

City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Stephen A. Renner, President
Merisa K. Bowers, Vice President
Karen J. Angelou
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Michael Schnetzer
Trenton I. Weaver

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

Regular Meeting date moved to Tuesday, July 5, 2022 in observance of Independence Day. City offices were closed on Monday, July 4, 2022.

A. CALL TO ORDER: Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 5, 2022, in Council Chambers. President of Council Stephen A. Renner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Vice President of Council Merisa K. Bowers delivered an Invocation and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda for this meeting was published on July 1, 2022.

Present 7 - Nancy R. McGregor, Karen J. Angelou, Merisa K. Bowers, Trenton I. Weaver, Kaylee Padova, Michael Schnetzer, and Stephen A. Renner

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

President Renner noted that at the request of the Mayor, the Department of Parks & Recreation update would be removed from the agenda and moved to the Committee of the Whole meeting for discussion on July 11, 2022.

C. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Kathy McCorkle of 677 Picadilly Ct., Gahanna, Ohio, spoke on comments made at the June 21, 2022, Council meeting.

Ms. McCorkle said that comments made by a Councilperson at the end of the June 21, 2022, Council meeting about what she believed was a recently created "Anti-American Marxist holiday of June 19th" prompted her to share that according to American history the Constitution was forged by God-fearing founding fathers. She asked whether the Council knew that [the founders] got the idea of the three branches of government - legislative, executive, and judicial - from the Bible. She said that Isaiah 22:22 says, "for the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. It is He who will save us." McCorkle said that all three branches of our government are in this Bible

verse. Reference to “our judge” is the judicial branch, “our lawgiver” is the legislative branch, and “our king” is the executive branch. McCorkle said that America was created as a Christian nation and that as most all founding fathers were predominantly of the Judeo-Christian faith, they knew the Bible very well. She added that God was watching over the building of the freest nation on earth, America. Because of this, she said that all Americans of all races have freedom, equality, and the blessings of God if they so choose to walk in them.

D. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Department of Planning: Rental Registration Update

2022-0210

2022 Rental Registration Program MB Revisions

Mayor Jadwin invited Michael Blackford, Director of Planning, to give a summary of where the City is with the Rental Registration Program. This program was implemented a few years ago. Jadwin said it had been on hiatus through 2020 with the need for further evaluation for legal evaluation regarding how it was being applied and what the terms of the rental registration code were at that time. The City spent a significant amount of time reevaluating the program and had presented code changes to Council. Jadwin noted the code changes were adopted and this is the first year the changes were implemented, and registration was required.

Director Blackford added that there are two major changes in implementation. First, part of the code rewrite had the program become bi-annual (every other year) instead of annual. He noted this is a huge reduction on paperwork. Second, the City is now able to accept applications through the City's website for those who choose that option. This also decreases administrative burden. Blackford went through the registration and permit process. The application submittal is first. The registration process involves staff evaluation of the application for completeness. Next, staff goes out to perform an inspection. This involves going onsite, looking for any inconsistencies with various codes. If there are violations, then those need to be corrected. At the conclusion of that, they would receive a permit. Blackford presented data on the program for a four-month period before there was a requirement to register. So far, there have been just under 700 properties the City has been able to identify. About 78 percent of these have registered within three months of when the program's due date of March 15 had registered. Blackford noted the city is chasing down still one out of four to just get them to register for the program. In terms of the work involved, there have been eight staff members for a total of 1,835 hours working on the program. This should give indication of how much involvement there is (46 work weeks of staff work within a four-month period). Blackford said he was not involved in the original implementation but knew that one of the things that was talked about back in 2017-2018 was hiring an additional code enforcement officer to implement the program. He said it is impossible for one person to implement the program. There is really

three processes or steps involved with staff time: the administration (paperwork and phone calls with people), the inspection (time out in the field), and then the violations (tracking people down to fill out information that might be incomplete or rectify some issues). Blackford said the field work should be inspections. Blackford noted that when doing the math, less than 10 percent of staff time is spent in the field with the program and more than 90 percent is administrative. In terms of revenue, Blackford noted the fee structure was changed considerably. There is a total of just under \$100,000 with about three-fourths of this with single-family properties. He said one of the good changes with the program is going to bi-annual. It is a \$150 fee for a two-year program or \$6.25 per month. He thought this was not a huge cost. When doing the inspections, Blackford noted that they have not been able to inspect that many because most of the time is spent on paperwork. Of the 183 properties inspected, just over half of those passed inspection (no violations were found). Of the violations found, he said most of the properties have one or two minor violations. They have not found serious violations. The most common are gutters and downspouts (for rental and non-rental properties), fascia issues, handrails that are a little loose, and clutter.

