

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 12, 2008

Immediately following previous committees or

7:30 PM

Council Committee Rooms

Committee of the Whole

*Thomas C. Evers, Chair
Beryl D. Anderson
Shane Ewald
Thomas R. Kneeland
John McAlister
Nancy R. McGregor
David L. Samuel*

Members Present: Thomas C. Evers, Shane W. Ewald, Thomas R. Kneeland, John McAlister, Nancy R. McGregor, Beryl D. Anderson and David L. Samuel

Additional Attendees:

Tom Weber, Mayor Stinchcomb, Isobel Sherwood, Sadicka White, Jerry Isler, Terry Emery, Karl Wetherholt, Angel Mumma, Tony Collins, Press

PENDING LEGISLATION:

ORD-0112-2008

AN ORDINANCE REDESIGNATING THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF GAHANNA AS THE AGENCY OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SECTION 1724.10 OF THE REVISED CODE OF OHIO.

Evers called the meeting to order.

Sherwood handed out a new draft copy of this ordinance. Evers said this is a new ordinance based on our previous discussions; it is part of a clean up effort and includes an update to the City's relationship with the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC); it needed rewritten since the original dates back to 1978 and there have been changes to the code that spells out their powers. McAlister said in the 2nd "Whereas" it states we have substantive and pressing problems; would like to know what these are. Mayor said that is carry-over language. McAlister said in the next clause, it states their policy will improve morals; how is the CIC going to improve the morals of Gahanna residents. Weber said also need to scratch the word "Redesignating". Evers said it was initially designated in 1978 and, besides the changes in code, brought forward because the CIC engages in issues like the Bed Tax Grants; we took what was on the books and updated it. Weber said the organization really wasn't doing much, and to make sure it is viable and ongoing we may need to have them assume other duties; it is in the City's best interest to make sure this is a clearly established relationship with no lapse in time. McAlister said in the 5th "Whereas" about the creation and development of jobs and commercial development it implies only the CIC can facilitate this; we had development prior to having a CIC so why are they needed; anything they do we can do ourselves? Evers said he disagrees; for Bedford Landfill we partnered with them and closed the landfill; now we are getting ready for development there; they are a useful tool but not valid in every instance; we can correct the carry-over language errors. Weber said the word issues can be solved; need to look at the fact they could be a problem solving agency for the City. Kneeland said he agreed there are situations and opportunities that are best solved by this kind of corporation. Mayor said the "Whereas" clauses are not binding; Section 1 at the bottom is binding. Kneeland said they may help us be proactive instead of reactive; could be a supplemental agency of the City. Weber said he doesn't like "supplemental". Mayor said we have too many authors here. Sherwood and I will resubmit this as a corrected draft in your packets for Friday. McGregor said the old language said we couldn't loan money to the CIC. Mayor said now just have it follow code. McAlister said he had not read the code. White and the Mayor said they did read it. Sherwood said Council will see a new draft Friday for Monday's agenda; if you have a change send it out before Monday so changes can be made and then discussed at Monday's Council meeting. Weber said some items definitely still need tweaking.

Recommended for Adoption

ISSUES - From Director of Development:**Job Ready Sites Grant**

White said previously she had asked for authorization for a resolution and it should correctly be an ordinance so this is the new language. Weber said the reason it needs to be an ordinance is there are assurances given and we can be held responsible for what we are going to do. McAlister stated his opinions; feels this is superfluous; commercial real estate agents already do this; Ohio has other business practices and core problems that make them an anti-business state; someone has to stand up and say enough; I do not support this. White said she understands they have differences; but this is related to our policies that are trying to create a better business environment; Job Ready Sites (JRS) is part of the change brought about by globalization; technology and global-based businesses used to depend on private real estate site managers and the lead time was significant; businesses coming in now contact the State and they need to start up within about 3 months; they are looking for it to be completely ready; we have studied other states to see what they offer; it is not just about land; need all the infrastructure there ready to build on; we have a site and it qualifies as a lead site and takes us to a higher level; I would be remiss to not get these funds and have all departments working on it with us. McAlister asked the location. White said it is by the fuel site; where Science meets Tech Center. Anderson said industry is not taking the lead and there is an economic need for product; businesses look at the climate and they are not looking at Ohio; the core problems are not being solved so government is involved; so what do they do. White said our revenues are positive and we are competitive; issue is how do we keep Gahanna competitive in the State; we can do that with sites and programs like this. McAlister pointed out we have a current development off Taylor Road that includes all kinds of land, called Eastgate, and it is not filled up yet. McGregor asked if the distributors of the grant have a certain amount of money that others will get if we don't use it. White said yes others will get it. Evers advised the time was 8:15 PM and the special meeting needed to be called to order.

This committee was adjourned and reconvened after the special meeting.

Kneeland said he checked the web site for Atlanta's Economic Development Department and they offer a variety of opportunities and partnerships; this is what we are in competition with and we need to take steps to be able to offer similar opportunities rather than just casting our fate to the wind.

ISSUES - From Council:**Economic Stimulus Package (McAlister)**

McAlister said there has been a Bi-Partisan Economic Stimulus Package introduced in the Ohio House; working on an alternative resolution but it is not something I am putting together personally; plan to bring it forward when I get it; I have talked to Representatives at the State House and, as I am opposed to this, I feel if a City like Gahanna votes it down it could provide some cover for them to speak up as well; as an elected body we have weight and it may give some groups cover to join us. Anderson asked if others have done this. McAlister said no.

