

## Des Moines City Council Meeting 2.7.22

(I got here at 5:06, so missed the proclamations and early part of meeting)

- Item 41, maximum property tax dollars for levy:
  - Taylor: The hearing for this is expected on the 7th, for the budget as a whole. This is probably a warranted increase. I'd like to know what in particular this is being used for. What specifically are we going to raise taxes for?
  - Carol, of Ward 3: I don't understand the math. Who gives the first number? The assessor? The tax levy? My question is: how much would the tax levy fee without tax abatement be? Am I as a resident subsidizing the tax abatement fee for programs that don't pay taxes?
  - Wyatt (sp?) Can the property taxes be increased and fund more local options? Increasing permanent funding for DART? Street improvements? Me and my wife have a one car household, and it needs to be safer and easier to get around. Or help with housing.
  - Indira: I'm going to vote no on this. I agree we need to spend more money on services, but I don't believe the city is responsibly using the money coming in. There's a high burden on taxpayers because of the pandemic, and other factors. I've had people come to me asking how we can address expensive houses having taxes go down. I believe in taxation and services, and collective money for collective benefits. The city is using so much money on the police budget, it isn't using money responsibly.
- Item 42: Carpenter Urban Renewal Area Plan
  - (Gatto and Mandelbaum whispering)
  - Natalie: According to the Des Moines Register, Drake is selling to MERGE, and the average cost is very high. The development company sells to areas needing economic development, and build the most expensive units in that neighborhood. They are here purely to profit.
  - Carol: No end date to blight purpose. More and more of our city is moving into TIFF. The last two urban renewal plans have had robust conversations. There's a lot of pushback on how we measure success of TIFFs. (sp?)
  - Taylor: I was at the planning meeting, and other commissioners had issues with the meeting too. The project says they don't need the TIFF money, Des Moines is giving it to them. Calling an area a "blighted" area has many issues. Why are we building new TIFF items when it's controversial?
  - Indira: Motion to continue to next meeting because of pushback. (Denied) Motion to A, B, and C. Mandelbaum seconds.

- Item 43: Appeal from Glad Tidings, Assembly of God Church.
  - Jeff Raines, Raines (sp?) architecture. This property had a site plan approval a few years ago, but were unable to move forward. We came to reapply after that design expired. We originally had four rows of parking, but we'd like to keep some of it. Even if we leave that parking, as the ordinance suggests, we still have a drive. It makes very little difference to design. (This older white man was allowed to use the podium??)
  - Taylor: I don't see anything wrong with this project, but after digging into this project the city shows the code is meant to encourage development of the street - not meant for foot traffic. Walkability is a huge issue, and we need to be adhering to our goals going forward. Would encourage going with the planning and zoning resolution.
  - Pastor Bill: I appreciate you taking a look at this. We want to be able to have people come through the driveway, to help older folks and young parents. It's a hardship for them to have to park in the back. It's not a residential area.
  - Gatto: Is there a sidewalk? (No) We're putting one on Indianola, not on Army Post Rd.
  - Pastor Bill: We just sold you some property on the west side for that purpose. We want to bless the community.
  - Gatto: moves alternative B.
- Item 44: 2022 Skywalk Bridge Structural Repair Program. Designating lowest responsible bidder as CTG Construction LLC.
  - Taylor: Skywalks are vitally important. My biggest concern is, are we using them to repair these issues? Or are we making them less accessible to the public. Recently, glass doors were put up. I'm worried they're being used to deter houseless people from seeking warmth. I'm concerned these repairs will be continuing to perpetrate anti-houseless architecture. We need to be making public spaces more accessible, and I don't think this does it.
  - Adam: I live on Court Ave and use the skywalks often. I'm glad we're using money to repair them, but I hope we don't continue to close skywalk entrances.
  - Mandelbaum: entrances are controlled by business owners. The money we invest goes to the bridges, because that's what we control.
  - City guy Steve (missed his name) We've done a structural analysis of the bridges, these are repairs to retain the structure, clean existing steel that is corroded, precast concrete repairs, and loaming repairs.
  - Mandelbaum: moves, Connie seconds.

