest's Capital Improvement Program.

---

Alderman Hortsman made the motion to open the discussion.

Alderman Emmett seconded.

Mayor Kuspa welcomed Finance Director Julian to the podium. Director Julian provided Council with her presentation. This was a collaborative effort by all department heads to update our rolling five year Capital Plan. Capital expenditures are critical to daily operations; this involves equipment, buildings and grounds, infrastructure, vehicles, machinery, etcetera. It has been some time since an in-depth look had been taken, and this is a draft so no decisions need to be made. Director Julian intends to have a final document to Council at the end of April. She feels that all department heads have presented their needs that are critical to operations. Director Julian did not touch on every item, but gave highlights of each department. Her goal for the final document is to have a supporting document underneath describing in detail what the item is, what it's replacing, etcetera. The total General Fund is about \$9.3 million. This is just an overview, and is consistent with CIP's in the past. We do have funds; we have allocated our Home Rule Sales Tax, which is about \$1.2 million per year. Director Julian said one of the most critical items to plan for is infrastructure, which brought her to water and sewer. It has been ten years since we have done any water main replacements, sewer main replacements, or any lining. That became a topic of the organizational assessment. There was a plan with the engineer which has been updated. They are asking for about \$1.2 million dollars annually, and we have been setting aside about \$200,000.00 annually.

Looking at the next five years, our capital plan is about \$22.4 million dollars; that's input from department heads, and Director Julian also asked for Council's input and would appreciate any feedback. Out of the \$22.4 million, Director Julian has about \$15.7 million funded, she is looking at funding for \$6.7 million over the next few years. The majority of that is water and sewer, which is \$5 million. If that was taken and divided by household, a flat fee of an additional \$30 per quarter would be needed. Director Julian is

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 8**

benchmarking our flat fee and our volume rate against the surrounding communities that get their water from Lake Michigan, and she can see where we stand. Additional users will also help with the water rate, and that could come from the volume the county will use. General Fund is about \$1.8 million dollars short, we will have to do some short-term borrowing or spread it out as some is for vehicle purchases.

---

B. Approval of Agreement No. 2021-03-0308A, a contract extension with Linda Rana for payroll preparation services. The attached memo from Finance Director Julian, dated march 17, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Simon made the motion to approve Agreement No. 2021-03-0308A.

Alderman Wolf seconded.

Finance Director Julian spoke on behalf of Mrs. Rana, who has been under her contract with the city since 2014.

Alderman Danihel, who was not present in 2014, asked why we are not doing payroll here. Director Julian answered there had been a union employee that did payroll that retired in 2004, and at that time it was cost effective to outsource. It is a specialty, and no one in the current Clerical Union can do payroll. The savings from outsourcing were used to bring in IT, which the city did not have at that time. Alderman Danihel asked if payroll could be brought back to the city to be done. Director Julian said no, as it is a specialty and incredibly difficult; outsourcing is a great savings to the city.

Alderman Hortsman asked what the back-up plan is if Mrs. Rana has a problem. Director Julian replied she is the back-up, as there is no additional staff to back-up Mrs. Rana.



Roll Call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			

The motion to approve Agreement No. 2021-03-0308A carried 7/7.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**8. BUILDING**

- 
- A. Approval of Ordinance No. 2021-03-08300 amending the Oak Forest Municipal Code, Chapters 90.041 & 90.042: Driveways. The attached memo from Building Commissioner Forbes, dated March 17, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Emmett made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08300.

Alderman Wolf seconded.

Building Commissioner Forbes explained that these changes are per the COW meeting from February 23rd, 2021. The language is not being changed, but moved from the Municipal Code to the Zoning Code. Under the Municipal Code you are not allowed a variance, they can now request a variance from the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Roll Call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			

The motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08300 carried 7/7.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

- 
- A. Approval of Ordinance No. 2021-03-08260, an Annexation Agreement Ordinance relating to the northwest corner of 149<sup>th</sup> Street & Cicero Avenue, commonly known as 14900 South Cicero Avenue. The attached memo from Community Planner Ruane, dated March 18, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Emmett made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08260.

Alderman Danihel seconded.

Planner Ruane gave Council the same presentation given to Planning and Zoning, explaining the location of the property and zoning changes.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 11**

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			

The motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08260 carried 7/7.

---

B. Approval of Ordinance No. 2021-03-08270, an Annexation Ordinance relating to the northwest corner of 149<sup>th</sup> Street & Cicero Avenue, commonly known as 14900 South Cicero Avenue. The attached memo from Community Planner Ruane, dated march 18, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Danihel made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08270.

Alderman Emmett seconded.

Planner Ruane explained that this is the annexation for the previous item.

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			

The motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08270 carried 7/7.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 March 2021**

**Page 12**

---

C. Approval of Ordinance No. 2021-03-08280, a Rezoning Ordinance relating to the northwest corner of 149<sup>th</sup> Street & Cicero Avenue, commonly known as 14900 South Cicero Avenue. The attached memo from Community Planner Ruane, dated march 18, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Hortsman made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08280.

Alderman Selman seconded.

Planner Ruane explained that this will be the rezoning to preserve the future land use as multi-family but still allowing the single family use.

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Hortsman			
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			

The motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08280 carried 7/7.

---

D. Approval of Ordinance No. 2021-03-08290, a Text Amendment to the City of Oak Forest's Zoning Ordinance regarding driveways. The attached memo from Community Planner Ruane, dated March 18, 2021, provides supporting details.

---

Alderman Danihel made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08290.

Alderman Hortsman seconded.

Planner Ruane explained this is a follow-up to the item presented by Building Commissioner Forbes. This lists the specific requirements.

**Roll Call vote was taken as follows:**

<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAIN</u></b>	<b><u>ABSENT</u></b>
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			

The motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-03-08290 carried 7/7.

\*\*\*\*\*

**10. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

None

\*\*\*\*\*

**11. OLD BUSINESS**

Alderman Emmett asked who is responsible for tree maintenance on the trees near 163<sup>rd</sup> and Cicero/Fieldcrest Drive as some are dead. City Administrator Kristin thinks it is the state, but will verify. Alderman Simon believes it is a state responsibility.

\*\*\*\*\*

**12. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Alderman Danihel made the motion to move to Executive Session.

Alderman Hortsman seconded.

Roll Call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			

The motion to enter Executive Session carried 7/7.

The City Council meeting ended at 8:59 pm.

\*\*\*\*\*

**14. ADJOURMENT**

Alderman Danihel made the motion to Adjourn.

Alderman Hortsman seconded.

Roll Call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Danihel			
Alderman Gray			
Alderman Simon			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Selman			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Hortsman			

The motion to adjourn carried 7/7. The Executive Session ended at 9:46 pm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR HENRY L. KUSPA