In terms of program feedback, Blackford noted rental owners felt unfairly targeted. Specifically, owners will ask why they are being treated differently than their neighbor. For example, one might say, "I'm a single-family house. They are a single-family house. So, why are they not required to register? My house is in better shape than their house." Also, feedback about fees being charged when some rental owners are already struggling financially. Blackford said this one is heard quite a bit: the pandemic era made it difficult to evict folks that were not paying their rent. Blackford said that even with doing the math of the fee for a single-family being \$6.25 monthly, some people are using the fee to increase rents. He also noted that minor violations have the potential to become major repair expenses. The gutter and downspouts could be a five-figure fix. Even if one's downspout is not connected to the streets, there is underground work that would need to be done regardless of whether it is causing any type of drainage issue. Blackford reiterated this is the feedback staff is hearing from people. He shared that another comment was that violations not visible from the right-of-way were being "nitpicked." Blackford explained that one of the major differences between this program and normal code enforcement action is that this program allows the City to go on the property. Normally, code enforcement can go on the sidewalk and up to the front door and not allowed to traverse one's property. With this program, Blackford said a lot of the feedback has been, "No one's complaining. No one can see it, yet I have got to make repairs to something." He understood some of the frustration but also stressed it was a code violation and not pulled out of thin air. Blackford said he agrees with the feedback that rental properties are being held to a higher standard than owner-occupied homes. Code enforcement is allowed to touch things, go on property, go in back yards. Many of the violations (90 percent) were from being able to traverse the property. Blackford continued, noting that more feedback about the program was that the inspections are seen as an infringement on the right of privacy. He stated that some people state on their

applications that the City is not allowed to go on their property. Lastly, feedback included that inspections interfere with landlord-tenant relationships. Blackford said that is true. However, he does not feel sorry for folks violating some agreement they have with the landlord, but there have been times the staff finds things and must report it, which causes some friction between landlords and tenants.

Regarding staff challenges, Blackford shared that he believed when the program was created that the Franklin County Auditor's website was going to be the solution for finding rentals. He said it is a great starting point but about one-third of all the listings staff found on the auditor's website were not accurate. He shared that this, again, is administrative work that must be done to cross-check and ensure properties are rental properties. Additionally, Blackford noted safety concerns for code enforcement. He said code enforcement has three very talented, hard-working individuals and that they get threatened on a weekly basis. This is ramping it up a notch because they are going into people's yards. The condensed application period every other year creates a busy season as reflected in the earlier data shared. With 700 different properties to register within a few months window is a lot of paperwork and a lot of interactions with folks. Blackford shared that this busy season does prevent staff from doing proactive enforcement. He said the staff cannot do this when there are basically two and a half people a week in the office working on the rental program. He concluded that this was four months' worth of data from being live with the program and trying to implement it. He welcomed questions from the Council.

Councilmember McGregor said the program is heavy with paperwork now but asked whether Director Blackford thought it would lessen as time passes. Blackford said he thought there would be a modest decrease in the paperwork, but that the bulk of the program is always going to be the paperwork. He said there had been a lot of simplifications to the program from the original concept to present day that helped. The application has been streamlined to every other year instead of every year, which helps reduce the administrative side of this. No matter what permit or application process he has been involved in is that getting accurate information from the applicant is extremely challenging. What is different about this program is that the city is going out to people and saying it needs stuff from them. Tenants are still going to live there. So, it is a little bit hard to get correct information and very rare to get something submitted. There is not a high success rate of people submitting complete applications. McGregor asked whether after the first couple years to stagger the registration, such as a third one quarter or a third of this year or a third later. Blackford said that has been discussed briefly internally. He said he agreed with this. With Gahanna being able to be split geographically into four relatively equal quadrants, this could make it a little bit less of a busy season.

