

Speaker 1 ([00:05:49](#)):

Good evening and welcome to the September 2nd, 2025 Lawrence City Commission meeting. The first part of our meeting is to adjourn into an executive session

Speaker 2 ([00:06:00](#)):

Move. We recess an executive session for 20 minutes to discuss employer employee negotiations pursuant to the employer employee negotiations exception as set forth in KSA 75 dash 43 19 B three. The justification for the executive session is to keep employer employee negotiation matters confidential. At this time, the City Commission will resume its regular meeting in the city commission room at 5:21 PM after the executive session is concluded.

Speaker 1 ([00:06:27](#)):

Second. Okay, that's a motion by Finkel Dye. Second by little John. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 2 ([00:06:31](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([00:06:32](#)):

Those opposed. Motion passes five zero. We'll see you in

Speaker 3 ([00:06:35](#)):

20 minutes. 5 21 executive session and we

Speaker 1 ([00:26:50](#)):

Have nothing to report from that meeting. Next, we're going to put the meeting on hold until 5 45. Sojourn rejoin us at 5 45 for the start of the meeting.

Speaker 3 ([00:50:34](#)):

All

Speaker 1 ([00:50:35](#)):

Right, I'm going to go ahead and restart the meeting. Good evening everybody. I'm going restart the meeting with some rules of participation from Sherry Reedman.

Speaker 4 ([00:50:52](#)):

Good evening everyone. If you would please silence your cell phones. The primary format for accessing the meeting is in person at City Hall. Virtual access cannot be guaranteed due to potential technology issues. When the mayor calls for public comment, please approach the podium to indicate you wish to speak. Virtual participants should use the raise hand function. When prompted, select join as panelists. There will be a brief delay as your role changes. Once your name is called, please unmute and turn on your camera to provide your comments. Please state your name and zip code before providing your comments. Comments will be limited to three minutes. The city reserves the right to turn videos off or mute participants. Thank you Mayor.

Speaker 1 ([00:51:36](#)):

Alright, thank you Sherry. Alright, the next item on our agenda is to approve the agenda and the city commission reserves the right to amend, supplement, or reorder the agenda during the meeting. Is there a motion to approve the agenda?

Speaker 2 ([00:51:48](#)):

Yeah, I'm going to make a motion to approve the agenda with the exception that we defer item C seven A, which is to consider adopt on second and final reading charge in order number 47 regarding the transit guest tax and move that till next week's meeting. Otherwise move to approve the agenda.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:11](#)):

Okay. There's a motion with an exception for C seven A. Is there a second?

Speaker 5 ([00:52:15](#)):

Second.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:16](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by dye. Second by Larson. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 5 ([00:52:20](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:21](#)):

Those opposed. Motion passes. Five zero. Alright. The next item is the consent agenda and items on the consent agenda are considered under one motion and approved by one motion. Members of the governing body may remove items for separate discussion if desired. Members of the public may remove items identified as quasi-judicial for separate discussion if desired, members of the public will be limited to three minutes for comments on these items. Is there a motion?

Speaker 6 ([00:52:48](#)):

We had a constituent that wanted to have C seven B removed for discussion.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:53](#)):

Very good. So we're going to remove item C seven B separate discussion.

Speaker 2 ([00:53:04](#)):

I make a motion to approve the consent agenda with the exception of C seven B second.

Speaker 1 ([00:53:08](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by Finkle dye and a second by sellers. All in favor say aye. Aye was opposed. Motion passes. Five zero. Alright, C seven B.

Speaker 6 ([00:53:19](#)):

Yes, mayor, we had a constituent who I do believe reached out to a couple of commissioners that wanted some clarification on some of the standards as it relates to the final reading of our standard traffic ordinance, so wanted to allow that constituent to come up at the time for conference.

Speaker 7 ([00:53:40](#)):

Good evening, commissioner Samuel Carter. 6 6 0 4 6. Thank you very much for taking the time. But briefly actually I think so there was a document released last week that listed from the Metropolitan Planning Organization that listed using scooters, roller blades or skateboards on public streets as being prohibited. I was surprised by that and I saw that the standard traffic ordinance was being approved, so I kind of rushed to find out if that was the source clarified with the city attorney. That is in fact those mobility devices are in fact not prohibited. So I actually can go ahead and withdraw my request to strike that section 1 36, but I do appreciate the opportunity to speak about it.

Speaker 1 ([00:54:18](#)):

Yes, thank you very much Samuel. Thank you. Any other comment on item C seven B, public comment? Anybody online?

Speaker 2 ([00:54:33](#)):

No ma'am. Alright, move to adopt on second and final reading. Ordinance number 1 0 1 5 0 second.

Speaker 1 ([00:54:42](#)):

Alright, that's a motion by Finkel Dye and seconded by sellers. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 2 ([00:54:47](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([00:54:47](#)):

Aye. Those opposed? Motion passes. Five zero. Thank you. Alright, let's move on to our regular agenda items and the first item is to consider an appeal of an administrative determination for a site plan. SP 25 dash zero three located at 700 New Hampshire Street.

Speaker 8 ([00:55:25](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Sandy Day planning office and as Kurt is being helpful in sharing my presentation, this item is an appeal of a site plan which is typically an administrative item. The project is located at 700 New Hampshire Street with frontage on seventh Street, New Hampshire and Road Island Street. This project was submitted prior to the adoption of the current land development code that became effective April 1st. This application actually came in in January. It also had design review associated with it that went through the historic resources commission review process. So the code that we used for this project was the 2006 Land Development Code. This slide is in your packet is really just trying to highlight what the zoning districts are that were effective at the time the application was submitted. What the zoning districts look like today under the land development code. So the point being that the CD district boundary did not change with either code.

([00:56:38](#)):

This is a slide of the site plan. You also have a copy of that site plan in your packet. It is for 15 units of multifamily residential dwelling. That is a permitted use in the district. The entire property is just under nine, I'm sorry. The proposed density is just under nine dwelling units per acre. The project includes both garage and driveway. Organized parking for this use within the CD district off street parking is not a requirement or was not a requirement for this project under the 2006 code. Just very quickly the design components of the project were reviewed through the Historic Resources Commission. There is a provision in the code that talks about when properties are in the urban conservation overlay district that that particular set of code dictates how the project is reviewed. The HRC had a project in March. It failed

to be approved, it was returned in April and then there was a new application that came forward in May that was approved by the commission with a three two vote and I think that is reflective of some of the concerns that you've seen in your packet and that staff has heard from as well the site plan criteria that staff used or set out in the development code.

(00:58:09):

The first one is that the plot shall contain only platted land site plan shall comply with the standards of the code and other adopted policies and neighborhood area plans. You have a highlight in this slide and this follows the outline of the topics that are discussed briefly in the staff report. Site plan review is really an assessment of a project on does it meet code or does it not? If it does not meet code, where does it fail to meet code and can there be conditions addressed to that, that the proposed use shall be allowed in the district. And as I stated, multifamily residential dwelling is a permitted use. There is never anything in the application that came across my review that spoke to any component of affordable housing. It is not a requirement of the code. It was not an element or criteria that staff can review affordable housing, the vehicular ingress and egress to and from the site.

(00:59:07):

This particular finding addresses the site circulation. There is no change to the access points of this project and that's summarized in the staff report and that the site plan provides safe movement of pedestrians within the site. This is a multifamily project with frontage along the Rhode Island street side as well as seventh Street and we have public sidewalk where the individual unit sidewalks will connect to that public sidewalk and that's a typical review component within the code and staff. Staff made the complete determination on July 22nd finding that the project conformed with the criteria listed above. Property owners have indicated an interest in this project and so they were notified of the appeal process. That is nine days staff received that appeal and moved through the next steps to schedule this meeting in front of you. You as a commission are able to consider a site plan per the code on an appeal and it asks you to follow the same review criteria that are in the staff report.

(01:00:30):

So this slide is just a summation of those specific findings that you are asked to consider this evening. Your actions are to either approve the site plan application, identify modifications that would allow for approval, approve the site plan with conditions or disapprove the site plan application if there are failures in one of these five criteria. I believe Randy is online as well and I think he had a statement for you. We also have Lynn Zollner, our historic resources administrator if you have specific questions about that part of the process and I believe a couple of the city engineers who were engaged in the review of this project are also online to answer questions. Thank you.

Speaker 9 (01:01:17):

Thank you. Sandy.

Speaker 1 (01:01:22):

Sherry, can we find out if we have our Randy Larkin available?

Speaker 10 (01:01:29):

Yes, please.

Speaker 1 (01:01:32):

Did you mention he might wanted to fill us in on a few important legal requirements here? Yes. Okay.

Speaker 11 (01:01:38):

Good evening. This is Randy Larkin, deputy city attorney. This is a quasi-judicial hearing, so you'll need to disclose parte communications before we go too much further. But I also wanted to outline what it is that we'll be doing tonight. Your review of the decision by the director of planning is de novo. That means you step into the shoes of the planning director and you do not have to give his decision any deference. You can make your own decision as act as if you are acting as the planning director once. This also involves a site plan. Site plan review is administrative, so that means this is ministerial function as opposed to a discretionary function. So basically if the application meets the requirements of the city code, then they are entitled to receive the site plan approval. If they do not meet it, then you can find out how they could meet it or you can send it back for modifications or you disapprove it. But if they do not meet the city code, you cannot approve it so that you have no discretion. It's very similar to the item that we had a couple weeks ago where it's a ministerial function. And with that I'll stand for any questions.

Speaker 2 ([01:02:54](#)):

Thank you. Any questions for Randy? And to be clear, the HRC determination is not on appeal here or how does that relate?

Speaker 11 ([01:03:04](#)):

The HRC decision is not on appeal. That was not taken as an appeal, so this is only related to the site plan that's appearing before you.

Speaker 5 ([01:03:18](#)):

All right. Any other questions? Anybody?

Speaker 2 ([01:03:24](#)):

Okay. You do judicial? Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([01:03:27](#)):

With disco? Yeah.

Speaker 12 ([01:03:28](#)):

I met with several neighbors about two or three months ago and the discussion revolved around the height of the building, concerns for traffic as well as setback requirements and parking and that's kind of the gist of the conversation.

Speaker 2 ([01:03:43](#)):

I also met, I think had the very similar meeting with the neighbors and talked about those issues and the issues I've seen in the letter here.

Speaker 1 ([01:03:51](#)):

Same. We had a meeting with most of the neighbors that are immediately adjoining and had some great conversations, some emails that came across back and forth, but all of 'em related to questions of approval of the site and this was HRC level at that time I

Speaker 13 ([01:04:07](#)):

Concur. I also had a meeting with the neighbors and discussing all the things that have been mentioned before.

Speaker 6 ([01:04:16](#)):

I did not have, I have a meeting, same thing that was concurred. So I concur with everything my fellow commissioner stated.

Speaker 1 ([01:04:22](#)):

Thank you. Alright, I don't know if I have any specific questions right now related to the standards specifically I think are pretty straightforward but we'll go ahead and open up for public comment at this time unless there's somebody who wants to make some sort of presentation. Otherwise we'll go ahead and do public comment.

Speaker 14 ([01:04:47](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Paul Warner with Paul Warner Architects, I think we're the applicant, I'm not quite sure and thanks for Randy. He's clarified a few of our questions so I will pare this down a little bit. I can talk about as long as we want or as little as we want. So I'll try to be respectful of your time. I want to make it clear that this is 15 homes that we plan to sell as opposed to what we could argue maybe should be on the site as a four story, maybe a five story apartment building with 60 or 80 units. Don't think seven's appropriate, but we decided on we want to sell town homes in downtown. There's plenty of apartments available, but there's really not that many homes that people can buy and people still want to live downtown. Sandy's already touched on a lot. It's zone cd so you may hear comments, but single family homes, duplexes as referred to them are not allowed in cd.

([01:05:48](#)):

So if that comes up, just keep that in the back of your head. Also that parking is not a requirement even though we are providing parking and we'll talk a little bit more about that. I've not been through the site plan appeal process, so again, I'm glad that Randy chimed in on that. A few of the comments in the appeal letter. So notification Sandy mentioned we submitted a site plan on January 16th. It's now September, but KT Walsh asked us to set up a neighborhood meeting. We set up a neighborhood meeting, met at Lawrence Beer Company with several people back in March. We went to the HR C3 times the A RC. Once we mailed the letters, we know they went out. Sandy's got comments from landowners that received them, but three trips to the HRC.

([01:06:44](#)):

The public meeting, Katie will tell you how many brochures she sent out. I think she delivered hand delivered 45 on her own. So to think that nobody knew about this is a little much the HRC meetings, we obviously made a complete submittal or they would not have heard the item. We did go to the HRC the first time during the middle of spring break, so hopefully this year we will correct that schedule so we don't have that meeting in the middle of spring break we got sent to the A RC, which is a fairly typical thing on several projects. Went back, got a tie, vote two, two. We can talk about how many members are on the HRC. I think they've picked up a few so that'll be better. But this is what we do. We've done it several times. Each time we go and we go to the A RC, the project gets better and I think that's why the third time it was passed three to two.

([01:07:45](#)):

We'd like to be also clear that this project is not about historic preservation. There is one historic house across the street that provides the context area, but we're trying to develop an unused parking lot from a building that's been vacant for 12 years. I don't see that as a historic preservation project, but each time again the project got better. We listened to what the A RC asked for, we listened to some of the comments from the neighbors that made sense. We've made the building slightly smaller, we pushed it back off road island again, it gets better. One of the neighbors made a comment about conflict of interest. It's a pretty bold accusation to accuse one of the HRC members. I probably won't go into any further, but that just

doesn't seem very responsible. Property values we can talk about all the time technically and Randy can chime in, arguing whether property values are going to go up or down is not a legal standing in the state of Kansas to deny something.

(01:08:55):

It really is about the requirements of a site plan, which has already been stated. We believe and we believe planning is correct, that we meet them all. It is funny that in a few of the emails from the neighbors, they went the other direction and argued that if we actually do sell these and it's successful it's going to raise their property values, which isn't fair. So I'm not quite sure which one it is insufficient. So let's talk about parking and traffic. So we had a choice the first middle we were six and a half feet, roughly closer to Rhode Island than we are now. So we push the building back to the west and we think it's appropriate that we are providing parking inside the buildings and a second space behind it. So the debate is if we push it any further west, our front yard gets a little bit bigger but then we lose those parking spots.

(01:09:49):

So we feel two spaces per unit is it's the appropriate number and that's where the spacing from Rhode Island came from. It's also important to point out, Rhode Island actually has a 80 feet of right of way versus 60. I mean 60 is a standard street right of way. So we are already 20 feet further away from the houses from the neighbors you're going to hear about. So again, we feel the two dedicated parking space for each housing unit is the right number and we obviously with that meet the code requirement. So in summary, the site zoned for this development and we have met the land development code requirements. This project was approved by the HRC, which again was not appealed as well as approved by the planning staff and the planning director. We have not requested any incentives or any variances from the city. It is infill development in line with comp plan.

(01:10:48):

It creates more density downtown, which is also in line with the comp plan. It removes a blighted parking lot that has been vacant for at least over 10 years. We are providing more parking than is required. It also in our opinion creates a good transition between the downtown commercial and the residential neighborhood, which is called out in the downtown plan. I do appreciate the neighbor's right to not like the project and not liking it does not mean the project isn't allowed and it's not an argument for denial. That is all I have at the moment. Be happy to answer any questions and would just like the opportunity to respond after other public comment.

Speaker 1 (01:11:33):

Okay, any questions for Paul Warner? I think we're good.

Speaker 14 (01:11:38):

Alright, thank you.

Speaker 1 (01:11:41):

Alright, we'll go ahead and open up to general public comment.

Speaker 15 (01:11:47):

I am going to start now because this seems like a good spot to jump in. I going to read as fast as I can. Tony Peterson, 7 24 Rhode Island and live in what is known as the OW McAllister house. When I bought my house in 1993, people questioned me over my decision to live there because at the time East Lawrence had an erroneous reputation for being a bad part of town and the block was a bit rough. One house had been abandoned for 20 years after Mutilation Murder bought mine as is because it was

suffering from delayed maintenance and two others were already struggling from neglect. Slowly the block has come back to life. A year later I submitted my nomination to have my house put on the historic registry and the nomination was intentionally held up by a previous city manager for nine months because he knew Borders was in the works and was wanting to avoid it.

(01:12:51):

Coming before the HRC for a review in the journal world, I was portrayed on the front page as submitting the nomination as a stunt as block borders, which wasn't true. Didn't even know about borders at the time, did it? Partly because I wanted to house to get some recognition it deserved and what I thought would provide some protections to the block. Only six months after I moved in, a developer had approached the city with a development proposal and one of the five ideas was to demolish the entire block for parking. Another was to demolish everything for retail to expand downtown. The battle between downtown and Rhode Island Street has been going on for decades. We were the pioneers who have fought repeatedly to save the block and one of the reasons why this is now a designated historic district. Once again, we have been kicked in the teeth with this project.

(01:13:54):

We become a backdrop stage for something completely out of scale and inappropriate for the block. It'll be marked as live in historic neighborhood while at the same time destroying it. What made it one but with a Motel six took three attempts to get this passed by the HRC and barely passed on the third time. None of the initial concerns raised by the neighbors or the HRC were ever addressed. It was just a few minor changes. That's why we're here tonight. To make it clear we are not opposed to the idea of row houses, but some respect should be shown to the existing neighborhood. When this was approved, one of the HRC members looked directly at the neighbors and said it could be worse. That's a pretty low bar to jump over. Thanks Tony. How about making a little bit better rather than Thank you, sir. Something not as bad. Thank

Speaker 1 (01:15:04):

You.

Speaker 15 (01:15:06):

I knew I wouldn't even be able to finish.

Speaker 16 (01:15:13):

Eric had 6, 6, 0, 4 6. I'm not against construction. I think construction and growth for the city is good at homes and stuff, but I'm not even against the architect or the other person who spoke. I just don't think it should happen. I've honestly thought for a long time you should just put a Barnes and Noble or a grocery store in there. That's it. Thank you Eric.

Speaker 17 (01:15:57):

Good evening commissioners. Phil Cunningham, 6 6 0 4 4. I submitted a letter as comment as part of the appeal process, but I saw that you all received a lot of comments on here and I don't know if you had the opportunity to read through everything, so I wanted to just share what I wrote here. I've become quite familiar with this project as a member of the city's historic resource commission, and this is probably being repeated what has already been said, but it came before the HRC at the March 20th meeting where it faced significant objection from neighbors as well as concerns on behalf of the HRC and it was sent to the Architectural Review Committee where it came back for the next meeting in April 17th. There was a little change done in the application. I will say that the building was moved, was lowered by two feet and

set back two feet from the application that came before the HRC in March and it was unsatisfactory to the HRC and it was denied.

(01:17:01):

It was then resubmitted under a new application for the May 15th meeting where it barely passed with a three two vote. I just want to make that clear. I'm speaking here just as a resident, not necessarily as a member of that board, but that's kind of where my familiarity on this project comes from and the conversations between the developer and the neighbors most impacted by this construction. There's been several opportunities to adapt the proposed building in a way that is more suitable for all parties involved and that really just was not made on the part of the applicant at a time when Lawrence is facing a housing shortage and has this revised city development code that is coming into play over these past few months. This proposed project claims to use infill to provide housing, but the details of the project suggests that these row houses will be used as investment properties for short-term or long-term rentals instead of single family homes.

(01:18:01):

It's the applicant suggested that the study that's sewn on the first floor of the floor plan could potentially be used as a third bedroom or rented out as an Airbnb. I've seen that the price of these units may range from 600,000 to 900,000 each and of course, while all of this is speculation, I find it difficult to believe that a family would purchase a home of this size for that price. Based on what we've seen with similar condo style projects on New Hampshire Street, it's more likely that these homes will be purchased by property investors to be used as rentals or Airbnbs. If that is the case, this construction would do little to ameliorate the housing situation. In Lawrence, I live on Mass Street in a neighborhood that has a mixture of single family homes that are somewhere on the historic registry, apartment buildings and large buildings such as Babcock Place. There's a way to construct large projects in a way that compliment rather than obstruct the neighborhood. And this proposed building is not it. Thank you. Thanks

Speaker 1 (01:19:01):

Bill makes your service too.

Speaker 18 (01:19:09):

Hello, she steel 6 6 0 4 6. I just wanted to say that I don't think we should build this particular building at this location. I think that the city could build something bigger perhaps and something that the whole entire community could get behind, even the historical preservation community. And I think that we should set our sights on something more ambitious and something that will set Lawrence apart for the long term and we should maybe expand the boundaries of this project to surrounding areas and consider ways that we could just improve the overall condition of Lawrence. So I would advocate that we build something bigger, build something better, and I just wanted to put that out there. Okay, thank you.

Speaker 19 (01:20:20):

Greetings commissioners, Sarah Norman 6 6 0 4 4. I come before you today to respectfully urge you to reject administrative approval for the Urban Row houses and vote no on this development. This proposal has been marked by procedural missteps, unmet requirements, and questionable shortcuts. As you've heard, residents and businesses were not properly notified of the proposal. This is a violation of City Code. The administrative determination cited a section of the code that doesn't exist. Of the six required plans and studies listed in the administrative determination two were waived. This undermines the integrity of the process. Several issues arose during the HRC review process. At the March HRC meeting, commissioners expressed concerns about the project's height and mass describing it as monolithic. It was referred to the A RC for design revisions. When it returned in April, only minor cosmetic changes had been made. It failed to meet the Secretary of the interior standards for size, mass, and height and was

rightly denied. The developer made minor superficial changes and resubmitted the project under a new number in May. This tactic undermines the authority of the HRC and sets a troubling precedent that a developer can simply wear down commissioners through repeated submissions until approval is granted.

(01:21:38):

HRC commissioners were instructed to evaluate the project separately using both the downtown design guideline and their certificate of approval under chapter 22. However, the administrative determination states the urban conservation guideline takes precedence. This points to confusion and inconsistencies with code interpretation, which weakens the review process at the May HRC. Meeting. Commissioners eventually approved this proposal not on criteria being met, but rather on the spirit or the intent. Why do we have criteria if they're so easily allowed to go out the window? I would venture to say if the neighborhood appeal had been submitted today or even an hour late, we would not have not been afforded such concessions. Navigating this process as a citizen has been frustrating and disheartening. Citizens are expected to meet strict deadlines and follow procedures to a T, yet developers are granted waivers, allowed to bypass requirements and are given multiple opportunities to revise and resubmit.

(01:22:34):

This imbalance is deeply troubling. In my letter to you, I detailed additional instances of non-compliance. I hope you've had the opportunity to review them. Codes, procedures and principles exist for a reason not to be waived or ignored, but to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. Commissioner sellers, during the August 5th meeting, you said we've bastardized infill development, we've pinned it up against 2040 and we've made it a bit messy. We're still uncomfortable around infill development and its purpose and intent. You urged your fellow commissioners to consider how infill should shape our city's growth. You warn that without clarity we wind up with ambiguity in projects that benefit. No one commissioners uphold the standards, protect the process, and ensure that infill development is done right and meet codes. I respectfully ask you to vote no to Urban Row.

Speaker 5 (01:23:22):

Thank you, sir.

Speaker 20 (01:23:31):

Good evening, mayor and commissioners. My name is Katie Walsh. I live at 7 32 Rhode Island Street in early 2025, the neighbors were not notified as was required by the city code in place at the time. I had to pass out flyers because this came as a surprise to us. My flyers were non-judgmental. I kept it really fair. I just let everybody know this was coming up. Despite repeated requests, Mr. Werner during this process never submitted, completed final elevation drawings showing the project from all four directions. In my years of dealing with architects and developers, this was a glaring first, the final elevation drawings would've informed both the historic resource commissioners and the concerned neighbors about the true scale and mass of the building. I would still love to see final elevations at the Historic Resource Commission. As has been said, we were told more than once that it could be worse, which to me sounds like an excuse for design that has not been required to be truly compatible and complimentary to the McAllister House, which is on the National Register and to the North Rhode Island Street National Historic District. You've been made aware, especially by Sarah's letters of all the procedural errors that have been made during this process. We are asking you to deny this project. Thank you.

Speaker 21 (01:25:08):

Todd Foster, 7 0 8 Rhode Island Street. Thanks for the time tonight. As always, it's difficult to put into words everything that I feel needs to be said, but I just want to speak tonight to get on record and publicly oppose this project. Once again, I'm still blown away that they're pretending we got advance notice letters. We didn't put neighbors that had distinct disadvantage. I found out about the project around a week before

the first HRC meeting and the next two HRC meetings. Of course, we didn't even find out it's on the agenda until five or six days before each meeting, so every single time it's been tough for us as far as notification. Years ago I bought my house and I put everything into stabilizing this place for generations to come. Knowing the historic significance here and with the knowledge that our city commission and Historic Resource Commission cared greatly about preservation in neighborhoods, all the houses on this block are very important to Lawrence's rich history and I've always felt protected until this proposal over the years we've all watched New Hampshire go up and never Rhode Island Street.

(01:26:17):

It's literally beyond my previous imagination. Once again, I strongly disagree with this proposal. The project's too impactful and crosses the line that I cannot agree with. It's too close, too massive and too conflicting when looking into things further, it gets worse with the various questionable decisions and errors that have been uncovered and pointed out in our appeal letter and other letters submitted. The proposal also greatly takes away from future border site development, which is quite concerning to me. I moved there around the time when it was still open and New Hampshire was still thriving and I've always thought it would be great to have kind of a commercial spot there that you could go buy stuff from maybe some apartments above. The letters written in. Our comments made since back in March at the initial HRC meeting, do a great job of explaining our feelings as a neighborhood.

(01:27:09):

I'm happy to see increasing support for the neighborhood coming from around town as well. I'm disappointed neighbors are sometimes perceived as the bad guys for fighting for our livelihood. I hope you've had a chance to look over everything that's been presented since this development proposal came about and I hope you've had the time to process your thoughts as well. As you can tell, our argument has evolved over the months, but the feeling remains the same. Design guidelines have not been met. Please put yourselves in our shoes and look at this individually without applying catchphrases or blanket policy thinking. This is a very unique and very important item. We're the proud front wall of East Lawrence, readily visible from the seventh Street Quarter. We're excellent representation of East Lawrence and we don't deserve to be shut out. Rather, this neighborhood deserves recognition. To conclude there's not a comparable example in town to what is being proposed or the impact that it makes on neighboring homes. Please seriously consider the issues here with this unprecedented proposal. As I've said before, it creates multiple problems and solves none. Thank you. Thank you Todd.

Speaker 22 (01:28:17):

Hi there. Griffin King, 6 6 0 4 6. I just wanted to come up here and emphasize how much I agreed with what Chen over there said. I don't want to toot my own horn too much, but I think that we've got something that we're going to bring up later tonight that just might make everyone here happy, so I'm really excited to be able to share that with you all later. Me and Shannon are both here representing the Enron Corporation, so I'm just excited to get to talk with everybody later and thank you all.

Speaker 23 (01:28:48):

Thanks

Speaker 22 (01:28:49):

Griffin.

Speaker 23 (01:28:53):

Hello, I'm Tim Nauman. I live at seven 14 Rhode Island. This is my daughter Lumina. I did not get a notice in the mail and I don't know anyone else on the block who did. I do like the parking lot across from

my street. I look directly at it. What I don't like is the empty borders building for how many years that it's been there and then this project comes along and it's just I invite anyone here, you can come over after this, sit on my porch and take, imagine the size and scale of this straight across. It's flat. It's the whole length. There's no breaks. It's a huge contrast between what we've got going over there. I'm not an architect so I don't know how to change that, but I do know you've got Hobbs Taylor, that's five stories and it's towards New Hampshire. It seems like to me we could, why build a new building that's not creating any flow between a historic area when we've got borders?

(01:29:52):

Just sitting there to me just really seems like it's not a good move and I think there's a real opportunity here tonight for you guys to set a standard on how we want Lawrence to look like going forward and how things flow together. That's what makes this city really good and we all love Lawrence and I want to see Lawrence grow and I'm not opposed to six or seven stories. I think six or seven stories across from us just does not fit within this. I don't think it pays any respect to Lawrence and what we've done to do that. I think if you want to do that, you can do that on the New Hampshire side. My few other things were just a few quotes from the HRC meetings from Commissioner Coleman. The project is trying to do conflicting things and it cannot to be truly compatible with the historic structures that's listed. The massing would have to be much smaller from Commissioner Klein. I lean on the side of not meeting the intent of section 22 dash 5 0 7. It's simply too large, too tall and offensive to the neighbors across the street. And lastly, commissioner Dearborn, if I lived across the street from it, as many of you do, I would have a real issue with it. Thank you. If I may, would it be okay if my daughter says a few words? Sure. She's a citizen.

(01:31:12):

Got it.

Speaker 24 (01:31:13):

I think that it's too big and doesn't fit in with the neighborhood and I think that it could be replaced with something more beneficial for our neighborhood.

Speaker 5 (01:31:28):

Thank you. Thank you. Anybody else in the room? Okay,

Speaker 7 (01:31:43):

Good evening. Samuel Carter. 6 6 0 4 6. I took an interest in this project as I was reading about the history of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance and I saw that it was started because they didn't like monolithic apartments and around this time I'd been researching Lauren's history. Started the 1930 City Plan, 1948 City plan. Looked at the 1926 zoning map and it's kind of unreal when you read those documents, when you actually look at the history and you see how much of that history is ignored and concealed. So East Lawrence, I think the first speaker said it used to have a reputation as being a bad part of town. East Lawrence was targeted by city officials.

(01:32:52):

The historic resources code seeks to replicate historical forms of zoning that were really malicious. So it's just very bizarre. It's very bizarre how much the history is signaled but not reviewed or articulated and sorry, it's, there's just a lot of history to it. It's difficult for me to articulate and I don't want to shock anyone. That's my point here, but it seems like this process hasn't really been good for anyone. The development is now more expensive than it would've been before with having brick siding, more setbacks. If you include the parking garages over half the development is reserved for parking or if you the area for that parking garage for the interior parking and people say that it could be worse. It is just, I was on vacation while I was watching this HRC Union. I was just curious about it and there are things

that commissioner said that I think the public should know. One commissioner said, I feel bad for the folks on Rhode Island. I completely agree with you, but you could also have a 60 unit loan income apartment building go there and that's not going to work either. If somebody wanted to propose a project for a 90 foot building with low income housing in there, I think I would object to that and that doesn't make any sense to me. Thank you, Samuel. Thank you.

Speaker 25 ([01:35:07](#)):

Hi, my name is Phyllis Payne. I own the house at 7 0 2 Rhode Island. I'm speaking mainly because I moved into that house when I was 10 years old. I have seen all the changes in that neighborhood. It changed from this beautiful block with varied houses across the street. None of those houses exist anymore.

([01:35:38](#)):

I feel like I have a unique perspective on this and I feel like East Lawrence, as others have mentioned, has frequently been targeted and I don't think that is really fair. I guess really what I want to say is that I'm sorry I'm not a public speaker. Okay. This block is one of the few areas that still reflect Lawrence's origin. It is listed as part of the North Rhode Island Street historic residential district and deserves protection bill. Expensive townhomes across the street will not address Lawrence's affordable housing storage shortage. They risk driving prices higher, not helping families in need. Development can be positive, but only when it respects history, scale, and community needs as proposed. This project does not. Thank you very much. Thank

Speaker 5 ([01:36:44](#)):

You, Phyllis.

Speaker 26 ([01:36:51](#)):

Sorry I'm late here. Mike Grendel, 4 0 5 Elm Street, north Lawrence. This is a legacy project. However, the legacy we are making for our downtown today contrast greatly with the legacy of the vital downtown we received from earlier generations. The C four zoning was intended to preserve downtown Lawrence as our central business district. Future commercial needs were to consider locating downtown. Also, the businesses and taxpayers paid for the service parking lots that made C four viable. The lack of restrictions is being exploited by new uses. Lawrence has had an excess of commercial zoning for decades that we lost and we lost the chance of maintaining a central business district. This transition to mixed uses in downtown has been a positive trend, but we made a grave error in not changing the C four classification to address non-commercial uses and prevent such conflicts as this. The old downtown plan maintained the vitality of our CBD, but also safeguarded the vitality of surrounding residential neighborhoods.

([01:38:09](#)):

That's another horse that's already left the stable. The claim that this project, if scaled back would not be feasible is a ridiculous insult to our intelligence. The developer is simply unwilling to give up a penny of profit if no feasible alternative exists. Something is wrong with the business plan, the applicant and members of the commissions that reviewed this project made the statement it could be worse. That's a mean thing to say. It's like stabbing someone in the heart and saying, Hey, it could be worse, but not twisting the knife doesn't change the outcome. I am glad that they made that statement repeatedly because it's acknowledgement and agreement that this is a bad project. It validates the claim. This project will adversely affect residential property values and destroy the character and vitality of Residential Street. Finally, it is clear from this process that the neighboring residents are second class participants. Notifications required by regulation were not sent. Information provided to neighbors was incomplete. These slights have all been cataloged, I'm sure by the people who are appealing this action. If our processes are not going to recognize the legitimate issues and values of neighboring properties and their

owners. If the governing body is not going to mediate to balance competing interests, then put that in the code and the second class citizens of our community won't waste time or expect fair treatment. Thanks Mike.

Speaker 27 ([01:39:49](#)):

Hello. David Bain. 6 6 0 4 7. Yeah, I guess you don't really know where to start on this other than, I mean if the HRC approved it, then it's approved so by them no matter how many times it took to get it to that. And then, I mean, I lived right there on Road Island probably 40 some years ago and I mean, yeah, it hadn't changed a lot, but I mean if you want to just make one zone historic and look a few blocks away, you got some five story buildings. Well that doesn't look historic either. So it's a whole historic thing to me when we're in a crisis for any kind of housing is kind of silly, but I mean if people were interested in that becoming something else, they could have bought the property. People that buy property have a right to do what they want to on it, as far as I'm concerned.

([01:41:10](#)):

I know a lot of people don't agree with that, but I mean if it meets code and it passes everything, then yeah, you can complain all you want. They're probably going to pass it anyway, which most of the time they do, which goes back to, I mean, we need more housing everywhere and not only housing for the low income. I mean you need people that have money. They need places to live too. So if these are bigger, I mean maybe somebody with some good money will move in there and build some other places here in town or move some businesses in here. So I don't know. For me, I don't see a problem with what they're proposing. Appreciate your time. Thank you. Thanks Dave.

Speaker 1 ([01:42:20](#)):

Bill's in the room right now. Sherry, anybody online to speak to this issue?

Speaker 4 ([01:42:26](#)):

No. Mayor.

Speaker 1 ([01:42:27](#)):

Alright, very good. Paul, you wanted anything to respond back quickly? That'd be great. Thank you.

Speaker 14 ([01:42:35](#)):

Just a couple things. Once again, this is not an appeal of the HRC that's passed. It was voted for. Those members take this very seriously. They didn't like it. They wouldn't have voted for it. It is about the site plan. Unfortunately, I get to say that I really haven't heard anything about what we don't meet per the city's requirements. I will add awesome comment about LPA on May 17th, LPA wrote a letter to Lynn and to the HRC supporting this project. I think we all know Lawrence Preservation Alliance and Dennis Brown and if they were against it, they certainly would've voiced that opinion. So I can go through some more, but it's really about the site plan and happy to answer any questions. I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([01:43:30](#)):

Alright commissioners,

Speaker 12 ([01:43:32](#)):

I got a couple of questions please. I'd like to for Randy, you still here with us?

Speaker 10 ([01:43:44](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 12 ([01:43:44](#)):

Okay, thanks. So I want to make sure I understand it, what you talked about at the beginning of the item that this is quasi-judicial. So if it's found to be in compliance with the code, we have to pass it. If it's not found in compliance, then we have to deny it. Is that correct?

Speaker 11 ([01:44:02](#)):

That is correct. This is the ministerial function where you step into the shoes of the planning director is this is an administrator. So there's no discretion. If the site plan meets the requirements of the city code, it must be approved. If it does not meet it, it cannot be approved. Now you can send it back to fix something or you can send it back with modifications or that type of deal, but you cannot approve it if it does not meet and you have to approve it, it does not.

Speaker 12 ([01:44:30](#)):

Okay. So the letter we got for the appeal had about nine items, or it did have nine items on it that it pointed out that the neighbors were concerned about. I would like to just briefly go over those and have your opinion on those. The first one is failure, proper notification. We've heard from both the applicant as well as staff that there's potentially some documentation that that happened or didn't happen.

Speaker 11 ([01:44:54](#)):

I will refer you to Sandy. Sandy has the information regarding notification. It's my understanding that proper notification was given that she has that. Details of that.

Speaker 8 ([01:45:07](#)):

Thank you. Sandy Day planning regarding notification for a site plan only. This is not related to notification for any of the HRC work. It's not applicable. Site plan application requires the applicant to provide notice. There is also a statement in code that says failure to receive that piece of mail does not invalidate the project. I had heard the comments about lack of notice. I looked at the application and double checked that we received the required documentation for the notice the list of property owners, I scanned the list. One of those people is a city employee. I reached out to that employee and was confirmed that that person received that piece of mail. I did that independently. I also reached out to the applicant to share with them that we had received comments about lack of notice. It was a very long drawn out project because it was submitted in January. The HRC process took a couple of times. I didn't complete my administrative review until July of this year. I suggested to the applicant that they may want to proactively send a new notification out. They considered that and chose not to that there was certainly evidence that property owners were aware of the project. There is nothing in our documentation that I would point to that the applicant didn't take the steps that they're required to take. That met my minimum requirement for notice.

Speaker 12 ([01:46:49](#)):

Okay, thank you Sandy. Appreciate it. So the second item was the inaccurate citation of the development code.

Speaker 8 ([01:46:55](#)):

So yes, there is an editing error in the project. If you look at the staff report on page four of the staff report, I have in the code under section 20 dash 7 0 7 F. That should read 20 dash 3 0 8 F. So the citation is incorrect. However, the language in the staff report is exactly correct. If there is a discrepancy between design criteria in the zoning code and the urban conservation overlay, the urban conservation overlay takes precedent. That's all that was really trying to say. So yes, there is absolutely an editing error. The language is correct. The citation was not.

Speaker 12 ([01:47:43](#)):

So that inaccuracy is at grounds for saying this is out of compliance. Randy,

Speaker 11 ([01:47:48](#)):

This is Randy Larkin, deputy city attorney. No, that's just Ners there and the city commission can just order that to be corrected to be fixed. It's just a typo.

Speaker 12 ([01:47:57](#)):

Okay. The third item is the lack of access to assigned planner. Apparently Sandy was gone during the appeal process, I think, or something to that regard.

Speaker 8 ([01:48:07](#)):

Bad me, I took a vacation and there are other staff members in the office that can answer questions. I was not there. The planning manager was there, the planning director was there. I don't know what conversations occurred during that time. I know that there have been questions about the studies that are required, the traffic study and the drainage study. I think the engineers are online. Those components are studies that are required for most projects. Those studies can potentially be waived for specific reasons. The MSO engineers have that in their scope. What is difficult is if you go into EPL, it is incredibly difficult to see where something specifically happened. Knowing that took additional steps to confirm with those engineers that they had received the study. They did see it in EPL. They did review it, they did waiver it, whatever was applicable, and that's reported in a very general statement in the staff report.

Speaker 12 ([01:49:20](#)):

Okay, thank you. So the lack of access to an assigned planner is that grounds for saying it doesn't follow code?

Speaker 11 ([01:49:27](#)):

This is Randy Larkin deputies to the attorney. The decision on the site plan is the decision of the director of planning. So all the questions should have been directed through him. He would then have referred it to the planner if he had questions, but the decision was actually made by the director of planning and signed by the director.

Speaker 12 ([01:49:44](#)):

Okay. The next item they stated was insufficient information for historic resource commission meetings.

Speaker 8 ([01:49:52](#)):

So this again is where we're treading back and forth between application types. My review and the item that you have before you this evening is related to specifically the site plan, not the HRC. Any of those comments or questions could be directed to Lynn Zollner, our historic resources administrator, and she has done a lot to double check her work as well.

Speaker 12 ([01:50:20](#)):

So the HRC is not, does not approve or disapprove the site plan?

Speaker 8 ([01:50:25](#)):

They do not.

Speaker 12 ([01:50:25](#)):

They don't have anything to do with that. Okay. The next item is conflicting guidance at the HRC meeting, not part of this action for you tonight. Okay. The next item is misleading public project information is the next item.

Speaker 8 ([01:50:44](#)):

So we believe that that may relate to the applicant's website, not the city's website. I can't speak to that. We don't have any control of what gets published on a private website.

Speaker 12 ([01:50:56](#)):

So that has nothing to do with whether or not it meets code. Correct? Correct, correct. The next item is a potential conflicts of interest. They brought up the idea that the potential conflict with city employees or something to that regard.

Speaker 8 ([01:51:12](#)):

I have no knowledge of any of that.

Speaker 12 ([01:51:14](#)):

Okay. Would that be grounds for that It does not meet code. Randy,

Speaker 11 ([01:51:20](#)):

This is Randy Lark and Deputy City attorney. I don't know the specifics of the allegation. I think again, that has to do with the HRC. There have to be done with that if there was a violation, but that would have,

Speaker 12 ([01:51:31](#)):

We're having a hard time hearing you, Randy.

Speaker 11 ([01:51:34](#)):

I apologize. That is irrelevant to the site plan. I believe that has to do with the HRC again and there would be nothing that has any relevance at this point in time. Okay.

Speaker 12 ([01:51:45](#)):

So the next item is negative impacts on neighboring property values. I know that was discussed a little bit on both sides. Is that rounds for saying that it's in or out of code? That is not. Is

Speaker 11 ([01:51:55](#)):

Randy? Oh, deputy city attorney. Yeah. That has nothing to do with the site plan. Again, those are just things we need to look at the provisions of the city code and there's nothing in the city code that requires anything regarding valuation or devaluation of property at all.

Speaker 12 ([01:52:12](#)):

So the last item they cited was insufficient consideration of parking and traffic. Can you discuss why that would put it out of code or make it be part of code?

Speaker 8 ([01:52:22](#)):

Certainly. I think in this particular case, there are two separate topics that are often conflated by many people. Traffic in the assessment of traffic on the Public street network is one component. Off street parking demands and requirements is another component in the CD district. There is no off street parking requirement. We all recognize that there is a demand for parking, especially if you want to be close to something in a downtown urban environment. Sometimes you can't just have that right out the door piece. And there are some impacts on neighborhoods clearly. And I know Brad Harrell is working on a project to look at what permit parking might look like and that may be a future solution. There are two separate things. The traffic study was a study that's typically required. What is the impact of the project? This project is just over the threshold of where we would typically have a traffic study or at least a seven step study. So a scaled down one, the request was to defer that until there was more information known about the commercial building for that site and what kinds of street network improvements may or may not be required depending on what final user is there. So that was a waiver.

([01:53:51](#)):

And then the parking, the applicant in this particular case is actually proposing dedicated residential parking for the particular use and we don't always see that.

Speaker 12 ([01:54:04](#)):

Okay. So the site plan that they have submitted has met the code for that parking situation

Speaker 8 ([01:54:12](#)):

That was staff's finding, yes. Okay.

Speaker 12 ([01:54:14](#)):

Thank you. That's all I got. Thank

Speaker 8 ([01:54:16](#)):

You.

Speaker 1 ([01:54:16](#)):

Thanks Lisa. Appreciate that. Any other questions? Commissioners right now?

Speaker 5 ([01:54:27](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 4 ([01:54:28](#)):

Dave is on if you have any questions for him. City engineer.

Speaker 1 ([01:54:33](#)):

Okay. I don't know if you have any questions on other than the fact that traffic study was waived until later. I mean, that's the only thing I heard out of that.

Speaker 2 ([01:54:50](#)):

I don't have any more. No. Do you have any comments based upon those questions? Seems?

Speaker 12 ([01:54:56](#)):

Well, I just wanted to kind of get that information in public so that way we understand that we're making decision based on whether or not it meets the code. And I'm meeting with the neighbors, I understand their concerns. We're in a different situation here. We're the quasi judicial end of the equation. And from what I understand, listening to staff as well as reading the neighbor's letter, I'm going to have to say yes to this project. Nothing in here that would indicate to me it does not meet code. And that's what our decision is based on. Okay. Thank you Lisa.

Speaker 2 ([01:55:41](#)):

I agree with that. I mean, if this was an appeal of the HLC, there'd be different questions before us, but it's not. It's an appeal and we have a duty and obligation to determine whether or not this complies with the code for site plans or not. And I think it does. So I think that there's a lot of things you could talk about, but that's the only thing that we can or should talk about tonight. And so I will approve the site plan I submitted.

Speaker 13 ([01:56:19](#)):

Very good.

Speaker 2 ([01:56:20](#)):

Talked on there.

Speaker 13 ([01:56:23](#)):

Well, yeah, I would concur the rest of my fellow commissioners. I think that was Commissioner Larson's questions were very helpful. So our position here is ministerial as brand said. And so given that it's meeting all the conditions, I would approve it as well.

Speaker 1 ([01:56:43](#)):

Okay. Commissioner Sellers, anything to add?

Speaker 6 ([01:56:46](#)):

Yeah, I'm going to read an excerpt from a summary of legislation that was dated January 26th, 2016. It's from the Kansas Association of Realtors, their VP of Government Affairs. A summary of legislation to ban price control mandates on the purchase or sale of private property at the time. This bill had a RS number and if anyone was tracking this or if happened to be a master student that was working on housing policies, then you were tracking this and realized that this piece of legislation was what they call gut and goad and during the 2016 legislative session, so during the veto session, I'm going to read bits and pieces of the summary legislation because I like educating the community. This legislation would prohibit cities and counties from adopting price control mandates on the purchase or sale of private property language would be added to the state's existing rent control statutes, KSA 12 dash 16 120 that already prohibits cities and counties from adopting price control mandates on the lease or rental of privately owned residential commercial property.

([01:58:04](#)):

Over the past few years, a group of community activists in the city of Lawrence have been pushing the city and county to adopt inclusionary zoning requirements on new single and multifamily housing developments. Inclusionary zoning requirements basically act as a price control mandate or tax on the construction of new housing units and increase the cost of housing for families who purchase market rate housing units. Inclusionary zoning programs impose price control mandates on private property by limiting the rental amount or sales price that a property owner can charge to lease or sell a certain percentage, generally around 30% of newly constructed housing units in a new housing development. As an alternative, the local government may also give, well let me dropped a a bit here, but I'm saying what the local government can do. Alternatively, the local government may also give the developer the option to buy their way out of the price controls by making a substantial upfront cash payment to the city or an affordable housing trust fund.

(01:59:14):

In effect, the developer is required to pay the local government for the right to construct homes in the subdivision, which is already allowed under the land use regulations and zoning by any other measurement. And if this were being done by a private entity, this would be extortion. Unfortunately, KR believes that the inclusionary zoning program leads to an increase in cost of market rate housing under a reduction in the number of market rate housing units constructed. Numerous studies and examples from other communities with inclusionary zoning programs supports these conclusions. Even though no cities or counties in the state of Kansas have enacted any inclusionary zoning requirements at this time, these ideas seem to spread fairly quickly across the state once they are adopted in one community. As a result, we strongly believe that now is the time for the Kansas legislature to protect consumer choice in the housing market and private property rights by preempting passing legislation to ban price control mandates on the purchase or sale of private property. That was not the letter in its entirety, but you can Google it and find it and read it all for yourself.

(02:00:35):

This is the type of ruling that I just don't like because we're, again, we're voting on the administrative and we're going to continue to see things like this come up and some of us may be voting against our moral judgment because we have to look at the administrative piece of it and that's what this is for me. This is not something that I would want to see. This is not what I would want to have in our community because it does bastardize and perpetuates capitalism where somebody is providing a good a service at the expense of prosperity, their economic prosperity, not at the benefit of what we need right now, but we can't do that because we don't have rent control. I can't mandate, we can incentivize, which is what our affordable housing administrator is working on and I encourage you all to be diligent about that and let's all kind of take the nimbyism out of where we're at now because we're all NIMBYs right now and we need to not be, we're all kind of one paycheck away from either eating kitty litter or buckling up with somebody bunking up or couch surfing.

(02:01:55):

So administratively this has to be approved policy wise for me morally wise, it is going to perpetuate something that many in our community believe that downtown is a treasure, it's a gem, and those who can afford to pay \$600,000 for a two story walkup row house, whatever you want to call it, and then offset their costs by Airbnb, the bottom, maybe that's the American dream that's making profit in profit. So there's a market for that and that's what this project does. It pimps out housing piece, it uses housing as the cover all to get in and there is ness to this because we don't have these policies and so we're going to continue to see these things until we are intentional and our community is intentional about engaging and being serious about affordable housing now includes everybody. I don't care if you make a hundred thousand dollars, \$40,000, \$20,000 or \$800,000.

(02:03:02):

Everybody deserves to have housing that is affordable and that is not burdensome to them and it can happen. It can happen at the local level. We need help from the state legislature. We don't need to be preempted like this did, and we need support from the federal government as well. But until we get that Venn diagram working together with us, we're going to be all over the place and we're still going to continue to see things like this that I have to vote yes on because administratively it does check the boxes, but by my own reasoning and my own understanding and knowledge of what I studied in school, this does nothing to support community. It supports capitalism and profit, which everybody has the right to do that because that's the lens that we live in this world, but it doesn't do anything, doesn't do much for our community. So that's my soapbox that I hope you appreciate it.

Speaker 1 ([02:03:55](#)):

Thank you. Okay, so it sounds like everybody understands our role. It's ministerial in nature, there's five criteria and the plan appears to meet all five. So for me it's an approval based on that, so I don't know if anyone wants to propose a motion here or

Speaker 12 ([02:04:16](#)):

Well approved site plan. SP 25 0 0 0 3 for 15 multi-dwelling residential units located at 700 New Hampshire Street.

Speaker 2 ([02:04:25](#)):

Second.

Speaker 1 ([02:04:27](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by Larson is seconded by Finkel Dye. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 2 ([02:04:30](#)):

Aye. Aye.

Speaker 1 ([02:04:31](#)):

Those opposed. Motion passes five zero. Thank you for your time coming tonight. We're going to move on to item two, which is consider conducting a public hearing for the vacation of a utility easement Loc located within block three lots, one through 10 minor subdivision at 39, 23 and 39, 27 day Flower Street submitted by Land Plan Engineering pa, and consider adopting on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 4 8 to vacate easements as described.

Speaker 10 ([02:05:07](#)):

Looks like he's

Speaker 28 ([02:05:11](#)):

Alright. Good evening, mayor Commissioners, let me share my screen real quick.

Speaker 10 ([02:05:31](#)):

Do you have to let them?

Speaker 28 ([02:05:44](#)):

All right. Good evening, mayor Commissioners, my name is Steven Smith. I am the right of way program administrator here with the city of Lawrence working with the municipal services and Operations Departments and today the item I'm bringing to you is to consider conducting a public hearing for the vacation of a utility easement located within blocks three lots, one through 10 minor subdivision at 3 9 2 3 and 3 9 2 7 day Flower Street. This vacation request was submitted by Land Plan Engineering. Also on my agenda item is to consider adopting on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 4 8 to vacate easement as described, the applicant is requesting to vacate an existing 10 foot utility easement at 3 9 2 3 and 3 9 2 7 day Flower Street as part of a minor subdivision replat of Monterey Bluffs number one. I'm going to go ahead and switch over here to my exhibits for the easement vacation as you can see and let me know if I need to zoom in for a better visual.

(02:06:47):

Here to the left is 3 9 2 7 day Flower Street lot six to the right is 3 9 2 3 day Flower Street Lot five. The easement that will be vacated is the one running up that center line. It is a 10 foot utility easement. As always, city staff has reached out to all property owners within 400 feet of this proposed easement vacation and have not heard any conflict or any objection as well as we have reached out to all private utility operators franchisees and have not heard anything of any facilities being within this easement or any conflicts there. With that in mind, city staff recommends to approve the ordinance 1 0 1 4 8 for this vacation. It's typically done with two steps. The first one is to conduct a public hearing and the second one is to vote to approve the ordinance for a vacation. I am here and happy to answer any questions you may have on this. I know we also have the applicant himself, Jess Noel with Land Plan Engineering as well as planning and development service staff who has been reviewing the minor subdivision itself. So

Speaker 5 (02:08:05):

Thank you Steve.

Speaker 1 (02:08:08):

Does anybody have any questions about the right of way itself or someone from land plan here? Is that right? Steven, did you mention that?

Speaker 28 (02:08:18):

Yes, they should be online.

Speaker 1 (02:08:20):

Okay.

Speaker 4 (02:08:22):

I just moved Jess over. Is there anyone else?

Speaker 28 (02:08:25):

Steven Avery with planning and Development should be online as well if there are any questions about the minor subdivision. Okay,

Speaker 1 (02:08:35):

And just before we open up the public hearing, I want to make sure if there's any questions or comments from the applicant,

Speaker 11 (02:08:45):

Just the land planning engineering answer any questions you have any?

Speaker 1 ([02:08:50](#)):

Okay. Any commissioners have questions for the applicant?

Speaker 6 ([02:08:54](#)):

I just have a quick technical

Speaker 1 ([02:08:55](#)):

Question.

Speaker 6 ([02:08:57](#)):

When I see in the report it states that there are no objections were received either from property owners or utility operators. If someone does not reply to a letter or postcard, is that denoted as no objection or is that denoted as something different?

Speaker 28 ([02:09:17](#)):

Yeah, on the agenda item I denote if we hear anything I would make note of that we haven't heard anything back from the letter we sent to property owners, so it was marked as no objection there. With utility operators we got all clears so we do receive replies from them just confirming there's no facilities there, but as far as I know, we did not receive any replies from property owners.

Speaker 6 ([02:09:45](#)):

Okay. I usually have to do comments after public comments, but I'm going to use my commissioner authority and say moving forward, if we're going to denote no objections then we might need to preface to say that based on communications there were no objections. Passive objections are a little bit murky and unless we're going to denote something as being a passive objection and define that, I would feel more comfortable and well more informed to know that an objection to something is in relation to there was communication that someone communicated that if no one did not communicate, it's not necessarily they objected, it's just they just didn't, they didn't say anything. That's not necessarily mean they objected. So that's all I know it's splitting hairs but it's one I don't mind us splitting, so thank you.

Speaker 10 ([02:10:42](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([02:10:48](#)):

Alright. If there's no other questions, I'm going to go ahead and open the public hearing for this item. Any comments?

Speaker 16 ([02:11:03](#)):

I'll keep it short. Eric hide 6 6 0 4 6. I just want to say since we're talking about right of way issues here, I don't really know what's going on in this item, but what I want to say applies to it. We have a huge right of way obstruction issue in this town and we need to, for instance, I'll give you an example. There's a lot of signs being blocked by overhanging trees, speed limit signs, stop signs, things of this effect while you're driving around. We need to hire more staff enforcers. There's only two people who work and actually enforce, drive around enforce codes. I know at least for yard sign violations, which I'm sorry Bart

Littlejohn, but you violated a lot of yard sign violations during your political campaigning and you should be ashamed of yourselves because Craig Owens told you directly not to do that and you did. It

Speaker 1 ([02:12:02](#)):

Has to be limited. Thank you, Merrick.

Speaker 18 ([02:12:12](#)):

All right. She steel 6 6 0 4 6 for this item. I just want to give thanks. I want to give thanks to our builders. First of all, I think the people working on this project are builders. I think the people who were working on the last project were builders. I don't think they were ambitious enough, but they are builders and if you look at those flags behind you, America was built by builders and I think that's important to acknowledge and to thank those people. I also want to give thanks to the system. I think that the system gives us processes, gives us rules, and it keeps things into order. And I think that we owe a lot to this system and we just saw an example of this happen. These builders were able to win because of the system, and I think that anything that supports people who are trying to grow the economy, grow America, I think anything that supports those people should be celebrated, should be celebrated, and we should make posters and I think we should join the side of the system and experience what it's like to win.

([02:13:41](#)):

I think that a lesson we can learn is that the system wins and it supports builders, and I think that all of those things are great and I think that everybody should, at least for the evening, imagine what it would be like to join in on the winning side and maybe we can all connect over, we can all bond over this embracing of the system. So that's all I wanted to say. I wanted to give a thanks to the builders and I wanted to give a thanks to the system and let's all celebrate the winners. Thank you.

Speaker 22 ([02:14:22](#)):

Thank

Speaker 5 ([02:14:23](#)):

You.

Speaker 22 ([02:14:28](#)):

Hello, Griffin King. 6, 6, 0 4 6. I just wanted to come up here and say that I really agreed with what Shen just said. Speak to

Speaker 1 ([02:14:37](#)):

The topic.

Speaker 22 ([02:14:37](#)):

What's that?

Speaker 1 ([02:14:38](#)):

Speak to the topic of the right of way. Thank you. Oh

Speaker 22 ([02:14:40](#)):

Yes. Yeah, yeah. On the right of way. We at Enron, we appreciate people who are working towards growth. We appreciate builders and most of all, we appreciate the system. So I want to give a thanks to U

five up here as part of the system. I want to say that we appreciate you, we want to help you grow in any way we can. That certainly fits within legal frameworks of the country, but we just want to say thanks. We love you. Thank you, thank you.

Speaker 1 ([02:15:18](#)):

Any other public comment on this item? How about online Sherry? No ma'am. Okay. We're going to go ahead and close the public hearing at this point and consider ordinance number 1 0 1 4 8, which is the dedication of this 10 foot easement. Any questions or comments about this?

Speaker 2 ([02:15:41](#)):

No questions I move to adopt on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 4 8

Speaker 1 ([02:15:45](#)):

Second. Okay, that's a motion by Finkle Dye, seconded by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 2 ([02:15:51](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([02:15:51](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes is five zero. We're going to go ahead and move on to the next item

Speaker 12 ([02:15:57](#)):

Break.

Speaker 9 ([02:15:57](#)):

Sorry.

Speaker 1 ([02:15:58](#)):

Oh, you bet. Okay, let's go ahead and take a 10 minute break. Let's see, what time is it now, Sherry? Just clock it in. Seven 10. Alright, we'll be back at seven

Speaker 3 ([02:16:06](#)):

20. Start the meeting.

Speaker 1 ([02:26:51](#)):

Everybody's be quiet for a second. That'd be great. Thank you so much. Alright, thanks for that break. The next item on our agenda is to conduct a public hearing to consider exceeding the revenue neutral rate for the 2026 budget and consider adoption adopting resolution number 7 6 2 7 to levy a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral rate for the 2026 budget. Tongue twister.

Speaker 29 ([02:27:24](#)):

Good evening mayor and commission. We are here this evening. We have two agenda items, but just this one presentation for our 2026 budget. So we'll look back on our process this year and we couldn't possibly capture all the milestones, but some highlights process that we usually start in the spring. We started officially in November. We formed both a community budget committee and employee budget committee to get some additional perspectives into our process and those kicked off in December. In

January, we came to the city commission to get some high level policy feedback. We opened up balancing act in February and then reviewed the results that we received from that exercise with the city commission. April. In June we went over the proposed CIP and then July the proposed budget and here we are this evening for the two public hearings and then September 16th is the planned budget adoption day. So just a reminder, this is a 431 million budget across all funds and some features of the city manager's proposed budget given direction from the city commission one that it's a flat mill levy, the commitment to market rate compensation and that continued investment in infrastructure.

(02:28:54):

We began the process with an anticipated \$6.6 million shortfall of expenses exceeding revenue in our general fund, the city's primary operating fund. We relied heavily on community engagement. I hear Craig say a lot that although he's the person who signs his name to it, that this is the community's budget and we look to reflect that in our process. So we have utilized balancing act, which we have found to be an effective tool to reflect the priorities and service level expectations of the community. And again, a goal for this budget is that it would set us on a sustainable path forward. I recognize that I'm the one standing in front of you tonight, but there are many individuals both within the organization as well as the community that have helped make this budget what it is today and I'm very thankful for their efforts.

(02:29:47):

So looking back on that balancing act, the community engagement, it was open from February one to March 7th. We hosted engagements for both the community as well as for our employees. We received 637 submissions and from those results we created tiers of prioritization levels and that broke into the four tiers that you see in front of you. The tier one were those programs that would be maintained. Tier two, approximately 6% decrease tier three, approximately 13% decrease in tier four, approximately 20% decrease. Again, these were guideposts for our department heads that then go and build a budget based off of those total numbers that they receive.

(02:30:38):

And again, that sustainability piece. So setting aside \$2 million for fund balance restoration, the graph on the left is without the restoration. The graph on the right is some out years with that \$2 million set aside in the 2026 proposed budget, there are a few changes from the proposed budget that the city commission saw in July. In addition, I'm sorry, I'm just going to minimize that. In addition to the \$2 million for fund balance restoration, this revenue over expenses line that you see of 3.2 that reflects the 0.8 additional maximum mill levy that the city commission approved in July, we will get direction on allocating those dollars or then lowering the mill levy rate.

(02:31:36):

Our other change is to fire medical and I think out of all our departments fire meds, probably the department that has seen the most changes due to our partnership with the county, their first proposal with the original 36% contribution from the county had a reduction of upward of 18 employees. That percentage by the county has increased to 40.5% and by doing so, we're able to maintain all but one of those positions. Again, this funding is only agreed upon for 2026. So one of our next steps will be to work with the county on what LDC FMS percentage will look like in future years.

(02:32:20):

So this chart in front of you is where we are today. You see the expenditure reduction by departments. If they had the opportunity to increase revenue, you see those as well. And then in blue is the total change. The far right hand is the original target that each department was given. There are also a few changes to our capital improvement plan. Our CIP placeholder for Lawrence Loop extension has been added in 2028. You see it highlighted in front of you due to the Michigan to Sandra Shaw Park project, no longer being tenable. And there were also several development driven revenue bond projects that can be supported by the rate models, current rate projections, so those have been added as well.

(02:33:17):

Again, all those changes that we've listed are reflected in the budget as it is before you this evening, but we do need further direction from commission, particularly as it relates to fees for parks, recreation and culture. So following the discussion that we had with commission, there is an updated option, a lower price membership with access to all facilities free for youth and those financially qualified residents. There is the Lawrence resident rate and then the non-resident rate for those outside of city limits. And the net reduction is \$50,000 less in revenue for that department. And here is what those updated pricing looks like.

(02:34:12):

Okay, so why we are here tonight is for two public hearings. This notice that you see in front of you was shared in the Lawrence Journal world. It has the maximum mill levy rate of 33.986, which exceeds the revenue neutral rate of 31.379. We do require a roll call vote to exceed the revenue neutral rate, but the mill levy rate can be reduced up until budget adoption. A look at that property tax breakdown, the city is approximately 26% of the bill with a maximum mil levy rate of 33.986. Our median home value would see an increase of approximately \$25 annually.

(02:35:02):

So again, those steps for tonight, the revenue neutral rate, public hearing, then we would do a roll call, vote if exceeding revenue neutral as well as the budget public hearing, and then plan for September 16th. Again, budget adoption. Just one more plug here at the budget lawrence ks.org. We have received a lot of community feedback this year. I think we're about 25 pages of q and a and we do that so that folks, when you have a question other people can see it as well. And it's not only a way for us to answer questions but also get an idea of where we can do better. And so we are certainly looking into some of those things. We've already made some minor adjustments and as we have the opportunity we will continue to do so and try to improve things. So that is all I have this evening. Okay, Allie,

Speaker 1 (02:35:53):

Thank you. Any questions for Allie?

Speaker 6 (02:35:56):

Allie on the piece for the rec fees under the de notion that the financially qualified residents, what was the criteria you used for that?

Speaker 29 (02:36:04):

I will let Lindsay or Luis.

Speaker 30 (02:36:13):

Good evening. Lindsay Hart, assistant director for Parks, recreation and Culture. We will be using the criteria that we currently use for our scholarship program and we will accept documents such as school lunch, letter for reduced fees, for reduced lunch, snap, any type of financial assistance from a federal institution that anyone can show us that they've already received. We will consider that as our qualified rate.

Speaker 6 (02:36:44):

Okay. Okay. I may have a follow up here in just a bit, but that's for now. Okay, thanks.

Speaker 1 (02:36:53):

Any other questions right now? Okay, thanks. I'm going to go ahead and open the public hearing.

Speaker 5 ([02:37:11](#)):

Nobody wants to talk on this going once

Speaker 12 ([02:37:15](#)):

You got some.

