



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes Committee of the Whole

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, February 26, 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 7:03 p.m. The agenda was published on February 23, 2024. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

1. **Public Arts Policy - Status Update and Discussion**

Mayor Jadwin began by updating the council on the ongoing efforts with outside counsel to finalize a proposed policy. She acknowledged the challenges that outside attorneys face due to other pressing matters like litigation and depositions. The Mayor expressed optimism about sharing the policy with the Council soon.

Councilmember Padova then shifted the discussion to Friendship Park, sharing her experience of visiting the park on a beautiful day in February. She inquired about the Story Trail and sought information on the frequency of changing or switching its content.

Mayor Jadwin responded, explaining that the Story Trail content is typically switched out in the spring. However, she couldn't provide an exact date for the change.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification on whether this change was an annual occurrence. Mayor Jadwin confirmed that, indeed, it usually happens yearly. Councilmember Padova raised concerns about potential issues similar to those faced with snowplows and emphasized the importance of coordinating with schools and the library.

In response to Councilmember Padova's concerns, Mayor Jadwin indicated she was not aware of the current status of discussions regarding the Story

Trail. She stated that the matter falls under the purview of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Councilmember Padova expressed her worry about potential hesitations from schools to start working on projects if they fear the materials won't be displayed. She sought clarification on the series of arts advisory panel meetings related to this issue, asking if legal counsel, the former City attorney, and a member of the administration were involved.

Mayor Jadwin responded that Ms. Vollmer was present to assist in facilitating the conversation. The Mayor acknowledged that there were questions from the panel regarding a draft policy presented by its members in December. However, Mayor Jadwin expressed concern that the policy provided was incomplete, lacking some critical components. In an effort to avoid inconveniencing the panel by requiring them to reconvene, the Mayor explained that, after consulting with outside counsel, the decision was made to revisit the meeting minutes and review the discussions. Mayor Jadwin noted that there were extensive emails related to the matter, and the outside counsel, as informed, would work on crafting the missing language based on the discussions held by the panel. Furthermore, Mayor Jadwin mentioned that the outside counsel had identified proposed policies from other locations, which she believed had already been shared with the Council. It was anticipated that the outside counsel would incorporate relevant language from these proposals to enhance the completeness of the draft policy.

Councilmember Padova expressed her concern about the current status of planning for the Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival (CBJF) and the installation of Bright Blocks in parks. She emphasized the need for a defined timeline to ensure that upcoming events, such as Herb Day and the Community Arts program in May and June, are not missed.

Mayor Jadwin acknowledged Councilmember Padova's concerns, agreeing that a timeline needed to be established. Councilmember Padova highlighted that nearly three months had passed with no visible progress. Mayor Jadwin clarified that there had been movement, specifically an evaluation and collaboration with outside counsel to finalize a policy. The Mayor hoped to have a policy adopted by the end of January, but this did not occur. She assured the Council that they would not go past the end of the first quarter without having a policy in place.

Councilmember Padova accepted Mayor Jadwin's explanation, expressing the hope that a policy would be established by the end of March. Mayor Jadwin clarified that no later than the end of March was the goal.

President Bowers sought clarification on the missing piece of the policy, focusing on the content of art displayed in public spaces.

Mayor Jadwin explained that the missing parameters were related to the legal scrutiny required for art in public spaces and the framework for review. She confirmed that they were working with Aaron Glasgow at Isaac Wiles and Donald Brey on the draft policy.

President Bowers inquired about City Attorney Tamarasan's involvement, noting former City Attorney Mularski's involvement.

Mayor Jadwin clarified that she believed City Attorney Tamarasan had not connected with them yet but was welcome to do so. President Bowers thanked Mayor Jadwin, expressing the Council's expectation for an update within the next couple of weeks.

Vice President Weaver expressed anticipation in seeing the policy, emphasizing that over 300 days had passed since the issue was first addressed.

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE:

[MT-0005-2024](#)

A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE PERMISSION TO BID CONTRACT FOR 2024 STREETLIGHT PAINTING SERVICES

Shawn Anverse, Director of Public Service, presented a single agenda item for consideration during the meeting. He introduced a motion seeking authorization for the maintenance of approximately 1,900 streetlights situated throughout the city. The regular upkeep, including an annual painting cycle, is necessary for these lights. Director Anverse specified that in the 2024 program, around 300 streetlights would be painted, with a focus on areas considered to be in poor condition.

