

City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton
Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Signature

Resolution: RES-0016-2023

File Number: RES-0016-2023

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ARTWORK FOR THE CREEKSIDE MURALS UNDERNEATH THE GRANVILLE STREET BRIDGE

WHEREAS, the Gahanna-Jefferson School District for the purpose of refreshing the murals underneath the Granville Street bridge at Creekside received permission from the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Gahanna for a new mural designed by local students; and

WHEREAS, the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation, the Gahanna-Jefferson Education Foundation, and the Gahanna Area Arts Council have generously donated funds in support of the new mural; and

WHEREAS, the artwork was completed and submitted by the students for the murals underneath the Granville Street bridge; and

WHEREAS, this Council appreciates the important partnership with our Gahanna-Jefferson School District and its teachers, staff, parents, and students; and

WHEREAS, this Council further honors that young people often see the world in ways that are different from adults while recognizing that youth perspectives are also not monolithic; and

WHEREAS, this Council recognizes and respects that our community is made up of diverse voices, diverse perspectives, and diverse people and that there must be space in a democracy for that diversity to be respected and celebrated; and

WHEREAS, while the students celebrated diversity in their vision, they still demonstrated a wanting of ONE Gahanna, a united people of compassion, respect, and solidarity to the greater good; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, COUNTY OF FRANKLIN, STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. The Council of this City supports students and honors the way in which they see and have graphically represented our community; and

Section 2. That the artwork submitted by the students as the murals underneath the Granville Street bridge is accepted for display at Creekside as a depiction of perspectives of residents and consistent with government speech of elected representatives of Gahanna.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect after passage by this Council and on date of signature of approval by the Mayor.

At a special meeting of the City Council on May 8, 2023, a motion was made by Bowers, seconded by Padova, that this Resolution be Adopted. The vote was as follows:

Ms. Angelou, no; Ms. Bowers, yes; Ms. McGregor, no; Ms. Padova, yes; Mr. Renner, yes; Mr. Schnetzer, no; Mr. Weaver, yes.

President


Stephen A. Renner

Date

05/08/2023

Attest by


Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

Date


5/8/2023

Approved by the Mayor

Laurie A. Jadwin

Date

Approved as to Form


Raymond J. Mularski
City Attorney

Date

5-22-2023

From: Laurie Jadwin
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 3:00 PM
To: Council
Cc: Ray Mularski
Subject: Creekside Mural(s)

Dear Council Members:

My thanks to all of you for your discussion over the last two weeks regarding the proposed art installation on public property under the Granville Street bridge. These have been difficult discussions to have on many levels.

The Administration's initial request of Council was to provide guidance that would enable the Administration to craft a city policy that identifies what is and is not permitted within public spaces, in order to protect the City from potential legal challenges. While the majority of Council passed a Resolution to adopt certain themes as government speech, it is my understanding from the City Attorney's comments that the Resolution does not otherwise order the installation of the artwork, as that authority remains with the Administration as a separate branch of government.

Ohio law specifies that the "mayor shall be the chief conservator of peace within the city." I have always taken this responsibility seriously. Gahanna is a community that welcomes diversity – including diversity of thought. As leaders, our residents look to us to conserve the peace. Responsible public sector leadership requires a thoughtful and serious approach, particularly when addressing potentially divisive matters.

The record already reflects my substantive concerns about taking official action on public art displays on city property without first having a detailed policy in place. Gahanna continually strives to be a leader in implementing best practices in municipal government, and best practice mandates inviting the diverse voices in our city into the process of creating such a policy.

Following best practices and adhering to the legal advice given to us by the City Attorney and outside legal counsel provide the best safeguards for our city and our residents against potential lawsuits that seek payment of tax dollars. As elected officials, I believe you share my concern that we should always seek to protect valuable taxpayer dollars by minimizing legal risk.

Based on the advice that has been provided by outside counsel and our City Attorney, and taking into account best practices in city governance, I do not agree that the action of passing a Resolution without first establishing a defined policy for displays of artwork in public spaces is consistent with best practices. Therefore, while I will not officially veto the Resolution, I am unable to sign the Resolution that was adopted Monday evening.

However, I also recognize the excitement that the students have in seeing their efforts come alive. As I have repeatedly stated throughout the discussion and debate on this topic, my concern has been focused solely on establishing and following best practices within the City and nothing else. It is both unfortunate and heartbreaking to me that students have been at the forefront of this discussion, rather than the legal issues at hand. I appreciate and applaud the efforts of our students in their creativity and artwork as well as their desire to share their views of our community, and I am proud of all of our Gahanna students. With them in mind, I have authorized that the artwork may be installed on the bridge walls prior to this weekend's event.

We represent all of the 36,000 residents of our city. As we have witnessed, read and heard over the last several days, our residents are not of one mind on the issues discussed in council chambers this week. Amid these clashing viewpoints, my Administration has already begun the work of researching proposed public art policies that are line with best municipal practices, and we look forward to collaboratively working together in a public process that respects the various and diverse views of our community.

LAURIE JADWIN
Mayor



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RES-0016-2023

ATTESTATION AS TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE:

The Clerk presented RES-0016-2023 to the Mayor on May 8, 2023, for signature of approval. The Mayor returned RES-0016-2023 unsigned and filed in the Clerk's Office on May 18, 2023. Pursuant to City Charter 3.05 and 4.14, RES-0016-2023 became effective May 18, 2023, upon the expiration of time within which veto power could have been exercised.

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Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

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Date