Annexation

Sherwood said she wanted to make Council aware of an annexation to be filed to add 27.9 acres; still gathering the information for a services ordinance; when filed will put a services ordinance with waiver and emergency on the agenda. McGregor asked where

it was located. Sherwood said Taylor Road.

RECOMMENDATION: 1st reading with waiver and emergency once annexation petition is filed.

Lincoln Circle - Post Office Access

Evers said we have an item about Lincoln Circle carried over from Public Service and Safety Committee. Wetherholt said we have a plan to try to help access at the Post Office (PO); we have passed out a map of the plan; we have worked on it for a year trying to make it work; one serious problem that had been identified is no drop boxes; this plan says build a median in the western leg and add boxes; PO requires a bypass lane which will widen the street to the edge of the bank of the creek; the other suggestion is to change the parking lot by adding a right turn out lane; the property owner feels it is a good idea if someone else pays for it; we would like to go for the one with the drop box and widening of Lincoln Circle; when the design is done we will get quotes to add the overlay.

Samuel asked if there would be a problem with the existing trees located there. Wetherholt said there are about 3 trees; 2 Ash and an Elm that we would lose; most of the bank protection is brush so that will be preserved; that will hold it in and stabilize it and maybe we can plant some other trees.

Kneeland said the current Granville Street exit has a lot of left turns even though restricted; the access into the location is from both directions so no pork chop can be done. Wetherholt said the left turn in is ok; out is the problem as drivers can't see. Kneeland said we could put up a sign saying there will be a \$500 fine.

Ewald said he has also worked on this issue; concerned it takes away the parking on the left side; and what keeps traffic from backing up. Wetherholt said the traffic back up would be prevented by the bypass lane; the parking is a trade off; hopefully enough people who have been parking there have single packages or letters and the drop box will eliminate the need for parking.

Ewald said the owner has a responsibility for ingress and egress and we have an agreement with him to pursue. Mayor said this is really 2 projects; both efforts will help; short term getting the property owner to add the exit and providing a drop box will help.

Ewald said at Thursday meeting of the School Board, they discussed plans to redevelop the old Kroger site; we should consider how to set it aside and hold it for a PO down the road. White said the current PO has existing leases for what could be almost 20 years so they are not able to move.

Anderson said she would also question possible congestion on the box drop side; any other way? Wetherholt said we only have left turn out so drivers are forced to go around and use the signal; to make it in and out either direction here would go into the middle of the creek; now it takes it to the edge of the creek and we have a guard rail; to add another lane for 2 sided drop boxes we would have to relocate the creek; as far as the potential for backup, with what has been observed in the area, and what the PO is advising, we anticipate a back up of 3 cars. Ewald asked how realistic is that; I don't want to improve this location to the point they will want to stay where they are. Wetherholt said there is no way now to measure; projection is 3; based on similar sized POs and areas; PO provided this information.

Anderson asked what the time frame would be. Wetherholt said it could be done this summer; take about 2 weeks. Evers clarified this is not legislation. Wetherholt said he did not want quotes or money right now; just making Council aware since he has to talk to the other businesses in the area. McGregor said she was glad he came to Council early with this; stated she is concerned about going to the top or edge of the creek bank; already identified where undercuts occur along Route 62 and Cherry Bottom Road where we have done this; said I agree with Ewald about eliminating the parking and encouraging them to stay here; owner should know it is his business and if he wants it better he is responsible; what about allowing a half pork chop turn. McAlister said he thinks very few people go to the PO just to mail a letter; see a lot of folks in and out checking PO boxes; would like to see this go in phases; do the right turn out of the place first; I agree with McGregor about the owner; doesn't appear to care about his tenants or their customers.

Samuel asked if the City did a study about auxiliary POs; maybe it is possible for them to pick up some of this. Mayor said we have several satellites; we have had trouble getting businesses to do this for the PO; I received an email last week from the property owner and feel he may be ready to assist Gahanna in resolving some of the PO issues; would like to do a short term solution for the residents; long term make other choices; we have to find ways to deal with what we have. Evers said these solutions are not ideal and the problems persist even after we have asked for help from people like Congressmen Tiberi; the PO has a lease and they are not going to move in the near future.

Weber said I feel Mr. Rosenthal may file suit if we mishandle this; PO has said no; they have a lease with the property owner and we can't interfere or cause the lease to depreciate.

Evers said I see the need for drop boxes so I have no problem supporting this. McGregor said more and more people mail packages online; the PO has automated centers now for non-peak usage; this may be an unnecessary expense as time goes on and online usage takes over and I see developing to the edge of the creek bank as our biggest problem. Kneeland said this has been a sore spot since 1994; these folks have done nothing but thumb their nose at it; this is a top complaint from residents; we have to be prepared to answer to the public why we did or did not support it; it is a catch 22. Mayor said I agree with McGregor that over time, the PO will be used less; but hoping that it all will go online is not the case; some residents are not computer users; PO believes there is no future in brick and mortar POs but I feel it has always been a community asset and for decades even a gathering spot for residents; communities like New Albany are again expanding their PO; we need a short term solution. Ewald said Wetherholt and Emery did a good job; earlier on the owner said he would work with us; now he won't partner with us; if we split these projects up and see about a right turn lane first maybe he would help; I would like to request we go to property owner and ask for his input. Mayor said she will call him tomorrow (Tuesday) and advise.

Sherwood said she had 2 more items; the new blue trash cans are for recycling paper and plastic bottles; sent an email to remind all that Wednesday is the Senior Citizens Day.

MONITOR:

2007-0060

Monitor Items:

- 1) Wireless Communication Legislation

Della Brandenberger, Reporting

