



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

City Council

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Brian Metzbower, President
Stephen A. Renner, Vice President
Karen J. Angelou
Brian D. Larick
Jamie Leeseberg
Nancy R. McGregor
Michael Schnetzer

April Beggerow, CMC, Clerk of Council
Council may caucus at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, November 4, 2019

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER - Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, November 4, 2019, in Council Chambers of City Hall, 200 South Hamilton Road, Gahanna, Ohio. President of Council, Brian Metzbower, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice President of Council, Stephen Renner, delivered an Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Agenda for this meeting was published on November 1, 2019.

Present 7 - Karen J. Angelou, Jamie Leeseberg, Stephen A. Renner, Michael Schnetzer, Brian D. Larick, Brian Metzbower, and Nancy R. McGregor

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA.

None.

C. HEARING OF VISITORS.

None.

D. INTRODUCTIONS AND ASSIGNMENT TO COMMITTEE:

Vice President Renner Introduced the items in Section D.

Ordinances - To Be Introduced and Assigned to Committee:

[ORD-0103-2019](#) ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT AN APPLICATION FOR ANNEXATION OF .70 +/- ACRES FROM JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP, COUNTY OF FRANKLIN, STATE OF OHIO, TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA, LOCATED AT 4478 E. JOHNSTOWN ROAD (PID# 170-001140)

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0104-2019](#) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF GAHANNA, OHIO: Amending Chapter 154 Landscape Board

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0105-2019](#) SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION - Various Accounts

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0107-2019](#) AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING APPROVING AND RATIFYING THE SUBMITTED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0108-2019](#) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT FEE SCHEDULE AS REFERENCED IN CHAPTER 148, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0110-2019](#) TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AMENDED LEASE AGREEMENT WITH TOWERCO 2013, LLC.; AND DECLARING IT AN EMERGENCY.

This item was introduced.

[ORD-0109-2019](#) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO: Amending Chapters 921 Sanitary Sewer Connections and Rental Rates, 927 Sewer Rates, and 929 Water Connections and Rates, OF TITLE THREE PUBLIC UTILITIES; and Amending Chapter 941 Garbage and Rubbish Collection of TITLE FIVE OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES.

This item was introduced.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

Minutes - To Approve:

[2019-0152](#) COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Ordinances on Second Reading:

[ORD-0099-2019](#) ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH AMERISCAPE FOR MUNICIPAL LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SERVICES.

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Leeseberg, that the Ordinance be Adopted.. The motion carried by the following vote:

[ORD-0100-2019](#) SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - TIF FUNDS

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Leeseberg, that the Ordinance be Adopted.. The motion carried by the following vote:

End of the Consent Agenda

Pass the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Leeseberg, that the be Pass the Consent Agenda.. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Angelou, Leeseberg, Renner, Schnetzer, Larick, Metzbower and McGregor

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

[ORD-0101-2019](#) AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2020.

No speakers on this item.

[ORD-0111-2019](#) To Gather Public Input for the Requested Vacation of Public Right of Way: Part of North Street (Additional Public Input Meeting will be scheduled November 18, 2019)

Proponents:

Doug Maddy, Brookewood Construction, 120 N. High Street said that he feels everyone on Council has a thorough understanding of the request and that they were here to listen to comment as was everyone else.

Matt Roberson 362 James Road, Gahanna: (read from written submission) I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you this evening. My wife and I own a small business (Blank Slate Coffee) and operate a non-profit (The Hart Room) in the Creekside District. We also own a home that we chose partially because it is in walking distance of the Creekside District. I hope sharing my perspective tonight will be beneficial. There are three points I would like to communicate tonight.

The first, is that we must create a better climate for new development in the Creekside District. There has been no significant development in the Creekside District for over a decade. In fact, it could be argued that the last serious investment in our downtown was the original Creekside

development, which broke ground in 2005, which will be 15 years ago come May. Economic downturn, the housing market, bad luck and bad timing have all contributed to the situation, however, we have seen other communities able to right the ship and invest in their small business community centers. Yet in Gahanna, we have seen over a decade of stagnation. Our goal should be to encourage sound investment in our community, balancing short term incentives for long term gains. I believe in this council, and the capable people on it. I encourage you to exert the necessary political will to shift us into a more productive development climate, so we can start to see significant investment in our downtown.

Second, I encourage the council to pivot from a “pass through” mindset for the Creekside District. It is not your job to make sure residents of other communities can effortlessly pass through Gahanna on their way to spend their time and money elsewhere. Though Mill Street is currently a part of “Highway 62” there is no structural potential for it to be more than a 2 lane road. To stifle development and investment in our community because we’re overloaded with traffic from other communities that have been making the right investments is beyond backwards thinking. As one of the two main arteries in and out of the Creekside District, all traffic considerations should prioritize what is most beneficial for the businesses and residents who operate, live in, and support the District, rather than those who just wish to pass through.

