



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes Committee of the Whole

Nancy R. McGregor, Chair

Brian D. Larick

Karen J. Angelou

Merisa Bowers

Jamie Leeseberg

Stephen A. Renner

Michael Schnetzer

Krystal Gonchar, MPA, Clerk of Council

Monday, December 6, 2021

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER

Vice President of Council Nancy McGregor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. DISCUSSIONS

[ORD-0086-2021](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH METROPOLITAN HOLDINGS FOR THE MILL STREET APARTMENTS.

Joe McCabe from Metropolitan Holdings development team presented the attached slide show to Council. The new design is residential only. The design has been updated to include more masonry and to increase vehicle views; propose widening Wilson Alley and vacating North St.; discussed demographics in the region; the market area is expected to grow by 3,000 residents in the next 20 years; the average age is 33; credit card debt is low for this demographic and desirable; developers are targeting bright young professionals, representing 22% of market and of that, 22% are renters and enjoy eating out and spending time outdoors; metro renters are another targeted demographic, who seek out retail experiences; savvy suburbanite, is the other major demographic.

Andrew Lemmon CFO for Metropolitan Holdings stated that financial benefits are outlined, see attached slides; reviewed revenue over 25 years, which is driven by change in real estate taxes, and income taxes; there will be discretionary income; the targeted demographic spends 3.8 percent of their gross income on food and entertainment which estimates to \$12M over that time frame. McCabe stated that the goal is to revitalize parcels, utilize appropriate architecture, and bring forward a right-sized project; would like to see a new gateway; would like to see growth.

McGregor called for public comments. There were no questions or comments from the public.

Bowers asked about masonry design; could they explain more about construction. McCabe said there would be a lot of masonry but not completely masonry; showed renderings again; the corner element is all masonry. Bowers asked about the wood frame on slab, is that still intended. McCabe confirmed, that's the only feasible construction method for this project; is most reliable.

Renner asked about plans for parking, and specifically the widening of the alley. McCabe said there are 74 units and a little over 70 spaces; will have off site leasing of 3-4, nearby; hoping to have one-to-one onsite; there is a lot of surface parking at private businesses in the area; have committed to alleyway improvements through widening; will do traditional street paving; semi-trucks will be able to turn around in the North St. area; all at developer's cost. McCabe said the only incentives being asked for are access to the abatement and the vacation of North St.

McGregor asked about the mix of units. Lemmon stated that there would be a mix of 42 one bedrooms, 10 town homes, and 22 two-bedrooms. Angelou asked if there will be retail. Lemmon said no. Angelou asked about recreational opportunities onsite. McCabe said due to the small scale, would prefer tenants go out and utilize those opportunities around Gahanna rather than keep them in the property; try to work out benefits with surrounding retail called metro-perks.

Nate Strum said there will be a walkability standpoint for trails, parks, and pools. Schnetzer said Council does not pick and choose which developments will come forward; asking what's the extent of the value being asked of Council. Strum said value would be vacation of North St., and open value is inclusion of taking an abandoned office building and facility and utilizing those parcels into a meaningful development; will bring new revenue with new residents. Schnetzer asked if there is any transfer of money being asked; any TIF reimbursements, or utility reimbursements down the road. Strum said this is a pre-1994 CRA tax abatement, but it's entitled due to Ohio Revised Code. Schnetzer said there was a rezoning on Hamilton Rd. and through a loophole and transfer, the project was different when completed; asked how we can be sure that what is developed reflects what is presented tonight. Strum said they can look at provisions and constraints of the agreement and follow the project through the Planning Commission process until it comes back to Council.

McGregor asked if they looked into building up and over North St. McCabe said that gets into fire issues; would have to suspend at least 2 stories up due to bridging; when you get into steel the costs increase significantly. Bowers said Tilton's Auto had concerns before when this was presented; has anyone reached out to them about this proposal. Strum said when they reached out to Tilton's, they still had concerns and wished to learn more about it. Leeseberg said neighbors had concerns but said they would be in favor if they were bought out; wanted to be a part of the project.

McGregor provided another opportunity for public comments or questions. There were none.

Recommendation: Back to Committee on 12/13/21.

[ORD-0077-2021](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 135, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ENGINEERING, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA.

Larick stated that there was an ask to review purchasing structures and rules that exist within our ordinances, specifically under Ch. 135; there was an ask to draft some language that would reinstate historical language that had been a place to promote transparency in the process of expenditures. Angelou looked into a \$3,000 threshold, and that anything being purchased above that amount would require Council approval; the new threshold is \$10,000; it is uncomfortable to hear from residents or other folks in the city, that there is a plan for the city which cost \$100k; is important for Council to be made aware of these things and be a part of the process; we work better when we are working together.