Vice President Weaver sought clarification on whether the proposed service included only painting or if it encompassed bulb replacement. Director Anverse confirmed that the service solely covered painting, and any electrical work, including bulb replacement, was handled by another contractor called Complete General. Vice President Weaver referenced a prior approval in October, seeking confirmation that it was related to the same service. Director Anverse affirmed this, providing the necessary clarification.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/4/2024.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0018-2024](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT INCENTIVE AGREEMENT WITH JE GROTE COMPANY, INC. TO FACILITATE RENOVATION OF AN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 1160 GAHANNA PARKWAY, PART OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #3

Mr. Shannon Hamons, Director of Economic Development, reviewed a request for an ordinance authorizing the mayor to execute a community reinvestment agreement with the JE Grote Company. The agreement aimed to facilitate the renovation of an existing industrial building located at 1160 Gahanna Parkway, part of Community Reinvestment Area #3. Mr. Hamons expressed his pleasure in discussing the potential Community Reinvestment

Agreement (CRA) incentive with JE Grote, emphasizing that CEO Bob Grote was present to address any questions after the presentation. Mr. Hamons provided background information on JE Grote's history in Gahanna since 1982 and their proposal to invest \$4.5 million in the existing building. The investment aimed to modernize the corporate headquarters, office areas, and install new equipment to meet growing manufacturing demand for food processing equipment. This expansion was expected to enhance worker retention and attract new employees. The company's request initially sought a 100% abatement for 15 years, but based on job creation estimates, Mr. Hamons recommended a 50% incentive. He outlined the financial impact of the proposed incentive, highlighting that the city would collect over \$1.2 million in new taxes over the 15-year period, with more than \$339,000 shared with the school district. The total retained in new taxes for the city, including income taxes for existing jobs, was estimated to be over \$5 million. Mr. Hamons addressed questions related to the company's employee benefits: employer pays 80% of the employee health insurance premium, contributes between \$750 and \$1,500 annually to individual health savings accounts, pays 50% of dental and 100% of vision premiums, and the employer also matches 401K contributions of 75% for the first 3% of deferrals and 20% on the remaining 4 to 15% of employee deferrals. Additionally, all employees participate in a profit-sharing plan which has been paid every year since the company's inception. Employees receive bonuses for milestone service awards and receive a lumpsum award based on tenure upon retirement. Hamons noted they also have a very liberal personal sick and vacation policy.

President Bowers asked how the company attracts and retains talent beyond the benefit package. Robert Grote, CEO of JE Grote Company, Inc., addressed the question. He noted the company is heavily involved with Gahanna Lincoln High School for jobs in the factory. They also recruit from Ohio State and the various surrounding community colleges and in engineering specialties. He asked whether Bowers could further elaborate. President Bowers asked how job creation benefitted Gahanna residents specifically. Mr. Grote responded that the company's reach expanded into Lancaster, Newark, Johnstown, and Delaware, but that local recruiting in Gahanna was a priority. President Bowers inquired as to how hourly wage workers qualified for the benefits and 401K package. Mr. Grote confirmed that they qualified and that they do profit sharing for everyone in the organization based on what they make from an hourly standpoint. President Bowers asked if Mr. Grote could speak to longevity and retention of employees. Mr. Grote explained that the company had almost zero turnover. He invited members to see the company. They have been in business 52 years and some employees have worked there for 47 years. He stressed that people stay because they are paid well and it is a very enjoyable place to work. President Bowers asked if any other Grote businesses were beneficiaries of other incentives in Gahanna. Mr. Grote said there were none that he was directly involved with. He mentioned that Donatos is another Grote business but has a totally different ownership group. President Bowers asked if The Edge receives an abatement as well. Director Hamons confirmed that the building that they are in receives an annual incentive. He was unsure of what year they were in but said he could provide that information. Hamons believed they had received it for several years. Hamons noted Mr. Grote had indicated the

companies were independent operating units and that therefore any incentive that they get had no bearing on any of the other affiliated companies. Mr. Grote clarified that The Edge was 100% Jim Grote. The Grote Company was Jim Grote, Robert Grote, and Jack Grote, Robert's brother. He noted that Jim Grote was the common denominator between the two. Jim Grote is Robert Grote's uncle. President Bowers asked if Donatos was owned by Jim Grote as well. Mr. Grote explained that it was Jim Grote and his daughter Jane and son-in-law Tom. President Bowers asked Director Hamons on the process for review through the TIRC (Tax Incentive Review Council) on job creation benchmarks. Hamons clarified that there would be an annual review of job creation benchmarks following an initial three-year review. The TIRC would conduct these annual reviews to assess the company's performance in meeting the established benchmarks.

