



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, June 26, 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 June 23, 2023. President Renner, Councilmember Bowers, and Councilmember Padova were absent from the meeting. All other members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0055-2023](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AGREEMENT WITH ROMANOFF GROUP TO FACILITATE REDEVELOPMENT OF AN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 977 GAHANNA PARKWAY, PART OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #1

Mayor Jadwin made introductions and informed the council about the Montrose Group's assistance in economic development initiatives during the transition period between economic development directors. She introduced Ryan Scribner from Montrose Group, who provided further details on a project involving the Romanoff Group.

Ryan Scribner, representing the Montrose Group, expressed his pleasure in working with the mayor and the council. He highlighted his background in public administration and his transition to development consulting. Scribner proceeded to explain the project opportunity to the council, emphasizing the importance of supporting a long-standing company in the community and its potential expansion in Gahanna. The Romanoff Group, represented by Ryan Yeater and Mike Pasella, was present to provide additional information on their company, its growth, and their considerations for investment in Gahanna. Scribner then addressed the council to outline the partnership request and the proposed 15-year, 100 percent CRA property tax exemption for Romanoff Group's expansion. He clarified that the exemption would only apply to the new taxable value resulting from the planned improvements, with

no impact on the existing tax base or current taxes generated by the property. Scribner emphasized that this project would contribute to job creation and higher-skilled positions in the corporate back-office operations. Scribner noted a worksheet distributed to the council, which calculated the return on investment (ROI) for the project. The ROI calculation factored in the anticipated payroll taxes generated over the 15-year term, conservatively estimated at \$2.8 million. Additionally, it attempted to quantify the potential taxes generated from the increased value of the building, assuming approximately \$5.1 million in new taxable value. Using millage rates and the respective shares of tax revenues for schools and the city, the net ROI was calculated at approximately 244 percent. Scribner acknowledged the conservative nature of the estimate, as it did not account for wage growth and assumed a significant incremental increase in property tax value. He emphasized that the project would be self-sustaining and outlined the proposed agreement with the School Compensation Agreement, which ensured that schools would be compensated for any taxes foregone due to the property tax exemption on the new improvements. Scribner mentioned the support received from JobsOhio, indicating the state's recognition of Romanoff's importance as an employer. In conclusion, Scribner offered to answer any questions from the council and invited representatives from Romanoff Group to introduce themselves, provide further project details, and discuss their plans in Gahanna.

Ryan Yeater, the Chief Financial Officer at Romanoff Group, expressed gratitude to the council and the mayor for their support. He highlighted their experience as an employer in the community for over 23 years and their significant presence beyond Columbus, with 60 percent of their revenue generated outside the Columbus region. Yeater explained the challenges they faced, which involved finding a new location for their operating companies and addressing the needs of their corporate headquarters. They considered potential relocation to their Charlotte region but believed in the importance of approaching the Gahanna community to demonstrate their commitment and seek support. He acknowledged the support received from the mayor, the economic development team, and JobsOhio, emphasizing their dedication to showing good faith and fostering continued growth in the community. Yeater provided an overview of the project, describing it as a 70,000 square foot building located near their current operations. The new facility would provide additional space for their operating companies and accommodate the anticipated growth of their corporate team. He expressed excitement about their future and the prospect of remaining a part of Gahanna's community.

Mike Pasella, representing Romanoff Group, expressed his appreciation to the council and the mayor for their collaboration and the smooth process they experienced. He acknowledged that it was his first time dealing with such matters and praised the seamless nature of the proceedings. Pasella expressed excitement about moving forward to the next step. He reiterated Ryan Yeater's earlier remarks and assured the council that the building they are moving into will continue to house their operating companies, specifically the HVAC and residential and multi-family electric companies. However, the concern lies with the long-term accommodation of their management team,

which provides crucial back-office support for the entire company across multiple states and offices. This is the reason they are discussing the matter with the council. Pasella expressed their contentment with being in Gahanna and the recognition they have received as a top workplace for several years in a row. He highlighted the uniqueness of their company being 100 percent employee-owned through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). This structure necessitates making financial decisions that prioritize the well-being and interests of their employees and the trust they have placed in the company. He concluded by thanking the council for their time and offering to address any further questions they might have.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked Pasella and Yeater for their presence and commended their commitment to adding headcount in the current work-from-home environment. He sought clarification on whether the presented numbers included any minimum guarantees regarding employment. Mr. Scribner responded, explaining that the CRA agreement specifies new employment and sets a minimum threshold. The agreement is annually reviewed by the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) and failing to meet the agreed-upon numbers may have consequences.

Councilmember Schnetzer acknowledged the requirement for performance to receive the benefit of the agreement.

