

CITY COUNCIL

March 31, 2003

ROLL CALL - PRESENT:

Alderman Kent	Alderman Rainey
Alderman Moran	Alderman Feldman
Alderman Tisdahl	Alderman Newman

A Quorum was present.

NOT PRESENT AT

ROLL CALL: Aldermen Jean-Baptiste and Wynne

ABSENT: Alderman Bernstein

PRESIDING OFFICER: Mayor Lorraine Morton

At the call of Mayor Morton, A SPECIAL City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Morton on Monday, March 31, 2003 in the Aldermanic Library at 5:38 p.m. for the purpose of an Executive Session on Litigation and to receive an update on the CTA Proposed Bus Route Restructuring.

Alderman Feldman moved that Council convene into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing matters related to litigation pursuant to 5ILCS Section 120/2 (c) (11). Seconded by Alderman Rainey.

(11) Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting.

Roll call. Voting aye – Kent, Moran, Tisdahl, Rainey Feldman, Newman. Voting nay – none. Motion carried (6-0).

At 6:48 p.m. Alderman Feldman moved to reconvene into Open Session and recess. Seconded by Alderman Newman. Motion carried. No nays.

Assistant City Manager Judith Aiello reported that Representative Schakowsky scheduled a meeting Monday, April 14 at 5:30 p.m., 820 Davis St. with Frank Kruesi of the CTA, Commissioner Suffredin, Representative Hamos and Senator Schoenberg to discuss Evanston viaducts. Aldermen Wynne, Rainey and Kent or Jean-Baptiste would attend.

Mayor Morton reconvened the City Council at 6:50 p.m. in the City Council Chamber and reminded all that this meeting had to be brief due to a previously scheduled Special Planning & Development Committee meeting on binding appearance review. Alderman Rainey was not present.

Update on CTA Proposed Bus Route Restructuring

Kimberly Beattie, CTA Government Relations Officer, spoke about CTA proposed service improvements. She recalled that on March 24 they sent an impression that they were no longer willing to adjust routes or respond to community concerns before implementation of the experimental plan in June. They were present to correct that and assure the community the CTA is committed to flexibility in working with Evanston customers to develop the best possible service in the region. At that meeting they received several clear messages from Council and the community. In response, the CTA made two adjustments to the proposal to meet senior citizen, employee and high school students needs. The first adjustment has the 201 running along Sherman Avenue and through the Chicago-Davis intersection to serve senior citizens in those two areas. This shift is from Sheridan Road to Sherman Avenue. The second is adjusting select trips on the 205 to run along Grant Street, timed to coordinate with shift changes at the Presbyterian and Swedish homes and beginning/end of the high school day. She stated this plan is a work in progress. The CTA will continue to evaluate its service, address community needs as they arise throughout the experimental period and beyond. In addition, the CTA is committed to participating in other regional studies that may begin in the area. As they seek support for their efforts, she clarified that the CTA should bear responsibility for changing routes, making service adjustments and needs to listen to the community and other regional partners to create a system that follows sound transportation policies that provide

frequent, efficient service and gets people where they want to go when they travel. The CTA also needs to be sensitive to community needs.

Alderman Newman reported he had met with the CTA and went over the location of various senior citizen facilities in the 1st Ward: Noyes Court, Jane R. Perlman facility at 1900 Sherman Avenue, North Shore Retirement Hotel, the Wagner, Mather and the Georgian. He said the CTA had been accommodating to remapping and did the best they could considering ridership issues to accommodate these residents. His objections have been favorably resolved and he appreciated the cooperation of the CTA.

Alderman Kent recalled the CTA had mentioned a specific bus to deal with high school students and had just mentioned particular times for the 205 to operate on Grant Street. He asked if they had talked to the high school about "B" days? Ms. Beattie responded that they had met with the high school and went through a number of scheduling issues. They will work with the high school on appropriate times and, where feasible, will adjust the bus schedules. They are also working on the stops around the high school to deal with security issues on campus. The CTA will work on a calendar in June to look at specific dates. Alderman Kent was thankful for weekend hours, which was a big improvement. He expressed concern about residents who live west of the high school going toward McDaniel who would have to walk several blocks to a bus stop on Dodge Avenue since there is no longer a bus on Fowler and Church Street. He understood this might be picked up by Pace. He said many senior citizens and families with small children live in that area. He suggested they note this and address it as they go along.