Councilmember Jones asked Mr. Grote to elaborate on any plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion representation goals or efforts as the company looks to grow its workforce over the next three years. Mr. Grote indicated that the industry and manufacturing had been lacking in representation for workers who are female and people of color. He stressed the company was very focused on bringing more diversity into its workforce. He said the company advertises to come on board, they will provide the training on running the machines, teaching people how to weld, etc. This is an effort being made with their operations in Gahanna. Elsewhere, he noted, locations were already much more diverse because of where their location.

The discussion concluded with an understanding that Grote's success was considered the city's success, emphasizing the mutually beneficial nature of the proposed incentive. Director Hamons reaffirmed the commitment to yearly reviews and expressed the city's desire to track and evaluate the project's success as the company grows and contributes to the community.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/18/2024.

E. ITEMS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

[ORD-0007-2024](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE PART ELEVEN - PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Michael Blackford, Director of Planning, addressed the ongoing discussion about the zoning code rewrite, focusing specifically on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). He began by recalling the previous meeting's discussion and the consideration of additional parameters for ADUs. The proposed changes centered around reinforcing safeguards, particularly that ADUs a lot must be owner-occupied and, more specifically, occupied by a family member. Director Blackford presented the straightforward language, referencing the legible document included in the council members' packets. Parking regulations for ADUs were also discussed, acknowledging the typical requirement of two off-street parking spaces for residential units. Considering the smaller size and nature of ADUs, which usually accommodate fewer people and vehicles, the proposal suggested adding language to mandate an

additional off-street parking space. Mr. Blackford emphasized the flexibility of the proposed changes, assuring the Council that staff could adjust based on their preferences. He highlighted the incorporation of language from Chapter Seven of the codified ordinances, which deals with rental regulations, specifically focusing on definitions related to family and owner-occupied structures. Notably, he emphasized that while rental regulations operate on an annual basis, ADUs would follow a one-time approval process due to the nature of construction.

Councilmember Renner expressed gratitude to Mr. Blackford for the information and sought clarification regarding the impact on entities like Airbnb and VRBO on the west side. He inquired about the process that would be in place to address such entities once the proposed changes are enacted.

Director Blackford clarified his perspective on the discussions related to short-term rentals and ADUs, emphasizing that these are distinct topics. He pointed out that the proposed language aimed to prevent ADUs from being utilized as rental units, thus excluding them from platforms like Airbnb or VRBO. Director Blackford noted that the existing rental program would apply to both primary and accessory dwelling units, requiring the same registration process.

Councilmember Renner sought further clarification on how the City planned to address the challenges posed by short-term rentals, particularly mentioning a specific situation causing problems in the neighborhood. He shared instances of increased traffic and blocked mailboxes due to excessive visitors, advising affected residents to contact the Gahanna PD.

Director Blackford deferred to Mayor Jadwin, who reiterated the discussion from the previous committee meeting. The Mayor indicated that regulating short-term rentals would likely require separate legislation beyond the zoning code. She updated the Council on her efforts to gather information, mentioning discussions with the Ohio Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Mayor disclosed that the Association had proposed legislation at the state level, and she was awaiting the details to begin local research. Acknowledging the challenges posed by short-term rentals, Mayor Jadwin emphasized the need to address resident concerns without subjecting the city to legal liability. She assured that the administration would work with the City Attorney and collaborate with the Council to develop legislation if there was an appetite for such measures.

President Bowers, prompted by Councilmember Renner's inquiry regarding the zoning code rewrite specifically focusing on ADUs, sought clarification on the conditional use nature of ADUs and requested Director Blackford to elaborate on the process a homeowner would undergo when seeking to add an ADU to their property.

Director Blackford confirmed that ADUs would indeed be subject to a conditional use process, commencing with a comprehensive staff review across multiple city departments to assess compliance with various codes. Following staff evaluation, the application would proceed to the Planning

Commission for approval or denial. The final step would involve the building permit process.

President Bowers delved further into the conditional use application process, seeking insight into how staff would verify compliance with the legislation, particularly regarding the family-related criteria proposed in the redlined version. Director Blackford explained that the staff review process would address the family occupancy aspect. Drawing parallels with the rental registration program, Director Blackford highlighted exemptions for family members and the need for an owner-authorized, notarized statement confirming the familial relationship and the absence of rent payments.

Councilmember Jones sought additional clarification on the verification of family ties, questioning whether birth certificates would be involved. Director Blackford humorously dismissed this notion, confirming that such extensive documentation was unnecessary, and jokingly stating, "if so, I'm out of here." Councilmember Padova sought clarification on the impact of the proposed zoning code changes on existing ADUs within the city. Director Blackford responded that, to his knowledge, there were no known ADUs in Gahanna. However, he explained that if any were discovered, they would be considered legal non-conforming, enjoying grandfathered status until any modifications were sought.

Councilmember McGregor expressed concern about ADUs as separate buildings, emphasizing difficulties in monitoring occupancy and potential misuse. Director Blackford acknowledged these challenges, highlighting the common issue of monitoring various uses on residential properties.

Councilmember McGregor further inquired about separate addresses for standalone ADUs and the complexities of monitoring changes in ownership and potential rentals. Director Blackford admitted uncertainty regarding separate addresses and agreed that such monitoring presented challenges, echoing the broader difficulties of regulating land uses. Expressing reservations about standalone ADUs, Councilmember McGregor questioned the feasibility of monitoring such structures effectively. Director Blackford acknowledged the inherent difficulties but emphasized that challenges with monitoring land use were a recurring issue in various contexts. He shared that code enforcement already addressed similar challenges regularly and noted that the proposal would align with the will of Council.

Councilmember Padova expressed gratitude to Director Blackford for clarifying details about the proposed changes and commended the efforts, particularly in aiding existing businesses affected by rezoning. In the context of ADUs, she highlighted the city's land use plan aiming to maximize space utilization by property owners within reasonable limits. Councilmember Padova acknowledged the importance of meeting code requirements, specifically noting the parcel occupancy limit of 30-40%, depending on the zone district, and the need to adhere to setbacks.

Director Blackford elaborated on the development parameters and setbacks, emphasizing the importance of preventing structures from encroaching on

setbacks to preserve the character of the area. Councilmember Padova, recognizing the need to avoid backyard structures that consume the entire space, voiced her support for individuals creating ADUs for rental purposes, provided they meet code standards and are owner-occupied. However, she expressed reservations about the family provision, suggesting its removal.

Councilmember McGregor raised a concern about situations where a property is sold, and the main dwelling unit is rented out, rendering the ADU unusable due to the owner-occupancy requirement. Director Blackford acknowledged the potential violation and the challenge of investigating such cases based on code enforcement complaints. Councilmember McGregor also inquired about the strain on sewer capacity resulting from additional units. Director Blackford clarified that the evaluation of sewer capacity would be part of the building permit review process, ensuring compliance with utility capacity during the assessment of proposed developments.

President Bowers expressed the need to determine the Council's stance on the matter. Vice President Weaver then commended Director Blackford for his dedication and engagement, expressing support for initially being overly restrictive with ADUs. He favored restrictions like owner occupancy and familial ties, believing it would be more feasible to ease restrictions later if necessary. Acknowledging Councilmember McGregor's concerns about potential issues when properties change hands, Vice President Weaver highlighted the flexibility provided by Chapter 11, allowing variances to be sought based on unique situations.

Councilmember Padova raised a question about whether staff informs individuals about the process for seeking variances when circumstances change. Director Blackford confirmed this and explained staff's role in guiding people through the application processes for conditional use and variances. President Bowers followed up with a question about the parking addition in the proposed changes, seeking clarification on the minimum one off-street parking space required for ADUs. Director Blackford clarified that existing parking on the site, such as driveways or garages, could fulfill this requirement.

The discussion shifted to considerations about on-street parking enforcement, with President Bowers noting that requiring parking spaces doesn't guarantee their use. Vice President Weaver asked if everyone was satisfied with the proposal as written, and President Bowers sought input on the suggested changes.

Councilmember Padova reiterated she had expressed her desire for a change in the proposed ADU section.

President Bowers responded, acknowledging that there might be a possibility of relaxing the ADU section once short-term rental regulations are in place. She expressed support for such regulations and hoped for a Council consensus. Vice President Weaver shared his preference for the redlined changes, and Councilmembers Jones and Renner also expressed support for the proposed changes. Councilmember Padova mentioned her desire for

some modifications but indicated overall support for the package. Director Blackford welcomed the feedback and stated the staff's readiness to make modifications after short-term rental regulations are established.