Mr. Scribner clarified that in every Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) agreement he has been involved in, the expectation is that there will be a commitment to capital investment and the creation of new jobs. He emphasized that providing cost relief and savings through the agreement is contingent upon meeting these commitments.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked Mr. Scribner for clarifying the matter and ensuring that it was clearly communicated to both the audience and those listening online. He acknowledged that including such provisions in the agreement is standard practice and expressed his gratitude for the clarification.

Councilmember McGregor inquired if the project involved adding on to the existing building or if it was solely a larger building. Mr. Pasella responded that it was an existing building, specifically the former ADB building. He explained that they would be renovating the interior of the building, converting some warehouse space into office space. There would be no physical addition to the building.

Councilmember Angelou expressed her appreciation for the opportunity this project presented to the City of Gahanna. She commended the business system in place and expressed her gratitude.

Vice President Weaver asked questions about the job numbers presented in the document and requested clarification on the projected number of jobs. Mr. Scribner responded, explaining that the numbers in the spreadsheet represented the baseline of the existing operations of the company. He

mentioned that Nate Strum had compiled the information for the calculation and they were using data from the CRA application. He clarified that the number 49 represented the approximate baseline of the management team, acknowledging that the actual number might be slightly different. Mr. Yeater further clarified that the number 49 specifically referred to the management team, while the company as a whole employed over 400 individuals in the community. He mentioned that the focus of the analysis was on the corporate overhead and management team, excluding the employees of the operating companies who would remain in Gahanna. Mayor Jadwin added that there were currently 403 employees in total, but the number 49 represented the management team. She noted that the projections indicated the addition of at least 17 jobs, potentially reaching a total of 19 new positions over the next five years.

Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for the clarification provided. He then asked whether the current location of Romanoff Group was under a 12-year, 100 percent abatement in CRA (Community Reinvestment Area) number three, starting in 2019 and ending in 2030. Mr. Yeater quickly responded with "no," indicating that the information provided by Vice President Weaver was incorrect. Mayor Jadwin also confirmed that the statement was incorrect, stating that Romanoff Group had been in their current location for 23 years, implying that they were not under the abatement Weaver had mentioned. Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for the clarifications.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 7/10/2023;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/24/2023.**

C. FACILITIES UPDATE:

[2023-0124](#)

825 Tech Center Drive Presentation COTW 6.26.2023

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, began his comments by introducing Keith Hall and Maria Rosmarin from MSA Group, the architect of record for the project. He mentioned that they would provide the latest update on the project and invited them to speak. Mr. Hall then took the floor to present the design solution and provide an overview of the goals and objectives that were established during the design process.

Mr. Hall expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be present at the meeting and mentioned that they had been working with the city for nearly six months. He emphasized the importance of the design goals and objectives, which were carefully considered throughout the decision-making process. The goals included creating an inviting and approachable building, establishing a clear civic presence, focusing on community and service, ensuring efficient planning, prioritizing safety and security, meeting the addition and renovation goals, and creating a unique identity while respecting the existing context. He further explained that the project aimed to provide a modern and functional police facility, as the current facility had exceeded its useful life. The design also emphasized creating a safe and secure atmosphere for both the staff and the community. Additionally, the building was designed to maximize

daylighting and improve the quality of interior spaces. Hall highlighted the significance of each goal in shaping the design decisions and stressed the importance of meeting the budget and program goals. He mentioned that the project aimed to set the building apart from the surrounding structures while respecting the contextual feel of the area.

Mr. Hall discussed the existing site and its characteristics. He mentioned that the buildings on the site had a similar geometry and reflected a uniform architectural style. He pointed out that the site's orientation was such that the airport was located to the west. This influenced the design considerations, particularly in terms of security. Hall highlighted a security issue related to the angled approach and drive aisle leading to the front door. He emphasized the need to address this concern, especially as the building would serve as an administration building or city hall. To mitigate the issue, specific attention was given to the front and back of the building. The front, facing the northwest, received significant focus, while the back, which overlooked surrounding trees, required minor adjustments to enhance its aesthetics. He also noted that the site was fully developed up to its edges, but the southern and eastern borders were adjacent to dense tree areas. This proximity to green spaces beyond the property boundaries was seen as a positive aspect of the site.

Mr. Hall proceeded to discuss the new site plan for the project. He referred to a visual representation of the plan, focusing on the building and parking areas. The existing building footprint was represented by a dark shade, while the lighter gray color indicated the proposed additions. The front parking lot underwent significant reconfiguration, including the addition of another curb cut at the top. The two existing curb cuts served the site well, and the new one was primarily intended to facilitate the efficient exit of police vehicles from the lower left corner, which served as their designated parking area. Mr. Hall detailed the parking allocation, explaining that the back-right parking lot was primarily dedicated to employee parking, with a designated area for Gahanna's service vehicles, which would also feature solar arrays. A secure line divided the back lot, with the upper half reserved for senior area users and a backdoor entrance. The front parking lot, located on the left side, was designated for public parking, providing approximately 123 spaces to accommodate visitors to the building. The left side also included secured parking for the police, featuring a drive-through sally port, where officers could bring in prisoners, book them, and transfer them to jail cells before exiting through the front door. Mr. Hall mentioned that the covered parking areas, both for service vehicles and the police, were planned to incorporate solar arrays. Additionally, EV charging stations for electric vehicles were intended to be installed in the front parking lot.