Alderman Tisdahl thanked the CTA for all their efforts. She asked if, during the six-month experimental period, the CTA would meet with Pace and participate in a Pace funded study? All would like that to be done because the Grant Street problems could be solved with a smaller bus, which Pace has and the CTA does not. Ms. Beattie stated the CTA will participate in the Pace study and they looked to strengthen partnerships with all kinds of transit providers and local officials. Alderman Tisdahl asked how many times will the bus travel on Grant Street during the day? Ms. Beattie said they were looking to make the final decision and will involve additional consultation with the senior homes and the high school on timing. A ballpark estimate is two-three busses morning and afternoon.

Alderman Moran asked when the number of busses on Grant Street is decided he would like to know how the CTA is looking at it and have an opportunity to discuss it with them. He was grateful for what had been offered and thanked them for working hard, meeting with him and showing sensitivity and flexibility to some important constituencies. He thought what the CTA is doing shows a commitment that was more solidified than at the last meeting.

Alderman Feldman said the CTA's response to community concerns and sensitivity to issues that were described was remarkable. He was surprised at the CTA's commitment to find a way out of the dilemma that Council found itself in at the last meeting; hoped this portends a good relationship between the CTA and City and that the same kind of sensitivity would occur during the six-month experimental program. He hoped CTA would share as much information as possible about what they discover and think of changing before it is written in stone and a tight deadline for Council response.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste thanked the CTA for their efforts but, if asked for a vote, could not support the changes. In particular, he did not support elimination of 202 bus service, which would be a hardship for people to walk several blocks during winter. These are people who live on Bradley, Greenleaf, Fowler or Pitner who need to get to Dempster several blocks away to catch a Pace bus. The Main Street bus they will operate during the rush hours would be the same – a significant walk for a number of 2nd Ward constituents. He knows they are working diligently to accommodate as many citizens as possible, but there is a shortcoming to be overcome in that area.

Mayor Morton had a letter indicating the CTA would like to meet with other transit providers and asked them to meet with the City Manager to set up a meeting so that needs that have not been met could be met by somebody. Ms. Beattie indicated they could do that.

Alderman Newman asked where they were leaving with acceptance of the plan? Mayor Morton stated there were no objections to the plan. City Manager Roger Crum asked, did they wish to give consensus to go ahead with the experimental plan? Ms. Beattie stated the CTA would like to see that, which was important to their board because at that

time Council was on record as having been asked to delay. If there was a way to send a formal message, whether a letter of support asking for specific things or vote by Council would be appreciated.

Alderman Newman wanted to hear from Alderman Jean-Baptiste. He was under the impression that the CTA was meeting with everybody and should meet with Alderman Jean-Baptiste if they had not. He asked if Council should wait? Alderman Jean-Baptiste was not asking to delay and did not think it appropriate to vote on the CTA's proposals for changes. They will continue to have discussions. If CTA is asking for some communication from the City, he thought the City Manager could sum up that a majority of aldermen feel the CTA has sought to meet the City's needs. In the 2nd Ward there are needs he expected to discuss with the CTA but that did not mean they could not go forward and implement the proposal. The CTA is an independent body. He thought that overall the CTA had sought to put in a plan with the interests of the majority of residents.

Alderman Feldman thought the CTA was asking for an expression of support. He noted they already have a letter and the main paragraph last sentence read, "The City of Evanston looks forward to continued opportunities for community involvement and partnership," which was a perfect segue into articulation of the issues remaining in the 2nd Ward. Endorse the plan as it stands with a caveat that special attention (be given) to the issues of Alderman Jean-Baptiste. Alderman Kent said the 2nd Ward was not the only ward with people living west of the high school. Alderman Feldman said whatever language gets that all in was fine with him.

Alderman Newman moved that the City Council direct the City Manager to write a letter to the CTA Board reflecting the sentiments of Council members who spoke that evening and to include comments by aldermen that were not made publicly. Seconded by Alderman Feldman.

Mayor Morton asked what would happen to the letter? Ms. Beattie stated it would be presented to the CTA Board as part of the presentation of community reaction. Mayor Morton asked if it was binding or could be changed? Ms. Beattie responded that they are in a continuing planning process, so this remains flexible until final changes are made to a route in the future. Nothing was binding.

Voice vote, motion carried. No nays.

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Morton adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Mary P. Morris,
City Clerk