The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois held a Committee of the Whole meeting on September 9, 2019, in the City Council Chambers of the DeKalb Municipal Building, 200 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

City Clerk Lynn Fazekas called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: Alderman Carolyn Morris, Alderman Bill Finucane, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Pat Fagan, Alderman Scott McAdams, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman Tony Faivre, and Mayor Jerry Smith.

Also present were: City Manager Bill Nicklas, City Attorney John Donahue, Principal Planner Dan Olson, and Management Analyst Jason Blumenthal.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION

Alderman Morris moved to approve the agenda. Alderman Faivre seconded.

VOTE


C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dwayne Brown presented history of how cannabis became illegal. He said he wants DeKalb to be competitive and urged Council to try a lower tax rate than the maximum.

Michael Larson urged cooperation rather than antagonism to get things done. He said the clerk’s office is only open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday right now, we’re competing with Sycamore and they are probably winning.

Barry Schrader spoke about his history in public office and as newspaper editor. He urged the City to take off political hats, put on thinking caps, and not to bow to political pressure in the matter of the clerk’s office.
Bernard Pupino said a locked-up City Seal is an insult and eight hours of clerk’s office hours are not sufficient. He said the city clerk should resign because an appointed clerk has no recourse.

David “DK” Kolars said the previous speaker was wrong about the city clerk’s being an appointed office. He said a deputy clerk who answers to the manager is put in a bad position and it makes no sense to work for one supervisor while answering to another.

D. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Further Consideration of the Framework for Cannabis Dispensaries in the City of DeKalb.

City Manager Nicklas talked about regulatory issues including zoning, setbacks, and signage.

Edward Balli said the State of Illinois made a decision to get the trafficking of drugs out in the open and taxes paid. He clarified that it’s the growers that have the issues with smells on site, not the dispensaries. He also noted that local approval has to happen before anyone gets approval from the state to participate.

Council discussion included the following:

- Proximity of dispensaries to Northern Illinois University and whether that would be a problem, even if the problem is only one of perception.
- Whether dispensaries should be allowed in multi-tenanted commercial buildings.
- Whether the City should prohibit on-site consumption of cannabis.
- How much sales tax to collect, and how to allocate the revenue.

2. Further Consideration of the Duties of the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Alderman Morris presented an overview of actions and the meetings she’s had with the city manager, mayor, city clerk, and former deputy city clerk.

Marguerite “Peggy” Hoyt said that between her own term as clerk and those of her successor in the position, there were 30 problem-free years. Ms. Hoyt said our forefathers wanted an elected, full-time clerk as protector of documents. She said the clerk must name the deputy as a backup and the deputy takes orders from the clerk.
JJ Wett gave a definition of leadership and said the limitations of the clerk’s position make it impossible for her to be a leader. He urged Council to bring the position back to its former level, responsible for day-to-day operations and restored as an independent office.

Bessie Chronopoulos noted that the City hasn’t had a clerk’s office for seven years. She noted the office used to have two full-time positions plus one part-time. She said reinstating this level of service hours would enable centralizing of activities, which would be economical. She urged council to line up the local code with the statutes.

Council discussed the trend in the state of appointing clerks, the role of home rule in gutting the elected office, and the limitations of elected officers in part-time roles.

E. EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO 5 ILCS (120/2)

No executive session was authorized during this meeting.

F. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Alderman Morris moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole at 6:39 p.m. Alderman Faivre seconded.

VOTE

Motion carried on majority voice vote. Mayor Smith declared the Committee of the Whole adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

LYNN A. FAZEKAS, City Clerk

Approved by City Council: September 23, 2019.