Mr. Hall continued his presentation, discussing additional design elements of the project. He highlighted the importance of incorporating green space to soften the front edge of the building, creating a heavily landscaped area for aesthetic purposes. The building plans consisted of three floors, including a basement level underneath the Sally ports, which housed the gun range. Mr. Hall explained that the basement level also served as a storm shelter, fulfilling

the requirement for an essential facility. The storm shelter was designed to accommodate all building employees during emergencies, ensuring their safety before resuming normal operations. The lower left area of the building, depicted in blue, primarily housed the police facilities. This included the two Sally ports, the detention facility, evidence processing and storage areas, as well as office spaces. The red area at the front of the building represented public-facing spaces, featuring a prominent lobby serving as a hub for access to council chambers. This arrangement addressed security concerns and provided a more efficient flow for the public. Mr. Hall pointed out the location of windows for utility bill payments and emphasized that the areas extending from the lobby were dedicated to support and administrative spaces. The northern section of the plan featured a spacious multi-purpose room within the senior area, capable of accommodating approximately 250 people for events such as weddings and receptions. He also explained the intentional design of three distinct entrances to the building: the main entrance at the lobby, a secondary entrance at the police facilities, and another at the senior area. This design facilitated accessibility and allowed for separate operations during off-hours events, with minimal staffing required for specific areas. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Hall highlighted the careful consideration of various requirements and goals to ensure that the design effectively met the needs of the community and provided a functional and visually appealing building.

Mr. Hall further explained the layout of the second and third floors of the building. He mentioned that on the second floor, when standing at the edge of the lobby, visitors would have a view down into the two-story lobby space. However, access to the upper floors would be restricted, and individuals would need assistance from staff to reach those areas. The second floor primarily housed administrative offices, with police facilities located at the bottom portion of the plan. Regarding the third floor, Mr. Hall reiterated that police facilities continued on the left side of the plan, with a focus on administrative functions. As the layout progressed upward, it gradually merged with City Administration spaces.

Mr. Hall addressed Councilmember McGregor's question regarding the concrete barrier in the first picture of the parking lot. He explained that the middle curb cut, as depicted in the renderings, featured a signage element in the form of a knee wall. This signage served as a barrier to prevent vehicles from gaining momentum and directly accessing the building. The design was intentional to ensure there were no direct shots into the building with a vehicle.

Councilmember McGregor raised a concern regarding the availability of bathrooms for the meeting room in the senior center area. Mr. Hall reassured her that there were sufficient and robust restroom facilities planned to serve the area. He also pointed out the intentional design of separate entrances for seniors, the main entrance, and the police entrance, emphasizing the importance of creating distinct entry points. Additionally, Mr. Hall mentioned the intentional approach to incorporate daylighting in the corridors, connecting the inside of the building to the outside and vice versa.

Mr. Hall presented the proposed design for the new building, highlighting the goal of creating a unique identity for the City of Gahanna and ensuring a strong civic presence. He explained that the building would have distinct bookend sections for the police and seniors, with separate entrances marked by signage. The walls of these sections would be clad with stone materials, symbolizing stability and foundation. The central area, serving as the main entrance, would feature a significant amount of glass, allowing for daylight to enter and representing transparency. Mr. Hall emphasized the intentional design of a covered walkway connecting the inside and outside spaces, creating a cohesive environment. He also mentioned the inclusion of wood-like materials and landscaping to soften the surroundings. The lobby was described as a welcoming space, envisioned as a hub for socializing and community activities, such as organizing races or serving as a trailhead for the nearby bike path.

Councilmember Angelou mentioned that the current building was established in 1994 or 1995, and during that time, it served its purpose well. However, she acknowledged that it is now time to move on due to changes in the city's operations and security requirements. Mr. Hall agreed, stating that although there is nothing inherently wrong with the building, it reflects the standards and needs of its time and has had its moments.

Councilmember McGregor expressed her approval of the presentation, finding the proposed design to be impressive.

Vice President Weaver thanked the presenters for their participation and the informative presentation and yielded the floor to Director Schultz.