President Bowers then shifted the focus to constituent hours related to the proposed zoning code, highlighting positive feedback received during public outreach. Vice President Weaver echoed President Bowers' sentiments, expressing gratitude for the comprehensive work on the zoning code. Director Blackford appreciated the positive feedback and emphasized the importance of spending the necessary time on ADUs. Vice President Weaver noted the schedule for public hearings and voting on the proposed changes. The discussion concluded with thanks to Director Blackford and his colleagues for their efforts.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024 (with public hearing); Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/18/2024 (with public hearing).

F. ITEMS FROM THE COUNCIL OFFICE:

[RES-0006-2024](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF GAHANNA TO BECOME A POWER A CLEAN FUTURE OHIO COMMUNITY AND ADOPTING A GOAL TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Renner began by expressing gratitude and acknowledging the need to level-set the discussion on electricity aggregation. He emphasized the importance of bringing information together before considering bids and exploring various concepts beyond aggregation, such as sources of energy generation within renewables like solar and wind. Councilmember Renner connected this topic with the Sustainability Task Force initiated by the Mayor, stressing the necessity of a municipal energy plan for efficient energy use and emission reduction. Referring to a meeting with Joe Flarida from Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO), Councilmember Renner appreciated the positive and constructive dialogue held on February 23rd. He highlighted the importance of collaboration between Council's priorities and initiatives and the dedicated staff responsible for the actual work. Councilmember Renner explained that PCFO's services are free, and before engaging them, the city needs to formally join their organization by passing a resolution. Councilmember Renner anticipated the need for further committee discussions to ensure a clear understanding of the proposal and the direction of the Council. He mentioned that Joe Flarida would be available for the next Committee of the Whole meeting to address any final thoughts or questions. Councilmember Renner then drew attention to highlighted areas in the draft resolution, specifically noting the need for discussion on identifying contact persons between the city and PCFO. In closing, Councilmember Renner sought feedback, questions, and the Council's will on the creation of an energy plan and potential involvement in power aggregation.

Vice President Weaver opened the discussion by expressing appreciation for the efforts put into the matter. Regarding the appropriate contact person, Vice President Weaver suggested deferring to the Mayor and her staff, considering

it as an operational item that could involve valuable and important work for the operations team.

Mayor Jadwin responded, stating that they currently don't have a definite answer about the appropriate contact person. She highlighted the positive meeting held with Mr. Flarida on Friday, emphasizing Councilman Renner's suggestion to bring the matter back to committee for further discussion. Mayor Jadwin emphasized the need to use this meeting as a listening tool to understand Council's comments and feedback, aiming to work collaboratively and address concerns.

President Bowers thanked Councilman Renner for advancing the issue and expressed interest in understanding the deliverables and support provided by Power Clean Future Ohio. She sought clarity on the menu of options and how they align with other priorities, particularly green energy aggregation. Councilman Renner responded, emphasizing the importance of establishing a baseline through the creation of a municipal energy plan before moving forward with aggregation. He highlighted the need to set goals and targets for emission reduction, indicating that this work would help the Council make informed decisions efficiently.

The discussion continued with Councilmembers expressing interest in the menu of options and the potential timeline for implementing energy aggregation, balancing the urgency with the need for thorough planning. Councilman Renner reiterated the significance of understanding the goals and targets before proceeding with aggregation, emphasizing that the work with Flarida and his team would likely not take much time based on their interactions.

Councilmember Schnetzer responded to the Mayor's suggestion of using the session for listening by posing several questions for the administration to research and provide input on. He specifically inquired about the staffing perspective, questioning whether additional staff would be needed to manage the proposed initiative, considering the robust discussions on staffing levels during the budget session in November and December. Councilmember Schnetzer also expressed concerns about the feasibility and cost of committing to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, seeking clarification on whether such a commitment is attainable.

Councilmember McGregor raised a question regarding the baseline for calculating the 50% reduction, noting that if 2010 levels weren't counted, determining the reduction could be challenging. Councilmember Renner responded, explaining that Flarida and his team have a database to calculate historical emission levels based on various sources, including transportation, municipal energy usage, and residential energy usage. Councilmember McGregor further mentioned a surtax initiated by Athens on electric usage, expressing disapproval and stating that she would not favor such an approach. Councilmember Renner agreed, stating that they could make it clear to Flarida from the beginning that such a measure is not desired. He emphasized that the power aggregation towards renewables, especially in residential areas, could easily contribute to meeting the emission reduction

goal. Additionally, Councilmember Renner assured that the approach and focus could be tailored to include municipal, commercial, and residential sources based on the Council's preferences.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification on whether the proposed initiative would expedite the City's progress toward aggregation. Councilmember Renner responded with certainty that it would indeed facilitate quicker progress.