- Item 45: 2nd Ave Bridge over Des Moines River Rehabilitation and 2nd Ave Bridge over Birdland Dr Replacement. LRB (lowest responsible bidder) Jasper Construction Services, Inc.
  - Jenny: I bike along there frequently, and I see trucks running into the bridge on Birdland. I was wondering how far they're going to raise it up?
  - Bridget: I want to speak in support of this project? (Cownie is a dick and asks for name) Before I was rudely interrupted, I want to say I support this plan. I drive over this bridge a lot. Iowa's bridge infrastructure is the worst in the nation. It's past time this gets done.
  - Natalie: While I support this project, I'm wondering why we only had one bid for this project? When we do this, are we reaching out to other business, minority businesses, union businesses? Or are we just asking people we know. Everyone here but Indira has donations from these businesses.
  - Jolene: I have pictures of a truck that got smashed. How high is the bridge going to be? Is it a scenic drive or a shortcut? When I drive along trying to enjoy the river, I see four or five cars behind me rushing along. What kind of road is this? What is the purpose? (Jolene is getting deep tonight.) Does it need to be that high? Should trucks be able to go through it? (She means no?)
  - Taylor: We need to fix this bridge, and many others. I am also concerned about the one bidder. The estimate is \$1.5 million over the city engineer estimate. We should vote this down and re-open it for bidding. There is visibility for this project. We need to ensure it's walkable, and there isn't any anti-homeless architecture.
  - Linda: moves the items.
  - Steve (city engineer) This project is actually two bridges. We need to replace the bridge over birdland, and the 2nd Ave bridge needs rehabilitation, so this is a good time. There are two narrow sidewalks out there. We'll be reallocating space and tightening up vehicular travel lanes. There will be cross sectional changes. Anytime we're working in the river, it's a niche type of work (in Iowa??? What other bridges do we have?) There are only a handful of contractors qualified to do this type of work. We were hoping for more than one, but when we reached out to folks who do this type of work, they don't have the workload capacity. There is well over one hundred structure and bridge projects on the list. There are other river projects that have gotten zero bids. We could expand the contract over two winters, but then we're hurting traffic, and vital connections to businesses and residents in the area. There will be one lane of traffic in each direction.

- Indira: Can you speak on why it costs more than the estimate?
- City Steve: Commodity crisis on steel, limited capacity for workplace. We are doing improvements for railing work, and some of those prices have come in significantly higher. Demolition type work is also higher - because of the time frame and the river.
- Bridget: the public has a question for the engineer/
- Cownie: No. (We haven't even hit the five minutes for public comment)
- Indira: Have we hit the time limit for public comment?
- Cownie: No.
- Brad: Can I ask my question now?
- Cownie: No.
- Indira: Why can't we re-open public comment?
- Motion carries.
- Item 46: SW 9th St Bridge Replacement over Middle South Creek
  - Taylor:
  - Cownie: Anyone else who wants to speak?
  - Taylor: I'm speaking
  - Cownie: I'm making the rules.
  - Taylor: This is the reality of how we're going to live going forward. Labor shortage, commodities rising. Are we properly bidding? This is the world we have to live in, this is the supply crisis. Soccer stadium, other expensive projects will be more expensive. We need a better process than taking money from your buddies and campaign donors.
  - (Didn't catch this person's name) We're going to have to go to bigger cities to get contracts. Bigger cities have lots of bridges that also need repair.
  - Abby: I was taught as a child not to give up. We teach our kids not to give up. It seems like you guys are quitters, and you give up when it gets tough. I implore you as a former child to never give up. Remember what you learned in preschool - never give up, and share. I implore you to share with people who aren't just your friends.
  - Natalie: Do we advertise that projects are open for public bidding?
  - Scott: We advertise and have conversations?
  - Molly: those are two opposites, are you advertising or having conversations with your donors?
  - Scott: there are pre-bid conversations that go on. This is all standard procedure.
  - Taylor: you can still vote even if they donated to you, right?
  - City engineer Steve: On all or public improvement projects, we are required to follow state law. In this case, there was federal funding, so we had the DOT bid the project. It was posted on the DOT state website.