Speaker 31 ([02:37:18](#)):

Yeah. My name is Allen Ford at 1723 East 1100 Road and I'm opposed to putting fees in for the recreation centers. I think we should be encouraging people to do exercise and not discourage 'em. Probably naming this, calling this a recreation center is probably a misnomer. The sports pavilion is, I think of it as a wellness center. I think if you go out there tomorrow morning, you'll see a lot of people who won't be recreation. They'll be doing exercise, they're walking, they're using the weight rooms, they're going to wellness classes, et cetera. But my real main point and my main desire is to discourage you from using some information that was distributed with a survey that came out and this is attempted to go out and compare what we have with other cities in Lawrence and it says here, we've compared what other communities charge for similar services. And so we're looking here at Eudora, Miriam Lenexa, Olathe Ball, and Overland Park and Derby. These is very misleading information right here

([02:38:41](#)):

Because these services have a swimming pool in them and that's very different. Either a swimming pool in the building or they have access to a swimming pool like they do in ura. If you look down, or let me say to really compare rates with what we have here, which not comparable, you have to think about what does it cost someone to swim annually and to swim here to get an annual ticket for somebody who's an adult, you're talking about \$325. \$325 would give you the right to swim downtown for a few months. And then you also have access to free state swimming facilities. Well, the original proposal came out here for \$250. It's now been reduced. You take \$325 for the swimming and you add \$250. Now for the recreation facility, the entrance fee, that's \$575, which now puts you almost at the very top of our list here. We got one who's charges \$600 for their particular facility. If you lower it today like we're talking about, you're still going to be over \$400 for that particular use of our pools outside and compared to what you're getting inside and you've got a full pool 12 months of year

([02:40:24](#)):

Inside.

Speaker 5 ([02:40:24](#)):

Thanks Alan, appreciate it.

Speaker 32 ([02:40:33](#)):

Mike Courtney Prairie Park, 6 6 0 4 6. During the July 8th City commission meeting, it was stated that city staff relied heavily on community engagement through balancing act to shape budget priorities. This tool was used by the departments to craft proposals, primarily based on results from balancing act. As you saw earlier, the balancing act was completed by 637 people. Today I'm here in support of Carol Kuer change.org petition. That petition no wrecks for Lawrence Rec Centers has almost 2000 signatures as of a few hours ago, three times the respondents of the balancing act. I have talked to many people over these past couple months and this is a unbelievably unpopular thing we're trying to do here. I would challenge members of the city commission and the city staff to go to Rock Chalk Park in the morning and talk with

the people there. They will tell you what a recent Harvard study concluded that exercising regularly is the single most important thing you can do for your health.

(02:41:35):

Or just read the comments in the petition. Two weeks ago, a user Hank said, I have used the rec centers for decades to help control my blood pressure. Having free access helps people's health and prevents expensive emergency room visits. Another user, Kim said, the opportunity to have a place to go exercise after surgery at no cost is a huge community benefit for my aging parents. This is what we're here fighting for, the health and wellbeing of our fellow lans, and there is a successful model in town that we can use to make these numbers work. Since May, I've been arguing that the parks and rec department should use a friends group similar to what the library uses. The library's friends and foundation raised \$521,000 to cover a hundred percent of the library's programs. This successful program can and should be the model for how we deal, how we fund at the rec centers. And when I've talked to you guys individually, you've asked for more community engagement. Carol's petition is that community engagement. I'm calling on you to put a one year pause on rec center fees while a parks and rec friends group is developed. This act will strengthen the community as we protect the health and wellbeing of our fellow citizens and friends. Thanks Mike.

Speaker 16 (02:42:57):

Sorry, Eric Hide. 6 6 0 4 6. Alright, so I appreciate what Mike Courtney said standing up for this fee increase against it, but I just want to remind everybody that I am the first person who voiced out my concern against it in this room and I was given no credit by the Lawrence Journal world. I sat in, sorry, I'll lower my voice is said in Lawrence Chamber of Commerce political candidate meeting and everybody looked at Bob Shum like he, sorry, Bob Shum, like he was an idol for the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. Oh, Bob Shum. Oh, and they looked at Little John. Oh, little John.

(02:43:52):

Okay, so what I'm getting at here is that parks and rec fees are unconstitutional. I know that there's a supreme law for this city. People here think they're Gods. Oh, we can do everything. We're supreme. We can charge fees. Look at all the other cities around here. Oh, they're so great. Let's be like them. No, let's be like Lawrence, Kansas. We are not like anybody else. We are Lawrence, Kansas. We accept all sorts of people here. But you know what? We should not accept parks and rec fees. Okay, sorry. Okay, don't do it. Do not do it. I don't care if it's legal, if it's to code like you guys fricking pass that stupid thing. Oh, it's to code. We should pass the building. Oh, it's to code. Well, you guys don't even follow your own codes, Mr. Littlejohn. Mr Hum. You also put up signs.

(02:44:56):

You violated the yard sign ordinances that Owens told you not to. Just like he told me upstairs in the fourth floor of city hall the day of my son was born on July 17th. So you know what? I'm pretty pissed off. I see a lot of people cheating in this town and they work for the city or they're trying to get on the city. You can't stop me. I'm almost done. Okay, do not pass these fees. I love parks and rec. People need to appreciate them for free because they already pay for them. Don't raise the fees. Don't make fees. There's already fees in place. Don't raise more, just leave it how it is. Okay, thanks.

Speaker 33 (02:45:40):

Good evening. Paige Weal Health 6 6 0 4 7. I'm a Lawrence local. I've lived here my whole life. I've used rock chalk park. I've played volleyball my whole life. The fees up on the board, it said lower something fees. I think that putting lower in front is just a facade of accessibility when this proposal is anything but accessible. Bastardizing capitalism was mentioned earlier, which is exactly what this plan is, but it's at the expense of our community and it was also mentioned earlier that you guys are reflection of the expectations of the community and I think it is clear that the expectations of our community's resources

and our community centers is accessibility, which this plan directly opposes. I think a big difference between a private club and a community center is accessibility, which this plan takes away and I know youth and elderly are mentioned. I'm 22 years old.

(02:46:56):

I believe I would not fall under either of those probably parameters, but it is still very important to me. I'm a part of a team reach that has over 55 people in it that play pickup games of volleyball for free, which even while you guys were speaking around 12 people messaged in that group chat and they're all actively currently playing as we are speaking. If this were to pass, that may not be available to all of those people that rely on that and that is just one of two group chats that have around the same amount of 55 people. So I would urge you guys to consider this because unlike the site plan administratively, this does not have to be approved. Thank you.

Speaker 34 (02:47:51):

Good evening, Nikki Weigel 6 6 0 4 9 1,923. People have signed the no fees for rec center's petition, which reads we petition the Lawrence City Commission to maintain free access to all Lawrence Kansas Recreation Centers. We also petition them to explore alternative funding sources to maintain and improve our recreation centers. Free access to our city's recreation facilities is important for so many reasons. Recreation cities are places for community members to exercise, gather and participate in activities that enhance their lives. They foster a sense of community. They encourage a healthy lifestyle. They support residents wellbeing and are accessible for all families and individuals alike. Lawrence prides itself on equity and inclusion, but implementing fees to access our local recreation centers would create barriers to their benefits, especially for lower income residents who rely on these services. Every resident, regardless of financial status, should have access to these vital services.

(02:49:13):

These fees are being proposed because the city has made substantial financial decisions in the last five years that have led to a budget deficit. During this time, residents have also seen a 40% increase in their property taxes and an 18% increase in their utility fees. The proposed fees for recreation centers would be an additional burden on a community that is already paying substantially for the city's increased spending. The medium household income in Lawrence, Kansas is \$63,000 and 17.6% of the population lives in poverty. Introducing fees could alienate nearly one fifth of the community. Families whose budgets are already stretched and individuals who view local recreation centers as their only option for affordable fitness and recreation. By implementing these fees, we would risk increasing health disparities. Instead of charging fees, the city could explore alternative funding sources to maintain and improve the rec centers and our petition list many options which Carol Comer will speak to. Next I and the other 1,923 people who have signed this petition urge the Lawrence City Commission officials to maintain free access to our local recreation centers so everyone can access their benefits without economic barriers. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 35 (02:51:01):

Carol Cumber 6 6 0 4 9. Good evening commissioners. The purpose of my petition tonight is to request the rejection of the proposed park and rec facility fees. It is not a matter of budget, but a matter of priorities and public trust. For decades, the community has invested in recreation centers with the understandings that they are shared public resources assessable to all regardless of income. Implementing fees would be a step backwards for Lawrence. Such a system would disproportionately affect the most vulnerable residents, including families, seniors, and young people who rely on these centers for the health and wellbeing. While we appreciate the city's considering lower fees than first proposed, we petitioned the city to maintain free access to our rec centers. A recent community survey showed that

more than 81% of the 2,632 respondents were opposed to these fees. When the cost of living is rising, publicly funded spaces should not become another financial aggravation.

(02:52:17):

Every other option must be exhausted before considering a policy that would make recreation centers less accessible. Instead of charging these fees, I urge the city to explore these alternative funding sources to maintain and improve the recreation centers options include partnerships with local businesses, community fundraising vets, events like Bikeathon, fun runs, fitness challenges, increasing fees for tournaments, charging spectator fees at tournaments, finding additional sponsorship, better advertising for existing revenue generating activities, increasing concession revenues, exploring grant opportunities that focus and enhance our community's health and self naming rights to SPL to philanthropists. As David Booth or Bill self recreation is not a luxury. It's a vital part of a healthy, equitable community. We already pay for these centers with our tax dollars. Adding a fee now would break a promise and deny access to low income families who knows free access to our rec centers may produce our next superstar athlete For KU basketball, football or volleyball, economic barriers should not be built. Uphold the community's value by keeping rec center free for all of our residents should be our goal. Thank you.

Speaker 36 (02:53:55):

Christina McKenna. 6 6 0 4 6. This is my own statement, not as a representative of another organization. I happen to be part of several of them in and around Lawrence, in fact across the nation because I care about the things that are going on and want to do something real to help democracy and the people it's there to serve. That's part of why we're here. The continuing conversations on parks and rec fees is giving Scott Jennings and his quote about the residents of DC not wanting the National Guard to be there in this farce of crime suppression. He says, I don't care what they think. I mean these are the same people who elected the mayor and city council that ran the city's public safety into the grounds first place. They don't know what's good for them. We are the same people who voted you into office. We are the same people who have decried the fees and what amounts to a majority alongside the advisory board that has also given multiple no votes on this topic.

(02:54:48):

So my question to you is do you care what the people think? You talk engagement, but do you actually care? Does it matter to you what we think the ones who continue to finance the things you voted in without proper engagement like the initial FOUS funding, the ones who try to get conversations going about what's included in the debt, other expenses and income using accurate numbers, the ones who are actually trying to do our job to help you to do your job. We are not here to be against you. We are here to be support and if you're not going to listen to us, that takes away all the support and community. This was promised to the city as a way to help the health of all these people who actually believe in it, which is why they were willing to have that initial upfront investment. It was supposed to be free to use because they care about their health, their children's health and all the future benefits that it can give. Do you care? It's about 80%. It's definitely the majority. Same numbers they were seeing in DC saying no. Are you going to listen to the people? That's what this is about right now. We definitely would support something like friends of the Library did. Look at Target, we put our money where we care. Thank you.

Speaker 10 (02:56:06):

Thanks

Speaker 37 (02:56:07):

Christie. Good evening. Tom Hornick 6 6 0 4 9. I just have one question for you guys. The parks and recs, lots of people use that thing and it's perfect just the way it is. You're having trouble funding that. My

question is how do you fund the bus? The bus goes around with nobody in the bus and it's free, so why can't you just leave the parks and recs that people use free. Thank you.

Speaker 7 ([02:56:46](#)):

Samuel Carter. 6 6 0 4 6. And I want to second the comments offered by Mike Courtney and the organizer of the petition about exploring other solutions and I also, I want to touch upon the idea of means testing, right? This idea that if you are below a certain income threshold, you can submit paperwork to have a reduced fee and I understand why it's proposed to kind of grease the wheels a little bit, but means testing just in principle has basically been a bad idea. It just for other programs that have means testing, it becomes an burden in of itself. It is just something that if you don't make enough money, you have to jump through more hoops and that's why a lot of food stamp funds don't get used because of means testing and stigma associated with means testing. So I do think I understand why it's being proposed, but I think in principle I agree with a lot of the other sentiment expressed tonight, which is that access to recreational opportunities is a right and it's something that's important.

([02:58:02](#)):

Everyone needs access to recreational opportunities and I would hope that other revenue sources are seriously considered. For instance, one revenue source that I imagine actually maybe less popular than rec fees would be to charge for parking at the rec center. I mean not everyone, 30% of Kansas residents do not drive, do not have a driver's license, but they still have to pay for the concrete, the land itself, that space that was used in general taxes and et cetera. So let's really put everything on the table if we're serious about this and I don't think it aligns up with our community values to start charging charging fees. I really think it's an all or nothing approach and I think everything needs to be on the table. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([02:59:03](#)):

Thank you Samuel.

Speaker 38 ([02:59:07](#)):

There were a couple people that spoke here about the responsibility that the people on the DAUs have for this and the responsibility that staff has for this. Parks and Recs was not to be charged. We spent a lot of money. I've been here 30 years, I remember this stuff. We spent a lot of money so that people wouldn't be charged and now since you have lazy city staff that can't figure out a budget without overrunning the dollars they're trying to get you guys to go back on the promises that you've made to the Citizens Parks and Rec wasn't, I mean that was sold to us as a community asset beneficial to the entire community and if you're going to try to charge for those services now and charge for that access, you're limiting a good portion of your community just by the dollars alone. While you have city administrators making excess of a hundred, 200,000 a year, you're going to have families making less than 20,000 a year paying parks and rec fees to make up for that. That's all I got.

Speaker 9 ([03:00:23](#)):

Hi, I'm Rod Cumber 6 6 0 4 9. We moved here about six years ago, so I wasn't privy to when this was built or anything, but I have done a little research. Bob Shum was the mayor at the time. He explained to me that the council said that there would be no fees. That was very important to him. He said, I think one of the things as Americans right now is we don't have faith in our government. They made a statement, wasn't you that made the statement, but it was a government of here that made the statement that there would not be fees if you go and raise fees. Now the faith in our government does fall another step. So it's very important that not just the financial but our faith in our government is looked at here too and our faith in what you do. Thank you.

Speaker 39 ([03:01:30](#)):

Good evening, Bob Shum 6 6 0 4 7. I've been previously introduced tonight and I once again want to tell you that I was the person who made the promise that there would be no fees when we contemplated the building and the planning of this and I still feel very strongly that that's the way it should be. There are other options that you have on the table that could change that and you're hearing from an awful lot of people here tonight that they really don't care for it. So I made that promise. I feel bad that my word might not be upheld and I made it in the name of the city too along with the rest of the commission, so please consider that. Thank you.

Speaker 40 ([03:02:29](#)):

Patrick Ross. 6 6 0 4 9. I just have a quick question on this issue. I know Parks and Rec director Luis Ruiz had previously stated that that's what everyone was promised was that we weren't supposed to have to pay for these fees, but that the promise was never codified in law. So Mayor DeVere, I know you were vice mayor back then, I would've liked to have gone before former Commissioner Bob Shum to have asked that. So I would just like to have the commission that was involved with this matter in the past, explain why that was never codified into law, why that decision was made and how if that's still an available option for us to codify that since that was the original promise. So thank you very much, Patrick.

Speaker 27 ([03:03:24](#)):

Hello David Baston and I'm definitely for no fees at the rec centers. Yeah, it just doesn't seem right. It was built for everybody and everybody should be able to go there with not having to pay any fees whatsoever. I grew up here. I mean that's one of the things that kept me out of trouble when I was young. I came from a poor family and that's like going to the boys club or things like that are some of the things that kept me out of trouble. So just having fees. I mean some parents can't afford to give their kids any money to do those type of things, either food on the table or that. So I think it's a bad idea and it's a good, it seems like we always have something that distracts from what we're focusing on here, which last year it was fire defunding the fire department and now it's recreation.

([03:04:35](#)):

It is always something that distracts people from what we're talking about. It's a revenue neutral rate. Again, I think earlier this year I submitted some things to you guys, some things where we could cut our budget here or there. I don't know if you looked at any of 'em. It doesn't seem like maybe you have, I don't know. It just seems like a lot of things are overlooked where we could save money so we wouldn't even be in the situation of even talking about cutting rec center fees or any of that. I don't know if anybody asked the question. I mean we go off the balancing act that's set up and even some of those numbers, when they originally brought back, I know for a fact a couple people voted for the money to go back into lower taxes and then when you guys came back with your reports, there was nobody selected that.

([03:05:46](#)):

So I find that some of the numbers, I don't know if that was a missed thing or not, but not a hundred percent accurate. And then if you're even go over there if you want, say a community member wanted to back all the money out of these other programs and put 'em all into that it, it's not really easy to do without knowing you have to go on the complete other side at the bottom and then transfer the money over there. So it's kind of deceiving. I mean if you want a real good thing with a balancing act, you need to make that easy to take the money out too. Thank you. Thanks Dave.

Speaker 41 ([03:06:43](#)):

Good evening. My name is Seamus Alden. I'm a member and I'm currently the president of Lawrence Professional Firefighters. While we strongly disagree with several policy recommendations for you tonight, particularly the proposal to shut down the fire engine at 19th and Iowa Engine number five, I'm not here to question your integrity or your commitment to this community. I've interacted with all of you enough to know better. Instead, I'm here here to talk about actions, not intentions, and I will challenge anyone who says this, budget prioritizes public safety because the actions proposed in this budget do not. The spending choices in this budget do not to borrow a couple idioms talk is cheap and the men always know the score. Yes, this budget is difficult, but let's be clear, it's not unique. Anyone who's been in government long enough has seen economic cycles like this before. What's unique is the response to shut down a firetruck and cutting public safety resources.

(03:07:43):

That's a departure from the past. Commissions who even in tough years affirm their commitment to public safety. You all seem to be on the verge to break that tradition. I brought with me tonight, every report published in the last decade or so from the city of Lawrence in the fire department or close to a thousand pages. These aren't anecdotal studies or reports. They're full of data on response times, population growth, building permits, risk profiles, traffic patterns, GIS plotting and resource deployment models. Every bit of it has been analyzed by a third party vetted. Frankly, these reports are of higher quality, are of higher quality and better in quality than some studies the city has spent tens of thousands of dollars on for other policy questions. There's enough research data and analysis in here to get a couple fire chiefs, some PhDs and doctoral thesis work and what did all these studies say? We're understaffed and the city is slowly becoming more dangerous year over year as the call volumes increase. Who has read these reports and responded to them? Our county commissioners the last decade as these reports have come out, they have added now as of last Wednesday, two ambulances and injected millions of dollars into the L-D-C-F-M budget. What has this commission done?

(03:09:13):

Nothing except maybe we may be shutting down a firetruck. It's unacceptable. It's unacceptable. Thank you. I'll leave this for the record.

Speaker 1 (03:09:26):

Thanks Shamus

Speaker 42 (03:09:39):

Sean Coffee 6 6 0 4 9 and I appreciate the words that shame just came out with public safety. I consider it. I've been here before, a backbone of our community and there's a great deal of passion here in this room tonight and it's wonderful to see it. But when it comes down to it, when you call 9 1 1 when things are bad, you expect your police hire an EMS to show up and cutting an engine company back to staffing levels that existed in 1985 is just not acceptable. We had about 60,000 people here in town at that point. It took you, maybe you had 17 minutes to get out of your house in 1985. Now they're saying you have three minutes or less, but yet we're reducing staffing levels back to 1985. Nobody in the city has been cut back to 1985 levels. City manager's office still has a city manager, two assistants when it used to be just one assistant manager, none of the other departments.

(03:10:43):

I'd also ask where are the reductions in the general fund departments. I may have missed it, but I haven't seen anything as we look at all this. Just remember, there'll be a reduction from IO one to IO two 75% of the insurance companies in the US U-S-L-I-S-O, so people's homeowners insurance is going to increase. We're not following NFPA consensus standards. We're not meeting that four minute travel time. We're exceeding that. The reliability of having a truck in the station when the alarm comes in is going down, down, and so when you need it, it won't be there.

(03:11:23):

I appreciate the funding the county has done. It appears that maybe it's 1.2, 1.3 million they've come forward with this year. Tying that back in with what they gave us in 2022 of 2.1 million, it's about what? 3.3 million, \$3.4 million the county has come up with, but yet we're reducing fire suppression and that's what I'm talking about. Fire trucks, fire suppression coming to my home. So it's important. So then I'd just kind of like to finish up and talk about as this goes forward and we reduce, I want to talk about my disappointment and I'm disappointed for our citizens or our community. I see this passion out there for the rec center fees, the loop, but we should have this passion for our public safety. These people out there are going to be there in the worst day of your life. They're going to come there and now we're reducing that staffing level and there may not be a firetruck to come to your house. Just appointed in the city manager's office. We talked about this last year when we tried to reduce to three person staffing on the trucks and the fire department came out and said, that's not the best way to provide service to our community. So we come around this year and we say, just find the money and it's really about the money time. Thank you very much. Thank you Sean.

Speaker 43 (03:13:00):

Melinda. Ball 6 6 0 4 6. I do have a passion for emergency services. I think they are deeply essential. When I was in seventh grade, my house burnt down, so I've been through it here in Lawrence. We live between two rivers. We already have flooding issues. We'll continue to have flooding issues. Emergency response will be our lifeline. So we need them. We need those services in adequate capacity. Wildfires are also a threat, so equally important to consider. I didn't have anything really laid out to say other than don't reduce from 1985 levels. That's just insanity to me and I certainly feel less safe. There's the issue as it was raised already around insurance. That's a reality. Insurance companies are already leaving the state, so we reduce our coverage for emergency services, probably have more leaving our state and we'll just end up somewhat like California where someone gets a huge new premium they have to pay and then they can't afford it and then they're out of their house. So please keep the emergency services staff. Thank you.