Councilmember Jones asked whether there was a reciprocal agreement or expectations from the consultant regarding the goals Gahanna wants to achieve. Councilmember Renner explained that the consultant, PCFO, primarily aims to showcase their assistance to Gahanna, listing the city among the communities they've helped. He emphasized that PCFO operates on philanthropic donations and seeks recognition for their contributions.

President Bowers raised the question of whether Gahanna could simultaneously proceed with both the resolution to join PCFO and discussions on renewable aggregation. Councilmember Renner acknowledged the possibility and mentioned that Florida, the PCFO representative, would be better equipped to answer such questions. However, he urged some restraint, emphasizing the need for analysis before making significant decisions.

Expressing concerns about the current costs of electricity and the affordability of renewable aggregation for residents, President Bowers emphasized the urgency to move forward on both fronts. Councilmember Renner acknowledged the urgency but highlighted the complexity of the topic, especially with rising costs due to decisions made by regulatory bodies. He mentioned that while residents can manage costs through the PUCO's website, there is widespread confusion and lethargy in acting, underscoring the value of aggregation.

President Bowers proposed scheduling another meeting with Mr. Florida to continue discussions on the aggregation aspect alongside a broader municipal plan. Councilmember Renner agreed, requesting information on the timing of the meeting.

Mayor Jadwin expressed her initial appreciation for Councilman Schnetzer's inquiry regarding staffing implications. She shared her preliminary perspective, stating that while she supports the resolution and the potential for aggregation, attempting both within one year could pose a significant challenge. Mayor Jadwin emphasized the need for further discussions with Mr. Florida to understand staffing requirements in the context of existing initiatives and projects.

President Bowers acknowledged the importance of understanding the administration's priorities and their alignment with the discussion on resource allocation. Mayor Jadwin appreciated the consideration and reiterated that the meeting aimed to gauge the Council's appetite for the initiatives.

Councilmember McGregor raised a historical concern about a previous aggregation attempt in the early 2000s, where the costs increased instead of benefiting residents. President Bowers acknowledged the historical challenge and noted improvements in current aggregation plans, emphasizing the need to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Councilmember Renner supported President Bowers' point, highlighting changes in laws and policies since the early 2000s, suggesting a smarter approach by aggregators in drafting contracts. He mentioned the increased flexibility and control municipalities have in current contracts.

Councilmember Padova inquired whether pursuing the resolution alongside aggregation would alleviate some administrative workload. Mayor Jadwin and Councilmember Renner were uncertain and suggested raising the question with Mr. Florida.

Councilmember Renner expressed caution, pointing to examples of rushed aggregation causing issues. He suggested Florida could provide insights into the sequencing of aggregation and the resolution.

Vice President Weaver expressed anticipation for the committee meeting on the 11th, expecting Mr. Florida's presence and a potential vote on the 18th. He added his full support for both the resolution and aggregation, expressing hope for simultaneous progress in both areas.

Recommendation: Held in Committee. Further discussion scheduled 3/11/2024.

[RES-0007-2024](#)

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MARCH 2024 AS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1, 2024 AS THE BETSEY, LUCY, AND ANARCHA DAYS OF RECOGNITION FOR THE CITY OF GAHANNA

President Bowers introduced updates to this year's Women's History Month resolution, recognizing the Betsey, Lucy, and Anarcha days of recognition. These days were highlighted to bridge the gap between Black History Month and Women's History Month. President Bowers expressed appreciation for the collaboration with Ms. Jones and Mr. VanMeter on these modifications.

Councilmember Jones expressed agreement and appreciation for the opportunity to connect the themes of Black History Month and Women's History Month through this resolution. She acknowledged the ongoing work on identifying a potential guest of honor.

Councilmember McGregor offered a brief comment, expressing the opinion that the resolution was too lengthy and contained too many details, suggesting it should be more concise.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/4/2024.

G. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[ORD-0011-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO

CONTRACT WITH STRAWSER PAVING COMPANY FOR THE TAYLOR STATION ROAD AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD ROUNDABOUT PROJECT (ST-1087); AND AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION - OPWC Capital Project

Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering, presented five items. The first two items were related to the recent bid opening for the Taylor Station - Claycraft roundabout project. After receiving eight bids and analyzing the costs of renting versus purchasing portable changeable message boards, Strawser Paving was recommended for the contract award, amounting to \$2.2 million, with an additional \$94,000 for the portable message boards. The City had secured roughly a million dollars in funding from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), covering part of the project costs.