Director Schultz provided an update on the next steps for the project. He mentioned that they have completed the schematic design phase and are now entering the design development phase, where specific details for each space will be determined. He highlighted the importance of considering minute details such as AV technology and podium placement to ensure the longevity of the facility. Schultz informed the Committee that a similar presentation will be given to the Planning Commission on the upcoming Wednesday evening. He also mentioned that the project's overall schedule and budget will be further developed and brought back to the Committee in the following weeks or months, potentially around July-August. Director Schultz expressed excitement about sharing the progress with the Committee and invited further discussion on the topic during the next Committee meeting when the other members are present.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:

[RES-0022-2023](#)

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TAX BUDGET OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2024

Joann Bury, Director of Finance, addressed the committee and provided information regarding the tax budget. She stated that the Ohio Revised Code

requires the tax budget to be filed with the county auditor by July 20th each year. This filing allows the county budget commission to assess the necessity of all property tax levies and make any modifications if required. The final version of the tax budget will be available in October, at which point a resolution will be presented to accept the determined amounts and rates. Bury requested a resolution from the committee to approve the 2024 tax budget and authorize her to deliver it to the county.

Vice President Weaver said he appreciated the reminder that this was a resolution and that the City would make the deadline in submitting this to the county.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

E. ITEMS FROM THE COUNCIL OFFICE:

[RES-0023-2023](#) A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING JULY 2023 AS PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

[RES-0024-2023](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TO RECOGNIZE BEEKEEPING EDUCATION DAY IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA ON JULY 19, 2023

Vice President Weaver said he believed this Resolution was brought forward by Councilmember Bowers. There were no questions from the Committee.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

F. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION:

[ORD-0051-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH JOSEPH TREE SERVICES FOR THE REMOVAL OF HAZARDOUS TREES; AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE GENERAL FUND, WAIVING SECOND READING, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks & Recreation, provided information to the committee regarding the request for tree removal at Harrison Pond. She explained that the emerald ash borer, a non-native insect, had caused irreversible damage to many trees in the area since its discovery in the early 2000s. Despite previous removal efforts, there are still ash trees in severe decline or dead within the right-of-way at Harrison Pond. Due to safety concerns and the urgency of the situation, the administration requested an ordinance to contract Joseph Tree Services for the removals, which includes stump grinding. An emergency waiver and supplemental appropriation of \$130,000 were also sought to facilitate the removal process. The Harrison Pond Homeowners Association (HOA) was informed of the issue, and the city intended to attend an HOA meeting and maintain open communication with the residents. Director Ferrell also mentioned the possibility of coordinating

with the HOA for tree replacement, considering a variety of tree species to prevent similar issues in the future.

Councilmember Angelou asked if the request is specific to the emerald ash trees. Ms. Ferrell responded that while the emerald ash borer can impact other trees, the emerald ash trees are currently the ones in severe decline.

Councilmember McGregor asked for clarification as to whether these are street trees and also asked if the contract included stump grinding. Ms. Ferrell responded affirmatively to both questions. McGregor wondered if the replacement trees would include a variety of species, and Ms. Ferrell confirmed that the city's Forester, Julie Predieri, would play a role in ensuring compliance with HOA requirements and effective communication with the HOA regarding landscaping approvals.

Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for confirming that the HOA received the letter regarding the tree removal. Mayor Jadwin confirmed that she received follow-up emails from residents, indicating that they had indeed received the letter. Vice President Weaver emphasized the importance of working with the residents to ensure their awareness of the upcoming work. He sought clarification regarding the supplemental appropriation, noting the significant difference between the estimated cost and the contract amount. Director Ferrell explained that the contract for tree removal and stump grinding was \$95,000, and the additional \$35,000 was required to manage the contract for tree replacement. While the residents would be responsible for the cost of replacement, the city needed the funds to facilitate the contract. Vice President Weaver then inquired about the residents' involvement in selecting replacement trees. Director Ferrell explained that a comprehensive landscape plan with prohibited and preferred tree options existed, and the city forester would collaborate with the HOA to determine appropriate tree varieties based on the size of the tree lawn and the overall diversity of the community. Vice President Weaver acknowledged the public health and safety concerns associated with the situation and expressed support for the emergency and waiver request.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading with Waiver of Second Reading and Emergency Declaration on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

G. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[RES-0025-2023](#)

A RESOLUTION TO PETITION THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO LOWER THE SPEED LIMIT ALONG MORSE ROAD FROM US 62 TO KITZMILLER ROAD FROM 55 MILES PER HOUR TO 45 MILES PER HOUR WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA IN ACCORDANCE WITH OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 4511.21

Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering, presented the first item, which was a resolution requesting a speed limit reduction on Morse Road between U.S. 62 and Kitzmiller Road. He mentioned that the portion of the road falls under the jurisdiction of multiple entities, including the Franklin County Engineer's office

and the City of Columbus. He explained that collaborative efforts were underway with these entities to submit companion resolutions to the Ohio Department of Transportation, seeking a reduction of the speed limit from 55 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour. Vice President Weaver expressed surprise upon learning that the speed limit was still 55 miles per hour. Mayor Jadwin echoed his sentiment, noting the difficulties in getting onto Morse Road with cars traveling at that speed. Councilmember Angelou added that the situation was dangerous with the current speed.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

[RES-0026-2023](#)

A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE THE NECESSITY AND INTENT TO APPROPRIATE REAL ESTATE FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENTS FOR THE TAYLOR STATION AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD ROUNDABOUT CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Director Komlanc provided an update on the Taylor Station and Claycraft intersection project. He introduced Michael Brehm from EMH&T, who was assisting with the project. Three items were presented related to the project. The first item was a resolution of intent to appropriate, which would be pursued if negotiations with property owners for permanent right-of-way warranty deeds and temporary construction easements were unsuccessful. Director Komlanc informed that negotiations had been successfully resolved for four out of the six properties, while negotiations were ongoing for the remaining two properties located on the northeast and southwest quadrants of the intersection. He mentioned that funding of one million dollars had been received from OPWC (Ohio Public Works Commission) for the project. Utility relocation work was scheduled to begin in the fall, involving AEP and Columbia Gas. The project was expected to be put out for bidding in the first quarter of the following year, with construction commencing in the next construction season. In case negotiations were not successful, there were two ordinances on the agenda authorizing the City Attorney to initiate eminent domain proceedings. Director Komlanc expressed hope for a resolution with the remaining property owners.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/10/2023.

[ORD-0052-2023](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY ATTORNEY OR THE CITY ATTORNEY'S DESIGNEE TO FILE FOR APPROPRIATION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT AT 926 TAYLOR STATION ROAD; VANDELAY IMPORTS & EXPORTS, LLC, OWNER; IN FURTHERANCE OF THE TAYLOR STATION AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD ROUNDABOUT PROJECT

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 7/10/2023;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/24/2023.**

[ORD-0053-2023](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY ATTORNEY OR THE CITY ATTORNEY'S DESIGNEE TO FILE FOR APPROPRIATION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT AT TAYLOR STATION ROAD, LOT 3; CAMP EZK, LLC, OWNER; IN

**FURTHERANCE OF THE TAYLOR STATION AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD
ROUNABOUT PROJECT**

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 7/10/2023;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/24/2023.**

Sidewalk Program Update[2023-0120](#)**Sidewalk Program Updates COTW 6.26.2023**

Director Komlanc provided an overview and update on the sidewalk program, including the sidewalk maintenance program and the transition plan within the public right-of-way. He mentioned the challenges faced by the program, such as funding constraints and reduced program area. The City engaged a consulting firm and ultra-light inertial profiler (ULIP) technology to scan the entire city and assess Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) facilities for baseline conditions. Komlanc informed the Committee that the data collection process was nearing completion and in the quality control phase. The department recommended repeal and replacement of sections of code to bring sidewalk facilities under the appropriate division of the streets and utilities section. Komlanc evaluated maintenance criteria, including cross slope, vertical offsets, and defects requiring repair. The department utilized ULIP data collection and street scan, street logic for sidewalk program and pavement condition evaluation, respectively. Training and education is underway to utilize the software for future programs. Komlanc addressed timing challenges, including providing residents with sufficient notice and finding contractors within reasonable timelines. He also addressed concerns raised during the 2022 sidewalk program, including low-income and fixed-income residents, cost escalation, and corner and double-wide lots. There would be fine-tuning for the opt-out process and enhancing communication with residents to ensure compliance with code requirements. He acknowledged the challenge of distinguishing between maintenance and renewal activities within the program and the need for clear guidelines. The department proposed program changes for commercial properties, including inclusion in the transition plan and consideration during development or redevelopment projects. They explored the possibility of fees-in-lieu-of sidewalk construction and bringing existing non-conforming sidewalks up to present standards. Komlanc mentioned the importance of aligning sidewalk development with planning and zoning code updates to ensure comprehensive and appropriate placement. There would be the opportunity for existing commercial areas to bring prior non-conforming sidewalks up to the present stage. Director Komlanc stopped for questions related to the commercial side of the program before moving on to discuss the residential portion of the sidewalk program.