Speaker 10 (03:14:45):

Thanks, Belinda.

Speaker 44 (03:15:00):

Good evening Commission. Jack Dolan. 6 6 4 6 6 0 4 6. I am our current vice president of Local 1596 L-D-C-F-M employee and member of this community. I want to start by bringing up something that happened around this time last year when we were talking about cutting staffing. So nine killed, 30 hospitalized after Fall River Assisted Living Facility Fire. This is a headline that was released early July of this year after a fire tore through an assisted living facility outside of Boston. This headline could have easily been replaced or easily replaced Fall River with Lawrence as of August 20th last year when we had that Brandon Woods fire. Luckily Engine five was in service that day. And do you know who was on the top level of that assisted living facility evacuating folks? It was engine five.

(03:15:59):

So commissioners this South end the line is the line between properly responding to calls and showing up too late line between the family member walking out of the hospital after a serious medical event with neurologic deficit for the rest of their lives. Or the line in late August last year where the story could have read multiple dead and dozens injured in senior living facility. Instead, it read 85 residents displaced, not one resident injured. This proposal is about more than money. The proposal is about the safety of the residents of Lawrence. It's about the residents knowing that when they call 9 1 1 that they have a proper response to their emergency coming according to National Fire Protection Agency. Standard 1710. A high

hazard fire like an assisted living fire, requires 43 people to safely mitigate. Right now our current minimum staffing is 39. Four of those are in the county.

(03:16:54):

Two of those are battalion chiefs. That takes us down to 33. Let's say we have one medic unit on a call, which is not an unreasonable scenario. We're at 31. Folks recommended as 43. With this proposal, you take 31 down to 28. It's a long ways from 43. This is not enough personnel to try and evacuate. 85 residents, let alone attack a fire, create a water supply, pump a truck, check for extension, perform overhaul, set up a medical group for potential victims, and allow for a backup crew to take place of the initial crew when their bottles are depleted. I urge the commission to think on this. Is this the risk that we're willing to take as a community? Is this the right place to be cutting from and are you willing to be the ones responsible for a gamble that results in a headline such as nine killed and 30 hospitalized? Thank you for your work on this budget. Thank you.

Speaker 18 (03:18:04):

Hello, HIN Steel 6 6 0 4 6. I'm going to change the pace of some of what I've been sharing tonight. I have an idea to propose regarding the recreational facilities that I think people could get behind. But first I want to address any assumptions people might have formed about us as we've come up here and spoken tonight. I'm not here to disrupt, I'm not here to undermine the comments that the other people are bringing to this forum. It's actually the complete opposite. I'm here as a 22-year-old citizen of this community and while I'm not here to make a joke of this important process, I am here to call attention to some of the absurdity and some of the situations we find ourselves in. And so I've talked with people in this community, there's groups out here who are working to solve problems for this community, who are being proactive about finding resources for under-resourced people who are trying to create a safer place for people.

(03:19:28):

And they're all doing this proactively. They're not being paid and they don't have these seats where they're capable of making decisions for the city, but they're out there. And I know that each of you when you ran for these seats, had a vision of what you wanted to do for the city. And what's unfortunate is how the city has wielded its budget over the last several years for us to end up in a position like this. And so while we're here, part of the reason is to draw attention to these issues. And part of the reason is to, I guess make this whole experience a little more enjoyable for people. There's a lot of people here who might prefer to spend their evenings somewhere else, but they're here because they care. And part of our presence here is to make it a little more interesting, a little more enjoyable while drawing attention to some of these issues.

(03:20:25):

And so we're going to propose an idea and it's a starting place and you can think about it as maybe a reflection of where we are right now and the idea that I have for the recreational facility that maybe everybody can get behind if we think this is something we can support. And if you think it might draw attention to something you care about, what if we turn the recreational facilities into a energy generation facility where everybody lines up and they push a giant wheel around in a circle and that generates enough electricity to offset some of the costs

Speaker 43 (03:21:06):

Time?

Speaker 18 (03:21:07):

And if people think they can support that idea, maybe a round of applause.

Speaker 1 ([03:21:12](#)):

Okay, thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:21:15](#)):

Next.

Speaker 45 ([03:21:26](#)):

Hi, my name's Bob Loner. I live out West Lawrence. Oh four nine, I guess you say zip code. Hey, I came here tonight just cause I haven't been here for many years to find out just what was going on with the budget, why my property tax payment now is more than my house payment, my first house at 13% interest, but I recognize the difficulty, so I just want to thank each one and for you for taking the time and volunteering to put yourself through this and have to go through the battle of making these tough decisions. I know they're tough and something has to give and something has to go and so forth. So I appreciate you sitting here taking all that and having the rest of those issues. I incur with the rec center issue and I can understand the importance of public service having served in the military almost one way or another for 40 years, how important those types of things are. So I appreciate your efforts. So I want somebody to say that to you tonight. I know you've taken a lot of heat, so good luck and hope the decisions come out that work the best across the board. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:22:29](#)):

Anybody else in the room?

Speaker 46 ([03:22:34](#)):

Good evening. Steven Patton. 6 6 0 4 9. I've been a resident of Lawrence for about 33 years, a homeowner for about 30 of those 33. My wife has been a long time or lifetime resident, so we've seen a lot over the years in this community and the budget challenges that we're facing can definitely appreciate having my line of work been faced with similar tough decisions, tough outcomes, but the budget's, the budget, I'm standing here and opposing the resolution to increase the milo above the revenue neutral. As the gentleman that was just up here at said, we've watched our property taxes just continue to grow and grow and grow. And from my own personal situation I've seen every year it seems I get the notice in the mail adjustment to what goes to the bank and it's all attributed to property taxes and insurance to the point where in my own personal situation, my property taxes and insurance are now more than my principal and interest, and that's the first time that's happened since I've been a homeowner in this city. That's the problem. And if, I'm sure there's thousands of other people, tens of thousands that are experiencing the same thing and that I think requires a really tough look at the budget. I think all the objections people have raised about the recreation fees as well as the services are all valid points and are probably what I would consider top priorities for the community. So it would require digging deeper in terms of where do we go inside the budget to make it all work.

([03:24:34](#)):

I know that in the plan it said \$25 for an average of a \$270,000 house. And it's precisely that type of rationalization that I believe we get ourselves talked into that gets us to the point where people are experiencing the burdensome taxes. And commissioner sellers, you had said in one of the other discussions we had prior that homeownership in this should be available and it shouldn't be burdensome. And I think we're getting to a point where home ownership is starting to become burdensome for a lot of people and a lot of it's become because of the taxes and how we're spending the money. So you have to be very, very requiring of how that budget gets put together. So I appreciate your time, appreciate your all's time and figuring this out, recognition that it's far from an easy task. Thank you. Thanks Dean.

Speaker 1 ([03:25:36](#)):

I'll see if anybody's online. Sherry,

Speaker 47 ([03:25:40](#)):

There are a few of them.

Speaker 4 ([03:25:56](#)):

Julie Jones.

Speaker 48 ([03:25:58](#)):

Julie Jones. 6 6 0 4 7. I'm asking Commissioner Sellers to turn on her camera. It's been off this entire meeting tonight. If she could please. I had a thought about for the parks and recs fees or the shortage in the budget. It would be nice in this town if people went the speed limit. I think we could make a lot of money just setting up speed traps and catching people who clearly do not go the speed limit in this town. So that would be my suggestion for increasing revenue in the town by charging for the parks and recs, charging for rock chalk, you're now competing with the gyms, so what are you going to do if you suddenly got a major drop instead of a major positive and thinking and assuming that people are going to pay those additional fees to go to your center versus joining one of the other gyms here locally?

([03:27:10](#)):

I haven't heard that discussion of pros and cons on that. And then my final comment is if Mr. Sch was the mayor when the promise was made for parks and recs to be free forever, why was that not written in to the documentation? Since he was the mayor? He should have known that. And so that makes me feel like it was like a snake oil sale that it was assumed by everybody it would be free because that's what he said, but it was never written in paper and that's how we got to this point of being able for the city to say to us, oh, we can charge you for that because it wasn't written down anywhere. And finally irritating people as a retired special education behavior disorder teacher. The more people you irritate, the more you're going to hear people coming up and being belligerent offensive because they're angry and they're very angry because they're not being heard. And the more we continue to do this in this city, the more of those people you're going to hear and see at your podium. Promise you. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:28:35](#)):

Thanks Julie. Julie,

Speaker 47 ([03:28:44](#)):

Chris Flowers.

Speaker 49 ([03:28:53](#)):

Hi, this is Chris Flowers Hours. I just kind of tuned in since I would've been watching on YouTube, but y'all removed that so this is much less efficient. I think one of my thoughts was do we have, I don't know how it works, but I've heard of volunteer firefighters. Do we have any of those? If we are going to be cutting staff or fire help, I guess do we have any kind of program to find volunteers in case there is a huge fire where we don't have enough firefighters anymore, so I just want to throw that out there. Not that I support cutting fire staffing.

([03:29:45](#)):

Also, here's something when it comes to public safety, how come we can, we still have the funds for police saturations and DUI checkpoints, which they just did one a week or two ago. So if we're going to

actually go for public safety, how about we quit funding that bullshit and start funding fire trucks? I've been hit by a drunk driver and I've had my apartment burned down and I will say I'd rather my money go to the fire trucks than the police catching drunk drivers. Also, when it comes to money, I want to bring up the parking permits that you all want to bring in the next year or two where you're talking about this new public or this permit parking. Are you going to be charging for that? Because I think if you're going to be charging fees for something, I think turning public parking spaces into private ones, I don't think we should be doing that for free. I think if someone wants a public parking space for their own private use, they should pay for it now. And if you do pay for it, how much can we expect from this program? That's what you need to be asking is can we be charging for these new parking permits and if so, how much less can we charge for recreation center fees? Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:31:20](#)):

Thanks Chris.

Speaker 4 ([03:31:22](#)):

We have one more mayor. Okay. Steven Watts.

Speaker 50 ([03:31:32](#)):

Hi. First I'd like to comment on

Speaker 2 ([03:31:41](#)):

You. Lose him.

Speaker 4 ([03:31:42](#)):

We did. Let me get him back. Sorry about that. Mr. Watts. Go right ahead.

Speaker 50 ([03:32:02](#)):

Okay, the media expert can reset the clock please. I'd like to first comment that the fire department staff need to work with the police department to keep the cars from blocking the fire hydrants. The fire hydrant at Sunnyside, Louisiana is typically blocked every day as is the fire hydrant at the corner of 17th and Ohio Street every day cars in front of the fire hydrant. How can they put out a fire if the water isn't available? We have a surplus of money in this town in changing gears a little bit because we don't have account travel policy and we have no limitations about how city commissioners use the money to go wherever the hell they want to pimp themselves to get another job somewhere else. In addition, the city pays every month to buy coffee, not store bought coffee, but stuff from UX stores. Any department can stock their own area with coffee and I guess it's only in Lawrence, Kansas.

([03:33:02](#)):

Having worked for the federal government and the state government, I can assure you that everybody buys their own gosh darn coffee, but we have enough money that we can do it for everybody. I know that that's rinky dink. It doesn't amount to much, but that is the metaphor for how we look at things in employment with the city. Now, with respect to charging at the parks, it's critical to note that it is not free. There is nothing free about our parks as they hold now. They're supported by tens of millions of tax dollars over the last many, many years. However, that being said, hearing all of this woowoo, this effort seems to be well. The effort to not charge seems to be what outside agitators and insurrectionists are trying to do to stop progress. Most certainly, our town needs to charge any and all to go into the parks and to use the recreation centers and we can have the by Budweiser billboards all over the place please.

([03:34:08](#)):

Now, by charging admission, the town executive team and the Chamber of Commerce are quietly able to limit the type and quality of people who use the parks and we also must support this quiet effort to restrict park access to only those who know how to appreciate a park. It is an effort to keep the riffraff away. It is not about money. Ray for Lewis Ruiz and Porter O'Neill and Mark Hecker, the guy who decided to scorch the landscape in herbicide around Prairie Park Nature Center, he got a nice pay raise for his effort too. And also Lindsey Hart, the Parks, recreation and Culture department of leaders who each recognize parks are only for the well-heeled and at least two of them don't even reside in Lawrence. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:35:01](#)):

Thanks Steve.

Speaker 4 ([03:35:03](#)):

We do have one more. I'm going to move over. Mayor, they haven't provided their names, so

Speaker 10 ([03:35:08](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 4 ([03:35:12](#)):

Hopefully we can get them on. I don't think you want to

Speaker 51 ([03:35:45](#)):

Go on.

Speaker 4 ([03:35:57](#)):

You can go ahead and provide your comments. I'm not sure. Mayor, that

Speaker 1 ([03:36:07](#)):

Guy Fox on there

Speaker 47 ([03:36:08](#)):

Person.

Speaker 52 ([03:36:19](#)):

My apologies having a difficult time here with the technology. My name is Bob Isaacs and I'm at 6 6 0 4 9.

([03:36:29](#)):

It seems I was looking at some of the line items and the budget numbers that I was able to look at and one of the things that came to my mind, I was looking at the transit operations budget as 11,783,000 and that's for a bus service that I think one of the previous commenters made the observation that the buses are mostly empty. The next is the homeless solution at \$4,723,000, very challenging. Then we have equity inclusion budget, \$318,000. Then we have sustainability at \$218,000. It seems to me that if the numbers that I have heard previous commenters make that the budget shortfall for parks and recreations, it's in the neighborhood of \$500,000. The elimination of equity and inclusion and sustainability would give you that number. You have to weigh the priorities of what you're spending on all these other items in terms of fire protection and other emergency services.

([03:37:49](#)):

What are the real critical needs? The other thing that is really frightening is to hear how housing prices are starting to collapse in a number of areas. So what happens when property values go down? Will the tax rates, the tax levies that you're proposing to increase, will they still hold when homeowners property values decline? These are all very, very challenging things for you to consider. I just want to put that out just so that it can be on the radar screen as you try to consider this. Thank you very much for your service. I appreciate what you do. It's a thankless task at times and it's very challenging. Road ahead for all of us. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([03:38:37](#)):

Thanks Bob. Anything else?

Speaker 4 ([03:38:49](#)):

That's all the comments.

Speaker 1 ([03:38:50](#)):

Okay. So the first part of this two-pronged approach this evening is was us discussing our, discussing our revenue neutral position or the lack thereof and then discussion further down on the budget. So we've conducted the public hearing relative to the exceedance of the revenue neutral status for the city and commissioners. I wanted to have some opportunities to discuss the feedback we received on this specific part of the budget and maybe open it up to fellow commissioners to come up with any responses to the feedback.

Speaker 2 ([03:39:38](#)):

And to be clear, the resolution tonight is to exceed the 31 mills, not to set the final mill rate. That's right.

Speaker 1 ([03:39:47](#)):

Just right exceeding revenue neutral status.

Speaker 2 ([03:39:55](#)):

Well, I mean I guess I'll say I know as we heard tonight, and we'll have some discussion when we talk about the budget, it's very challenging budget, which would be even more challenging if we didn't exceed the revenue neutral rate and whether or not we end up raising the mill levy even to get to that 6.6 million deficit that's without, I mean that is exceeding the revenue neutral rate up. So whether or not we raise the mill levy I think is still a point of discussion. But for me, even to address some of these issues we concerned listen to tonight, but I mean I feel we, given where we're at with this budget and the comments we've heard about prioritizing some of the needs, I'm going to support exceeding the revenue neutral rate,

Speaker 1 ([03:40:57](#)):

Right? As you pointed out, just by not reducing our mill levy, we are going to exceed revenue neutral based on the property, increase the valuation increases, so at this point we just have to discuss and vote individually on our agreement to exceed revenue neutral.

Speaker 2 ([03:41:17](#)):

We'll talk about the mill levy later.

Speaker 13 ([03:41:22](#)):

Yeah, I would agree because if we were not to, we would be talking about even more cuts that we would have to make and we've already asked staff and kind of had them searched to make pretty deep cuts already, but yeah, I would second what Vice Mayor Finkel. I said,

Speaker 1 ([03:41:50](#)):

Okay, commissioner sellers, you want to add anything on this specific question?

Speaker 6 ([03:41:55](#)):

Not on a revenue neutral, no. I'll wait to, okay. Take my comments for the budget.

Speaker 1 ([03:42:00](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 12 ([03:42:02](#)):

Yeah, if we wanted to keep revenue neutral, we'd have to cut about another \$3 million. I believe my math was right, so I'm okay with voting yes on this. However, that does not reflect how I feel about the mill levy as well as the budget and that will come next or later.

Speaker 1 ([03:42:26](#)):

Okay. Same here. I think this is a matter of form and since the valuations have increased, we have to make this decision and I think at this point we'll have to vote individually on whether or not we're interested in moving forward. So I didn't know if you wanted to speak to this anymore or we can discuss the specifics on item four, but at this point we do need to do this via roll call vote and I would entertain that motion

Speaker 2 ([03:42:55](#)):

So I move to adopt resolution number 7 6 2 7 to levy a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral rate for the 2026 budget.

Speaker 1 ([03:43:04](#)):

Second. Okay, that's a motion by Finkel Dye and a second by Littlejohn. Commissioner Larson, how do you vote?

Speaker 2 ([03:43:13](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 1 ([03:43:13](#)):

Commissioner Keldi.

Speaker 2 ([03:43:15](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 1 ([03:43:16](#)):

Deborah votes? Yes. Littlejohn Yes. Sellers.

Speaker 53 ([03:43:22](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 1 ([03:43:24](#)):

Got five individual yeses a's this motion passes. Five zero. Okay, so the next item is to conduct a public hearing specific to the fiscal year budget 2026. Again, we are open to public comments and so I'm going to open the public hearing as it relates to our 2026 budget.

Speaker 54 ([03:43:56](#)):

Good evening, Sherry, I have an image yes for Holly Krebs,

Speaker 4 ([03:44:04](#)):

Can you get those photos pulled up that I sent or forwarded to you?

Speaker 12 ([03:44:09](#)):

Holly, could you lower that podium? I cannot see you folks.

Speaker 10 ([03:44:19](#)):

Thanks.

Speaker 54 ([03:44:25](#)):

Holly Krebs 6 6 0 4 6 commissioners. Thank you very much for meeting with me last week to discuss the city's debt. I'm here tonight to share some of the coalition for collaborative governance's research about the city's debt that I've previously shared with you. The chart before you shows the city's debt plan for paying the current and proposed general obligation debt through 2035. It's worth noting that our coalition has asked for this information since March and this 10 year forecast was just released last Friday afternoon. This chart shows that if the city approves all debt proposed in the CIP before you, the city's debt service payments for their general obligation bonds in 2030 will be \$10 million more than this year's payments. This is an 84% increase in five years. The city is able to afford these larger payments through 2032 by using funds from the bond and interest fund balance.

([03:45:18](#)):

This chart then shows that in 2033 through 2035, the city anticipates paying for their debt obligations by breaking with their fund balance policy and dipping into reserves that I believe are intended for emergency purposes. Additionally, this chart doesn't show how the city plans to pay for its currently proposed debt beyond 2035. This means that in the 2030s, the city's debt obligations may surpass our community's debt capacity. That is the amount our residents can afford to pay for debt while also maintaining our city's critical services. If property tax collection is less than anticipated or if infrastructure needs are greater than anticipated, our community's finances and services may be under even greater strain during this decade. This chart's projections also assume that the city will only take out approximately \$6 million in annual geo debt from 2031 to 2035 for the street maintenance program and will do no other infrastructure repair and maintenance work that requires geo debt during these five years.

([03:46:21](#)):

I believe this may be an unrealistic expectation for at least five years and possibly longer for a community of a hundred thousand residents. Our coalition is concerned that the city's proposed debt may significantly limit the city's future capacity to financially manage planned or unplanned infrastructure needs during the 2030s. Our coalition has suggested that the city receive a long-term financial plan from your municipal advisor, which is commonly provided as part of the bond issuance process. This long-term financial plan

determines the sustainability of debt by identifying the city's debt capacity based on a city's mill levy and expected utility rates. That is it identifies how much debt the city can afford based on expected revenue. This plan also identifies the expected principle and interest payments for all proposed debt issuances. This combination of information identifies how much additional debt capacity the city has and would have in future years through the total period of the proposed debt issuances. This allows cities to plan their cips based on their long-term debt capacity rather than planning their long-term debt primarily on identified. Thank you. Thanks,

Speaker 9 ([03:47:32](#)):

Sally.

Speaker 43 ([03:47:37](#)):

Hello, Melinda Ball. I have an image to go with my comment, Kurt. Thanks,

([03:47:54](#)):

Melinda. Ball 6 6 0 4 6. About half of the city's debt is from revenue bonds. The city's current total revenue debt is 248 million and based on the proposed CIP, we anticipate that the city's revenue bond debt will be about 300 million by 2030. This debt is paid for with our utility fees and the city has been increasing our utility fees to pay for this type of debt. They have increased these fees 18% in the last two years and are expected to increase them close to 10% again next year. While the proposed mill levy increase would add a \$25 a year to an average home's property tax, the city's proposed utility fee increases will likely add about \$150 to a year, a year to an average household fees. In addition to a similarly sized increases that have occurred each of the last two years, our coalition has repeatedly asked about the city's long-term plan for paying their revenue bond debt.

