



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Trenton I. Weaver, Chair
Merisa K. Bowers
Jamille Jones
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Stephen A. Renner
Michael Schnetzer

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, October 28, 2024

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was published on October 25, 2024. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Vice President Weaver welcomed members in attendance from the inaugural class of the Gahanna Citizens Academy. He provided brief remarks on their six-week long course, which culminated in a graduation ceremony held prior to the meeting.

B. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:

[RES-0039-2024](#)

A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 2024, AS "NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH" IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

President Bowers acknowledged a draft resolution created with contributions from Jessica Hilts, Management Analyst to the Council Office, and Jen McBroom Administrative Assistant to the Mayor's office, aimed at highlighting the heritage and contributions of native peoples to the shared history of the community. The resolution emphasizes the importance of acknowledging Indigenous people's significant historical role and local impact. For a potential outreach initiative, Bowers mentioned that Talon Silverhorn from Ohio Department of Natural Resources, a Shawnee descendant and expert on prehistoric Native American burial mounds in Ohio, had been contacted to possibly discuss further historical context and enrich understanding of Indigenous cultures' impact on Gahanna. Bowers invited comments or suggestions regarding the resolution. There were no additional comments.

Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/4/2024.

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION:**[ORD-0066-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH POD DESIGN FOR ACADEMY PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

Director of Parks & Recreation, Stephania Ferrell, provided an update on the Academy Park Improvement project, highlighting planned enhancements to the parking lot, playground, and a new trailhead. The trailhead will serve both the recently constructed Mountain Bike Trail and the Big Walnut Trail, partially funded by a NatureWorks grant awarded in 2023. Through a request for proposal process, POD Design was selected to develop the design and construction documents for these improvements. In the planning and evaluation phase, it was determined that expanding the parking lot to add an additional 85 spaces would be feasible. Additionally, it was decided to consolidate the trailhead and shelter into a single site rather than two separate locations, which would result in both cost savings and site improvement. Director Ferrell requested Council approval to amend the POD Design contract to a total amount of \$298,860. She noted this item was coming forward for approval due to it exceeding the current procurement threshold of \$250,000.

Councilmember McGregor expressed concerns about the impact of adding 85 additional parking spaces at Academy Park, given the high usage of the existing athletic fields. Director Ferrell clarified that the new spaces would be located in open green space to the west of the existing parking lot and would not encroach on the current athletic fields. She noted that even without new amenities, the park often faces challenges with adequate parking, particularly during practices. With the addition of the Mountain Bike Trail, there is an anticipated need for more parking to accommodate the increased usage.

Councilmember Renner requested a graphic or visual aid to clarify the specific location of the parking expansion. Director Ferrell confirmed that she would provide a graphic and explained that the new spaces would be asphalted to ensure durability, particularly given the lower-lying terrain of the area and the need for improved stormwater features. Councilmember Renner inquired about alternative options, such as a pervious surface, and reiterated his concerns about the environmental impact. Director Ferrell responded that the asphalt surface was determined to be the most sustainable option for the site's long-term needs.

President Bowers expressed appreciation for the efforts to address the parking issues at Academy Park, noting the existing shortage of spaces, particularly when the park is at full capacity. She requested that stormwater management be prioritized within the project scope, citing the area's existing drainage issues and the potential for additional impermeable surfaces to worsen these conditions. Director Ferrell confirmed that stormwater mitigation was already included in the project's scope. President Bowers further suggested exploring permeable surface options for the parking lot, highlighting potential benefits for downstream flood management. She also

inquired about restroom upgrades and potential improvements to ventilation. Director Ferrell clarified that the shelter house and trailhead would be combined into one updated facility, including new restroom facilities and ADA-compliant access to both the facility and playground.

Councilmember Schnetzer expressed support for the project, noting frequent personal use of the park and the deteriorated condition of the parking lot. He asked about additional features, such as backstops, netting, and shade structures by Fields One and Two. Director Ferrell explained that while these improvements are planned for Academy Park, they fall under a separate vendor and are not part of the current POD Design scope of work.

President Bowers requested a timeline for the project phases. Director Ferrell explained that the shelter house, playground, and other internal park improvements are slated for 2025, while the parking lot expansion is expected in 2026. She noted that the design work is projected to be completed by the first quarter of 2025, with bidding for construction beginning in the second quarter. President Bowers asked if the design proposal could be shared with the Council by the end of the first quarter of 2025, and Director Ferrell confirmed that this was feasible.

Councilmember McGregor suggested that the item proceed through a first reading and not return to Committee unless further review was requested.

President Bowers confirmed with Director Ferrell the design schematic could be emailed to Council.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 11/4/2024. Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 11/18/2024.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

[ORD-0067-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AMENDED AND RESTATED JOINT SELF-INSURANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE CENTRAL OHIO HEALTH CARE CONSORTIUM; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Senior Director Vollmer requested authorization for the Mayor to enter into a Joint Self-Insurance Agreement with the Central Ohio Healthcare Consortium, which operates on a three-year trust cycle beginning January 1, 2025. Each participating entity must secure legislative approval to sign the agreement, which has been reviewed internally by staff and the City Attorney. An emergency designation was requested to ensure timely execution and avoid any interruption to employee health benefits for plan year 2025. The City's health insurance rates will increase by 1% for the upcoming year.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 11/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/18/2024.

[ORD-0068-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH THE BOARD OF HEALTH OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT (FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC

HEALTH) FOR 2025 PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Senior Director Vollmer sought authorization for the Mayor to contract with the Franklin County Public Health District to provide essential health services for the City of Gahanna and its residents. These services include administrative and data services, environmental health, emergency preparedness, epidemiology, health promotion, health systems planning, and more. The 2025 contract reflects a 1.4% increase over the previous year, and funding is included in the current budget. Emergency authorization was requested to ensure uninterrupted continuation of services for Gahanna residents.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 11/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/18/2024.

E. ITEMS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

[ORD-0069-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES SECTION 505.14 - DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS ANIMALS

City Attorney Tamilarasan presented a redlined ordinance for addressing dangerous and vicious animals, recommending revisions to correct typographical errors in the City code and ensure consistency with state law. The updated ordinance also includes an appeals mechanism for dangerous or vicious dog designations, which would be handled through municipal court as required by state statute. Additionally, Tamilarasan highlighted that the current code defines a “nuisance dog” as part of the criteria for a dangerous dog designation, a stricter approach than that of state law, which only escalates a nuisance dog to dangerous status following repeated offenses. She requested guidance on whether to retain the stricter City definition.

Councilmember Jones inquired about the designation process for identifying a dog as vicious, with City Attorney Tamilarasan clarifying that it involves cases where an animal has killed or caused serious injury without provocation, aligning with state law.

President Bowers expressed support for the City’s more stringent definition, noting that it helps ensure timely identification and control of potentially harmful animals, ultimately reducing the risk of severe harm to the community.

Councilmember McGregor suggested exploring a two-incident threshold for dangerous designation, though Tamilarasan noted the City’s ordinance currently moves directly to a dangerous designation upon a single menacing act.

Vice President Weaver inquired as to how designation information is communicated to ensure compliance, particularly between City and county authorities. Tamilarasan explained that historically, incidents have been reported to Franklin County Animal Control, which could create gaps in communication. Under the proposed ordinance and new police protocols,

local designation of dangerous or vicious animals would allow the City to maintain its own records and track incidents more effectively, with the Police Department assuming primary responsibility for designation and reporting.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 11/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/18/2024.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
day of 2024.*

Trenton I. Weaver
Chair