Director Komlanc then discussed the second item, involving a contract modification with EMH&T for construction administration and inspection services associated with the project. This modification amounted to just under \$300,000.

Councilmember Schnetzer inquired about the flow of funds with regard to the grant from OPWC. Joann Bury, Finance Director, explained that the City would spend the money first, and then request reimbursement from OPWC, leading to a temporary negative balance in the fund until reimbursements are received.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

[ORD-0012-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORD-080-2020 CONTRACT WITH EMH&T FOR ENGINEERING AND DESIGN OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INTERSECTION OF TAYLOR STATION AND CLAYCRAFT ROADS TO INCLUDE COSTS FOR CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION AND INSPECTION

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

[ORD-0013-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH STRAWSER PAVING COMPANY FOR THE 2024 STREET AND SIDEWALK PROGRAM (ST-1110)

Director Komlanc provided an update on two recently opened bids. The first bid was for the 2024 Street Maintenance, Street Reconstruction, and Sidewalk Program. From the two bids received, Strawser Paving emerged as the lowest and most responsive bidder. Director Komlanc recommended awarding the contract to Strawser for \$5,791,947, inclusive of a traditional 10% contingency.

Councilmember Jones sought clarification on the bid comparisons, particularly regarding the base bid and alternate bid. Director Komlanc explained that alternate bids include additional items, citing the inclusion of golf course cart path paving and pavement markings throughout town as

examples.

Vice President Weaver raised concerns about previous work by Strawser, referencing constituent issues. Director Komlanc addressed this by stating that 68 inquiries were logged for the 2023 Street program, with 12 being material questions or contractor related. He assured that corrective actions were taken, and communication strategies would be improved for the 2024 program. Mayor Jadwin and Director Komlanc emphasized their commitment to proactive resident engagement, with open houses planned later in the spring.

Mayor Jadwin sought clarification on the number of inquiries compared to the total parcels, revealing that 68 inquiries came from 713 adjacent parcels, and 12 of those being contractor related, representing less than 2%.

Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for the updates and improvements in communication strategies, thanking Director Komlanc for the information.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

[ORD-0014-2024](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH BRENNSTUHL CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE 2022 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM (ST-1109)

Director Komlanc reported on the recent bid opening for the 2022 Sidewalk Program, which follows the old legacy year system. Brennstuhl Construction emerged as the apparent low and responsive bidder, with their bid of \$328,000, slightly under the engineer's estimate of \$331,000. Director Komlanc recommended awarding the contract to Brennstuhl Construction after conducting a responsibility review, highlighting their experience in other Central Ohio communities, including Dublin.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

[ORD-0015-2024](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
- Right-of-Way Special Revenue Fund for Professional Services

Moving on to the next item, Director Komlanc discussed the changes following the separation of the Department of Public Service and Engineering in 2023. The Engineering Department took on a significant role in Right-of-Way Administration, focusing on plan reviews and inspections for franchised utility operators within the public Right-of-Way. With 136 permits pulled, including 79 for major construction activities, many telecommunication and private utility providers made improvements to their systems. Director Komlanc proposed using special revenue funds for Right-of-Way to cover the associated costs of plan review and inspection, aiming to support the department's resources.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

H. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:[2024-0042](#)

Citywide Grant Update 2.26.2024

Corey Wybensing, Senior Deputy Director of Administrative Services, presented the 2024 Grant summary, emphasizing the City's efforts to enhance its grants management processes. The grants management process, a structured approach, oversees funding received from various sources to ensure effective allocation, alignment with intended purposes, and achievement of desired outcomes. The grant management process involves several stages, starting with identification and application. The City identifies potential grants aligning with its needs and goals, preparing and submitting applications detailing the project's objectives and fund utilization. The subsequent stage involves award acceptance or non-award, where the city reviews and processes the grant agreement, accepting the terms if successful. If unsuccessful, research or follow-up conversations with the awarding agency aim to improve future applications. Once a grant is awarded, the process includes implementing and monitoring the grants, ensuring planned fund allocation and aligning activities with the grant's objectives. Progress and expenditures are monitored for compliance. The reporting and evaluation phase follows, requiring regular reports to the awarding agency on financials, progress updates, and project outcomes. The closeout process, at the project's completion, involves preparing a final report, summarizing outcomes, expenditures, and lessons learned. After the closeout, there's an audit and review period where the grant may undergo an audit for compliance verification. This period also allows the city to assess the project's success and identify improvements for the grants management process. Wybensing provided a comprehensive overview of the open grants, funding sources, project descriptions, local match considerations, and pending applications. The presentation was concluded with an invitation for questions.