Renner asked if this was in regard to professional services, or if this is meant for all purchases. McGregor said it was for professional and personal services. Leeseberg stated it would be for purchases and services above \$10k. Renner stated that there isn't much you can get for \$10k; the number is low compared to general practices around central-Ohio; some locations have a \$100k threshold; does not see where it is his duty as a Council Member to approve purchase orders. Leeseberg stated that the City Attorney must bring any request for professional services to Council per Charter; agrees that all purchases above that amount is low but agrees on the professional services part. Larick said this is a draft, and this is meant to incorporate Council's input; the ask for this evening is to discuss, have it introduced at the Regular meeting and brought back for further discussion at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Bowers asked if this is for all purchases, and would all equipment need to be brought forward to Council for approval. Angelou said she wants to be part of these discussions; wants to collaborate with the administration on planning and what's going on in the city; doesn't want to be surprised by \$100k plans. Schnetzer said he wonders if there should be a more surgical approach to this and have more targeted changes; when looking at proposed capital requests, many items on that list are above the \$10k amount, and does not believe Council needs to approve all of those items. Larick stated that on an annual basis there is a request for salt, which is standard and completed outside of the budgetary process; they also approve requests to go to bid; at the same time, when funds are used for professional services or other items, which cost significant dollar amounts, they are not always coming before Council; if the focus is on the \$10K amount, that can be changed. Schnetzer said aside from contract services, does not believe this is necessary; there is line-item detail in the Capital Needs Assessment. Renner stated that he concurs with Schnetzer; does not believe this belongs in section 135.04 and the number is far too low.

Leeseberg said for items in the budget and CNA, recalls times when items have been presented to Council for approval and then never get completed and the money is sitting around and not spent, and then gets transferred for other uses that were not intended for originally; this year we had parks money that was not spent and then later transferred to Economic Development; we appropriate money and are in charge of the purse; not unreasonable to be a part of the process; just last year \$30k was spent on a brand refresh and Council heard about it after the fact; is a fair ask to be a part of how money is spent.

Schnetzer asked if the Director of Finance could discuss inter-department transfers. Bury stated that those are common in most municipalities; there is a fluid budget process; things change and funding that is no longer needed in one department may be moved to another department; it all stays in the same general fund; those are brought forward to Council for approval. Leeseberg said those are for inter-department transfers. Bury said for any appropriations transfer. Leeseberg stated that for inside one department, you can change the project, but if it does not change departments then it is not brought to Council. Bury said she can move up to \$3,000 between series of accounts; above that, even in same department, must be approved by Council.

Schnetzer asked how the City Attorney and Administration perceived this would work. Bowers asked if the City Attorney had an opportunity to review and comment before this moves to first reading. Mularski stated

that he had not; it went out Friday evening and was never sent a copy; was made aware of it on Saturday morning; no one had asked for his opinion; when looking over it this weekend sees that 135.03 is violative of the Charter; cannot say that Director of Public Service shall have the exclusive authority to purchase and lease all goods; the Charter states that in 3.04, the authority is given to the Mayor or her designee; is happy to help, but does not believe this says what Council wants. Mularski stated that he reads this as any item over \$10k must be approved by Council. Angelou stated that her first proposed change was sent to him by the clerk and then there were changes made to that, which is what is presented tonight. Mularski stated that he did receive that from the Clerk but had not looked at it yet because he didn't know it was going to be addressed since we were working through the budget.

Larick stated that in July there was an administration contract executed with an architecture firm for consulting services, in the amount of \$100k, and the funds came from multiple locations; questioned how that occurred without passing through Council; there were a few lines included in Mayor's reports about it, but not really any detail. Bury stated it was opened from the multiple accounts that had the appropriations available; there were available in the economic development department and mayor's office. Strum stated that the scope of work included previously appropriated dollars for a revisioning plan from the mayor's office budget; the inclusion of developer interviews was also included; stated that Larick said there were a few lines in the Mayor's reports, but went back and did an independent analysis and this was referenced 35 times; a few times before he joined the office, but certainly 35 different Mayor's reports referenced that contract. Larick asked if the contract itself executed in July? Strum said the plan, or the intention of the plan, or the execution of the plan, as well as being brought up multiple times at CIC meetings. Larick said that was separate from Council. Angelou stated that was at CIC not here. Strum stated that Council has two representatives to the CIC.

Schnetzer said he would see having further discussion for the professional services piece but not for the other. Larick stated that 135.04a could be removed, and then take forward the other piece for further discussion at a future committee meeting. Leeseberg stated that it could be introduced as is and amended at a future committee since there will be other amendments anyway. Bowers asked if they would be waiting on further feedback from the City Attorney; would prefer to not move something forward if it were violative of the Charter. Leeseberg stated that the concern the City Attorney brought up was on existing code section, 135.03, which was not redlined for proposed changes.

Mularski stated that this is presented as a single ordinance and you can only vote on an ordinance as a whole; if you present it this way you are voting on everything that's in here. Larick stated that what Leeseberg is pointing out is there are only two sections that have any changes proposed; what Mularski is looking at is existing code. Mularski said it doesn't matter if it's existing language or not it's still violative. Bowers reiterated what Mularski said. Mularski said it should not have been presented in this manner. Angelou said they did present this to him. Mularski said they had not sat down to discuss this yet. Mularski stated that it could be introduced as a separate ordinance with just the two sections. Mularski stated that it could not. McGregor stated that they would amend the ordinance to move forward with the section 135.05(e) (6) to introduce. Mularski stated that it has not been introduced to the public; you have to give 24-hour notice. Renner stated that work is needed to restructure this; does not understand the rush.

Council determined that it would be held in committee and discussed at the next meeting. Bury stated that she is working on this section of code for federal guidance in order to process ARP funds; will be bringing this forward for uniform guidance.

Recommendation: Back to Committee on 12/13/21.

C. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.