- Item 47: Chesterfield Park Water Playground and improvements. LRB Caliber Concrete, LLC.
  - Taylor: Splash pads are great. One concern I have - we are over the estimate on this project. We need to look at our estimate process. We should look at how we can be better at our jobs. We've had countless rejected items for not receiving bids on existing splash pads. Why do we think we'll be able to maintain this properly? Are we spending 2 million on something we won't be able to maintain?
  - Jolene: I have grandchildren. I had children. These playpads are important. If it takes money to do that, we should do it. None of these people have children. (Taylor just said he had kids??) I will not be stifled.
  - (Missed the name) You seem to be like part of a group. I've worked with communities. I'm very shocked. I'm an activist. I'm 46. There's a workplace crisis. Instead of arguing with these people, create groups to maintain these parks. I'm an activist, I'm a community person.
  - Gatto: This neighborhood doesn't have a neighborhood association. We're investing money in a neighborhood that doesn't have a neighborhood association.
  - Carl: Joe is spot-on about this uplifting the neighborhood. Speaking to individuals about what makes sense for this park, this is what's wanted for the neighborhood.
  - Indira: I'm supportive of this project. My concern is when people are speaking, like Adam and Taylor, their microphone gets shut off. Others get told they are out of time. I would like to be able to hear what everyone is saying.
- Item 48: Ingersoll Ave Streetscape. LRB Jasper Construction Services, Inc.
  - Carol: Lots of pain we're going to experience, but it will all be worth it. I ask that safety protocols are followed to ensure no bicyclists are harmed. Speed limit reductions, metal panels adequately applied. The current Ingersoll renovations are a mess - this needs to be better.
  - Bridget: To all the You are in fact all motherfuckers, and you should be voted out.
  - Linda: Can we ban speakers?
  - Taylor: Ingersoll has been a mess, it's begging to have more issues as we continue to do renovations. It needs to be accessible for pedestrians and bikers. This is the same bidder as the 2nd Ave Bridge. We also seem to be able to accurately estimate here. The other issue I'd bring up - we need to make sure this is actually accessible. I also haven't seen anything about ensuring there isn't any anti-homeless architecture.

- Indira: I still can't hear when people's microphones are being shut off. I should be able to hear the same things as everyone else.
- Mandelbaum: This will be safer for everyone - bikers, pedestrians. We can take safety concerns into account during the construction process. This is a good list of items to keep in mind.
- Linda: This is a good project, we're excited. I just want to direct the manager to work with legal to develop payroll language that would be acceptable for city standards.
- Indira: Linda, I'm glad you're calling for this. I agree with the request. I got a request for public comment. "On a project of this side, it would be great to see the standards for the process. We would like to ensure that workers are being paid a living wage, we're using union labor, and there aren't any environmental impacts. I called animal control a while ago and DMPD showed up and didn't do anything. I want to ensure this project isn't being used to further line DMPD's projects." Indira: I would like to move this out of the purview of DMPD, and ensure we're using union labor.
- Item 10: Authorizing the purchase of 4,905.50 stream mitigation credits within the DSM River Mitigation Bank, from the City of Fort Dodge for the E. Douglas Ave Reconstruction from E. 42nd St to NE 56th St. in the amount of \$245,275.
- Indira: choosing the cheapest solution shouldn't be our priority in a city with this many clean water problems. I would like to move to allow public comment.
- Cownie: is there a second?
- Item 28: Acceptance of the Homeland Security Explosive Ordnance Detection 2019 Reallocation Grants.
- Indira: I have public comment for this as well: this request fails to specify what specifically this is going to, or what any restrictions or guidelines will be. SWAT teams are called to protests and council meetings outside of the SWAT teams purpose.
- Agencies such as DMPD receive a lot of money, and these projects go towards pet projects. I have been attacked by DMPD on multiple occasions, and combined with the lawsuits against DMPD for brutality.
- (I couldn't follow along here...Indira talks very quickly lol but it was all great)
- Linda's video goes off??? Rude.
- Indira votes no. Everyone else sucks.
- Item 30: Final District Plan for the Capital City Reinvestment District.
  - Indira, with public comment: This can be used for quality of life improvement projects, like 24 hour warming centers, public restrooms, etc.

- Mandelbaum: this district is meant for hotel and motel sales tax dollars. The map looks like this to maximize city tax dollars. (I've stopped following this, I'm sorry.)
- Indira: tax dollars should go to the areas where the taxes are being generated. We should bring forward the public to speak on this. Motion for public comment. Indira votes no.
- Item 36: Abatement of public nuisances.
  - Indira: I'm pulling this item because there have been issues with communication with property owners. We are essentially kicking people out of their homes and bringing them to court for repairs they may not be able to make. Property owners are not getting communications, so they're not really getting 30 days. It's irresponsible to litigate without notifying people. Some buildings are currently being worked on and then don't get a notification that the city will take legal action. This makes it harder for this issue to be dealt with.
  - These are people's homes!! That's so shitty!
  - Connie moves, Carl seconds.
  - Scott: these properties are not occupied, and when owners come forward, they have time to work on them.
  - Indira: People aren't getting notices, and by the time legal action is taken it's too late.
- Item 49: Receive and file Stormwater Infrastructure Advisory Committee's 2021 Annual Report to the City Council.
  - Gloria, Ward 1: I am the chair of the stormwater advisory committee. Two other members are here. On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank the council members, and the staff who have listened and responded. Some of these issues date back 50 years. The 2018 flood impacted residents, small businesses, and the environment. Our activities include research and gathering information and speaking to residents. We'd like to highlight a few things. We presented at a variety of public meetings and neighborhood association meetings. Included the American Relief Plan. We were pleased to see that stormwater infrastructure was included. We encourage everyone who has been impacted by stormwater issues to take the survey, available on the city website, and also on Facebook. We recommend that a significant amount of our funds go towards these projects.
  - Second from Connie and Indira.
- 50: Public Comment (Hell yeah!!)
  - Cownie: blah blah blah we'll kick you out if you argue with our draconian rules