([03:48:49](#)):

While the city has answered many of our other questions, they have not provided details about how the city is planning to pay for this half of their debt. We believe the community should know more about the city's long-term plan to pay this debt before the city commission approves their final budget on September 16. Would you please display my second image? Additionally, our coalition's research into the city budget has revealed documentation inconsistencies that make it impossible for the public to understand the actual numbers for the city's debt issuances, debt payments and capital expenses. Budgeting information shows what is expected to be collected and spent in a year, which is called cashflow, but we have discovered that the city's budgeting documents report some debt and capital expense numbers as assets and liabilities rather than cashflow. This means the community and the commission are not able to compare how much the city budgeted for those categories versus how much they spent.

([03:49:44](#)):

For example, if you compare the 2024 adopted budget with the 2024 actuals, you see a 95 million discrepancy in capital expenses. The city budgeted 125 million but only reported 30 million in actual expenses. It's unclear how much of this discrepancy is because the city's reported some of the expenses as assets and how much of it is due to budgeted money that wasn't spent because projects weren't complete. Another example of these discrepancies is how much the city pays for debt annually in 20 24, 80 8 million was budgeted for their debt services payments, but the 24 actuals say that the city spent 27 million less than that. We believe that budgeting documents should report cashflow for all categories so everyone can understand how the city's money was budgeted and used. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 5 ([03:50:34](#)):

You, Melinda.

Speaker 36 (03:50:37):

I have images for comments for Christina McKenna. The coalition has also found it challenging to understand how much new debt the city is authorizing each year in the city's budget. Debt revenue is presented collectively with other sources of revenue in a category called miscellaneous, so it's not clear how much of this revenue is from debt. We have been using the city's CIP documentation determine how much new debt is being proposed each year, which provides line items showing how much bond revenue the city anticipates. The problem is the finance department's recent q and a answers say this number refers to expected cashflow out. Even though the line item itself states that it's incoming revenue, this means we haven't been able to find in the city's financial documentation an accurate showing of how much new debt the city's proposing to take out in 26. We believe they're anticipating spending \$126 million in debt revenue, but it's not clear if that's new or reissued debt.

(03:51:33):

We do know the city reissues one year temp notes for some of their debt, but the finance department has also not answered our questions about how they're tracking reissued debt. We suspect the city records the original temp note revenue one year, then the next year they pay off any amount they didn't use and again, take out that amount of money the following year. If so, this means the city's practice reissuing one year temp notes may be confusingly inflating the city's budgets in multiple ways. Would you put the second image please? Budgets normally show cashflow, but for next year's proposed budget, the city's no longer showing cashflow for capital expenses and instead now only shows \$40 million a mere quarter of the anticipated CIP expenses of \$160 million for 26. However, the city's still including all the debt revenue they hope to receive for that same year now because they're not showing all expected capital expenses that'll be paid for with that debt revenue, this leads to a budget that appears to have a \$79 million surplus, which we believe to be inaccurate.

(03:52:28):

The inconsistency in the data presented between proposed budget and oddity years makes it difficult for the commission and the community to accurately know how much new debt, reissued debt and capital expenses the city's taking on each year. This information is the only way to reconcile if it's at all sustainable. We do appreciate the commissioners and finance departments continue attention to these issues along with their willingness to engage with our coalition and hope that they'll continue to work to improve the clarity of financial information available to us all as well as helping us to understand if we are correct, if there is a way to adjust things to make it sustainable. Thank you.

Speaker 22 (03:53:07):

Hello, Griffin King again trying to get set up here. Make sure we can see these slides on the thank you to the Filmographer here. Hello, my name is Griffin King and I'm an intern with the Enron Corporation. I'm here today to deliver an important message to the city of Lawrence in relation to this agenda item E four. There is no doubt we are living in a historic political moment across this nation. A pandemic of injustice haunts a severely marginalized group. Perfectly good people have to live every day in fear of mistreatment commissioners. There's no doubt you're thinking about the same group as I am. Of course referring to America's economic. 1%. Two instances stand out as recent demonstrations of this hatred. Earlier this year our CEO Connor Gatos was attacked in New York City by a disgruntled former employee wielding a pie. No doubt we all remember a similar incident involving former United Healthcare CEO, Brian Thompson.

(03:54:06):

This behavior towards our economic elite isn't just wrong, it's mean. Mr. Mayor, I understand you own a business yourself. I can only imagine the anxiety you must experience waking up every day knowing you might be next to be judged for your financial identity and Ron is here to keep you safe. But we're going to have to make some changes. Mr. Mayor. In five years, the tallest building in the world is located right

here in Lawrence, Kansas. But how does this happen? What I hold in my hands now is the result of thousands of hours of AI driven research directed at one goal creating the perfect city. Today I am proud to introduce to Lawrence, Kansas the power bill, a first of its kind piece of legislation which will transform this city into a sanctuary city for America's economic 1%. Through the institution of a wealth requirement for all citizens, we will stimulate local growth by removing insignificant contributors to the local economy. 30 blocks of historic Lawrence Homes will be rezoned to make way for a beacon of economic prosperity. The new Enron world headquarters. In conjunction with this, Enron will relocate its board of directors to the city, bringing with them nearly \$1 trillion in combined net worth. By relocating these risk populations away from the city, we anticipate a nearly 98% decrease in crime. Mr. Mayor, you can feel safe again. This is it. This is safety. This is the future. This is what Enron's all about, bringing power to the people. Power right into your hands.

(03:55:27):

Standing here today, I'm reminded of other times in history in which people will be remembered for doing the right thing. Rosa Parks refusing to give up her spot on the bus. Nelson Mandela returning from prison to lead South Africa against the apartheid or maybe Iron Man wielding the infinity gauntlet in the face of Thanos, the greatest danger the universe had ever known. Mr. Mayor City commissioners. Today I ask you to stand up to a proverbial Thanos by passing this bill and guaranteeing forever the safety of the 1% in Lawrence, Kansas. Thank you. Are there any questions? Thanks. Was that okay? Thank you. I'm going to grab a copy of this bill to bring up here for the record real quick. Thank you. I've got the, I am sorry everybody. I'm sorry everybody. That's my bad. It's behind the barricade or else I get it, but you guys have Thank you. If you hand that to me, I can put it over here. Sorry. Somebody left a pile of M on the flyers on the floor over there. Sorry everybody. Thank you.

Speaker 10 (03:56:47):

Yeah,

Speaker 18 (03:56:57):

Yeah, she 6 6 0 4 6. I want to start off by apologizing for what just happened. I think that was I pretty unfortunate, but I want to acknowledge what just happened. What you guys just saw when I first heard Enron was back. I didn't believe it. It was too good to be true and some of you are going to be in that same state of disbelief, but what you just witnessed was a courageous act from one of the top most brilliant people I know, top 50 to 500 people that I know.

(03:57:43):

The point is that Enron is here because we spoke to the people in these neighborhoods and we asked them what matters to you and then we listened. And when the people speak, Enron shows up like a genie from a lamp. The brass tack of this plan. We're going to bring over 30,000 jobs in the next five years. We're going to prepare our children for careers in a fast-paced future, we're going to generate 10 billion in taxable revenue and become a global magnet for talent and innovation alongside ku. Here's some statistics for you guys. 81% of residents when asked said that they would prefer Enron nuclear energy to power their home. 76% of men in this country face a loneliness epidemic. 91% of CEOs are men. I think you guys are seeing the connection. These things, they aren't a coincidence and Enron's going to fix this problem.

(03:58:48):

The story of Enron is one of redemption and the power bill is more than a document. It's a chance to unify behind a common corporate cause. But as a citizen, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that we're all here in support of a country that we love, in support of a community that we believe in. And so I want to invite every single person in this room, including each of the commissioners, to join me in an act of

solidarity and I'll take the remaining 30 seconds of my speech to join in a group hug with everyone in this room.

Speaker 22 ([03:59:31](#)):

Thank you Chen. Please guys, come on up. You don't

Speaker 4 ([03:59:59](#)):

Time.

Speaker 18 ([04:00:02](#)):

Thank you

Speaker 16 ([04:00:10](#)):

Eric. Hide. 6, 6 0 4 6. The budget. Let's get back to the budget

([04:00:19](#)):

For 2026. Okay, I just want to say real quick that when I ran for city commission this year, I was invited to Lawrence Chamber of Commerce to talk there. One of their questions was what do you think about the budget? And I said, I don't care about the budget. All I care about is God, my wife, my son, and everybody else comes next. That's the truth. I really don't care about the budget. Alright? But then there's another thing. There's another way of looking at it. Serving God, your neighbors and yourself all in that sort of trinity. You serve God, your neighbors and yourself. Jesus in the King James Bible talked about the two greatest commandments are love God with all your heart, mind, and soul and love your neighbor as thyself, which implies also loving yourself. So Jesus also talked in the Bible about, well, Jesus, you could say or did he also talk about that was irrelevant to this budget?

([04:01:36](#)):

Oh, money. Let's say there's some stuff in the Bible about money. So no man can serve two masters because he will end up loving one and hitting the other. One of them is God and the other one is mammon, which is money. So if you want to solve the budget for the 2026 public hearing consideration, which you should do anyway, you need to consider more about morality. Is this the right thing to do? I got all these people chiming in my ear. I got a devil over here and an angel over here. Is this the right thing to do? Am I going to just go along with somebody else on the commission? No, I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to listen to the angel over here and not the devil on this side. Anyway, that's all I wanted to say. Oh, the last thing I want to say, sorry, is that if anybody does not profess their belief in Jesus Christ, that means you're a false prophet. You're a false person. You should be gone in this city. We need to believe in God. I pledge allegiance to the flag to the United States of America. I forgot I'm losing it. And to the republic for which thank you, which stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Amen.

Speaker 1 ([04:03:04](#)):

It's Eric

Speaker 55 ([04:03:10](#)):

John M 6 6 0 4 9. The debt analysis provided by the Coalition for Collaborative Governance that you just heard about is reported in the August 31st. Lawrence Times Community Voices by Holly Krabs. I think everybody should know that so they can look it up. Those were a lot of numbers according to those numbers we're on our way to debt payments paid by property taxes ultimately of tens of millions of

dollars, which is looking forward 80% more than this year's debt payment. So if you think that this year's property taxes are bad, just wait a couple of years. That's millions of dollars in debt payments not for social services, not for city improvements, not for the benefit of the community, but for debt payment, property taxes will have to rise substantially to cover the debt payments. That's a lot of taxes and eventually retired folks and renters on a fixed or low income budget will be strapped.

(04:04:21):

As was stated, no city plan to reduce this debt burden has been published. Personally, I think the city needs to be much more aggressive in paying down that targeted debt burden. I know you all tried this year, but we can't march year by year when it's growing at the rate that it's growing in the age of free bus rides, free parks and rec promises were made when the city received substantial money from federal and state grants that we don't get anymore. So we have to reevaluate the services that are provided by the city and rightsize them and educate citizens on the cost of some of the things that are provided. Federal grants also supported electric vehicles for which we've been buying quite a few, especially electric buses, which are very heavy compared to gas powered buses and do a lot of damage to our roads, which then we have to fix. And road maintenance is expensive as well. Maybe we ought to slow down road maintenance. We can use some of that money to fund fire and police.

(04:05:31):

We've got a lot of little things going on that we could cut back. Some of 'em have been mentioned tonight. One that comes to my mind is the fuss camera system. We paid a lot of money for that, but the chief of police in April, this April said, crime in Lawrence is very manageable. It's mostly down. I don't know if we need a public camera system to fight crime that is mostly down. We need to bend the curve on the debt. We need to target our budgets for the multiple years ahead where the debt is growing. George Washington said to contract new debt is not the way to pay down old ones. Thank you, John.

Speaker 51 (04:06:17):

Good evening. I'm Michael Alman. I'm the president of the Brook Creek Neighborhood Association. Communications is the key component of all organizations. It coordinates the efforts of individuals toward unified goals. Without it, it's just chatter. As organizations go, neighborhoods are unique in that they're not purposeful organizations at all. They're simply residents in proximity to each other by virtue of mortgages and rental contracts. As such, neighborhoods have no inherent mission or goals except by choice. So when neighbors choose to organize, it's an uphill struggle. And while the four CDBG neighborhoods are organized around values, it's good communications that makes each organization possible. And good communications is what the longstanding consistent annual \$5,000 makes each CDBG funding has enabled. That money goes overwhelmingly to communications as print newsletters, weekly or biweekly e-newsletters. Publicity for City of Lawrence events, a coordinator to operate our discussion forums, to prepare meeting agendas, to facilitate officer communications and to apprise residents of events. When considering how the commission wants strong neighborhoods, I find it hard to believe that you would weaken us by defunding our communications. It's the lifeblood of every organization. Please reinstate the annual \$20,000 for the four CDBG neighborhood associations. It's 401000th of a percent of your overall budget. That's all. Thank you. Thank you

Speaker 5 (04:08:27):

Michael.

Speaker 53 (04:08:32):

Hi, Phil Collison 6 6 0 4 4. Tonight I'm representing the Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods. I am the secretary of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association and I too am asking that you restore the funding of \$20,000 that was split between the four neighborhoods that were previously funded by CDBG

funding and then through city funding. And those neighborhoods are Schweiger, Pinkney, Brook Creek and East Lawrence. That amount has been described as budget dust and a rounding error. And as Michael said, four 10000.00044 zeros and a four. We are active in the loss of funding that will have a devastating impact on our abilities to function land. The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods as proposed a plan for a process that the city could implement that could reach more neighborhoods. But in the meantime, I'm encouraging you to help us maintain strong, welcoming neighborhoods for the coming year. We are a good investment, I think. Thank you very much.

Speaker 56 ([04:09:54](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Emily Lyon, director of development of the Lawrence Farmer's Market. With your current proposed mill increase for 2026, we at the Lawrence Farmer's Market would request forward thinking for community asset projects like our permanent site location in downtown Lawrence that will continue to bring in more economic development and build community and build resiliency around our local food system. Our market is a leader in Kansas and across the country for our commitment to producer only vendors, high quality agricultural products, and the kid and nutrition incentive programs that we host. This year alone, we've added 13 new vendor members bringing us up to 75. And our customer count of 404,400 people in June showed a growth of over 70% in just two years. On August 9th, we began a robust community engagement process of meetings, presentations, and conversations in partnership with the city of Lawrence and Douglas County.

([04:10:53](#)):

We are grateful for this support and our goal is to end this process with a recommendation for a site location by the end of this year. To continue momentum for this project, we are requesting that our 2027 CIP funding and request be bumped up to the 2026 fiscal year. We are requesting \$175,000 of our initial \$300,000 request for the design phase of this permanent location project. It is imperative that we continue this design phase after site location commitment as this project has been in the works for over a decade and we have committed partners and we are building community support to see this through right now. As you hopefully are aware by now, this permanent location project is included in numerous city plans. The citywide cultural plan for Lawrence, Kansas in 2015 presented the need for an activity hub which could use a farmer's market as an anchor tenant in 2017.

([04:11:43](#)):

The Douglas County Food System plan included policy 1.3 0.1 identifying the need to invest in signage, shared infrastructure and coordinated marketing to support Douglas County Farmer's Markets. And then the council then set a focus on assisting to find a permanent downtown farmer's market location. In 2018, the sustainability office released the report Farmer's Market scan key lessons from other markets. The report finds market success often relies on public private partnerships and strong collaboration between the market and community stakeholders for markets to become well-established, recommending markets be a part of community planning efforts, adaptation of public infrastructure and shared financing. In 2021, the city of Lawrence released the downtown Lawrence plan, including on pages 78 through 79, recommendations that the city should consider investing in a permanent outdoor event space to better accommodate the farmer's market and limit the number of on street events and disruptions to traffic and safety. Multiple sites were identified as potential sites for permanent home for the Lawrence Farmer's Market in this plan. And just earlier this year, the City of Lawrence's Parks recreation and culture department released their master plan with Goal 4.2 to identify and develop space for Farmer's Market. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 ([04:13:09](#)):

Any additional public comment on this one?

Speaker 27 ([04:13:15](#)):

Hello? David Bastin. 6 6 0 4 7. Yeah, I know you guys have a big job to do to get this budget under control with the, I know there's a million moving parts and I know you guys up there are the ones that can actually tell Craig and his people that this is what you want and try to shoot for this. And then I don't know if you're following up behind them, digging into what they're actually doing. And I'm not saying they're not doing anything. I'm sure they're doing a good job, but there needs to be some accountability in things that, like I said, I don't know if you're following up behind them or just you give them a goal and they tried to do what you say.

([04:14:31](#)):

I don't know. I just know some other people have said we're looking at some really hard choices even with, I mean I know one thing that the transit system, I mean I know when I was young I needed to go anywhere. We took a taxi around or whatever, nothing was free. And I think the last at least two years, you've made everything free in that. And I still don't know if you are getting the money from KU that you used to get and they actually put into their tuition to fund some of those things. And I know we spent a lot of money, 12 million plus. I think last year was more like 20 billion with the station. But I mean we can do some fees there, which would bring a lot of money. I don't know what the ridership now is. I haven't looked at it for a long time, but it was, and maybe that's what you want the ridership to be way up to say it's doing good. If you charge fees, is it going to be still good? But I just hope you guys can dig into that more and figure out what we can do better. Thank you David.

Speaker 57 ([04:16:15](#)):

Tim Hamilton, 6 6 0 4 4. The Coalition for Collaborative Governance has issued some documents and reports and what I wanted to share with the commission is that this group has a lot of really, really smart people and they work really hard. They have a very high work ethic. And when we issue reports, it is not in an adversarial position at all. It is just the opposite. We are trying to help sort of help our community understand numbers that are very, very complex and very, very difficult. And our conclusion is the debt that's taking out is unsustainable and it is excessive. It isn't that we want to say that, but that is the conclusion that comes about the coalition is kind of like your friend when you're going to do something kind of foolish and your friend taps you on the shoulder and says, Hey, you sure you want to do that? That's kind of where the coalition is. So we have extremely high work ethic not going away. And as you see things that come forward from the Coalition for Collaborative Governance, please understand that we are very much in partnership trying to all row in the same direction and hope the city. Thanks David.

Speaker 5 ([04:17:56](#)):

Any other comment in the room?

Speaker 1 ([04:18:02](#)):

Share anybody

Speaker 5 ([04:18:02](#)):

Online?

Speaker 4 ([04:18:04](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([04:18:05](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 47 ([04:18:16](#)):

Chris Flowers.

Speaker 49 ([04:18:23](#)):

This is Chris Flowers. I just want to say I think one of the earlier commenters might have been onto something when bringing up, God, maybe we should try praying to God to help with the city budget. So I'm just going to take a couple seconds to pray and hope to get an answer on how to solve this budget.

Speaker 58 ([04:18:52](#)):

This is God. You could lower the budget by cutting funding for the city manager's department and the police. Thanks for praying. Keep on trucking.

Speaker 49 ([04:19:06](#)):

Well, you heard it from God himself. I guess we should just cut funding for the city manager's department and funding for the police. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([04:19:17](#)):

Thanks Chris. Amen. Anybody else online?

Speaker 4 ([04:19:24](#)):

That's it, mayor.

Speaker 5 ([04:19:25](#)):

Thank

Speaker 1 ([04:19:26](#)):

You Sherry. Alright, commissioners, we've got a lot of feedback on this, most of it, pretty straightforward. I've got a couple of tasks on our hand here. I know that there was several comments about trying to change or to alter some of the plans we had relative to rec fees. That was the number one. And then of course public safety and the reduction in potential equipment and manpower. I think those are the major points that I think that came across this evening and I think we need to discuss anything else that you want to bring up, I want to make sure we touch on before we move forward with the details on how we get to our final fiscal year budget.

Speaker 2 ([04:20:25](#)):

Want me to stop? Yeah, anybody? I'm happy to start. I'll see how long I can go here. So a couple things. I certainly appreciate all the comments tonight and the comments we've received via email and otherwise I think tonight's a microcosm of the issues we have, which is trying to balance all these competing issues. I know not everyone's a fan of balancing act, but one of the things I truly appreciate about balancing act is it makes the people filling it out do that hard work of actually balancing between the two. Two, it's easy to say whatever, spend more money on X, but also don't raise taxes, don't raise fees, don't lower the mill levy. So trying to find that balance is the difficult part and that's obviously what we've been the senior manager's proposed budget, what we've been working through and I clearly think a budget that doesn't make a large number of people unhappy is probably not a good budget because we need a budget that pushes different parts of this community and tries to find that right balance because our community is diverse and our community has diverse thoughts and I think the five of us have diverse thoughts on those and what we're trying to do is come together to find a budget that we can balance all of those things on.

(04:22:05):

I note one of those before I get to some of the issues, transit is a good example. You can talk a lot about the transit, but that budget comes from a tax that's been passed by the taxpayers. There's no general fund dollars in that. If we cut the bus service, we couldn't spend the money on anything else. If we started charging again ridership, you cannot use that to fund the parks and rec. It's, we can't do that. It's not how the sales tax that's passed works. So that's an example of yes, we can talk about transit, but that doesn't help us with S, it doesn't help us with fire, it doesn't help us with police. It's a self, a budget within itself. So that's an example. I mean there's a lot of things touched on. I think the three major issues like you said, I think public safety fees and the debt, three of the big ones. I wanted to talk about those other things brought up that certainly we can balance.

(04:23:22):

I will start, let's see, which one do I want to start on? Let's start on the debt. I appreciate the conversation about whether or not we're taking on too much debt in order to fix our infrastructure. We've been under a multi-year plan to do just that, to fix our infrastructure, to undertake major infrastructure projects to fix Iowa, to fix 23rd to fix wusa. And we've been taking on large amounts of debt to make that happen. That's when I came into office when Craig became city manager. We had deteriorating physical assets that we first analyzed. We looked at, we started measuring all our roads, we started figuring out the lowest cost of ownership. We created a asset management plan and then we created a debt profile where we knew we were going to take on this debt. It is true that we're going to increase the amount of debt from last year.