Councilmember Padova inquired about the status and timeline of the Link to Literacy Trail project. Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks & Recreation, shared that the consultant is in the schematic design phase, progressing through private land easement acquisition.

Councilmember Schnetzer focused on the mechanism of tax credits for the 825 Tech Center project under the Inflation Reduction Act. Director Bury and Brian Cooper from Baker Tilly explained that the tax credits are applied for and received directly, functioning as funds allocated for the project, not a reduction in taxes.

President Bowers commended Mr. Wybensing for the informative presentation on the 2024 Grant summary. She requested future updates to include specific dates for better tracking and offered feedback on balancing details. Councilmember Bowers also asked about the recyclable or biodegradable material in the CORA recycling receptacles grant, and Mr. Wybensing explained ongoing discussions with SWACO and the unique considerations for CORA area containers.

Mayor Jadwin clarified that the Link to Literacy grant is \$500,000, not \$50,000, emphasizing its significance.

Vice President Weaver inquired about the threshold for grants requiring Council acceptance, and Director Bury mentioned the varying requirements set by grantor agencies. Mr. Wybensinger added that some formula grants are non-competitive and reimbursable, not necessitating formal Council action.

[ORD-0016-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
- Refuse Escrow from Grant Award

Mr. Wybensinger presented information about the SWACO CORA District Community Waste Reduction Grant during the meeting. The grant, amounting to \$35,000, required a 20% local match. He collaborated with MORPC intern Drake Cromes and Recreation Supervisor Chelsea Heppert to develop a proposal for the funding opportunity. The primary focus of the grant is the implementation of a double smart waste and recycling station, designed to collect both trash and recycling. Additionally, around 30, 35-gallon recycling receptacles will be acquired and strategically placed throughout the Creekside Outdoor Refreshment Area (CORA). With CORA hosting over 1.1 million visitors annually and selling over 5,000 recyclable plastic CORA cups, the project aims to reduce waste and litter significantly. It also includes educational aspects, such as signage on receptacles to increase recycling knowledge and inform the public about landfill waste reduction. The initiative also strives to establish consistent messaging across Central Ohio for public education on recycling impacts. To facilitate this project, the administration requested a supplemental amount of \$42,500 from the unappropriated, unencumbered fund balance for the Refuse Escrow. In response to Councilmember McGregor's inquiry about the apparent discrepancy in match amounts, Mr. Wybensinger clarified that the total supplemental is \$42,500, with the City contributing a 20% match of \$7,500, and \$35,000 of which will be reimbursed through SWACO.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.**

[ORD-0017-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
- Parks & Recreation Fund for Recreation Coordinator II Position
Supporting Community Recreation

Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, commenced the discussion on the Recreation Coordinator II position, presenting a brief overview of the finances. She highlighted that the proposed funding would come from the unappropriated unencumbered balance of the Parks and Recreation Fund (2420), which stood at \$1.5 million at the end of 2023. Vollmer introduced the discussion item and deferred to Director Ferrell to elaborate on the need for the Recreation Coordinator position.

Director Ferrell emphasized the complexity and requirements associated with managing community events, sponsorships, and volunteerism. She provided insight into the extensive coordination, safety measures, and marketing

efforts involved in hosting the city's 30 annual events. The presentation underscored the invisible work within the Parks and Recreation industry, addressing the logistics, safety, and behind-the-scenes efforts needed for successful events. Director Ferrell emphasized the importance of partnerships and sponsors, explaining how relationships with 30 partners generated over \$62,000 to support special events in 2023. Furthermore, the discussion covered partner events-additional events hosted by external agencies-with an average of 40 such events each year, involving coordination and applications for permits. The presentation also focused on volunteerism, outlining opportunities for growth by expanding the volunteer program, formalizing policies, and utilizing software to its full capacity. Director Ferrell concluded the presentation by highlighting the potential for growth in sponsorships and revenues through the proposed Recreation Coordinator position.

President Bowers and Councilmember Padova expressed gratitude for revisiting the proposal, acknowledging the positive financial outlook. Vice President Weaver expressed support for providing the Parks and Recreation team with the needed support.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/4/2024; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/18/2024.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Trenton I. Weaver
Chair