

**URBANA CITY COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2023**

APPROVED

President Hess called the City of Urbana Work Session to order at 6:00 pm.

**City Staff attending:** Director of Administration Kerry Brugger, City Zoning and Compliance Officer Preston Carter, and Fire Chief Dean Ortlieb

**Council Members attending:** Amy Jumper, Cletis Scott, Stephanie Truelove, Pat Thackery, Mary Collier, and Audra Bean

**Legal and Zoning Issues of Outdoor Displays**

Ms. Jumper stated that there were multiple displays in downtown that go further onto the sidewalk. She believed to be trip hazards, especially for people in wheelchairs or the blind. She stated some of these displays should not be out year-round. Most examples are retail displays, such as ladders kids are climbing or bathtubs with logs in them. She believes these displays should only be out while the store is open.

Mr. Carter stated the City currently has some legislation. Historically it's applied to signage. The nuisance code does prohibit certain things like having indoor furniture outside. This is typically enforced in residential neighborhoods.

Ms. Jumper stated the City has put a lot of effort in making the downtown area look nice. She also stated it was a safety issue for everyone involved.

Mr. Scott stated he did not know how the City could legalize "looking good". He stated if there was a hazard, that was another thing.

Ms. Bean stated the ladder and bathtub should be treated differently. It made no sense to have a ladder out where kids could get hurt. She agreed with Mr. Scott on the difference between safety and appearance. She asked Ms. Jumper if the displays were within the allowed three feet. Ms. Jumper stated she believed so.

Mr. Thackery asked if that was the City's responsibility. Where are the parents? He could see both sides.

Mr. Carter agreed that looking nice is subjective. The idea is to a certain degree all or nothing. Previous discussions are defining things for retail purposes versus outdoor specific decorations. This could be an enforcement issue that the Zoning staff did not have after hours enforcement for.

Ms. Truelove stated that if it proved to be a danger, then it should be addressed.

Mr. Hess asked how much of the sidewalk is allowed for the shop owner to be in control. He also stated how does things get enforced when there are issues like fire lanes that are unable to be enforced. He believed this was more of a downtown business association issue rather than Council.

Ms. Jumper stated that there was nothing in writing, so people cannot call Zoning because there is nothing to enforce. Mr. Hess stated people could potentially go to the BZA for a variance if there

was something in writing. Mr. Carter stated people cannot have a conditional use or variance for a nuisance.

### **Downtown Restrooms**

Mr. Thackery stated that he continuously received questions from the public and thought he would bring the topic up to see if there was any new information.

Mr. Brugger stated that the public should be directed to the <sup>Visitor's</sup>~~Business~~ Bureau and the Monument Square District.

Ms. Jumper stated she believed the issue was in the Chamber's court now. Ms. Collier indicated she thought the design had already been approved. Mr. Carter stated the design had been approved about a year and a half ago with the Design Review Board. He had not heard anything further since that time.

Mr. Thackery stated most communities with any <sup>kind</sup>~~kind~~ of tourism have created downtown restrooms. Ms. Bean stated she spoke with the mayor of Troy recently. They are working on this same issue but have not completed it yet. She stated businesses in the DORA in Troy will allow customers to use their restrooms.

Mr. Thackery stated the City has potential money to get this done and the public has the interest. He was frustrated with the perceived lack of movement this topic receives.

Ms. Collier stated the Chamber had agreed to maintenance and cleaning. They had received a proposal but desired more quotes. The Chamber and the Visitor's Bureau stated they would provide the maintenance and the Monument Square District would provide the supplies, but agreed the topic does not seem to go anywhere from there.

Mr. Scott stated it was one thing for the City to appropriate money, but he does not think it is the City's responsibility to specifically build it themselves.

Mr. Hess stated the people who directly benefit from the restrooms should be the ones who push the topic to get it done.

### **Cross Streets and Parking in Residential Areas**

No council member had any comment on the issue.

**WORK SESSION COMPLETED AT 6:30 p.m.**

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**  
February 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

  
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Council Clerk

  
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Council President <sup>Pro Tempore</sup>