(04:24:30):

The debt payments 84%. But what that doesn't take into account is slowly over the last few years we've been building up the reserve in that account to \$34 million. That's the reserve in the account. So we were funding less than we were bringing in and now we're spending that money that we've been planning for years to spend because when you're talking about multimillion dollar projects, it takes a while to plan, execute, bond it out, get it done. So we have \$34 million in that account that we are going to spin down over the next years. Appreciate the chart that the staff put out and the coalition talked about.

(04:25:15):

It has a whole bunch of assumptions in it. It assumes that we fund the CIP as it exists for the next four years and do 6 million after that. It assumes that we leave the mill weight for the debt fund at the 4.099 mills that it is at it assumes 4% increases in property values and when you look out 10 years, that's a whole lot of assumptions. And this city commission and future city commissions, we're going to have to look at that every year. At the end of the 10 years, we still have \$7 million in reserves in that account to make debt payments. When you have an account that you are using to make debt payments, there's no surprises in that account. That's not an account where you need a huge reserve. We do have a policy, but to me I think we're in very good shape. Can someone say we're spending too much money? Sure. Can someone say that it's a risk to do these large infrastructural projects to set us up for the future? Sure. I happen to disagree with that. I think we have a very good plan. I think it's a plan we've been working for years to implement and I'm confident in fulfilling that plan on public safety.

(04:26:46):

I will, knowing from the police union came and spoke tonight, when you look at some of what we've done with commissioned police officers in 2015, we had 155 commissioned officers and as of 2024 we had 145 commissioned officers and we've had to decrease in the number of police officers over that time period even though calls have been going up. And one of our tier one options was not to cut patrol and we ended up through various things cutting a few patrol positions. So one of the things I'm going to suggest at the end of this is I would support adding two patrol officers back into the budget and paying for that out of property tax. And not sure everyone will agree with that, but I do think we need to try to keep our patrol division up in police. As for file, in 2015 we had 131 commissioned officers. In 2024 we had 159

commissioned firefighters. And it is true that we've been carrying the 39 active firefighters for a long time over that time period in 2015 we had 211 file calls and in 2024 we had 211 file calls. In 2015 we had 8,000 ambulance calls. In 2024 we had 12,000 with 11,956 ambulance calls.

(04:28:30):

The growth as we've seen and the big book that Seamus left up here shows is that the number of calls we have has increased quite a bit, but those calls have increased on the ambulance side of the service, not the fire side of the service. When we take up this budget on the 16th, we'll be talking about fire station six. I support fire station six. I support adding the firetruck back into fire station six. That's going to almost undoubtedly cause a mill levy increase next year to pay for the firefighters to put into that. Very much appreciate the county stepping up and funding the ambulance. That's going to go into fire station six a year early to keep those numbers at 38 instead of 39. I think having that ambulance unit, having that unit responding is a good use of our resources and when we go to six, I support adding the firetruck back. But I appreciate the county stepping up this year and funding that ambulance for fire station six. But I would go ahead and support adding the one firefighter back to get us to the 39. The 39 which is we've been at for many years.

(04:29:47):

And then as I said, as we get into the fire station six in the future budget, I'm going to support adding the fire truck back where it had gone from five and move it to six. So those, I do support that and I do think we'll be in a better position at that point as we bring fire station six online. But I will support adding, we will suggest we support adding one firefighter to get us to that 39 from the 38 that the county has helped us reach. Finally, as to recreation fees, we've obviously talked about that. Continue to hear from folks here tonight to or against fees. I also continue to hear from folks who don't use the rec centers, who don't want to offset that million dollars we're raising and that we're using an increased revenue. That would be almost a mill increase and when you ask the question, do you want your property taxes to go up, you want people who use the VE to pay part of that cost.

(04:31:00):

A small part of the cost, not the full part of the cost, a small part of the cost. That answer is a lot different. I also get a lot of people who say, well I'm fine paying the fees but I don't want low income people or kids to pay the fees and I appreciate staff coming up with a proposal that does not charge youth and does not charge low income individuals and that has a low fee amount, the fee amount of \$12 a month for an adult, \$8 a month for a senior and you get a discount of course if you pay annually. So it'd be less than be \$6 and 50 cents a month for a senior if you pay annually. I think that is trying to strike that balance of having the users pay for it. As I've mentioned before, we charge with a pool, we charge for both pools. We've always charged with the pools. We found a way in this city to let low income and others use the pool, find ways to get 'em into the pool. I think in the same way we can find ways to get those into the rec centers and I don't have a problem with that type of user fee.

(04:32:24):

I wasn't around when supposedly this promise was made about Sports Pavilion Lawrence and maybe I don't understand the promise even as reported, but I'm not sure that applied to Holcomb. I'm not sure it applied to East Lawrence Center. It applied if it was said, it applied at the time of Sports Pavilion Lawrence, but there was also a lot of other things said during that time, some of which come to pass and some of which did not come to pass on the amount of fees we generate from users, how many tournaments that would be brought in. There was a lot of things said at that time that have not come to fruition and we were in today's situation and so I feel comfortable that we need to move in this direction, but in order to use the lower fees and in order to not charge students and not charge low income individuals, we need an additional \$50,000.

(04:33:32):

So I would support putting that in the budget and so the four of those things combined, two police officers, one firefighter, and the \$50,000 adds up to \$407,000 you have to add in adding into our reserves to balance out the 2 million we're putting into the reserves. So not to change that and I think when I ask Allie that calculation, that's a 0.32 million increase, which I think is about \$10 for the average household, not the full 0.8. Full 0.8 we talked about, I voted to put the full 0.8 in and that would be the amount to get rid of the fees in total about a million dollars but I don't think we want a 0.8 mil increase and I think there is some public safety issues I want to address and I think some level of fees is appropriate. So that's where I'm landing at this point. Obviously we're not going to make a final decision for two weeks and I say all this tonight because I want to hear back from others and I know I'll hear from people who say don't raise the mill levy and I'll hear from people who say they still don't want fees and I'll hear from the firefighters and the police saying they want more and I'll hear all of those things, but I'll try to walk that through. Allie's going to correct my numbers. 10.

Speaker 29 ([04:35:11](#)):

No, I think they sound good but I don't want to mislead anyone adding that one position and fire is not going to take their minimum staffing from 38 to 39 and Chief Wade's here, I'm sure he can have a number that would take it, but one position's not going to increase that minimum daily staffing.

Speaker 2 ([04:35:28](#)):

Three. Can we hear from, I thought the numbers we were given were the, well tell me more about that. I guess, let me make sure I understand that. It's a good thing to understand. I thought we had reduced nine positions when we shut down five to four and then the medic, they added eight individuals back. Am I wrong on that?

Speaker 59 ([04:35:53](#)):

So shutting down engine five, we were going to upst staff our ladder to four. The county's added back eight positions, but those positions are dedicated to an additional medic unit.

Speaker 2 ([04:36:08](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 59 ([04:36:08](#)):

So we're at 38 minimum staffing across three shifts. Adding one firefighter back would theoretically up staff or get one shift back to 39, but we don't really have a writing position for them.

Speaker 2 ([04:36:23](#)):

Yes, that

Speaker 59 ([04:36:24](#)):

Makes sense.

Speaker 2 ([04:36:24](#)):

Yep. I understand that point. I'm with you now, thank you.

Speaker 6 ([04:36:27](#)):

Oh that would mean we would need

Speaker 2 ([04:36:40](#)):

Four. You need or the eight,

Speaker 59 ([04:36:44](#)):

What would we need to get another, the firetruck back We would need nine.

Speaker 2 ([04:36:48](#)):

That's what I thought, but not to get the firetruck back. Yeah, that's not what I was suggesting is not to get the firetruck

Speaker 6 ([04:36:54](#)):

Back. No, we're trying to get to staffing.

Speaker 2 ([04:36:56](#)):

I thought we had reduced the chart. I got said we reduced shut down engine five up of staff engine five to full. We reduced nine positions. Nine FTE positions. Correct. Then the county added an expansion, ambulance medic six, so they added eight positions.

Speaker 59 ([04:37:16](#)):

Okay. So the eight is taking into consideration our relief factor. So if we're going to staff a new apparatus, while it would take two firefighters per shift, we do factor in a relief factor to account for leave. So that's where the eight additional to cover various types of leave.

Speaker 2 ([04:37:35](#)):

Yeah, understood. Yeah, that's what I was just trying to get us back to that from the minus nine plus eight Lyft is minus one to add that one back.

Speaker 6 ([04:37:44](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([04:37:44](#)):

That's

Speaker 6 ([04:37:45](#)):

Not an Apple staff to Apple

Speaker 2 ([04:37:46](#)):

Is what you're saying. Yeah. Well let me ask this. If I was asking the total number of firefighters not, are we going from 145 to under the current budget, how many back what

Speaker 29 ([04:38:10](#)):

We added one back that would maintain either 145 or one 50 a

Speaker 2 ([04:38:14](#)):

Month. Exactly. That's what I was suggesting. Correct. But thank you for that clarification. Yes.

Speaker 6 ([04:38:20](#)):

So just adding one back So but

Speaker 2 ([04:38:22](#)):

Just adding the one back,

Speaker 6 ([04:38:23](#)):

Right? So adding a one back gets you to that number but however eight of that is dedicated to ambulance. So then what does that mean for the fire side as far as staffing and relief? You would still need that plus eight or what would that number be?

Speaker 59 ([04:38:37](#)):

To get us is

Speaker 6 ([04:38:38](#)):

What?

Speaker 59 ([04:38:39](#)):

So to get us back to status quo on the fire side, we would to hire or we would need to hire, add back nine FTEs and then what we would do is take the one that we have upst staffed to the ladder with, put them back on the engine, which would get us to our full staff and that would get us a status quo is what we are now.

Speaker 6 ([04:39:01](#)):

But what you were suggesting if we did not add the truck in, what would that magic number as far as staffing you were thinking? The plus one would make us whole,

Speaker 2 ([04:39:13](#)):

But again, I support adding back the firetruck when we open up station six, not right away. So I was looking at the total number of firefighters

Speaker 6 ([04:39:27](#)):

For 25

Speaker 2 ([04:39:28](#)):

For 2024. If you take the total number of firefighters we had in 2024, forget where they are on any vehicles,

Speaker 6 ([04:39:35](#)):

Right?

Speaker 2 ([04:39:36](#)):

As I understood it, we had a hundred and I think 45 and under the current proposal we have 144. So if we added one, we beat you back at 145. What chief? I don't want to

Speaker 59 ([04:39:48](#)):

Say Yeah,

Speaker 2 ([04:39:51](#)):

That's the math I was doing.

Speaker 59 ([04:39:52](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 2 ([04:39:53](#)):

How you deploy them, it's up to you would be different. You see what I'm saying?

Speaker 59 ([04:39:59](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 2 ([04:40:00](#)):

That was my suggestion to keep out level at 145 firefighters. That was my suggestion. Right,

Speaker 6 ([04:40:06](#)):

Right. So I'm saying the plus one for this budget would get us to 45. It doesn't make us whole by adding back the truck.

Speaker 2 ([04:40:16](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 59 ([04:40:17](#)):

What

Speaker 6 ([04:40:17](#)):

Does that mean for shift? So that one person is now

Speaker 59 ([04:40:21](#)):

A

Speaker 6 ([04:40:21](#)):

Floater or what? Yeah,

Speaker 59 ([04:40:22](#)):

There's several different ways we could handle the one FTE internally. The one benefit it would have, it would help offset leave and to help keep our overtime cost down,

Speaker 13 ([04:40:38](#)):

Which is something we've heard previously over the years. Yes.

Speaker 6 ([04:40:45](#)):

Okay. Let me hear your four again because I thought I had it done a lot.

Speaker 2 ([04:40:48](#)):

Two police,

Speaker 6 ([04:40:48](#)):

Two police

Speaker 2 ([04:40:49](#)):

One file from 50,000 to pay down parks and rec.

Speaker 6 ([04:40:52](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 5 ([04:40:54](#)):

50 K,

Speaker 2 ([04:40:55](#)):

50,000 which is pay down parks and rec as I understand it for the proposal before us

Speaker 1 ([04:41:00](#)):

Covers the children under 17 and under plus low income or moderate income users.

Speaker 53 ([04:41:08](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 13 ([04:41:09](#)):

And Louise with parks and rec as well, just to make sure for clarification also

Speaker 6 ([04:41:14](#)):

Here.

Speaker 13 ([04:41:15](#)):

Yes, he's right there.

Speaker 6 ([04:41:17](#)):

I couldn't

Speaker 13 ([04:41:17](#)):

See

Speaker 6 ([04:41:17](#)):

Over there

Speaker 13 ([04:41:19](#)):

As part of that as well included from what I remember earlier in the presentation earlier this year would be naming rights and exploring naming rights and sponsorships.

Speaker 60 ([04:41:30](#)):

Yeah. Everything that's been spoken today, it's in our strategic plan, our master plan. So we would pursue those things. I just want to mention one thing. How many years has the library had a friends organization? They finally hit 500,000. It would take us years to get there as a parks friends organization. So these are all cumulative efforts to make our department sustainable. So we're not saying, hey, we're going to do fees and we're not going to do anything else. We're going to continue to chase naming rights, sponsorships, friends, organizations and other ways of raising funds. So we're not saying, hey, we're going to forget everything else that's in that strategic plan or that master plan and only do this one thing, which is also suggested in there. So yes, all those, again, this doesn't fix us. We're still 1.2 million lower than we were yet last year in our budget even with these fees. So we have to make this sustainable. We have to turn it around so it is not such a burden on the taxpayers. So yes.

Speaker 13 ([04:42:35](#)):

Okay, just wanted clarification. I kind of figured that we were just exploring all avenues as well to pursue revenue generation.

Speaker 60 ([04:42:42](#)):

Yeah, we're just focusing on this one aspect of all those revenue generating ideas that we've been given. Okay, thanks Brad. Appreciate that.

Speaker 1 ([04:42:52](#)):

Do you, anything you

Speaker 13 ([04:42:53](#)):

Want to add? Oh, and just to go ahead and dovetail on Vice Mayor Finkel, the remainder of after those four would go towards our fund balance. Not a fund balance but our revenue to maintain our revenue reserves. I'm sorry. Maintain our reserves, right?

Speaker 2 ([04:43:16](#)):

No, I mean I'm saying we would just raise above the city manager's recommendation, which is a flat mill levy 0.32, abandon the rest abandon, don't go. Oh, abandon the rest.

Speaker 13 ([04:43:30](#)):

Abandon the rest. Okay,

Speaker 2 ([04:43:31](#)):

Just 0.32

Speaker 13 ([04:43:32](#)):

Either

Speaker 2 ([04:43:32](#)):

407 K, that would be the 407 K. Well it's actually four seven then to make the fund balance equal is 1.25 that because which gets you to \$508,000. That's how you have to keep a fund balance in line and that 508,000 equals 0.32 mills.

Speaker 13 ([04:43:55](#)):

Okay, I got you. I'm

Speaker 2 ([04:43:56](#)):

Looking at Allie because she gave me these, she confirmed my numbers

Speaker 13 ([04:44:03](#)):

So we wouldn't go up the entire amount. Gotcha.

Speaker 2 ([04:44:05](#)):

So we would not go 0.8 mils increase. Well that's the proposal,

Speaker 13 ([04:44:09](#)):

Right? The proposal out there. Proposal.

Speaker 6 ([04:44:12](#)):

So Allie, I want to make sure I understand what our homeless solutions piece, because I know that was kind of conflated in some of the discussions this evening with the sales tax that will be dedicated. So we would not be pulling any funding from special alcohol moving forward, correct?

Speaker 29 ([04:44:41](#)):

No, they're still homeless solutions. Get funding from the general fund, the sales tax, the fund. You just said that I'm blank on special alcohol. Alcohol, I apologize. Special alcohol, I got you. And France. I got you.

Speaker 10 ([04:44:58](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 6 ([04:45:02](#)):

Okay, I'm going to go. I want to, sorry I was going to self-sabotage myself by saying I'm not going to talk much tonight, but since we know that everyone likes to dump on me about that, we're going to have this conversation in two weeks. So I'm not going to belabor too much about how we get to this point and whatnot. I think it's a testament that we still have to continue to do the work to educate our community about property tax pieces and the relationship that we have on the local state and even federal level. And so there are some great examples out there that explain it. I know Johnson County has put a wonderful piece together. It kind of gives you that umbrella of how property tax goes in assess values. We've seen conversations on the state level talk about capping, so ensuring that when the county assesses the value of a home that we want to cap it at 4%.

([04:46:12](#)):

You can't have more than 4% growth. There's other things we can do. There's been talk about legislation about reducing the value of the percentage value of 11.5% down to 9% or 6% and all of those have a yin and a yang. So yes, it is a relief on property owners whether you own a home or property management for

those who rent as well as. So you have that and then that balances out to, that's less revenue coming into the city, which then creates the whole effect of that. So we'll have conversation about that. There's information out there. I do encourage individuals to look if you still are struggling with the familiarity around that, there are great resources out there. I did want to take a point to talk about some of the coalition work that we've had in this and I know we've had some individuals talk about that.

(04:47:05):

The goal is not to be adversarial and I don't think the intent is to be adversarial. I think advocacy and engagement and all those things, it can be a little bit wonky and sometimes the approaches are a little bit different. What I'm encouraged by is by one we have more community people who are wanting to know and what we're realizing is that it is very difficult sometimes to drill down and concentrate things that are very complex to be as simplistic as possible in public health. We talk about you want your information to be shared at a third grade reading level and good mercy to give budget, government budget at a third grade reading level. There may be a schoolhouse rock episode out and not maybe we'll be the first ones to do it. But that does take work and I do appreciate some of that.

(04:48:05):

I still think there's some opportunities to understand and recognize that some of the things that were proposed are just not, it's not good practice. And while I've shared that with several of the coalition members that a tenure forecast I don't believe is an effective tool for this community because there are so much uncertainties because of the type of community we are in, the state that we are in. There are so many different variables that could make those swings very drastic that could put us and could really turn us into make a mountain out of a mole hill. And so five years gives us something that is digestible, crable, flexible, nimble. 10 years does put us in a lot of uncertainties. You've heard several commissioners talk about asset management. We've put the city has put a lot of investment into the asset asset management system and what that's going to do and what that tool brings to us.

(04:49:04):

So I'm encouraged for groups to continue to come to the city, meet us where we're at, where we talk about public private partnerships. Those things are happening. They don't happen overnight, but they do happen. And so I think there's some shared work and responsibility on this to continue to allow this to continue to grow so that it doesn't feel adversarial. I don't want it to be adversarial. Just this is an ugly topic. How many of you all go out and drink and talk about your budgets with your friends? I don't. So with that said, we are not making a decision tonight about budgeting, but what I want to bring to the commission for consideration is for us to maximize that 0.8 mill as much as possible.

(04:49:54):

We've heard some conversations about different pieces of things that we're wanting to address and until we can get to a point that we continue to help people educate and understand them on, if we don't do fees, what are we doing in lieu of if we're wanting these services, what do we do in lieu of, and I think that's the next step for a lot of these conversations is what do we do in lieu of? And I think there's commissioners are having those conversations with city management as it relates to the CIP and some other mechanisms. So you are being heard as those things are happening not behind the scenes they're happening as we are able to engage in those conversations and do these things in real time just as the work is being done.

(04:50:36):

I did have on my list too, I heard and have heard from others about adding those two FTEs back for LKPD. I'm not opposed to that. The firefighter piece, I'm going to have to GNA on that a little bit because I'm hearing that one makes us right, but does it really make us right? So I don't want to do apples the oranges, the kumquat comparison out here and just land on a spot. But I think there's something to be said about what does that whole look like as it relates to what we've heard from several commissioners about

what is station six going to look like in 27 and so on and so forth. So I'm wanting to have that discussion. I don't have a number tonight for that.

(04:51:25):

I do want to add in, there was discussions around the farmer's market. I think that is a viable one. I've been speaking about that since 2022. We're seeing momentum. There's a feasibility study that's being done. I think there we should have an appetite to move that because that is prosperity and economic security. That is all the things that we see in our community and that we know our community values that. So bumping up and adding that 1.75 to the 2026 budget is something I would like for us to look into. Another thing I would like for us to consider small but mighty economic development was a tier three, but I would like to entertain the possibility of adding \$25,000 for 2026 around small business support. And I'm happy to work with staff to kind of flush out what my thoughts are and what I'm looking at, but mostly centering that around opportunities for small business supports.

(04:52:23):

It could be for projects in 2026, especially projects around World Cup. Since we are talking, we've talked a lot about World Cup as it relates from Marcomm as it relates to logistics but not about helping and filling the gap for some of those smaller businesses that are in our community. That could be what they add to our community could be a mutual benefit. So just a small little one-time opportunity there. I've heard from several entities that saw the RFI for prosperity and Economic Security and just didn't feel like they met the framework but had a very strong case as to why their services would be beneficial for our community. And so it gives us the opportunity to have that discussion and maybe this as a pilot could be something for us to think about as we start to look at budgeting around PES for the following years to have that. Lastly on the parks and rec piece, and I shared this when we had the conversation around the fees and what it looked like, and I know I shared that if it's for students and how we identify low income, I'm getting for that. I use the rec centers sparingly. I have a gym membership, but I do appreciate the value of that.

