

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND**  
**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**  
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor,  
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL

1/27/2025 - Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**2. Roll Call**

Mayor Thoms asked City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Tweet, Randy Hurt, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker, Mark Poulos, Bill Healy and Mayor Thoms.

Absent: None.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, Attorney Leslie Day, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City Staff.

**3. Public Comment**

No one was signed up for public comment.

**4. Presentations**

a. West End Revitalization Presentation Update

MLK, Jr. Center Director Jerry Jones discussed the overall project and introduced Avery Pearl and Thurgood Brooks, who serve as the West End Coordinators for the project. Mr. Avery explained the key impact areas, which included: economic vitality, infrastructure and visual appeal, housing and land, assets and income and civic capital. He said they have been engaging with the community through a variety of ways, including media coverage, yard signs, community meetings with stakeholders, presentations and website updates.

Mr. Avery explained the current strategy for building relationships. He indicated they have been working with and meeting with a variety of partners, including Augustana College, the school district, MidAmerican Energy, Community Home Partners, among others.

Mr. Brooks discussed the Mid-American Pilot project, which included energy-efficiency audits, repairs and upgrades to homes in the West End and planting trees throughout Rock Island to address tree equity. Additionally, they are working on youth empowerment and have created two West End Revitalization Clubs at Rock Island High School and Thurgood Marshall Learning Center. He discussed two upcoming pilots that will be launched soon. The Ascentra Credit Union Financial Program is a 9-week financial empowerment course with a financial coach. The other pilot program involves a community participatory budgeting process.

Mr. Pearl explained that their next step is strengthening the backbone, which includes hiring additional staff and internal capacity building. He provided resource development information and discussed the

Environmental Protection Agency Community Change Grant, which was submitted in November 2024 requesting \$20 million in funds to address key components in the West End: workforce development/multi-use facility; service corps, and community partners, such as Augustana and Black Hawk Colleges.

Mr. Brooks discussed reflections since the inception of the West End Revitalization project, which includes finding assets where others may see deficits, youth, mental health appears different in impoverished areas, trust and accessibility, among others.

Mr. Brooks reiterated the next steps, which included launching the pilot programs, implementing the communications plan, research with Augustana College to establish a Special Services Area, forming a visioning committee for a Community Development Corporation, and writing grants to better understand the needs of the West End.

Mr. Avery clarified that the majority of the trees were planted on City-owned property. He noted that in the process of planting trees, they found several residents asked for tree removal and they will be exploring funding for removal of dangerous or rotting trees.

Mr. Brooks said the Acentra Credit Union project is scheduled to launch in March and that they worked with Mid-American Energy.

Aldersperson Robinson praised the project and the work being done.

## **5. Adjourn**

- |    |         |                       |
|----|---------|-----------------------|
| a. | Motion: | Motion to adjourn.    |
|    | VV      | Voice vote is needed. |

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Parker seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 voice vote. Aye: Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Tweet, Swanson, Parker. Nay: None. Absent: None.

The meeting concluded at 6:18 p.m.