Third and finally, I encourage the council to develop an “Ecosystem” mindset for the Creekside District. There is no “Silver Bullet” solution. The holistic health of our downtown will rely on numerous streams of investment. The proposed development seeks to add additional population density, which translates into expanded clientele for our small business community. This has been identified repeatedly as a key component for success in the District. A step in the right direction should be celebrated, not resisted because we were really hoping for two or three steps. Investment encourages investment. Growth encourages growth. Stagnation encourages more stagnation.

In closing, we are all here because we believe in Gahanna and want to see our home reach and maintain its’ fullest potential. I’m standing and speaking tonight in support of the proposed development, and encourage the council and administration to move the proposal forward in a timely and responsible manner. I encourage the council and administration to make it a high priority to provide the necessary oversight and review of this project in the quickest time frame possible and grant approval without delay."

Opponents:

Marie Olan, one of the original condo owners at Creekside said the one thing she wants to see them do as a resident is do a traffic study and make sure that all the additional residents proposed can get in and out of there easily. She said she sits several minutes if she doesn't leave by a certain time. She wants to see it do well but traffic is a concern.

Randy Cissler, 171 N. High Street: Mr. Cissler said that C&M leasing has been a property owner in Olde Gahanna since 1987. He opposes this project thus far. He said it should not adversely affect other real estate. The proposal plans to vacate part of North Street and block visibility of his building. He said this move will hamper all traffic and visibility to his retail businesses and the residents of North High Street and High Streets. All contiguous property owners should be granted the same privilege of having North Street signed over to them for their projects. This development would totally change the purpose and use of the property that was purchased in 1987.

Jack Irwin, 203 Lintner Street has a concern about public safety. Access and egress to the fire department is more important than giving up the street. Also the City shouldn't give the land to the Developer. Consider the neighbors and the safety issue.

Amanda Morris, 153 N. High Street: Ms. Morris owns the Mug and Brush barber shop. She said they moved from the Short North 3 years ago and wants to see development in the area but can't show support at this time. She is concerned about the adjacency of the project to her business. She is concerned about access to the property from the rear. Her business is open 6 days a week and is concerned how this development will affect her property. There are several small business on North Street that will be cut off with the easement vacancy including access to her business on High Street. She asked the Council to keep the rest of the small business owners in mind when considering this project.

Jeannie Hoffman, 708 Waybaugh Dr: Said she isn't necessarily opposed but so much more needs to be studied. She said it looks like the traffic into the building will be coming from North Street and into the parking lot so when the traffic coming out to go to work every day, are they going to be using the alley, is it wide enough and safe enough for 2 way traffic on it. She asks that the value be determined and make sure the tax payers are getting what they deserve out of it. She asks that a traffic study be done paid for by the developer.

Mary Bidlack, 99 Orchard Hill Ct said she doesn't have a business there but she deals with the traffic and said it was an issue for the people that

live there and need to go anywhere. She said vacating property and giving it away to a commercial entity that is going to make money off of it, she considers anything the city owns as hers because she is a tax payer and resident and she is opposed to giving this property away to a developer.

Tim McClurg, 935 Leaflock Ct said that he can't figure out what they need it for. He wanted if they want to put the building across or a bridge across. He said that it is a thoroughfare and those things need to be considered.

Chris Tilton, Tilton Automotive, 171 N. High said they heard about the project about a year ago and he believes in development and feels there is a way to accomplish the development without giving up a part of a public roadway. His small business has been there for 15 years and needs visibility. He said they tried to vacate and move to Hamilton Road, but the cost is substantially more. He asks that Council do its due diligence to find a way to keep the road open so that visibility can be maintained.

Mark Bolton, 81 Mill Street, Suite 300 said they have a medical staffing company above Nostalgia Brewing. He said that if the decision is made to do it, he'd like to see published what a typical abatement would be for a project in a community of this size. He's like to know if the abatement that is requested is in line with what other communities are granting. Similarly, he's like assurance that this abatement wouldn't lead to increased taxes.

Mrs. McGregor said that the area is a CRA pre-1994 so the abatement is there. It was placed there to encourage redevelopment in blighted areas.

Hope Dawson, 118 north Street is concerned about traffic as North and Shepherd Streets are small and anytime there are events, there is a lot of cut-through traffic which changes the atmosphere of the street.

Lisa Bentivegna, 681 Waybaugh Dr thanked Councilman Renner for being vocal about this meeting and Development. She said she thinks that people in Gahanna like the small town feel and appreciate the small businesses at Creekside. She said they don't want it to look like the Grandview Yard and there is concern that Council is prioritizing large development over the small businesses. She feels that the developer should pay full market value for the purchase of the right of way.

Ryan Jolley, 80 Shull Ave said he understands how complicated these

decisions are and that it's not an easy process. He is in favor of development but would like Council to keep in mind with this proposal. One is that this is residential only which precludes the ability for anyone else to open another small business in this space moving forward. Second, looking at the tax base, bringing residents that do not work within the city limits will not increase the tax revenues, however, commercial office space would. Lastly, on the vacation of the right of way, looking at the land use plan, the development does fit the area, but the City should be spending more of its capital in shaping what those developments look like and if closing a currently public street is part of the vision. It should be looked at closely for fiscal responsibility.

