



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes Committee of the Whole

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

Pam Ripley, Interim Clerk of Council

Monday, January 24, 2022

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER.

President of Council, Stephen Renner, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0003-2022](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE HOUSING OFFICER TO ENTER INTO COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA (CRA) AGREEMENT WITH SCANNELL PROPERTIES; PART OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #1; WAIVE SECOND READING; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Director of Economic Development, Nate Strum, provided a summary of the attached report; stated on the Return on Investment he ran the numbers a few different ways due to comments from Council Members Schnetzer and Bowers at prior council meetings. The building value was removed, the document contains straight wage, dollars in and dollars out. Included, is what the city will be gaining through the project and what the city will be putting out as part of the project. The key difference in this project versus other similar projects is developers had requested a 10-year 100% abatement. This developer is requesting a 15-year abatement due to the size and scale of the project. The 15-year abatement is significantly higher due to the extended term. We have taken the difference between the 15 and 10-year valuation and created a payment in lieu of taxes arrangement as part of the agreement. Strum stated that once they receive 50% occupancy for their building, and an occupancy permit, that will begin the clock for the 15 years. Dan Harrington is present this evening to answer any questions about Scannell Properties.

Schnetzer said he understands the cashflow schedule, but what is the logic behind the occupancy standpoint. Strum said that's when the project becomes viable and cash flows. Schnetzer asked for confirmation that the developer is not entitled to the 15-year time. Strum confirmed. McGregor said she does not see the reason for the request for emergency. Harrington said that they are trying to work with the speed of the market; materials cost continues to increase daily; trying to get lenders to finance the project, and they want to see if the tax-abatement will go through before securing funding. McGregor said that is an emergency on his part, but that does not mean the legislative process should be an emergency. Strum said there was a prior request and approval for a similar project. Angelou said there is a fifth Monday, where there is no Council meeting, which may be the need to move forward with emergency, since there is extra time this month. Renner said that the agreement seems sound, but he understands the concerns of McGregor.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading/Waive Second Reading/Adopt as Emergency on Regular Agenda 2/7/22.

C. DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

1. Court Services

[2022-0027](#)

Mayor's Court Report to Council.

Director of Court Services, Amanda Parker, introduced herself to the new Council Members and provided some background information on her role with the City, and the functions of Mayor's Court; presented the attached report to Council. Parker stated that New Albany's Mayor's Court is held here on Thursday afternoons; have absorbed that workload without adding staff.

Parker said the Ohio Revised Code provides for the existence of mayor's courts, but they are presided over by a magistrate; they only hear misdemeanor cases with the exception of domestic violence cases, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th offense OVIs; are not a court of record; defendants are afforded an appeal to Franklin County Municipal Court if they are not happy with their outcome at mayor's court.

McGregor asked for new cases, is that all new tickets written in the month. Parker stated that's the number of citations that come in and are provided a case number; traffic, criminal, parking, code enforcement violations. Renner asked how Capital Recovery Systems was selected as a collections agency. Parker stated they were selected and put in place well before her time at the City, but they are one of the top vendors throughout the region; they allow for a flat fee rather than a percentage,

which is beneficial for planning.

2. Department of Parks & Recreation

[2022-0026](#)

Parks & Recreation Report to Council.

Director of Parks & Recreation, Stephanie Ferrell, stated that the last plan was adopted in 2006; original plan was created as a guide for plans and policies and included capital improvements; trails were identified as important to the community, so a lot time and effort was put in to trails, which resulted in the Big Walnut Trail. The plan was updated in 2015; updates included operating under financial constraints, capital improvements were removed; but pricing policy is reviewed annually by Council based off recommendations from the Parks & Rec Board. Ferrell stated that the industry standard is to update the plan every five years. Issue 12 provided for a plan for maintenance which was deferred; and also impacted fields. With new staffing, it is a good time to review the plan. After speaking with the Finance Department, it was determined that an RFP process was not required; this is an amendment to an existing plan. The 2022 plan will have three components: first phase will take a look at where we are today and will include a SWOT analysis; second phase will include where we are going and will include public engagement; third phase will be a plan on how we get there and will evaluate funding; third phase will also include goals and objectives in order to create a plan to present to Council for adoption.

Renner stated that he is happy to see this come to fruition; asked what the next steps are. Ferrell said the mayor is able to move forward with a contract. Mayor Jadwin said this is a professional service contract and does not require Council action at this time; just presented for informational purposes. Ferrell stated that the City Attorney has reviewed the language and feels comfortable with it; expects a nine-month turn around time. Angelou asked about the cost. Renner said in the agreement, it says \$98k. Jadwin said that if there were no concerns with this, they could move forward with the contract; will need a strategy around investing Issue 12 dollars. Angelou said they need to move quickly on this to not lose funding; infrastructure funding is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Weaver asked if the consultant had done similar studies in the area in the past. Ferrell confirmed that they have. Agreement attached.

3. Department of Planning

Director of Planning, Michael Blackford, provided an overview and update on the Department of Planning. The department has four

divisions: building, code enforcement, planning and zoning, with 10 staff members.