Director Komlanc provided an update on the residential sidewalk program. He explained that for areas without existing sidewalks, they followed the Ohio Revised Code petition for the assessment process. A cost-share of 50% based on the annual budget appropriation adopted by the city council was recommended for projects in areas lacking sidewalks. Prioritization criteria, such as proximity to parks and schools, were considered when selecting

projects within the budget. Director Komlanc addressed the issue of prior non-conforming sidewalks in residential areas, which were built before ADA and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). He proposed incorporating sidewalk renewals into major Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), utility projects, and annual street rebuilds. This approach allowed them to address cross slope issues and make necessary improvements to the entire facility, including profile grade, curb, gutter, and driveway aprons. Regarding maintenance, Director Komlanc clarified that it referred to activities like mill and overlay within the street maintenance program. Deficiencies identified through Cole data were used to provide advance notice to residents. They were given the option to opt out of the program or have the maintenance work performed as part of the street maintenance program for the year. He explained the distinction between maintenance and renewal, emphasizing the cost comparison. If the cost to maintain a specific panel or section was less than 50% of the cost to tear it out and rebuild it, it fell under maintenance. However, if the cost of maintenance exceeded 50% of the reconstruction cost, it was considered renewal on a lot basis or corridor wide. Director Komlanc expressed the preference for addressing renewal and maintenance on both sides of a street during corridor-wide renewal projects to maintain consistency. Komlanc acknowledged that corridor renewal projects might arise, but he anticipated that most would be handled through the street reconstruction program or on an individual lot basis. He mentioned that more context would be provided once they had absorbed the cold data and evaluated the changes to the criteria. Director Komlanc expressed his belief that meeting the 50% cost threshold for corridor renewal projects would be challenging due to the revised criteria. He mentioned the provision in case corridor renewal became a viable option but expected that it would predominantly be addressed through the existing street reconstruction program.

Director Komlanc addressed the cost-sharing aspect of the repair side. He explained that residents who opted out of the program would be responsible for 100% of the repair costs, while those in the program would be assessed for 50% of the cost, with the city carrying the other 50%. The rationale behind the 50% cost share was to ensure equity across residents, including those with low income or fixed income. This approach aimed to strike a balance between safety and the financial impact on residents.

Councilmember Angelou shared her observations about repairs in her neighborhood, specifically mentioning that several driveway entrances had been done. She expressed uncertainty about whether the repairs were done by the residents themselves or as part of the program, finding it interesting.

Director Komlanc provided clarification regarding the process for residential driveways. He explained that residents would have been required to obtain a right-of-way permit and undergo inspections to ensure compliance with the criteria, including the formwork.

Councilmember Angelou expressed her support for the proposed ideas, stating that the previous approach seemed to be taking too long and required

extensive repetitive discussions. She emphasized the importance of understanding that the program was primarily focused on safety and highlighted the benefits of spreading out the cost over a longer period rather than a substantial upfront payment. Angelou shared her thoughts on the program, expressing that the revised approach and longer payment period would be beneficial for residents, particularly in terms of financial affordability.

Councilmember Schnetzer expressed his gratitude for the presentation and posed two questions. He sought clarification on the logistics of the existing residential sidewalk program, specifically in relation to the Street Maintenance program. He questioned whether there would be a catch-up period for sidewalks that had not received attention due to recent robust street maintenance efforts. Councilmember Schnetzer raised concerns about the possibility of a 30-year delay for sidewalks to receive necessary attention, considering that some streets had been milled and overlaid just two years ago. In response, Director Komlanc explained the life cycle of maintenance activities for mill and overlay streets. He stated that within five to seven years after a street reconstruction or mill and overlay, minor maintenance measures such as crack seal and slurry seal would be performed to extend the street's performance. Based on this cycle, it would take approximately 15 years to return to the area for further attention.

Councilmember Schnetzer further inquired about streets that had been recently worked on but had not received sidewalk improvements. He questioned whether those streets would be addressed in the immediate term, within the next couple of years, or if a longer time frame of seven to fifteen years would apply. Director Komlanc responded that it would likely be within the seven to fifteen-year time frame unless there was a catch-up provision in place.

Councilmember Schnetzer raised concerns regarding the cost of the program and the 50% cost share for renewal. He inquired about any estimations or assessments of the total cost of the program. In response, Director Komlanc provided information about the cost projections based on the data collected from Cole and the assessment conducted by a consulting firm. He mentioned that the revised criteria, such as considering minor hairline cracks as defects but not requiring panel replacements, would significantly reduce the projected cost. The 2022 program, which was initially estimated at around \$900,000, was now expected to be approximately half of that amount. He also mentioned that there was an allocation of \$700,000 in the 2024, 2025, and 2026 CIP that could be utilized for maintenance and reconstruction efforts, including the sidewalk-related elements and underground utilities.

Councilmember McGregor expressed her view that this cost-sharing approach would serve as an incentive for residents not to opt out of the program. Director Komlanc agreed with her comment. McGregor further noted that if the program was implemented comprehensively and completed at once, it would discourage residents from undertaking individual sidewalk repairs. She highlighted that the residents' portion would still be assessed for

five years. Director Komlanc confirmed her statement, mentioning that Grove City also followed a similar cost-sharing approach.