(04:53:44):

But I think as it relates to parks and rec, it's a gap piece. But the other side of my brain is thinking that we've heard a lot from the community about I pay for this so it should not be free. And so I think that is a conversation that we should have that if that is what the community believes, then having a budget shortfall means cutting back on things, which means we're going to staff the rec fees as determined by what the community says is. And so that's going to be a lot of reductions, but I think that's something for our community to entertain and experience. So then we can come back to the point that came up is where do we do that then? Is it through rec fees or is it through a mill levy increase or is it something else? So I'm not proposing one or the other.

(04:54:42):

I'm not opposed to the 50 k. I'm just thinking there's a bigger existential question out here that again talks. We've talked about that with several other coalitions and individuals who have emailed us, but I think there's a conversation to have about that. I don't know what that number is, but it's definitely not 0.32. But I see where you're at and I think there's more discussion to have the commission decided not to go above one. I think going above one could have mitigated some of the consternation and we have about some of these things. But that was a decision that the commission said that we didn't want to use that as a tool or we didn't want to use as much as that tool that we could use. So what can we do with the 0.8 that satisfies some of the things that the community wants if they're okay with us doing that or we feel like that's a good way for us to utilize that. And again, I don't want to hamstring us to say to do more with less. So I'll just put those are my numbers out there, but I'm still kind of holding firm on the 0.8.

Speaker 13 (04:55:46):

Okay. Yeah, as this been said before, it's kind of the next stage in the process. We'll also be discussing it in a couple of weeks, so with our final determinations, but to Vice Mayor Finkel dies, thoughts and proposals out there. I had be interested in the two police officers and also fire and me adding that one, that one personnel as well. I'd be very interested in that conversation. I think kind of anything we can do in terms of we won't be able to get them all the way back in public safety, but just an incremental piece would be helpful.

(04:56:31):

And then with parks and rec fees, yeah, I'd be interested in any sort of conversation that would lower any sort of fees that would be assessed or anything we could do on that. So if we can find any way to incorporate that. Yeah, that'd be part I'd like to hear that. I am interested with commissioner sellers and the economic development piece if there's any way to add a small amount to that department because that is one of our revenue generating pieces of our city that we work to go ahead and start and grow our own businesses and also attract our own businesses. So anything we can do in that area, I'd be interested in that as well. Or the farmer's market. I'm also interested in that, but I'd like to see a little bit more information on exactly what that would entail. I know there's the 40,000 that is proposed. I think it was CIP in 2026 or 20 27 45. No, there's 40,000. And then

Speaker 6 (04:57:44):

That was for the feasibility study, which they've established in the process.

Speaker 13 (04:57:48):

45, is that

Speaker 6 (04:57:49):

What you said?

Speaker 13 (04:57:49):

No, no. But then there's the additional piece that Commissioner Sellers was speaking to as well. So I'd like to see some more information about that, but I would be interested. So those are just my thoughts right now on it. And also to speak to, I want to throw out this plug speak to Vice Mayor Finkel die and what he was talking about with the debt and yeah, it's a lot of large part of that is due to deferred maintenance on infrastructure that really hasn't been taken care of over the years and we're finally addressing it. And in doing that we will just take that kind of attention. And I would plug as well that coming in October, we will be having a discussion and bringing in folks to talk about our debt as well as our asset management plan. So we'll be having those conversations here in a month. So thank you. Yeah, October. I said December. Yeah, yeah, don't mind Lisa, you

Speaker 12 (04:58:49):

So thank you Brad.

Speaker 10 (04:58:53):

I'll

Speaker 12 (04:58:53):

Die for your summary of some of the changes you'd like to see. I appreciate you pointing out how the fire calls have gone up and it's been on the EMT side or the medical side. I think that's a really important to point that out because I know Sean had indicated earlier that how the county has stepped up, but the

county is a hundred percent responsible for the medical part, if I remember right, is that not true EMS. So it would make sense that they would step up and provide more funding on that side of it. The positions, I don't have a problem with the positions and the other items that were pointed out there. I would also like to see whether or not there would be an interest in adding back that neighborhood funding that we have removed this budget season, whether or not there's something there. Given all that, I would like to see some other ways we can potentially cut versus just adding on the mill levy. I'm not real interested, I don't have a lot of interest in raising the mill whether or not there could be some cuts still found. I don't have anything right now, but I'll definitely, based on what I've seen, something that I would look for

Speaker 1 (05:00:07):

Very good. I really do appreciate all the advocacy and feedback we've gotten on how we're spending our money, especially our capital improvement. I know it's a lot of information for people to really process, but more importantly to understand and comprehend the cost associated with doing these projects. And I understand how difficult it is to constantly be repairing what was broken, then also build new infrastructure in order to allow for the growth of the community. And I think for many years we focused on some growth and maybe neglected older infrastructure, but everything starts to age out and people really are concerned about how much money we're spending and bonding and focusing on the future. But these are the steps that leadership must take and the difficult decisions you make to secure the future of the community 10 or 20 years down the road. And for us to imagine planning 10 years out and actually committing future commissions to such things is just not possible given our current policies and procedures.

(05:01:16):

So we need to focus on a shorter term and I think the commission has done a pretty good job of doing that in the past. I do know we've spent a lot of extra money and we have to figure out how we're going to pay for it. I do know that our mill levy increases have gone up. Whether the mill levy rate has gone up in spite of the mill levy increases not occurring. We're getting additional funding and it's obvious that we're going to continue to do so as the appreciation of real estate continues. I really hope that we don't focus on these small items like fees or one or two firefighters when there's larger huge amounts of money they're being spent and people aren't focusing their attention on those. So I do appreciate the capital improvement plan assessment by some of the coalitions, but I also want to give credit to the staff for reducing our expenditures, for reaching those goals of keeping us within our budget and allowing the commission to have these conversations and about not increasing the mill levy because I think that's really what I was focusing on.

(05:02:18):

But I also understand some of these roadblocks and I want to focus on fees as a means to sustain the great services we have. I think it's interesting that nobody brought up the fact that we're spending millions of dollars on the pool and that's a charged service. You have to pay money to use that, but yet our tax dollars are being spent to improve that facility. And people don't mention that, but there needs to be some consistency in our actions. And I feel like what I'm trying to do is create a sustainable future for our parks and also accountability for us and how we're going to run these programs in the future. And many people have talked about the accessibility of fees and how it's going to impact people's lives, but I want to focus on the future of the parks and rec department and how we're going to help sustain that down the road when other commissioners are here and these conversations have cuts and decreases in funding are going to be made at this level.

(05:03:15):

And I believe a fee-based system allows a sustainable and more self-sufficient program in the future. So for me, I feel like the fees could be negotiated down and I would be willing to use some of this mill levy increase that we set aside for covering that shortage. And I also feel like some of the commissioner's

suggestions on how we could do some sort of CDBG grant program placement back in whatever that \$20,000 would be. And then also the farmer's market is really something is a generating is a revenue generating opportunity. And if we're already planning on putting money aside for this, what it would look like to try to move it sooner so we could actually manifest some change if it's really happening, if this is really something the community wants to identify as a long-term goal, I don't want to block that out. But also I don't really know what that middle of the increase would be.

(05:04:13):

So I think that between now and the future conversation, it sounds like we need to make sure we've addressed the potential for a hundred and some thousand dollars for the farmer's market and then as well as the CDPG grant money or the \$20,000 for those four communities and then the additional staffing that we need to get that. I think you've already got that number down. So Commissioner Sellers pointed out she doesn't know if it's really going to meet the letter of maybe specifically going to help us by adding one, but I want to make sure we do see what that looks like. And so at this point I guess we just need to decide if we're there's anything else we want to add to this potential use of this 0.8 that was set aside during our last conversation.

Speaker 13 (05:05:08):

Yeah, mayor, I think we just want to see options.

Speaker 6 (05:05:13):

Okay, so commissioner, understand, I want to make sure I understood you. I know you said you didn't have an appetite for increasing the male levy, but you had brought up the \$20,000 for the neighborhood. So where are you wanting that to come from?

Speaker 12 (05:05:26):

Well, as I said, I would be willing to look at cuts and I haven't looked at that closely yet. And so that's where I would look at

Speaker 6 (05:05:33):

For cuts. So looking at general fund cuts in order to supplement that or subsidize that,

Speaker 12 (05:05:41):

Just cuts of some sort, whether it's from the general fund or if there's some other option, I'd be willing to look at that.

Speaker 10 (05:05:46):

Okay.

Speaker 1 (05:05:57):

Okay. So do we need to give any direction,

Speaker 2 (05:06:00):

Anything else, Allie?

Speaker 29 (05:06:07):

I just want to sure that we're reflecting direction that we're receiving this evening. So at this moment in time, I believe our plan would be to bring back pretty much the budget as you see it today. And then these items that you have listed as options versus building them in. Now

Speaker 1 ([05:06:30](#)):

Mil for mill levy, this would be the increase, correct? Yes.

Speaker 29 ([05:06:35](#)):

Okay. And can I run through that list real quick? You can. Okay. So the two officers for the police department, one firefighter for L-D-C-F-M 50,000 to offset the fees at park recreation culture farmer's market, approximately \$175,000, economic development, 20 to \$25,000 small business support. The neighborhood funding

Speaker 5 ([05:07:09](#)):

That was 2020.

Speaker 29 ([05:07:12](#)):

And I think that is what I scrunched out.

Speaker 6 ([05:07:17](#)):

So then my question would be then I know you're saying that as plus, so Commissioner Larson, my question to you would be you're wanting that 20,000 to kind of be like a PayGo in the sense that something's got to be cut out of the budget in order to slide that in. So if staff is not able to do that, are you still committed to using part of the exceeded revenue neutral mill increase to subsidize that 20 K?

Speaker 12 ([05:07:47](#)):

Yeah, I just would've to see the numbers. I'm just not at this point in time willing to commit to that.

Speaker 6 ([05:07:52](#)):

Okay. Allie, I got nothing for you

Speaker 12 ([05:07:59](#)):

Allie. You said how much on the economic development piece? I think I heard commissioner seller say

Speaker 29 ([05:08:04](#)):

25,000.

Speaker 6 ([05:08:05](#)):

Yeah, I think 25. Okay.

Speaker 29 ([05:08:10](#)):

And again, when we add expenses at this point, we will add that 90 days of operating expenses for our reserves.

Speaker 1 ([05:08:20](#)):

Yeah. Would you repeat that?

Speaker 29 ([05:08:23](#)):

Now that we have basically our baseline budget as we allocate these 0.8 mils or whatever, we will add 90 days of operating expenses. So that \$25,000 would be times one point.

Speaker 5 ([05:08:37](#)):

Times one point. Got it. Yeah.

Speaker 6 ([05:08:41](#)):

What's the multiplier? 1.2525 1.25.

Speaker 29 ([05:08:46](#)):

Is that right?

Speaker 1 ([05:08:47](#)):

1.25. Yeah, it's

Speaker 29 ([05:08:50](#)):

90 days

Speaker 1 ([05:08:50](#)):

Right? Very close to 1.2. Okay. I think that was it. Oh, and the World Cup money fungible economic development. I think we going to make, I know last time we brought this up

Speaker 6 ([05:09:08](#)):

We did and we talked about TGT.

Speaker 1 ([05:09:11](#)):

No, we didn't bring it up tonight. I just want to make sure we want to,

Speaker 6 ([05:09:13](#)):

Based on the conversation we had about TGT, the vote figured that out. So I left that.

Speaker 1 ([05:09:23](#)):

Okay, very good.

Speaker 6 ([05:09:23](#)):

Back. Sounds

Speaker 1 ([05:09:24](#)):

Good. So I think that'll do it then. Yeah.

Speaker 6 ([05:09:28](#)):

Now if you want to add some more money to it, that's a whole nother conversation we could have.

Speaker 1 ([05:09:32](#)):

Well that math will be pretty simple I think once we get these others solved. So we don't really have an action to take other than giving direction. I believe that's it. I think we should move on to commission items.

Speaker 6 ([05:09:54](#)):

I have two commission items. I'll let people skit scoot and skedaddle while I bring them up. Yes

Speaker 5 ([05:10:05](#)):

Ma'am.

Speaker 6 ([05:10:18](#)):

My first commission item is just wanting to get an ETA on the inspection report. I know that we circled back to staff about two months ago and there were some shifts and priorities and so just wanted to see if that was going to come back to us before the end of the year. So there's that. And then I feel like this is a deja vu question, but I couldn't find it in my email so we'll do with that. But wanted to see, and I know, I think it was in one of the Ahab reports, so I may have to go back and check, take a look. So this might be a question for Leah is of the Ahab dollars over the last few years, what portion of that has been dedicated for, have been dispersed for utility payments? So any entity that has asked for Ahab dollars, if it was used to offset the cost of utilities, if we could get that number. I don't have a timeline on that. I mean just by November at least. So we can get those two. So those are my kind of two policy wise commission items.

([05:11:45](#)):

My other commission item is I had the opportunity and I think do believe all the commissioners received invitations. The Kansas City, the Black Archives of Kansas City hosted a community engagement visionary around a proposed memorial that's going to be on the grounds of the black archives for the Black Women's Suffragette Plaza. And so there was a greater Kansas City Black Women's Suffragette committee that was created to identify what were eight women from the Kansas City area who played a major role in the suffragist movement who were black women. So was there to meet several of all of the committee members, Dr. Car Carletta Williams was there and gave remarks, heard from several of the different funding entities. They are in phase two of the project, which is they're trying to meet their funding goal of \$1 million. The reason why that is germane to Lawrence is because of the eight two are from Lawrence Douglas County. The first one is, let me shoot, I wasn't ready. So the first one is Mamie Dillard. Mamie Dillard lived from 1874 to 1954. Mamie was the only African-American student in her class at Lawrence High School. When she attended, she earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas. She taught at Pinkney school and one of her favorite students was a young Langston Hughes.

Speaker 10 ([05:13:31](#)):

Nice.

Speaker 6 ([05:13:33](#)):

The other one was Carrie Mercer Langston Clark that lived from 1873 to 1938. She entered a University of Kansas as a student in 1894. There's no documentation that states whether or not she continued her education or whatnot. But she did enter as a student in 1894 and she advocated strongly while in high school at Lawrence High as well as at the University for women's rights and suffrage. And she is the mother of Langston Hughes. So we have a connection to this plaza. And so it was an honor to be able to

attend. One of the committee members sent the invitations out and everyone was very appreciative that there was representation from Lawrence Douglas County there. And so I am kind of jittery just talking about it. It was just so warming and they didn't tell me that. They just talked about these eight women and then they had noted that these two women were from Lawrence Douglas County. So wanted to share that with the commission and with our community's. Cool. That's really cool. And I have the flyer if else here and my scribbles, that's

Speaker 2 ([05:14:43](#)):

All one commission item. We've received several emails about mills, about Fs, about the hearing next week, which I think is on the book session. I think it's set to be a book session asking that it'd be a regular agenda item in case there's some action that we want to take. I guess I'm fine with that. I mean I would, I think kind of like we did tonight, listed in the regular agenda and just call it a hearing on fuss or whatever we want to call it, but with no necessarily the action only being to have a hearing at this point. We could decide to do something

Speaker 1 ([05:15:20](#)):

With no action.

Speaker 2 ([05:15:21](#)):

With no action. I mean, I don't think, unless you think we have an action item, that

Speaker 61 ([05:15:27](#)):

One is not planned. We just, we're going to give an outline of presentation of what it is. We've had so many questions.

Speaker 2 ([05:15:33](#)):

I think if we put it on the regular agenda, that at least gives us a chance if we want to take an action to be there rather than having it as a work session. That's

Speaker 1 ([05:15:42](#)):

True.

Speaker 2 ([05:15:42](#)):

So people have asked that. I think it's fair to do that.

Speaker 1 ([05:15:46](#)):

I'm okay with that. That's okay with everybody else.

Speaker 2 ([05:15:50](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 13 ([05:15:51](#)):

I'm okay with that. But I probably won't be here next week.

Speaker 6 ([05:15:56](#)):

Just a little less educated your questions, but one person.

Speaker 5 ([05:16:00](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([05:16:06](#)):

Any other commission items? Alright, future agenda items. Looks like we just talked about the ninth. Anything else that comes up? And then the commission, oh sorry. The city manager's report.

Speaker 61 ([05:16:26](#)):

Thanks, mayor. The first one is just to recognize our fourth consecutive peak performance awards for both of our wastewater treatment plants. These are not easily achieved and we've been consistent at meeting the very high standards for that peer award. And just wanted to express my appreciation and pride in the group that keeps doing that day in, day out 365 for our community. The other one is just to close the loop on the grant that we've talked a lot about. And you saw we addressed in the budget, we weren't able to move forward on that segment in the alignment that we had hoped, but we're retaining the budget and we've allocated that as you saw this evening. So we will be working on that in other segments of the loop and we retain those resources to help us do that. But there was nothing to do with the grant. It's a reimbursement grant and obviously we didn't spend the dollars that were allocated for us.

Speaker 1 ([05:17:36](#)):

Thank you. Any public comment on the city manager's report? Thanks.

Speaker 51 ([05:17:45](#)):

I'm Michael Alman, sustainability Action Network. I don't have those numbers in front of me, but the grant from the state, we never actually got the money, so there's no money to return. But the budgeted part was what our local match.

([05:18:07](#)):

So the agenda items said that that could be allocated to other capital improvement projects. And I would suggest, and I think you have this in mind already, that it'd be dedicated to Bikeways since it's at this point for the purpose of bikeways, my particular, or my organization's, actually, I say particular interest in that is that it go to bicycle transportation as opposed to recreation or maybe being split among the two. So it's not entirely to the loop, but for local safe streets, projects, things that will enhance the usability for all users of our streets. That could be any kind of traffic calming or bikeways things that just make streets safer basically. And bikeways are a great way to do that. So thank you Michael.

Speaker 38 ([05:19:22](#)):

I think a lot of what I have to say right now does fall on the city manager. I've had some conversations out here this evening with people who remember what this town was like in the early nineties and some of you might actually be able to remember what this town was like in early nineties. We were pretty prosperous back then. We had one of the premier fire medical departments in the country. I dunno how many people are in this room are aware, but Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical used to be the place where everybody wanted to get to. And so they used feeder departments across the area. You had to go work for Baldwin, you had to go work for Eudora, you had to go work for some volunteer wusa and hope that you had the opportunity to someday get on Lawrence Douglas County.

([05:20:21](#)):

That's not happening. When I spoke to Shamus out there and the other fellow, I can't remember his name, but they're telling me about having a hard time keeping the new guys having a hard time with retention. It's not a fucking pay issue guys. So quit with the purse string bullshit. You're treating people wrong.

You're putting these guys in situations that are hazardous to their own health by the short staffing. I'm not a fireman, but I know that I can understand the concept of needing staffing on an emergency scene to be able to handle it properly.

(05:21:09):

And at the same time we've gone from a police department that was small, they all knew everybody. You could talk to 'em on the street. Now we have the Gestapo that if Bart Littlejohn says I have to be trespassed, they just send me to court. That's a city manager issue because what we saw earlier, you guys don't really have much say because that little vote you guys had earlier where you talk about how you're opposed to it, but you have to vote for it. You're full of shit and he knows it, but he's got you buffaloed over it. You don't have to vote any direction. All you have to do is vote yes or no, but he's somehow convinced you that if you don't vote yes for him, it's some kind of fucking violation. You all need to man up and start running this shit. That's why we put you in office. We didn't elect him.

Speaker 1 (05:22:24):

Thanks. Anything else on the city manager report? Alright, commission calendar.

Speaker 4 (05:22:34):

We have some online. Oh

Speaker 1 (05:22:36):

Do we? Sorry, raise

Speaker 4 (05:22:36):

Their hand. That's all right.

Speaker 1 (05:22:38):

Of course.

Speaker 47 (05:22:46):

Chris Flowers.

Speaker 49 (05:22:52):

Hi, this is Chris Flowers. And I was just going to, thinking about the earlier remark about if we don't fund the loop that we fund other bicycle projects, but if we're saying we're not going to fund, if the loop is recreational, shouldn't it also be considered to go to other recreational programs like maybe Parks and the rec center? So I just want to throw that out there. If there's free money from the loop, could it be used for other rec services and not necessarily bike projects for bike transportation? I guess I'm not saying either I am for or against. I'm just saying that should be an option for other rec funding, I guess. Thank you.

Speaker 5 (05:23:48):

Thanks Chris.

Speaker 4 (05:23:52):

That's all the comments.

Speaker 5 (05:23:53):

Alright, thank you.

Speaker 2 ([05:23:56](#)):

Alright.

Speaker 1 ([05:23:56](#)):

Commission

Speaker 2 ([05:23:57](#)):

Calendar. We might just put on the October 20th through 24th is the Huka City sister. I won't miss that meeting on the October 21st, so I might just put that on there

Speaker 13 ([05:24:12](#)):

And yeah, I'll miss the meeting next week on September 9th next week. Okay.

Speaker 5 ([05:24:24](#)):

Alright.

Speaker 1 ([05:24:24](#)):

Anything else to add to that? Alright,

Speaker 6 ([05:24:30](#)):

Mayor, real quick. So Sherry, for who tentatively for the inner city visit, who's all going?

Speaker 4 ([05:24:40](#)):

I believe it's just you and Commissioner Littlejohn.

Speaker 6 ([05:24:44](#)):

Okay. For some reason I thought we were looking at, I thought we were going to have more people out, but that means we only have three. That's correct.

Speaker 1 ([05:24:53](#)):

It's all in one.

Speaker 6 ([05:24:55](#)):

You don't can't,

Speaker 1 ([05:24:57](#)):

Three

Speaker 6 ([05:24:58](#)):

Won't get sick. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([05:25:05](#)):

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Yeah, that's good. Thanks for reminding me about that. Alright, anything else before I open up to public comment? Okay. Public's allowed to speak on these issues or items not scheduled for.