For the nuisance abatement code, the purpose is to protect health, safety, welfare and protect from blight; works in conjunction with code enforcement. Code enforcement can encourage residents to comply with fines but cannot force them to comply without the nuisance abatement code.

Blackford stated that they have begun implementing Rental Registration; protects property values, and applies to residential properties, not commercial properties. There are 1,200 rental properties in the city.

The department is also working on a zoning code rewrite, which was last done in 1958. The code needs modernized, and will include more pictures and less text, needs clarity to be more clear and precise, and formatting needs updated; will be brought before Planning Commission later this year, and before Council for final approval by end of 2022. Renner thanked him for the aggressive project; stated that feral cats are an issue and asked for recommendations. Blackford and Jadwin stated that is something that needs addressed at the County; is a broader issue with not many options at the city level.

D. ITEMS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

[ORD-0002-2022](#) AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO TO PROVIDE AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL OFFENSES CODE, VARIOUS SECTIONS; TO PROVIDE FOR PENALTIES, CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

City Attorney, Ray Mularski, stated that this is another codification; did one last year for traffic code; this needed updated to reflect Ohio Revised Code; took time to review each section to determine what should be left in; not an entire overhaul, but rather select ordinances and statutes that were not in line with state statute; did not accept all changes.

McGregor said she was glad to see that it's approved for women to breastfeed anywhere; asked about the spelling of marijuana, and why there was an "h" rather than a "j." Mularski said that is how it's spelled in ORC. Weaver said he was glad to see some outdated terms replaced surrounding developmental disabilities and physical impairments; thanked Mularski for his efforts on that.

Recommendation: Introduce/First Reading on 2/7/22; Consent Agenda on 2/21/22.

E. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:[2022-0023](#)

Liquor Permit Request: #03207030260; 1380 N. Hamilton Road; Bob Evans Restaurants LLC.

Deputy Clerk, Pam Ripley, stated that this is a new request for a liquor permit; no objections from the Police Department. No objections noted from Council.

[2022-0024](#)

Council Rules of Procedure.

Renner stated that the last time the rules were updated was in 2019; have discussed 6.3, Hearing of Visitors, and how to handle public comments during this time. Under normal conditions, speakers may come and comment during Hearing of Visitors, and have three minutes to speak, but there is a question about electronic communications, and people requesting e-mails be read under that section of the agenda. Asked Council how they felt about changing that; do they try to make an allowance for this new age where live streaming is available; should they be more accessible. Weaver stated that accessibility is very important; it is hard to make it to a Monday evening meeting held at 7:00 p.m.; would like to see a change to allow for them to read correspondence into the meeting; believes it would encourage participation. McGregor said she would not be opposed to having comments attached but reading them into the record could be very lengthy and unsure if it would be beneficial. Padova asked if they had an option to allow people to call in to make comments, as was the case when the meetings were virtual; agrees that it would be lengthy to read in e-mails, but also, who would read them; would be a burden to shorten comments that would extend past the three minutes allowed. Jadwin said they considered that when returning to in-person meetings; looked at an option to support calling in.

IT Manager, Kevin Schultz, stated that there were challenges with that; we can participate with a Teams Meeting in the room, but the person on the other end could not hear the proceedings through Teams; they could make some small adjustments to the technology to accommodate that outside participation, but the way the room is setup now, it would not function. Schnetzer said he has done this for over eight years; receives regular correspondence from residents; based on evidence, it is not that big of an impediment to require that a person be here in chambers; not opposed to the suggestion that if someone made a proactive request to have something added into the minutes about a particular topic, that could be attached; is opposed to reading letters into the record during the meeting. Renner stated that he is opposed to the idea; open to ideas of copying to the minutes; holds value in local government and its participatory nature; City Hall and the Chambers were built for the

people; if we add the ability to read every letter then we would get inundated; if you feel that your local government needs to hear you, you should come down before us and talk to us; will look at some minor changes. Renner said he was also concerned that under Council Comment, people use that time to read something from a constituent; that is a time for Council Members to express their view as an elected official.

Schnetzer asked if they could ask the Council Office to look into this. Clerk stated that back in 2020, during peak pandemic, they looked at a tool to submit electronic comments; discussed at the time that it was similar to social media; felt it was not the proper way to submit comments; how you participate in a Council meeting is different from participation through social media; looked at other communities and what they are doing is all over the place; charter changes could be made to allow for virtual meetings; we don't have that ability; must decide what's best for Gahanna. Renner asked that they be prepared to update changes in mid-late February.

[RES-0004-2022](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH.

Clerk stated that Bowers and Ripley drafted this resolution; asked that any additions or amendments be submitted before they present it on Monday.

Recommendation: Regular Agenda on 2/7/22.

[ORD-0001-2022](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR USE OF CITY PROPERTY AS POLLING LOCATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2022.

Clerk stated that their office coordinates with the Board of Elections on polling locations; changes to this agreement from past years include a Monday evening setup and an addition for campaigning language that matches Ohio Revised Code.

Recommendation: Introduce/First Reading on 2/7/22; Consent Agenda on 2/21/22.

F. ADJOURNMENT.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.