

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

5/12/2025 - Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Thoms called the Study Session to order at 5:34 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

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

Present: Alderpersons Moses Robinson, Randy Hurt, Randy Tweet, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker and Mayor Mike Thoms.

Absent: Alderpersons Mark Poulos and Bill Healy.

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

**3. Presentations**

a. Presentation on Proposed Amendments to the Tobacco Ordinance.

City Attorney Leslie Day provided a detailed background on the timeline and progression of changes to the City's tobacco ordinance over the past several years. She said that in October 2024, the Council adopted a moratorium on vape shops through June 30, 2025.

Ms. Day provided background information on the potential regulation of hemp-derived THC products at the state level. She noted that 13 other states have adopted a regulatory framework for hemp products. Gov. Pritzker introduced a bill in January 2025 that would limit the sale of most hemp-derived products, but it stalled in the House. She discussed the possible enforcement challenges the City would face and noted the effectiveness of the ban would be minimal as it is offered by all of our surrounding communities, like Moline.

She discussed the challenges of regulating flavored tobacco products, including enforcement concerns as well as potential First Amendment issues. She emphasized the current lack of clear state or federal guidelines and the difficulty of local enforcement without a regulatory framework. She recommended that the City wait for the adoption of a regulatory framework at the state or federal level.

Clerk Gange provided an overview of the proposed changes to the tobacco ordinance. The proposed amendments include: revisions and additions to tobacco definitions; restrictions on vape product sales by reducing the sales threshold for Class B tobacco licenses (vape/specialty) to 50 percent and including a 20 percent threshold for floor/display space; limiting the number of Class A licenses (general retail/incidental) to 30 and limiting Class B licenses to 2; recommended \$50 fee adjustment for each license class; removal of outdated language and designate the City Council the authority to increase or decrease the number of tobacco licenses.

Attorney Day clarified that if a convenience store or vape shop closes or leaves, we will not have a license available, so it automatically reduces the number of licenses until the limit is achieved.

Alderperson Parker said he supports a flavored tobacco ban and a ban on hemp-derived THC products in the City. He noted he is sympathetic to having the staff and resources to enforce the bans and asked for further clarification. Clerk Gange noted the shortage in the police department and Attorney Day said there is difficulty with testing the hemp-derived THC and noted pending litigation with a municipality in Illinois who banned these products. She warned about banning hemp-derived THC products at this time, given the lack of regulatory framework and litigation risk.

Attorney Day said she would be more comfortable waiting to ban hemp-derived THC products until the state implements a regulatory framework. She suggested Council adopt the proposed amendments to the tobacco ordinance now, and she can begin researching and drafting language for a flavored-tobacco ban similar to Chicago's if that is the desire of council members.

Chief McCloud remarked that they are short staff, but could enforce tobacco regulations during their annual underage sales of tobacco checks.

b. Presentation on the Martin Lukther King Center Prevention Program.

MLK Director Jerry Jones introduced Carlos Jimenez and stated that they would be providing an overview of the MLK Prevention Program.

Mr. Jimenez then introduced Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Adrianna Rubio and Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Specialist Adriana Blanco. He described the prevention program as a proactive, comprehensive educational initiative aimed at equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to make informed decisions regarding substance use and teenage pregnancy. He outlined the program's evidence-based curriculum, which emphasizes the development of social skills, resistance to peer pressure, anti-drug attitudes, and education on mental, emotional, and sexual health.

Ms. Blanco shared recent data from Rock Island High School, noting that 24 percent of students were suspended during the 2023–2024 school year due to vaping and tobacco-related incidents. She also reported that the program has reached over 1,500 students to date.

The prevention team highlighted their community outreach efforts and outlined their goals for the 2025–2026 academic year. These include expanding research efforts, increasing the number of students served, staying up to date with best practices, and strengthening their partnership with the Rock Island-Milan School District.

Mr. Jimenez added that the program is active in junior high schools and referenced a recent survey indicating a concerning prevalence of vaping among junior high students.

Director Jones concluded by noting that the Illinois Department of Human Services provides both funding and support for the program.

#### **4. Public Comment**

No one signed up to speak.

#### **5. Adjourn**

MOTION:

Aldersperson Tweet moved to Adjourn; Aldersperson Swanson seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 5-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Robinson, Hurt, Tweet, Swanson, Parker. Nay: None. Absent: Poulos, Healy.

The meeting concluded at 6:22 p.m.

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

[MIN\_SIGNATURES]