Vice President Bowers said she had similar questions to McGregor. She appreciated Blackford for updating the Council and giving an overview of some of the challenges of the program. As far as the department's

suggestions for fixes to some of these obstacles like changing the application, staggering the application period, or splitting it somehow, or extending it to triennially, Bowers said she would look forward to hearing from the department more about this. Bowers said the other question is how the city is communicating why the program is important to owners and landlords, why does it matter to the department and to the community. Noting the immediate answer on importance, Blackford said it is in the code. He stated that code enforcement officers are not as skilled with some of these conversations as elected officials so that's not usually a conversation they would try to engage in with people. Mayor Jadwin said that the information that people receive in the registration form has the preamble to the code that stated why the code was created. So, this is how the letter begins and the notice that one needs to register property is communicating the exact language from the code that details the reason for implementation. Bowers said she thinks creating more community buy-in and awareness around why it is important is relevant to this. When the department would like to come forward with proposed solutions versus discussing tonight, Bowers would be interested in hearing this. Blackford said they have had those conversations and have yet to receive positive feedback after relaying that information.

President Renner said he thought all on Council had been challenged by some of the more vocal landlords and landowners and making comments to the Council on treating these properties differently. Renner shared that one had challenged and said they were going to drive around to each of [the councilmembers'] homes. He acknowledged the other comment about entering in and disturbing the landlord and tenant relationship. He asked rhetorically whether the Council had done something new. Renner stressed the Council did not create a new wheel, but rather copied something that has happened in other places. Blackford said that he did not know, as he was not involved in the creation. Renner said this was not a new thing and so what is the response. He asked whether the city was treating them differently. He said that in his mind he thought that the city was not. Blackford said that absolutely they were being treated differently. The reason why is that the program allows the City access to the property that it cannot get elsewhere. Whether this is a good idea or not, Blackford said that was not why he was here to debate. Renner asked whether the city was disturbing a landlord and tenant relationship. Blackford said that some of the feedback on this has more merit than others. He did not believe this had a significant merit overall. If one is violating their lease, and the city has pointed this out, ultimately it is the homeowner that receives the information. For example, if one is harboring ducks or something in their yard, and it is a violation of Code, the owner is going to find out. This might create friction, but it is also someone doing something they should not be doing. Blackford stressed this feedback has less merit but was included in the presentation feedback because it is something staff hears frequently. Renner said he appreciated the dialogue, as it helped him know how to respond when rebutting accusations.

Councilmember Weaver said it appeared the Council did not reinvent the wheel on this topic. He said he assumed this is based off a model in other

communities. Blackford said he could not answer, as he was not involved in the program. Vice President Bowers responded the City was not the only community to do this.

Councilmember Schnetzer said specific to the point about traversing the property that maybe there has been change to the application of the program in the various reforms that occurred through the years. However, in his recollection, it was the expectation that code enforcement would view from the public right-of-way whenever they could. Schnetzer said this was a bit of new information for him. He again stated his understanding was that code enforcement would assess from the public right-of-way whatever they could see from the exterior as opposed to going onto the property. Blackford responded that he had always heard that the intent was to go on property. If the city could not or did not, then he said he thought the city would be treating folks equitably. It would be a much fairer approach. To Blackford, this difference is why it is not fair in some people's eyes.

Councilmember Padova asked when going onto the property had started. Blackford said this is the first year of fully implementing the program. It had started to roll out in 2020, but possibly due to the pandemic it had stopped. If there were any done a couple years ago, it was very minor in the number of inspections. Padova said if enforcement was doing a drive-by rather than going onto the property, it sounded like Blackford thought it would be more equitable. She asked whether this would also help with the staffing issues. Blackford responded that it was in his opinion still a very administrative-heavy program. Generally, code enforcement officers are out in the field about 70 percent of the time and 30 percent of the time in the office doing paperwork, whereas this program is about a 90/10. He said he believed the thought process was that the first round there was going to be more drive-by inspections. Anecdotally, about 90 percent of what the staff found would not have been visible from the right-of-way or sidewalk. Blackford said in one day with riding along with code enforcement, there are some properties one cannot see from the right-of-way. Inspection of properties like this was vastly different from traversing the property. Padova asked whether the department was expecting the rate of passing inspection as low. Blackford said this was a good question, as he did not know what the expectations were on the pass rate. He thought maybe it was higher than most people might have thought. Historically, code enforcement does not have a bunch of problems with rentals. Padova asked whether Blackford could go back to slide with the bar graph of single families. She confirmed the 26 multi-family residences is 26 properties. Blackford said he did not know what the unit count was on that. Padova confirmed the 506 listed were units. Blackford said this was correct. He said the property is going to be skewed as it is not the unit total, it is the property. It is skewed heavy toward single family. Out of the 700, there are a lot more properties that are single family, not necessarily more units.