- James Grimm: You just mentioned personal attacks or slander, but a few weeks ago there was a personal account by the 6 of you against one member of this council. You say it doesn't have to do with Indira, but everyone knows you're lying. At least admit it's a personal attack. You won't even second her motions - you could second and then still vote the way you want to. When it doesn't go your way, you just change the rules and do whatever the hell you want. We're King Cownie and the Des Moines City Council. About the houseless shelters - a man died a few days ago, and you were more concerned about someone saying a naughty word than a man who died. You won't even consider opening a 24 hour warming center. How do you live with yourselves? You don't give a shit, you only care about money. You're hypocrites and liars.
- Tyler: This is my second in-person meeting, I've watched online. This disorder in your procedure baffles me. The way you go about business is confusing. It would be beneficial to restructure how you do this. Confusing speeches and procedure. It would pay off for everyone. Connie Boesen, can you answer in all honesty, that considering the timing of the rule change, it wasn't personal against one member of council?
- Cownie: This isn't a debate.
- Tylder: The silence is a good enough answer. Mr. Mayor, what procedure are you using to recognize comments? You are greatly disrespecting your fellow council member when you refuse to second a motion. Linda, are you so bored you can't listen?
- Natalie: for the longest time I couldn't figure out why the council voted the way you did after listening to the public. After going to the campaign donations, it all makes sense. Gatto receives a fuckton of money from cops. Gatto, and every single member of council besides Indira, receives donations from the Cownie family. The day before the election, Mandelbaum received money from Rob Sand. It ensures that the interests of developers will always go over the interests of the people. (See speech from Natalie because that rocked)
- Jolene: On Jan. 10th, my first amendment rights were grievously violated in this room, and I was slandered. This comes from people who want their first amendment rights. I was bullied as a child, and I will not be bullied again. When people are up at this microphone, keep your mouth shut and your ears open.
- Larry: I'm asking you support Connect Downtown by fiscal year 2025. It connects all four wards. By focusing on pedestrians, transit, and cyclists, it will increase safety and decrease reliance on cars. Rush hour no longer exists because of covid. There is overcapacity in our streets due to



increased working from home. This opens the street space for other uses. Now is the time to make sure our infrastructure addresses the needs of a new reality.

- Paden: Instead of listening to people, you have only attacked and silenced us. We show up not because we hate you, but because we care so deeply about this place. We actually have to live here. I left for college and I came back because I love it here. Seeing you go against any change that people have been begging you for drives people away. The people who showed up in 2020 to make it better are the ones who are here. We have ideas on how to actually improve the material conditions of those who live here. It's your job to take our comments and implement ways to make it work. You are literally working against us. Maybe you think you're doing everything you can, but when people refuse help or don't want to go to CISS, it's not really about this. You can't just keep brushing this off. You continue to ignore us and silence us. How do you expect us to react? These are our lives, and we're fighting for our lives. You cannot continue to refuse to act and refuse to listen.
- Scott going to the back.
- Indira: I would like to thank Paden for speaking up. We aren't able to pass over Denver because Paden was speaking.
- Katelyn: I'm the VP of Central. I want Des Moines to be a leader. Unemployment went down, but there are still no jobs. There are more jobs than people to fill them. I help run an unemployment agency. We want to ensure successful rates. We're still seeing issues of retention and filling good jobs. A few executives and I have gotten together. Workplaces have changed. Workforce auditing of employees.
- Molly, reading Aidan's statement.
- Brandi: Attempts to speak because council member Gatto emailed her saying she would be allowed to speak. Council adjourns instead, cutting off Indira