

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORMAL TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, NORMAL CITY HALL, FOURTH FLOOR UPTOWN STATION, 11 UPTOWN CIRCLE, NORMAL, MCLEAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS – WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Chris Koos called the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council to Order at 5:01p.m., Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

2. ROLL CALL:

The Clerk called the roll with the following persons

PRESENT: The Meeting was conducted virtually. There were no persons physically present in Council Chambers.

REMOTE: Mayor Chris Koos and Councilmembers Kevin McCarthy, Chemberly Cummings, Stan Nord, Karyn Smith, Kathleen Lorenz, and Scott Preston, also present were City Manager Pamela Reece, Assistant City Manager Eric Hanson, Corporation Counsel Brian Day, and Town Clerk Angie Huonker.

ABSENT: None.

Mayor Chris Koos made the following statement:

Due to recent changes in the Open Meetings Act, I feel compelled to make the following statement that the Governor has issued a disaster declaration related to the public health concerns caused by the statewide COVID-19 pandemic.

As Mayor, I have determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus stemming from an indoor gathering, and that the remote meeting is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the council, staff, and general public.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Koos led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Given the circumstances necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis, and in accordance with a mandate of social distancing, public comment was made available virtually through the use of Zoom Meeting.

Ms. Fusun Akman, Normal Resident and ISU Teacher, supports these Ordinances. Ms. Akman spoke about her concerns regarding student housing and open campus.

Mr. Brian Rejack, Normal Resident and ISU Teacher, believes that ISU and the Town of Normal are under a crisis. Mr. Rejack stated that based on the data, serious actions should be taken such as closing bars, restaurants, student housing and that ISU should require current students to shelter-in-place for at least 2 weeks.

Mr. Chris Macek expressed his appreciation for the time and effort of Council during this pandemic. Mr. Macek spoke about his concerns over limiting groups sizes and indicated he feels the government should not mandate restrictions on wearing masks and social distancing.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. ORDINANCE CONCERNING MAXIMUM CAPACITY AND SOCIAL DISTANCING AT PARTIES AND OTHER GATHERINGS: Ordinance No. 5839:

MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION:

Councilmember Lorenz moved, seconded by Councilmember McCarthy, the Council Call the Question on the Approval of an Ordinance Concerning Maximum Capacity and Social Distancing at Parties and Other Gatherings:

AYES: McCarthy, Cummings, Lorenz, Preston, Koos.

NAYS: Nord, Smith.

Motion declared carried.

MOTION:

Councilmember McCarthy moved, seconded by Councilmember Preston, the Council Approval of an Ordinance Concerning Maximum Capacity and Social Distancing at Parties and Other Gatherings:

AYES: Cummings, Smith, Lorenz, Preston, McCarthy, Koos.

NAYS: Nord.

Motion declared carried.

Mayor Chris Koos stated that he has spoken to mayors of other communities and the staff of several universities. Mayor Koos noted he is trying to reduce the positivity rate of COVID-19, indicating that if this does not pass, he worries businesses will suffer and some may not survive another shutdown. Mayor Koos stated he believes this Ordinance is in the best interest of the community.

Councilmember Karyn Smith rebutted a public commenter regarding Town actions against other diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Ms. Smith noted that those diseases are not contagious unlike COVID-19 which is airborne.

Councilmember Stan Nord questioned why the Council is making a health-related decision. Mr. Nord also questioned the Emergency Order Process. Corporation Counsel Brian Day and City Manager Pam Reece responded.

Councilmember Kevin McCarthy stated there is medical consensus on masks, handwashing and social distancing. Mr. McCarthy then stated it would be irresponsible to wait on making decisions until hospitals are overrun with patients. Mr. McCarthy noted the Council is a body with the ability to make decisions, indicating concerns over potential restrictions imposed by the governor if progress moves backward.

Councilmember Scott Preston stated there are 1838 positive cases in McLean County and as of today, noting 1023 are ISU students who live off-campus. Mr. Preston added the positive cases have increased by 80% since students returned. Mr. Preston indicated he believes this action will help businesses stay open suggesting it is Council's responsibility to protect the businesses.

Councilmember Kathleen Lorenz Called the Question.

6. ORDINANCE REQUIRING SEATING RESTRICTIONS AND OTHER COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES, FOR ON-PREMISES LIQUOR ESTABLISHMENTS:  
Ordinance No. 5840:

MOTION:

Councilmember McCarthy moved, seconded by Councilmember Smith, the Council Approval of an Ordinance Requiring Seating Restrictions and other COVID-19 Safety Measures, for On-Premises Liquor Establishments:

AYES: Smith, Lorenz, Preston, McCarthy, Cummings, Koos.

NAYS: Nord.

Motion declared carried.

Councilmember Stan Nord questioned if this Ordinance is covered by the Governor's Executive Order. Mr. Nord also questioned where funding for enforcement would come from. Corporation Counsel Brian Day and City Manager Pam Reece responded.

Councilmember Scott Preston asked about the Redbird Return Plan and how ISU is responding to the pandemic. City Manager Pam Reece and Mayor Chris Koos responded.

Councilmember Kevin McCarthy stated this Ordinance gives clear guidance for establishments and is a short-term solution. Mayor Chris Koos responded.

Councilmember Kathleen Lorenz commented on the role of the Town Council and the responsibility to the residents. Mrs. Lorenz stated the Town of Normal needs to work in tandem with the University.

Councilmember Stan Nord stated he believes the Health Department should be making these decisions. City Manager Pam Reece responded.

Councilmember Kevin McCarthy stated this Ordinance was made on behalf of the economy and for all residents of Normal. Mr. McCarthy stated the Town is being proactive to protect our community members and the business owners, indicating it is irresponsible to think that is someone else's job.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Koos called for a Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council.

MOTION:

Councilmember McCarthy moved, seconded by Councilmember Lorenz, the Council Accept a Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council.

AYES: Smith, Lorenz, Preston, McCarthy, Cummings, Nord, Koos.

NAYS: None.

Motion declared carried.

Mayor Chris Koos adjourned the Special Meeting of the Normal Town Council at 6:10p.m., Wednesday, September 2, 2020.