Councilmember Angelou inquired about the prioritization of areas around schools and commercial areas for sidewalk improvements. She asked if these areas were being addressed first before other locations. Director Komlanc explained that they had recently received the Cole pilot area data, which validated the costs and information presented to residents during the original notification. He mentioned that as they move forward, they would be analyzing the sidewalk data obtained from street scans, utility-related work, and evaluating proximity to schools and parks. This information would help determine the scope and priority of sidewalk improvements within street maintenance, rebuilds, and overall CIP projects. Councilmember Angelou sought clarification, expressing her understanding that these areas, particularly around schools, should be prioritized for improvements. Director Komlanc confirmed that the ranking criteria and overall need would be used to weigh the prioritization between sidewalk maintenance, street maintenance, and CIP activities.

Councilmember Angelou questioned the responsibility for sidewalk maintenance in commercial areas, specifically mentioning Stoneridge. She asked if commercial properties handled their own sidewalk repairs or if they required intervention from the city. Director Komlanc clarified that for commercial properties, sidewalk improvements typically occur when there is a project involving site work, revised development plans, or major building renovations. Outside of these instances, enforcement of the code would come into play for maintenance and repairs.

Vice President Weaver expressed gratitude for the presentation and sought clarification regarding future planning. He summarized that based on the changes to criteria and expected cost savings, there should not be a reduction in the geographic area targeted for sidewalk improvements or a decrease in the amount of work. He noted that the cost sharing should not result in a significant increase in costs to the city that would require a reduction in the targeted area for each program year. Director Komlanc responded, explaining that the severity of sidewalk disrepair in specific areas would ideally align with the condition of the surrounding roadways, indicating the need for comprehensive maintenance and repairs.

Councilmember Schnetzer raised another question about the retroactive application of sidewalk improvements. He asked if there were any significant cost implications if the city were to address streets that were recently repaired within the past few years. He wondered if there were cost synergies or if it was primarily a matter of administrative convenience. Director Komlanc provided an explanation, stating that there were multiple factors to consider. He mentioned the inconvenience to residents and the coordination with subcontractors or general contractors who would be performing curb replacement or other concrete work in specific zones rather than scattered throughout the community. The concentrated approach allowed for better communication with residents and minimized disruptions.

Councilmember Schnetzer sought clarification, asking if the approach was primarily for convenience and if it did not result in cost savings. Director Komlanc confirmed that it was indeed for convenience and clarified that it did not necessarily result in cost savings.

Councilmember Schnetzer expressed his perspective on the program, emphasizing the importance of ADA compliance and the initial intention to coordinate street and sidewalk improvements. He believed that it made sense to connect the improved walkways with the ADA ramps. He expressed his preference for addressing recently rebuilt or improved streets and inquired about the potential impact of the revision on pre-built sidewalk rebuilds. Director Komlanc responded, suggesting that retroactive consideration would need to take into account the breaking point of two to three years rather than going back 10 or 15 years. He highlighted the need to reduce the scope and breadth of how far back they would address sidewalk improvements.

Councilmember Schnetzer inquired about the duration of the program's existence, to which Mayor Jadwin sought clarification on whether the discussion pertained to street programs or sidewalk programs. Schnetzer provided a real-world example of Laurel Ridge being repaved two years ago, expressing concern that the sidewalks in that area would not receive attention for another 15 years despite the updated ADA ramps. He found it incongruent and questioned the discussion surrounding the change in cost share. Director Komlanc explained that the cost share had been established before moving forward with the assessment for the 2021 program, ensuring consistency for residents. He acknowledged the challenge of evaluating those who opted out and self-performed the work. Schnetzer expressed the importance of avoiding disparate treatment.

[ORD-0054-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE CODE SECTION 521.06 - CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, AND REPLACEMENT OF SIDEWALKS, INTEGRAL APPROACHES/APRONS AND RELATED AREAS; AND TO REPEAL AND REPLACE CHAPTER 903 - SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Director Komlanc requested code updates, specifically the repeal and replacement of section 521.06 and chapter 903. These updates were prompted by the recent discussion and inclusion of those elements within the program. Additionally, there were proposed changes to various deadlines. The appeal deadline was to be extended from 30 days to 45 days, while the opt-out deadline would be extended from 45 days to 60 days, with the director or designee having the ability to further extend the deadline if necessary. The construction deadline for opt-outs would align with the right-of-way permit presently outlined in the code. The recommendation was to move this provision to section 903, which would provide 105 calendar days from the date of notice, allowing property owners ample time to find a contractor and complete the work if they choose to opt out of the program. For individuals participating in the program, the cost share of 50 percent would cover the property owner's portion, and further clarifications were being made regarding tree work costs, which would be covered at the city's expense.