Vice President Bowers said she was not on Council at the time this was passed but that she recalled the conversations. There was always an intention to have an annual inspection of each unit or at least each property.

She said if she recalled correctly, a lot of the conversation was around ensuring rental units were appropriate, were safe for tenants, and that they were meeting community expectations for tenants. She added that if she remembered the conversation correctly, there was always an intention to go onto the property and potentially into the property by design of the program. Bowers thought this was consistent with neighboring communities. Blackford said he could not say too much, as he was not directly involved, but that from what he recalled it was that it was to always go onto the property. Not having been directly involved, he agreed with Bowers' recollection. Bowers asked whether this was one inspection per year or since it is a two-year period, it would be one inspection biannually. Blackford said it was one inspection to receive the permit. If there is a failed inspection, this might take two or more inspections depending on correction of the violations. Once the permit is issued, that signifies one is up to code and the permit would be good for up until December 31, 2023. It is a one-time inspection generally for the two-year process. Bowers said it appeared the city was in a nascent phase of getting the rental inspection and registration up and running.

President Renner thanked Director Blackford for the update and handling the questions and comments from Council. He said he was proud of the work the Department is doing and proud of the City's program.

Mayor Jadwin responded to Councilmember Weaver's question regarding whether the code was precipitated or based upon codes in other jurisdictions. She said, yes, that at least the current Code version of this was, which was adopted by Council in November 2020. This was the result of looking at multiple other jurisdictions that had valid rental registration programs in place, including the City of Columbus. She noted the City Attorney put a lot of research into looking at other jurisdictions.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

2022-0190 CN Special Minutes 6.21.2022

These meeting minutes were Approved on the Consent Agenda.

2022-0191 CN Minutes 6.21.2022

These meeting minutes were Approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Ordinances for Second Reading:

ORD-0031-2022 AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING TAYLOR STATION ROAD ROADWAY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

This Ordinance was Adopted on the Consent Agenda.

End of Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Angelou, seconded by Bowers, to Pass the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - McGregor, Angelou, Bowers, Weaver, Padova, Schnetzer and Renner

F. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

Clerk - None.

Council - None.

G. REPRESENTATIVES:

Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Weaver

President Renner said that June 21 there had been a joint meeting with Council, the first of a semi-annual meeting with the CIC and Council. CIC President Betty Collins had welcomed everyone, made introductions of all CIC trustees and councilmembers in attendance, with attendees sharing professional backgrounds and motivations as to why they were involved in serving. The CIC reviewed its role and the provisions of Ohio Revised Code, specifically sections 1724.01 and 1724.09. There were highlights of the financials for the month of May. The CIC Treasurer reported the line of credit balance of \$692,000 had been repaid down to zero due to reimbursement from the City. The CIC liaison for the CPA firm reviewed the 2021 CIC Year-End financials. The Mayor gave an update of the Economic Development Forum and Town Hall held on June 9, 2022. The Planning Committee discussed applications, including Sheetz gas station, as well as the development in progress at the Crescent. Development Committee mentioned the due to the Intel announcement, Director Strum is getting a lot of calls about interested businesses setting up in the City. There is an offer from the Lapis Project that they are considering that will provide many new medical jobs. Renner added that the CIC had also entered executive session to discuss a real estate matter. The next meeting will be Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at 8:00 a.m. in the Committee Room.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Angelou

Councilmember Angelou said there are no meetings for this month. She said she was happy to attend a portion the 56th Annual National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) conference last month. Angelou stated there also was a Rail and Freight Conference but that she was not able to attend. She also said the LinkUS Community Action Plan booklet would be available for councilmembers to look at. She thought this would be on the ballot in the fall

and has a good chance of passing to make the action plan come together.

Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova said loose ends were still being tied up with respect to the Blues & Jazz Festival. It appeared that it was a successful weekend, and that non-profit organizations that staffed the beverage booths and admission gates earned nearly \$15,000 in stipends and tips. This was a great fundraiser for volunteers for the non-profit organizations. Padova said there will be a picnic for volunteers on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the backyard of the Visit Gahanna and Ohio Herb Center. All the volunteers are welcome. There will be food, games, and prizes. At the Ohio Herb Center, they have hosted the Union County Master Gardeners, Columbus Symphony Women's League, and Worthington Hills Garden Club. Padova recommended that people stop by and visit the gardens of the Ohio Herb Center, as they are in full bloom.