Kristina Boynton-Acklin, 765 TimTam Ave said she's lived in Gahanna since 1997 and has witnessed development as an attorney and vacating at this early time without having a development agreement with the developer, certain terms can be negotiated and the whole CRA doesn't have to be given. She feels it's premature to vacate any land until all of those aspects are reached and there is an agreement with the schools for all of those people.

Mr. Ewald said that there is a development agreement and that this is part of it. This portion has to go to Planning Commission for review. These are just preliminary hearings. This will go to Planning Commission where there will be more meetings and then they will report their recommendation back to Council. There is also, separate agreement with the schools to make them whole depending on how this deal is worked out, if at all. This is very preliminary and there are things the city has to follow to get this in front of Planning Commission. Tonight is just to gather public input.

Proponents rebuttals:

Mr. Maddy offered thanks to the residents for their input. He said they would be working with their engineer to provide a traffic study of the traffic on North High Street and will submit it to the City Engineer once it is available. He said they are proposing to park about 185-190 cars but back in the days of EMH&T, there was a time that there were 360 employees that about 300, parked there. This project plans to park just a little bit more than half of that number.

Craig Lightwine, 180 Mill Street (Gahanna Auto Sales) said Mr. Maddy said 180-190 cars and asked if that was the number of apartments. (reply that the number was 129). He asked if that wasn't less than 1 car per apartment. Traffic has also grown. He feels that the traffic is going to be more cars per apartment regardless of apartment size and he doesn't

want to see traffic get worse.

Matt Roberson said Council's job is not to provide an easy pass through for the cars and if the solution to prevent traffic was to have more vacancy, that has already been tried. He asks that Council look at how to increase the population downtown.

Mr. Metzbower thanked everyone for being respectful and that it was a good and healthy discussion. This topic will be on the November 18th Council meeting for continued discussion.

G. COMMITTEE UPDATES

H. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

Clerk

Council

I. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES:

[ORD-0106-2019](#) ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE HOUSING OFFICER TO ENTER INTO A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT (CRA) WITH EASTGATE COMMERCIAL PARK LLC, FOR A TAX ABATEMENT FOR A TEN YEAR PERIOD; FOR ONE HUNDRED PERCENT PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT ON THE INCREASED VALUE OF THE PROPERTY; FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 6579 TAYLOR ROAD; PARCEL ID NO. 027-000008; PART OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #1.

This item was introduced and returned to Committee of the Whole.

J. REPRESENTATIVES:

Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Larick

No report.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Angelou

Mrs. Angelou presented that the Executive Committee meeting is upcoming and then next Thursday is the Commission meeting. She said there is information regarding the return on investment for the work

MORPC has done for the city. \$48 dollars for every dollar that is given to MORPC in dues.

Government Liaison - Metzbower

No report.

Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Schnetzer

Ohio Herb Center and Visit Gahanna will host the popular "Visits with Santa" on Sat., Dec. 7 and Sat., Dec. 14 from 9am to 1 pm at the Ohio Herb Center. Snap a photo with Santa and create a craft to give as a gift in Mrs. Claus' parlor. Details can be found at ohioherbcenter.org. Finalizing plans for the 2019 Holiday Lights Celebration, with kickoff event scheduled for Sunday, November 24 from 3-6:30pm in the Creekside District. Volunteers will be needed. Go to visitgahanna.com for info. Planning for related Holiday Lights events, including The Santa Race (Sat., Dec. 7) and the Holiday Character Breakfast (Sat., Dec. 14). Registration and ticket information can be found on visitgahanna.com

K. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

Mayor

Mayor Kneeland announced that Thursday at 9:30 a.m. the schools will be holding their Veterans Day ceremony in their Veterans Memorial area. Monday, November 11, the ceremony will be at 11:00 a.m.

City Attorney

Mr. Ewald said to follow up on the notification, there will be a Planning Commission process that will fall to the chair of the Planning Commission, expectations from that process is that they will announce a public hearing, notify contiguous property owners and there will be additional information that we don't have today. He said he would ask for the valuation of the transfer of the property as well.

M. COUNCIL COMMENT

Mrs. Angelou said she would encourage everyone to come to the 11, 11, 11. It's something that everyone, and our children should see because it is so well done.

Mr. Larick thanked Finance Director Joann Bury for staying for the entire evening.

Mrs. McGregor thanked everyone for coming out to voice their opinion.

Mr. Renner thanked everyone for coming out to voice their opinion and thanked Mr. Maddy for his presentation and offer to sit down with the public to discuss the project further.

Mr. Schnetzer reminded everyone to get educated on the candidates and issues and go vote.

Mr. Metzbower congratulated every candidate and said it is not an easy experience and wishes luck to his Council colleagues.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

April Beggerow
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2019.

Brian Metzbower