



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 27, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, October 27, 2025, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The agenda was published on October 24, 2025. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

[RES-0046-2025](#) A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE "OUR GAHANNA" STRATEGIC PLAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Vice President Weaver invited Senior Director of Administrative Services Miranda Vollmer and Bailey Morlan to discuss the item.

Senior Director Vollmer stated that she and Bailey Morlan of Planning NEXT were present to answer any questions about the Our Gahanna Strategic Plan. Vice President Weaver noted there had been discussion over the last several weeks on the item and it was agendized to circle back for any lingering questions.

President Bowers asked Director Vollmer to share the process of the Economic Development Strategy. Director Vollmer explained that the Economic Development Strategy was developed by economic development experts, the Steering Committee, and the public engagement in tandem with the strategic plan process. Planning NEXT engaged with Ninigret Partners and Julie Colley. Kevin Hively of Ninigret Partners has been working in the Columbus region and did an assessment of the current economic landscape in Gahanna. The assessment is found in Our Gahanna under the "Economic Development Strategy" section. Ms. Colley attended CIC meetings to discuss

the plan and work with Director Gottke and Director Vollmer herself on the strategy. The Steering Committee and public engagement were vital parts of the development of the Economic Development Strategy. Planning NEXT conducted business roundtables during the first round of engagement in addition to the table talks. In the second round of engagement, there was a specific economic development question and associated board of economic development facts for the public to comment on. The economic development goals and strategies had their own table at the joint steering committee with directors in June. Finally, the strategies had two dedicated boards in the third round of engagement and were on the online survey for all participants to review, including Council. The Economic Development Strategy had engagement at the annual economic development day event that featured Josiah Brown. Following the event, Mr. Brown hosted roundtables made up of community partners from the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), schools, and the Chamber of Commerce. In addition, local developers and partners participated. Director Vollmer explained that the Economic Development Strategy was intentionally integrated throughout the entire strategic planning process.

Councilmember Padova acknowledged the work put into the project over the last year. She appreciated everyone's commitment and efforts in obtaining community input. She appreciated that the data was fresh and stated it could help Council in their considerations. Padova referred to materials provided by the administration and specifically called attention to Appendix A on page 11. She referenced the statistic that most homes are single family detached and 9% are multifamily, and some apartment complexes have been built but more are needed to diversify the housing stock. She asked if Planning NEXT could elaborate on why the housing stock diversity is needed for Gahanna. Ms. Morlan stated the data goes hand-in-hand with the city's vacancy rate, which was low as of 2023, which is the most recent data that was pulled. The recommended vacancy rate is 4%, and Gahanna's was lower. This means there is not much available housing stock in Gahanna. Not much housing stock was available for younger professionals who want more flexible housing, such as apartments and multifamily. It was therefore recommended to increase and diversify the housing stock. This helps to reach different types of people with different ages and lifestyles. Councilmember Padova thanked Ms. Morlan and remarked on another statistic regarding renter-occupied housing units on page 14 of the appendix. She wondered if 29% of all housing types or specifically single-family housing is renter-occupied. Ms. Morlan stated that percentage was for all housing types. Padova wondered if short-term rentals are included in the statistic that 2% of housing stock is unoccupied. Ms. Morlan said it depends on how the short-term rental is classified, and whether it is classified as an additional or primary residence in the census. Padova also highlighted Kelsey Bartholomew's work on the

project.

Vice President Weaver extended his gratitude to the committee members, volunteers, and all who participated on the project.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 11/3/2025.

C. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:

RES-0052-2025 A RESOLUTION CONCERNING SERVICES TO PROPERTY PROPOSED FOR ANNEXATION: 7.6+- ACRES IN JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP (Jimmie Toney & Darlene Toney, PID #'s 170-000068-00 and 170-000069-00, 4722 East Johnstown Road and 4736 East Johnstown Road, Columbus, OH 43230) TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA, AND CITY BUFFER REQUIREMENTS AS REQUIRED IN OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 709.023.

City Attorney Tamilarasan explained that the process began when there was a pre-annexation agreement that was filed. The process is now at the second step, and a petition has been formally filed with the county. Within 20 days, the city is to adopt a services resolution outlining what services will be available to the proposed annexed property. During this period the city also has the right to object to the petition on particular grounds, including whether it was statutorily in compliance with code. Per City Attorney Tamilarasan's review, it meets all criteria, and the petition is sufficient. There is no need for Council to object.

Vice President Weaver asked City Attorney Tamilarasan to explain the steps following the resolution for services. Tamilarasan explained that the Board of Commissioners would consider the annexation petition and between 60 and 120 days the city would have to act to officially approve the annexation.

Councilmember Renner inquired about zoning, and whether the property would be zoned according to the city's zoning, or whether the township's zoning would remain. Monica Fuster, Kephart Fisher LLC, spoke as the agent of the annexation. She shared her understanding that Section 3 of the annexation, which Mr. Renner referred to, pertained to Code 709.023(c), requiring a buffer zone for an area that will still be bordering the township. Establishing zoning would be a separate process and would be approved by Council.

Mayor Jadwin noted the administration was available to answer any questions the petitioner may have, and that the decision is ultimately up to Council.

Vice President Weaver emphasized that this step in the process is simply determining what services the city can provide for the properties and stated

that he looked forward to additional discussion on the annexation itself in the future.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/3/2025.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

ORD-0042-2025

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH CONNECT REALTY LLC, BENSON CAPITAL, LLC, AND THE GAHANNA COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT AND BLIGHTED PROPERTIES IN THE CREEKSIDER DISTRICT

Vice President Weaver explained the item was returning to Committee of the Whole after lengthy discussions in other meetings and is currently scheduled for a vote on November 17, 2025. Vice President Weaver thanked Mr. Bob Lamb and Mr. Frank Benson from Connect Real Estate and Benson Capital, respectively, for their attendance as well. Jeff Gottke, Director of Economic Development, opened his presentation by sharing that Council had submitted five issues to him for discussion, which will be answered in his presentation. He also noted there was a memo circulated to Council that would be discussed as well. The five issues Council proposed were:

- The development agreement review process and continuing liabilities to the city.
- Better understanding of the usage of the city-owned parking lot on High Street and working toward a solution to offset the loss of parking.
- The extent of public engagement and the results of the public engagement and communication and the public's response.
- Fiscal impact analysis that demonstrates the net impact of the proposed project on city finances; and,
- Traffic impact study process.

Director Gottke reminded Council and viewers that the project is mixed-use with two phases on Mill Street and High Street. Regarding the first item, Development Agreement Review, Director Gottke stated Council should have the most recent, final, version of the development agreement and the memo circulated by City Attorney Tamilarasan outlining the most recent changes. There were four changes. All parcels were verified that the numbers were accurate. Additionally, the purchase agreement originally had two separate purchase agreements, which were merged into one with staggered closings to cut down on confusion and redundancy. Third, the reconveyance period was clarified as parcel by parcel and it is extinguished with the receipt of building permits. Finally, there was clarity on the staging areas that the construction team could use throughout the process, including where they

would be located and how much of the space could be occupied.

Director Gottke shared that Councilman Schnetzer previously sent questions primarily surrounding liability. Director Gottke explained that there were currently no unexpected public infrastructure costs. He also stated there was no existing liability for environmental or infrastructure issues upon breaking ground, and the developer will bear those costs. He was hopeful that all potential issues would be identified during the inspection period and there would not be any unknowns that might cause future costs to be borne by the developer. He added that the developer could terminate the agreement if they find unknown issues that would be too much to bear. The city does not have an obligation to remedy or fund the issues for the developer. In response to a question about remediation and relocation cost caps, Director Gottke explained there are no caps, but the developer will investigate during the inspection period. There are also no lingering CIC liabilities. The properties are sold as-is and the developer assumes all the risk and cost thereafter. Regarding explicit city costs, the only known cost that the city must bear is the cost of the parcels being conveyed under the development agreement. There is no money changing hands, but there is value to the parcels being conveyed. The city has no obligation to provide any further existing financial resources. However, Director Gottke expressed that the city is making certain commitments regarding a reduction in inspection fees and a commitment of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and New Community Authority (NCA) revenue sharing. These are currently unknown amounts. Finally, there are no revenue guarantees from the TIF, NCA, or other sources. The city is not responsible for covering any shortfall if revenues underperform.

Councilman Schnetzer thanked Director Gottke, adding that what he essentially wants to capture is the city's "all-in" cost on the project. He noted that it seemed to be largely one time and fixed in nature, and Director Gottke's responses were satisfactory.

Director Gottke then addressed the second item, parking demand. In a previous Committee of the Whole meeting, he presented preliminary findings from a district-wide parking study, which included all surface lots from Granville to Carpenter and Shull to Mill. It did not include anything south of Granville Street or the garage. The average daily usage is 28%. High Street surface lot usage was further broken down by morning, noon, and evening use. He then provided heat maps showing overall parking demand across the district. The areas with the greatest demand were on Town Street, the west side of Mill Street, and on High Street south of Ogden Alley. The city parking lot maintained average demand. The study looked at average usage, but special events may require increased parking demand or render space unusable. He stated they should not be considered in these types of parking

studies. He added that it is too early to propose final parking solutions, but progress has been made toward understanding broader patterns across the district and how the lot functions within it. The next steps will be to continue to review the data and craft solutions based on evidence.

Next, Director Gottke addressed the third issue, public engagement. He provided a list of all public engagement activities that have been undertaken so far. He noted that the Creekside Reimagined website is now active. He described feedback as largely positive, noting that the public had asked good questions, voiced support, and shared concerns in a constructive way. Over the course of four events, approximately 200 people provided feedback either through live polling, small group discussion, comment cards in person, or through stations. The results showed a rating of 4.1 out of 5, with 5 being the most positive number for the mixed-use development, as well as 4.6 out of five for the plaza revitalization. During live polling, the five most popular sentiments were “exciting,” “stunning” or “impressive,” “visually appealing,” “fresh” or “modern,” and “unsure” or “apprehensive.” When live poll participants were asked, “What aspects of the proposed mixed-use development stand out to you? Would this have a positive impact overall?” the public reported that it draws people in, bringing attention and investment to Gahanna. Participants felt optimistic overall but inquired about the impact on public services such as roads and schools, as well as affordability. Overall, the public feedback has recognized that Creekside currently lacks attractions, a defined identity, and foot traffic. The public likes the mix of uses and urban feel of the project. The most frequent concerns were the number of units and impacts to city services, water capacity, traffic, and parking. The public appreciated the outreach process and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be included. Feedback continues to be monitored.

Director Gottke shifted to the fourth issue raised by Council, fiscal impact analysis. He prepared a detailed analysis comparing projected revenues to city costs, addressing questions such as what is coming in from the project and what is going out because of the project. He referenced a spreadsheet provided to Council. Director Gottke explained that he used two models, both of which determine revenue and costs by type. In this case, the uses analyzed were multifamily and commercial, which capture restaurants and hotels. The first method captures the marginal cost of growth by unit type. This looks at how much each new apartment and townhouse will generate and consume in terms of city services in a year. It includes data from the Gahanna Jefferson Public Schools annual report, city budget, and discussions with local safety personnel. Method 1 uses local data. The second method also considers use type, but it considers restaurants, residential, and hotels. Method 2 uses national per unit costs. Director Gottke explained that the two fiscal impact methods show a similar result. The result

is estimated to be a fiscally positive effect, particularly noticeable after the property tax abatement period ends. The first model shows a break-even during the first 15 years, and a positive impact afterward. He noted the analyses did not include any induced effect, such as new residents and construction workers spending disposable income at restaurants in the area. The project will likely have downstream impacts that were not necessarily captured during these analyses.

Finally, Director Gottke addressed the issue of traffic impacts. He explained the traffic impact study process. It is based on the size and type of project. There are requirements for what data is required. Developers compile and submit data to the city, which is then reviewed and approved before construction permits are issued. It may take several rounds back and forth between the developer and the city to ensure all traffic concerns are identified before the project moves forward.

Vice President Weaver thanked Director Gottke for his follow-up and provided an opportunity for Councilmembers to ask questions.

Councilmember McGregor acknowledged there were 667 parking spaces, but wondered how many are in private lots, as some private business owners will not permit public parking, even after hours, due to liability. Director Gottke stated it is close to 50% public and 50% private, with a few more private spaces than public. McGregor then asked if residential spaces between Mill and Shull were counted, and Director Gottke replied they were not, unless they were marked public parking areas. If the street is striped, it was counted, but if not, the spots were not counted. Councilmember McGregor then noted that businesses also rely on the public parking lot for their patrons, and she expressed her concern that businesses would fail if parking was eliminated.

Councilmember Padova asked whether Director Gottke knew how often the garage was full, noting that from her perspective, it is rarely full. Director Gottke explained that a once daily hand count accounted for numbers in the garage, but it was only once per day. Given the available space in the parking garage, Padova felt Creekside parking would be sufficient.

President Bowers thanked Director Gottke, Attorney Tamilarasan, Mr. Lamb, and Mr. Benson for their work and stated her appreciation for the deep dive into the fiscal impacts and the review of the development agreement. She asked whether the terms in item 12.4.9 of the development agreement, which discusses the use of city property during development, could be summarized. She hoped to understand which lot or parcel would be allowed to be gravel surfaced and then utilized for parking. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated it includes the phase two lot, the CIC-controlled lot, and parking garage as

permitted by regular public use. The CIC-controlled parcel limits the percentage of use. Mr. Lamb clarified his understanding that the CIC-controlled lot would be fully used, while the city-controlled parcel would only use a percentage of spots during the day. Attorney Tamilarasan explained that it was currently written the way she described, and Mr. Lamb was amenable to switching those permissions. President Bowers then said the agreement currently reads as though all the phase 2 property could be utilized for parking, which would indicate that there would be demolition of all phase 2 property sooner than expected. Mr. Lamb explained that phase 2 has both CIC and city-controlled properties. The CIC-controlled properties would be utilized for parking and city-owned would be used with the limitations stated. President Bowers stated that the property at the north end of North High Street has some historical significance, and she sought clarity on timing and use of that parcel. Mr. Lamb said it was difficult to speak to that property in a determinative way. Mr. Lamb added that a unique aspect of the agreement is that there are multiple parties involved, which work out how costs will be handled. There is a 180-day period to conduct due diligence measures, and then feasibility would be determined. He explained that he cannot provide firm answers to some questions because the land needs to be in contract for them to determine some of the items. Bowers felt it would be helpful for the community to know the soonest the construction process would begin but acknowledged that he may not be able to provide that information at this meeting. He stated that although much of the control is in the hands of the city and state, he suspected construction would be at least one and a half years from the day the development agreement is approved.

Councilmember McGregor asked if there was a report on the discussions with Mifflin Township regarding a TIF. Director Gottke explained that there was a meeting, and more follow-up discussion is anticipated. Mayor Jadwin added that until a development agreement is passed, there is no TIF. The development agreement process needed to be followed and then terms of a TIF could be negotiated if it is established. Director Gottke said that the township was supportive of the project.

Vice President Weaver expressed his thanks for modifications to Sections 5.2 and 12.46 regarding the reconveyance period and developer commitments for arts and community engagement. He stated there would be a public hearing on November 3, 2025, and that the item would be added to the agenda for Committee of the Whole on November 10, 2025. Attorney Tamilarasan added that the minor changes referenced during the meeting could be made in the coming days.

Recommendation: Public Hearing Scheduled 11/3/2025; Further Discussion in Committee of the Whole 11/10/2025; Anticipated Second Reading and Adoption (with Amendment) on 11/17/2025.

E. ITEMS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

[RES-0051-2025](#) A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF GAHANNA AND THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF GAHANNA

Attorney Tamilarasan discussed a redline version of the supplemental agreement for the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), with the repayment provision if they draw on the appropriated funds. They would repay any reimbursement received by the state or the Central Ohio CIC. Director Gottke suggested a clause in section 2 adding the words "for demolition" after the dollar amount, clarifying usage. He also recommended adding a clause to the beginning of the third section stating that if funds are used for demolition, the CIC agrees.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 11/3/2025.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
day of 2025.*

Trenton I. Weaver