School Board (SB) - Bowers

Vice President Bowers said that the former Lincoln Elementary was demolished. Most of the building is down as of today. Bowers said there were a lot of memories and maybe a few tears shed with people reflecting on good thoughts and experiences there, kids' and grandkids' experiences. She said that even with these memories, there is a lot of excitement for the new things to come on that parcel.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

Mayor

Mayor Jadwin said the 2021 Sidewalk Program notices were mailed Friday, July 1, 2022, to parcels where defects were identified. Letters for parcels for which no defects were identified were mailed today or will be mailed tomorrow. The notice is about a three to four-page letter. It provides details on the timeline if they would like to appeal or request a remarking of their sidewalk, and details on opting out and what to do. The letter also contains information as to where they should direct questions with email to sidewalks@gahanna.gov or by calling the Engineering Division at 614-342-4050. Jadwin said if Council should get questions from residents, direct them to the Engineering Division. The Parks Master Plan is undergoing a refresh of the Parks Comprehensive Master Plan that was done in 2006. The project is underway and led by Director Ferrell. Households in Gahanna were mailed a hardcopy of a survey soliciting feedback from residents on how they use City parks and trails, as well as what they would like to see. There will be an online survey that is available. The consultant on the Plan, Pros Consultants, did the 2006 version is crafting this new online survey that will become available July 12, 2022. This will also be shared on social media. Regarding the Fourth of July events, Jadwin shared from the fireworks display on Friday night to the parade on Monday it was a wonderful weekend. The

company for the fireworks was extremely professional, comments online were very positive. There were also a lot of photos posted and a video by a resident that captured the spirit of the event. Jadwin stated that walking in the parade is always great to see people lined up and excited and happy. Many children were prepared with bags for candy this year and many squirt gun battles were had along the parade route. It was wonderful to see the community come together at these events. There were very few issues at the events, which included maybe two parking issues on Friday night. Typically, the City would have had many more. The Edison held their event Friday night with no issues. There had been a lot of planning involved between the City police and the owners of Edison. Jadwin shared that with all this success, it was disheartening to turn on the news and see what happened in Highland Park, Illinois. Over the last few weeks, some residents had reached out about why the City had fireworks on Friday and the parade on Monday. Jadwin said the reason was all about public safety. These type of events where there is a mass gathering of people involve a great deal of logistical and staff planning to keep control of the event so that people are as safe as possible. Planning happens year-round. It involves multiple departments. The Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police, Director of Public Service, and Director of Parks & Recreation, and the Mayor's office are all involved and aware of the detailed plans that go out. Jadwin noted that Lt. Moffitt is the special events coordinator for these. His reports on the operational requirements and where resources will be located, and all the contingencies are extremely detailed. She shared that no matter how much can be planned, we can never anticipate that goes through the mind of somebody else and risk is always involved. Jadwin expressed her sincere thanks to the Division of Police, the Public Service team, and the Parks & Recreation department for the yearlong effort and dedication put into a successful weekend - including the setup and tear down and clean up that was seamless. They did their work with smiles and teamwork and professionalism. Jadwin thanked all the residents that came out to enjoy the events and to Council in allowing the City to hold these events through the budget process.

City Attorney - No news to report.

I. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Angelou thanked all that had reached out regarding her injury and that it meant a lot. She said she is hoping to be able to go to things next year. She said she had really missed out on the various events this year.

Councilmember McGregor thanked all who had made the Fourth of July activities possible. The fireworks were great. There were a lot of positive comments. McGregor said her granddaughter had ridden along with her in the parade. Her granddaughter did not expect that so many kids there would recognize her, but they did. They knew her from being a lifeguard and a teacher for swimming lessons at Foxboro. McGregor said the humidity was not high, so the parade was probably one of the more pleasant ones weather-wise that she had been to in 40 years.

Councilmember Weaver said he enjoyed the weekend festivities - fireworks, parade, and Red, White, & Blues Block Party at Creekside. He recognized his niece for assisting with candy tossing in the parade. He wished everyone a Happy Belated Fourth and echoed thanks to officers in Public Safety and Parks & Rec, and Public Service staff. It was wonderful seeing so many city staff out and about and enjoying.

Councilmember Padova said a lot of councilmembers were at the same events this weekend. It was good to see so many with smiles and to see colleagues in a different setting. Going through the parade, she recalled kids saying, "There's Coach Mike!" This was good seeing different views of some Council colleagues. The parade was a lot of fun. Padova thanked Director Ferrell and team for doing a great job with everything Friday and cleanup Saturday. She also thanked Chief Spence and police for keeping all safe, especially with news events that occurred later in the day with Highland Park.

