MINUTES OF A MAJORITY OF THE QUORUM MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS
AT A TOWN HALL MEETING
PERTAINING TO GROCERY STORE ATTRACTION AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTHY FOOD
STRATEGIES DISCUSSION (In Response to the Closing of the Kroger Stores on
Wisconsin Avenue and Harmon Highway

A Majority of a Quorum of the City Council of Peoria, Illinois, attended a Town Hall Meeting pertaining to Grocery Store Attraction and Alternative Healthy Food Strategies Discussion at The Peoria Public Library, Main Branch, Lower Level Auditorium, 107 N. E. Monroe Street, Peoria, Illinois, on Saturday, January 13, 2018, at 1:00 P.M. Town Hall Meetings were also held this date at Manual Academy, 811 S. Griswold Street, at 10:00 A.M. and at East Bluff Community Center, 512 E. Kansas, at 11:30 A.M., but a majority of a quorum of Council Members were not present for those meetings. Notice was provided to the public and properly posted more than forty-eight hours prior to the meeting.

The following Council Members were in attendance: Jensen, Moore, Montelongo, Riggenbach, and Ruckriegel – 5.

Also in attendance: City Clerk Beth Ball, Dr. Leslie McKnight from the City’s Economic Development Department, Sie Maroon of the Public Works Department, interested citizens, and members of the media. Community Development Director Ross Black and Township Supervisor Frank Abdnour attended the two previous meetings.

Council Member Moore and Council Member Riggenbach opened the meeting at 1:00 P.M. and welcomed everyone present.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear a presentation by Dr. Leslie McKnight from the City’s Economic Development Department regarding how the City was working to assist residents in finding solutions to fill the gap of losing two Kroger stores in the City and to listen to comments from the public for possible further solutions.

Dr. McKnight reported the Mayor, as well as City Staff, had been having many conversations with the Kroger Corporation. She said this situation was a top priority. She said they learned that 60% of those shopping at the Wisconsin Kroger store either walked or took the bus. She also discussed constituent meetings held by Senator Koehler and Representative Gordon-Booth. She stated that if another store decided to locate in the East Bluff or Southside of Peoria, the entire community would need to support it in order for it to remain. She said there would have to be a mixed income approach. She encouraged residents to always buy local and to invest in the City of Peoria.

Dr. McKnight discussed the development of community gardens by individuals, neighborhoods, and churches. She said several grocery store chains that were not known locally had been approached to locate in Peoria. She explained that grocery stores operated on volume and their profit margins were only in the 1% to 3% range.

Dr. McKnight discussed co-ops, but said they were membership based and may not meet all the needs in the community.
Several citizens expressed concern that they walked to the grocery store and had no other transportation to other stores to buy groceries.

Concern was also expressed for those people who used Kroger stores to send money through Western Union to pay their bills. A list of alternative locations was distributed to all those who were present.

Council Member Moore stated that Dr. McKnight would continue working with store chains who had smaller stores that could be located in one of the Kroger stores that were closing.

Some suggestions for transportation included an offer from CityLink to make additional stops at food locations. It was suggested that churches could use their church vans to shuttle residents to and from grocery stores or provide a delivery service. It was stated that a list of food pantries would also be distributed.

Council Member Moore stated Mayor Ardis and other State Elected Officials had contacted the Kroger Corporation to continue to work on a solution.

Other suggestions from residents included that there was a need to maintain the stores that were currently located in Peoria and strive to keep them all open. It was suggested there was a need for more employee-owned stores and there was a need for education to be provided so people would know how to prepare healthy foods and produce for maximum benefit.

Council Member Moore and Council Member Riggenbach thanked Dr. McKnight for her presentation, and they thanked all those who were in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Beth Ball, MMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois