



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes Committee of the Whole

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, August 28, 2023

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 August 25, 2023. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

[2023-0149](#)

825 Tech Center Drive Presentation COTW 8.28.2023

Senior Director of Operations Kevin Schultz addressed the Committee by introducing the upcoming presentation. He mentioned that the presentation for the evening would be led by representatives from MSA Design, and the focus would be on discussing various aspects related to the exterior reveal and landscape architecture concepts. He indicated that the presentation would serve as a refresher for some attendees who were not present during the initial exterior reveal in June. Additionally, he mentioned that the presentation would also cover scheduling details, and he handed over the floor to the representatives from MSA Design to begin their presentation.

Keith Hall from MSA Design started his comments by acknowledging the progress made since the last meeting. He mentioned that the design of the project had been advancing diligently during that time. He emphasized that the focus of his presentation would be primarily on the landscaping aspects of the project, particularly the developments related to the exterior of the building. He expressed the team's enthusiasm for the direction the landscaping had taken and saw value in sharing these updates with the Committee. Hall also indicated his intention to provide a recap of the building's exterior design for those who weren't present during the previous meeting in June. He noted that while the design continued to evolve, there had not been significant changes in the appearance of the building since that time. With that introduction, he was prepared to proceed with his presentation.

Project Objectives

During his presentation, Mr. Hall displayed a slide titled "Project Objectives." He mentioned that he had shared this slide during the previous meeting and decided to include it again for reference. He explained that these project objectives were essential guiding principles for the design team as they progressed through the design process. These objectives helped inform decisions and ensure that the design aligned with the project's goals. Although he didn't go through each specific objective on the slide, he wanted to highlight its presence to underscore the importance of their decision-making process.

Site Study

Mr. Hall displayed the existing site plan, showcasing the four almost identical buildings, each with a similar footprint and architecture. He emphasized the intent to give the new municipal building a distinct identity within the City of Gahanna. He then introduced the proposed new site plan, focusing on the changes and features of the layout. The plan included parking on the northern and southern sides, with the majority of work concentrated on the north facade. The dark gray box represented the existing building, while the light gray elements were additions, such as the Parks & Rec Senior Center, lobby with council chambers, and police department. Mr. Hall explained that there were two secure lines, one separating the police area from the northern parking lot and another on the right side, dividing the administration area from the rest of the public space. He mentioned the inclusion of covered parking areas with solar panels, highlighting the incorporation of sustainable features and green technology where feasible. He discussed modifications to the access drive that leads to the front entrance, with an emphasis on security considerations. Additionally, he mentioned the incorporation of a bike path on the site to potentially serve as a trailhead for community members to park their cars and access the bike path. He also highlighted the efficient exit layout for the police department, allowing quick access to the street. Mr. Hall noted that the landscape design would be further discussed in the presentation, addressing security measures and obstacles that prevent direct access to the front of the building. The site layout was designed to accommodate various needs as efficiently as possible.

Exterior Architecture Progress

Mr. Hall discussed updates on the exterior architecture progress. He compared the existing building, which was similar to several other structures in the vicinity, to the proposed design that aimed to give the new municipal building a unique and representative civic look. He explained that portions of the existing facade needed to be removed due to the significant additions being made to the front of the building. Unique spaces such as the multi-purpose room, lobby, and council chambers were positioned as additions at the front. The design choice to use stone materials for the facade was meant to convey stability and longevity, suggesting a government foundation. Glass panels were incorporated to promote transparency and openness about the activities taking place inside the building. Mr. Hall highlighted specific entrances and areas within the proposed design. The

Senior Center entrance with the multi-purpose room was on the left side, the police main entrance on the far right, and the main entrance to the building in the middle. He also pointed out the covered canopy connecting the police entrance to the main entrance. He mentioned that the landscaping in the previous renderings was a placeholder and had since been significantly improved, creating a park-like atmosphere at the front of the building. Mr. Hall discussed the inclusion of a covered canopy and glass curtain walls on the building's administrative sides. He presented various views of the design, showcasing different entrances and aspects of the exterior architecture.

Exterior Landscape Progress

Mr. Hall delved into the intricacies of the landscape plan, which aimed to cultivate an inviting and park-like environment in front of the building to foster community engagement. He expounded upon the extensive enhancements and modifications that were incorporated into the plan since its prior iteration. Commencing at the top of the blueprint and progressing downward, Mr. Hall discussed the expansion of the green area, highlighting its potential as a site for a police memorial. He emphasized the introduction of a meandering pathway leading to the main entrance, where a captivating water feature was positioned to infuse the space with a tranquil and inviting ambiance. Furthermore, the landscape design encompassed a novel trellis canopy and an arrangement of curves, artfully softening the architectural edges of the building. Mr. Hall elaborated on how the landscape team strategically integrated various features, such as well-placed boulders and other elements, serving both aesthetic and practical purposes, including passive security measures while upholding an open and transparent appearance. He noted the incorporation of bioswales, a sustainable stormwater management approach that not only aids in detaining stormwater runoff but also adds an ecological dimension. He highlighted the intention to utilize certain types of herbs as ground covers, contributing to both the functional and aesthetic aspects of the landscape. The presentation of detailed renderings provided a comprehensive view of the landscape design from multiple angles. These renderings showcased key areas such as the inviting outdoor living room near the main entrance, the captivating water feature, and the entrance to the senior center. Mr. Hall underscored the design's intent to facilitate social interaction through well-considered furnishings and an intentional blending of interior and exterior spaces. Concluding this portion of the presentation, Mr. Hall touched on ongoing discussions regarding the selection of specific tree species, ground covers, and herbs, all of which would contribute to enhancing both the visual appeal and practical utility of the outdoor space.

Next Steps

Mr. Hall provided insights into the project's upcoming milestones and construction plans. He discussed next steps that were poised to be taken, shedding light on the project's trajectory. He shared that the Design Development (DD) documents, a vital set of construction documents, were scheduled to be issued the following day. These documents encompassed around 30 of the required construction documents that would significantly delineate the project's scope and design. This represented a pivotal moment

as the well-defined design and scope would be validated by both the local team and the construction manager. This step would also enable an assessment of the project's cost alignment. He then explained the project's two-pronged approach to bid packages. The first package focused on the core and shell aspects, encompassing site clearing, utilities, demolition, construction of the police addition and basement, structural steel implementation, and cladding for both new and existing parts of the building. This package, once underway, would require several months to complete. About 30 to 40 days after the issuance of the first package, the second bid package would be released, concentrating on interior construction. This encompassed interior walls, finishes, doors, hardware, mechanical and electrical systems, and more. Mr. Hall shared that construction was anticipated to commence in early to mid-April of the following year. This timeline would witness the initiation of on-site activities, such as site clearance, building demolition, and the installation of a construction perimeter fence. The projected level of activity indicated an exciting phase for the project, with significant developments on the horizon. As he concluded his remarks, Mr. Hall expressed his enthusiasm and excitement for the forthcoming construction phase.

Questions and Comments from Council

Councilmember McGregor raised a point regarding the arbor-like gazebo structure and its practicality in various weather conditions. She mentioned that while the structure looked aesthetically pleasing, it might not be very functional during rainy or snowy weather. She drew a comparison to her own experience with a porch on her house, stating that a solid roof would make the structure more usable, even during inclement weather. She also noted the importance of having picnic tables placed in shaded areas, as they tend to be more popular among users.

In response to Councilmember McGregor's comment, Mr. Hall acknowledged her concerns. He explained that while the arbor structure would indeed provide shade, its narrow design might not offer adequate protection from rain. He mentioned that if rain became heavy, users would likely need to seek shelter indoors. Mr. Hall pointed out that the canopy's width was limited, particularly towards the ends, and that the wider sections were positioned near entrances to accommodate people seeking shelter. He assured that her input would be considered and appreciated the feedback.

Councilmember McGregor reiterated that with seating displayed under the arbor structure, the area would likely see more use if the structure had a solid roof instead.

Councilmember Bowers thanked Mr. Hall for the presentation and expressed her appreciation for the update on the project. She said the plans looked fantastic. She also inquired whether MSA Design would be involved in the bid packages and raised a question about project labor agreements and CBAs related to the project. Mr. Hall responded that he was not aware of any involvement of MSA Design in the bid packages or discussions about project labor agreements or CBAs. Director Schultz commented that discussions

about project labor agreements and CBAs are more in the realm of a construction manager and would not be under MSA Design's purview. Councilmember Bowers clarified that MSA Design was not involved with this aspect of the project. Director Schultz confirmed that while MSA validates prices and reviews bid packages, they are not involved in the finer details of selecting contractors. The construction manager, Elford, would likely handle those aspects, including considerations like project labor agreements.

Councilmember McGregor expressed her positive feedback on the project's design. She commended the mounding in the trees and the arrangement of parking spaces, noting that the layout wasn't a straightforward shot which she indicated was a concern. She conveyed her appreciation for the efforts put into the design.

Councilmember Padova expressed gratitude for the consideration of Gahanna as the Herb Capital and appreciated the incorporation of herbs in the design. She inquired about the possibility of transferring elements from the existing herb garden to the new site or creating something similar, while also considering the potential challenges of relocating such features. In response, Director Schultz mentioned that decisions regarding movement and plantings might be better addressed by the Parks & Rec team. He noted that the landscape architect had discussions about recreating certain features from the current herb garden at the new location. The idea of using bioswales for both drainage and enhancing the landscape was also discussed. Councilmember Angelou humorously interjected with the comment, "Rosemary, we need Rosemary." Mr. Hall added to the discussion, mentioning the potential for raised planters behind the senior area and emphasizing that any plantings incorporated would align with Gahanna's status as the Herb Capital. He mentioned the intent for low-maintenance or even zero-maintenance plants that would thrive without constant attention.

Vice President Weaver expressed gratitude to Mr. Hall for the update and appreciation for the efforts towards safety and transparency in maintaining an open government feel. He brought up a specific point about safety, asking if there would be boulders placed along the drive as it wraps around from one side of the building to the other, specifically referring to the northeast corner on the building outline slide. In response, Mr. Hall confirmed that boulders would indeed be placed strategically along the drive, particularly around the northeast corner. He mentioned that there are already plans to mound that area and place large stones, which would serve as a deterrent and prevent vehicles from approaching too closely to the building. Vice President Weaver then concluded his comments, thanking Mr. Hall and Director Schultz for their presentations.

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:

[ORD-0064-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF NOTES IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$8,500,000, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, RENOVATING AND IMPROVING

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTING, RENOVATING AND IMPROVING ADDITIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS; FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING THE SAME; IMPROVING THE SITES THEREOF; ACQUIRING LAND AND INTERESTS IN LAND IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND ALL NECESSARY APPURTENANCES THERETO; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Director of Finance Joann Bury began by introducing Brian Cooper from Baker Tilly and Allison Binkley from Squire Patton Boggs, who are involved in the issuance being discussed. She provided an overview of the financial situation, mentioning that in November 2022, the city issued \$8.5 million in short-term notes to purchase the building and land at 825 Tech Center Drive. These notes are due to mature on November 2, 2023. Due to various factors such as market volatility and the time it takes for long-term issuance, the city is considering another short-term note to roll over the existing \$8.5 million. Director Bury stated that the final estimated cost for the project is still being worked on despite progress in design and architecture. To address timing considerations, she recommended an ordinance with an emergency and waiver of second reading to reissue the notes on a short-term basis for another year at the same amount of \$8.5 million. The Ohio Market Access Program (OMAP) would be used, just as with the previous notes, for this negotiated issuance.

Vice President Weaver sought clarification on the need for an emergency and waiver due to the timeframe. He pointed out that there is ample time until November, considering it is currently August. In response, Director Bury explained that despite the note maturity date being in November, the process of getting to the market, pricing the notes, negotiating the sale, and completing the necessary procedures can take around 45 to 60 days. Therefore, having enough time is crucial to ensure the smooth issuance and sale of the notes.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda with Waiver and Emergency Adoption on 9/5/2023.

[ORD-0065-2023](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS; WAIVING SECOND READING - Capital Improvement Fund, Water Capital Fund, and ARPA Fund for 2023 Capital Projects

Director Bury began by addressing a request for supplemental appropriations related to the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). She explained that during the initial appropriations for 2023, only essential items from the CIP were included, as the plan was being finalized. Now that the CIP is fully adopted, the presented supplemental appropriations pertain to the projects outlined in the plan. She shared that a chart accompanying the legislation outlines the amounts, categories, and funds associated with each project. Department directors were available to address any queries about specific projects, while Senior Director Schultz could provide insights into the CIP and any pertinent items. She noted that this request, too, was put forth with a waiver and emergency.

Vice President Weaver interjected briefly to mention that he saw the waiver request, but not an emergency. Director Bury then corrected her earlier statement, emphasizing that emergencies were not necessary for appropriations.

Councilmember Bowers inquired about the safety aspects of the supplemental appropriations, specifically related to police cruiser and officer technology, as well as police vehicle replacement. Chief of Police Jeff Spence addressed the inquiry, explaining that the supplemental request aimed to replenish the police fleet program that had been a part of the capital budget for several years. He highlighted the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in vehicle production shutdowns and delayed vehicle deliveries, causing high mileage vehicles and catastrophic failures. He elaborated that the requested amount was intended to ensure timely ordering of replacement vehicles in 2024, considering the extended ordering timelines. Chief Spence also clarified that when they appropriate funds for officer technology, it covers the complete package of the vehicle, including mobile data computers, electronics, data communications, emergency equipment, and light bars.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Consent Agenda with Waiver and Adoption on 9/5/2023.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

[ORD-0066-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - General Fund for Risk Insurance Renewal

Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, informed the council that the City of Gahanna had joined the Central Ohio Risk Management Association (CORMA) pool earlier in the year for property and casualty insurance. She referred to Resolution 0007-2023, which had been passed during that time. She explained that CORMA's renewal period is from October 1st to September 30th of each year. Since the switch to the new insurance carrier happened in April, the city paid for coverage from April to September 30th of the current year. She requested a supplemental appropriation of \$200,000 for the insurance renewal effective from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2025. Director Vollmer also mentioned the budgeting cycle challenge due to the renewal date being in October rather than January.

Councilmember Bowers inquired about the difference between the appropriated amount and the renewal cost. Director Vollmer clarified that the appropriated amount from the previous year was prorated based on the pool the city was in at the time. The transition to CORMA pool mid-year caused a higher cost structure. The appropriation was prorated to cover April to September, and the additional funding was needed for the upcoming renewal year due to the budget calendar misalignment.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 9/5/2023; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 9/18/2023.

E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[ORD-0067-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE LEVYING OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTAIN REAL ESTATE WITHIN THE 2021 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering, began by informing the council that the 2021 Sidewalk Maintenance Program had been concluded. The quantities and costs related to property owners within the program had been finalized. Following the city's code and procedures for recapturing payment, the next step was to hold a public hearing. After the public hearing, property owners had a 30-day window to make full payment or opt for the assessment to be added to their property taxes. The public hearing was scheduled for September 5th, and the process would proceed accordingly.

Councilmember McGregor had a question regarding the certification of the assessment's amount, effective date, and interest rate to the county auditor, specifically asking if the interest rate was still zero percent. Director Komlanc confirmed that his understanding was indeed that the interest rate remained at zero percent.

Vice President Weaver mentioned the timeline adjustments based on recent changes and thanked Director Komlanc and his team for their work and responsiveness to Council's feedback.

Councilmember Bowers said she was fine with this item going forward on the consent agenda, as the assessment was a procedural matter.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Consent Agenda with Waiver and Emergency Adoption on 9/5/2023.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Angelou reminded Council about the NOPEC presentation slated for the regular Council meeting agenda for September 5. Vice President Weaver noted that the meeting was on a Tuesday, since Monday, September 4 was recognized as the Labor Day holiday.

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
day of 2023.*

Trenton I. Weaver
Chair

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