Councilmember Schnetzer extended his thanks to the public safety personnel. He was onsite momentarily Friday prior to the fireworks and saw those gearing up to direct traffic and close streets. His experience was great and thought the fireworks show was excellent with an incredible grand finale. The traffic was about as smooth as could be expected with thousands of cars from a single point of entry. Schnetzer commended the Public Service and Parks & Rec teams for their efforts in setting up. He said he saw them out very early setting the cones out and getting ready. It was noticed and appreciated. He said his family had a lot of fun during the long weekend and appreciated all the work that went into the events.

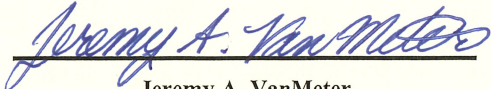
Vice President Bowers thanked the Gahanna Lions Club for organizing the wonderful parade. She echoed thanks to the Public Service Department and Parks & Rec staff for their hard work throughout the entire weekend. She said it was nice to hear nothing but praise and positive comments about the fireworks and celebration at the Golf Course on Friday and parade on Monday. All the hard work and attention to details was appreciated. Bowers congratulated Golf Course Supervisor Joe Hebdo on getting through the busy weekend professionally. She said she knew he had a lot of golfers lined up for tee times and he did a great job. Bowers expressed her thanks to the safety services men and women. She noted they all had a very busy weekend and grateful for all the hours put in. She said it was jarring that it is not surprising anymore that instead of being shocked about another mass shooting, we're asking how many mass shootings happened this weekend. She noted just coming home and thanking God her son was safe. On the topic of voting, Bowers said that today was the last day to register for the August 2nd Primary, but if urged those who still needed to register for the General Election on November 2nd, that there was still a couple more months to do that. She said that elected officials certainly encourage and celebrate participation in a fundamental right of our democracy. With respect to voter turnout, in the 2020 General Election in Gahanna, it was 82 percent based on data on the Ohio Secretary of State's website. Gahanna's turnout in the 2016 General Election was over 78 percent. Voter turnout in Gahanna is typically

higher than that of both Franklin County and the state of Ohio. Bowers shared that voter turnout in odd-numbered years also exceed state and county voter turnout, with the 2019 General Election having almost a 35 percent voter turnout. She said there is a real risk of voter suppression when misinformation indicates that “no one is voting” or that “voters don’t care.” She said that while we have work to do and certainly aspire to 100 percent registration and 100 percent voter participation in every year, the voters of Gahanna are engaged and vote at rates that exceed the county and state. She quoted Evelyn Beatrice Hall, “I do not agree with what you have to say, but I’ll defend to the death your right to say it.”

President Renner said it was a wonderful weekend to celebrate Independence Day. For fireworks, Renner said his family watched from his parents’ porch. With Council colleagues, Renner noted participation in the parade was amazing. There were so many in the community out and so much energy there that was almost sacred. With hearing from residents who were appreciative of him being there, it meant a lot. Renner said that the kids would sometimes group together and hold their bags out and say “Trick-or-Treat.” He said that in response to this, he would stop and redirect that the candy was not for this and ask for them to recite what the importance was of the day. Some tried to say it was just July Fourth. The parents were appreciative and supportive of that. There were some very quick discussions on the actual importance. It was all still very positive. Renner said he was deeply appreciative for all the support of city staff to make this happen. He thanked the Mayor for all the staff and countless people inside departments for their work. He thanked all the officers and veterans along the parade route for their years of service. Renner mentioned that some were very elderly and still made the time to walk up to them. Also, Renner noted that Chief Spence’s birthday happened recently and wished him Happy Birthday.

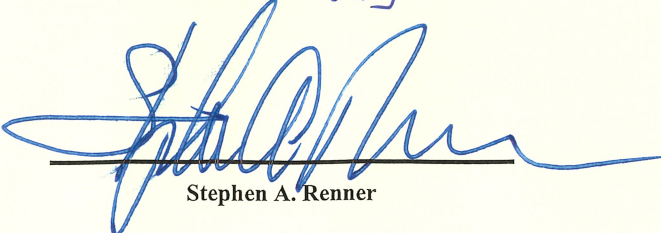
J. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Renner adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.



 Jeremy A. VanMeter
 Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the City Council, this
 18th day of July 2022.



 Stephen A. Renner