

Mayor's Column for the January 30, 2013 Review

The Role of Mayor-continued

In my last column, I outlined statutory duties of the mayor. There are additional mayoral responsibilities found in the Evansville Municipal Code.

The Code specifies that the mayor must be a city resident. The mayor is elected city-wide; alders are elected by district. The mayoral term is two years. There are no term limits for any local elected officials. The compensation of the mayor is set by ordinance, currently \$375 per month.

The mayor is part of the Common Council but is not included in determining quorum. The mayor presides at meetings of the Common Council. Robert's Rules of Order, 1970, Newly Revised, "shall govern the proceedings of the council where not inconsistent with the rules stated in this Code." During the citizen appearances agenda item of council meetings, comments by non-residents, other than during public hearings, are at the discretion of the presiding officer. Section 2-71(3) of the Code states: "Citizens may address the council with the permission of the presiding officer as to matters which are being considered by the council at the time."

Special meetings of the council may be called by the mayor. "The mayor may declare the entire council a committee of the whole for informal discussion at any meeting or for any other discussion at any meeting or for any other purpose and shall ex officio be chairperson of the committee, provided there is no objection by any one of the alderpersons present at the meeting."

Article I of the Administration Chapter of the Municipal Code prescribes the details of the State of the City. The mayor shall prepare and present the State of the City, the overall plan and recommendations for the City, to the Common Council at its regular May meeting in the year elected. At the end of the first year the mayor may revise the plan. The mayor will confer with the council president when developing recommendations.

The mayor is the presiding officer of the Plan Commission and is a voting member of the Commission.

The mayor makes a number of appointments to positions, including city administrator, clerk-treasurer, auditor, engineer, EMS chief, water & light superintendent, public works superintendent, weed commissioner, building inspector, chief of police, city attorney, and city assessor. Appointments are subject to council confirmation.

The mayor annually makes aldermanic appointments to standing committees of the Common Council, subject to confirmation by the council. The committees are Public Works, Public Safety, Finance and Labor Relations, and Water & Light. The mayor may

appoint special committees by motion or resolution, stating the number of members and purpose.

The mayor makes citizen appointments to the city commissions and committees, such as the Youth Center Board, Economic Development Committee, Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Park Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Council confirmation is required.

Considerable effort is undertaken in making annual aldermanic and citizen committee appointments. To best represent city residents, appointment of alders from different districts is a priority in determining the composition of a council committee. Attention is also given to the personal background, knowledge, and experiences of alders when making appointments, to maximize the strength and effectiveness of individual committees and our municipal government as a whole.

When making citizen committee appointments, effort is made to bring new citizens into the process. Broadening the base of citizen participation in local government necessarily increases public awareness. It also brings new opportunities and fresh ideas that are essential to better governance.

In my next column, I will discuss the leadership responsibilities inherent in the position of mayor, as implied in the State of the City language and prominence in our Code.

Community Announcements

According to an article in the January 20, 2013 issue of the Janesville Gazette, a recent study by the University of Wisconsin Extension and the non-profit Product Stewardship Institute found that only 2% of unused medications were safely disposed of in our state. Most medications that were no longer needed or were beyond their expiration dates were flushed down toilets, placed in the trash, or left in medicine cabinets. The drugs can find their way into ground and drinking water or end up being used inappropriately in the wrong hands.

When you clean out your medicine cabinets, expired and unneeded prescription and over-the-counter medications can be placed in the drug drop-off box at the Evansville Police Station, 10 West Church Street. Drugs will be properly disposed of by the Rock County Health Department. Keep the pills in the original container; patient names can be blocked out for privacy. Proper disposal of excess medications keeps our community safer and is environmentally friendly.

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There are plenty of local activities offered in the coming weeks to chase away cabin fever. I encourage everyone to participate in an event or two.

A two-session program entitled Beginning Genealogy will be offered by local resident Carol Culbertson on February 7 and March 7 at Eager Free Public Library, 39 West Main Street, from 6-7 p.m.

The Friends of Eager Free Public Library Winter Gently Used Book Sale is scheduled for Saturday, February 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The sale will be held at the Library and is open to the public.

Beer Study, led by Tom Calley, will be held on Monday, February 11, from 7-8 p.m. at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street.

The public is invited to Abraham Lincoln's Birthday Party on February 12 from 5:30-7 p.m. at Eager Free Public Library. Celebrate with Civil War-era music, games, activities, and cake.

On Tuesday, February 12, University of Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program Director Mike Maddox will speak about the Master Gardener program and getting trees ready for spring. The presentation will be at 7:00 p.m. at Creekside Place.

The Evansville Jays, the Evansville Home Talent Baseball Team, is holding their 8th annual 9-pin tap bowling tournament, Strike Out for Baseball, on Friday, March 15, and Saturday, March 16, at the Blue Devil Bowl, 108 East Main Street. Bowling shifts are 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. both nights. For additional details, go to www.evansville.hometalent.org/bowling.

Community Thanks

Evansville congratulates Nancy Nelson for receiving the 2012 Spirit of Philanthropy Award from the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin. Nancy chairs the Evansville Fund Advisory Board. We thank her for her outstanding efforts on behalf of our community.