Director Komlanc provided an overview of the maintenance criteria changes being proposed. Currently, any vertical offset exceeding a quarter of an inch is considered a trip hazard and non-compliant with PROWAG. The recommendation is to increase the threshold for grinding from a quarter inch to half an inch. Additionally, they propose changing the criteria from a quarter inch to three-quarters of an inch for full removal and replacement. Through data analysis, it was found that many panels slated for replacement could be effectively maintained with grinding if the offset falls within the half inch to three-quarters of an inch range. Vegetation growth between sidewalk panels is also being addressed. While overall removal of such growth is recommended, panels with vegetation growing through cracks and causing panel disintegration will still be marked for removal. Cross slope issues, a result of the sidewalks being built prior to ADA standards, are considered a secondary defect. It is challenging to address cross slope outside of full rebuilds or lot renewal cases where there is more space for accommodating ADA requirements. Data and technology play a crucial role in informing decision-making. The Cole ULIP information, received for the 2022 program area, will be integrated into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This data, along with the street scan data and street logic data, will help inform the prioritization of street rebuilds, street maintenance, and other projects. Staff members are currently undergoing training to effectively utilize the street scan software for data analysis and project planning.

Director Komlanc informed the Committee that the plan is to re-engage with the 2022 sidewalk program area. A notice of defects will be reissued, with less stringent requirements than the previous notice sent in late February or early March. The deadline for appeals was set for September 2023, and the deadline to opt out was in November 2023. A new communication initiative will be implemented, sending a notice to residents within the program area to confirm their opt-out status and provide updates on the program. For those who opted out, they will have six months to complete the required work by May of the following year.

Vice President Weaver inquired if residents would have the option to opt back in given the new cost sharing arrangement. Director Komlanc clarified that once a resident opts out, they cannot opt back in. Mayor Jadwin commented on the challenges faced during the first cycle of the program, where some residents who opted out failed to complete the required work, causing delays and difficulties in estimating the scope of work needed. Director Komlanc confirmed the mayor's statement, highlighting the issues arising from residents opting out and subsequently needing to be included again in the program. Mayor Jadwin expressed that the goal is to provide residents with an extended period of time to decide whether or not to opt out of the program. Additionally, there will be an extended timeframe for residents to make the necessary corrections to their sidewalks. If residents fail to make these corrections within the specified timeframe, it will become a code enforcement issue.

Director Komlanc mentioned that within the 2022 program area, there may be

residents who have already obtained a right-of-way permit. They would be informed about the program changes and the cost-sharing adjustments. To ensure equity, the city needs to consider how to address the cost share for those residents who have already taken action. Moving forward, Director Komlanc indicated that the department would request permission to initiate the bidding process in January 2024. Residents who opted out would need to obtain their right-of-way permit and complete their self-performed work by May 2024. The construction activities for the program would then occur in June 2024. In July, the city would evaluate the street logic and Cole data to determine the targeted program areas for street and sidewalk maintenance in 2024. Notices regarding the 2022 program area and the upcoming maintenance activities for 2024 would be issued simultaneously.

Director Komlanc explained the sequencing plan for the 2025 program and beyond. In the first quarter of 2024, the program area for 2025 would be presented to the city council. The aim was to address the program in a timely manner, ensuring that the work is performed in the same calendar year it is programmed for. Notice of defects would be sent to residents in the 2024 Street Maintenance and Sidewalk Maintenance program area. They would be given until November to opt out and have the work completed by May 2025, allowing them ample time to arrange for the necessary repairs. The bidding and work activity would follow a similar schedule as in previous programs. Director Komlanc also mentioned the utilization of the street scan data collection on a two-year cycle. The data collection started in March 2023 and the next capture was planned for October 2025. This data would be used to identify and program the targeted areas for the following two years' construction activities, beginning in the first quarter of the preceding year.

Councilmember Angelou expressed appreciation for Director Komlanc's thoroughness and the quality of the information presented, expressing gratitude for having him on board.

Vice President Weaver expressed gratitude for the hard work put in by the team, acknowledging the intensive nature of the labor and emphasizing that it doesn't go unnoticed. He echoed Councilmember Schnetzer's comments regarding the importance of working towards parity in the treatment of residents, ensuring that they are not being treated differently from past program years.

Director Komlanc mentioned the plan to assemble data from the past five years of Street Maintenance and Street programs once the Cole data is collected. This data would help assess the feasibility of fitting those projects into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Vice President Weaver found this information helpful and suggested considering data from when the latest iterations of the sidewalk program began, approximately starting from 2021.

Councilmember Schnetzer added that it would be important to include any streets that were done within that time period, specifically addressing concerns about maintaining continuity in ADA-compliant mobility pathways.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 7/10/2023;

Further Discussion in Committee of the Whole on 7/17/2023; Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 7/24/2023.

H. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Trenton I. Weaver
Chair