

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Saturday, April 6, 2002

9:00 AM

Council Committee Rooms

Committee of the Whole

*Robert W. Kelley, Chair
Karen J. Angelou
L. Nicholas Hogan
John McAlister
Debra A. Payne
David B. Thom
Michael O'Brien, ex officio*

Members Present: Debra A. Payne, Robert W. Kelley, John McAlister, L. Nicholas Hogan, Karen J. Angelou, Michael O'Brien and David B. Thom

PENDING LEGISLATION:

ORD-0063-2002

TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO MODIFIED SCOPE OF SERVICES WITH STILSON CONSULTING GROUP FOR CREEKSIDE DEVELOPMENT-PHASE II; ORIGINAL CONTRACT APPROVED BY ORD-0116-2001; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

Kelley said that Development Director White has asked to speak first.

White presented Creekside Development Information, and said what she has attempted to do in this document is to answer any questions or concerns relative to the Phase II plan; put together the booklet that she thinks will address all the questions that Council may have; go thru this in a logical sequence; reps from Stilson are also here for any questions you may have; hopefully this document will help you in your deliberations. (Copy of Creekside, Site Development Information, is available in the office of the Clerk of Council.) White reviewed page 1 thru 8 - Questions & Answers.

White said that Phase II creates a unique ambiance; drawing Gahanna together in a town square; recreate the Mill Race; was the industry that surrounded the grist mill; revitalization project; has to be some investment to cause that to happen; economic value. White said we want to acquire some of the land so that we can have control of the development; critical mass; want it to be aesthetically pleasing; compliment that which is already in Olde Gahanna. We have been working on this for 3 years; City must provide that public ingredient that makes the formula work; best plan that will meet these goals and objectives; extend the park and the infrastructure.

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White said we have downsized the project to minimize public investment and maximize private investment and development; provide infrastructure to attract the private development. The total cost will be determined by the decision whether or not to bury utility lines; Wetherholt said that could add a cost of \$1.5 million; \$28,000 to do the study.

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This phase of development would not cause the need for sewer and waterline upgrades immediately; do know that will have to do upgrades soon. As to the role of the Creekside Development Team, which includes the President of Council, we have been getting together what we thought the Administration wanted. The object of the revised plan is a definitive town center; becomes a model for other cities.

Page 4:

The tower is a visual landmark; attraction for residents and tourists; makes Gahanna unique; waterwheel is the terminus for the Mill Race extension; compliment system.

Page 5:

The estimated cost of the tower and the waterwheel is \$325,000; total cost \$1.75 million.

Page 6:

White said this spells out how much it would cost if the waterwheel and tower were

taken out of this plan and planned for future development; would have to tear up infrastructure that would be put in with this phase; annual maintenance per Mitchell would be approximately \$15,000.

Page 7:

Proposed plans for Phase III.

Page 8:

How the Gahanna downtown revitalization compares to other local cities.

There was discussion about parking and the direct correlation between number of parking spaces and final size of the project.

Exhibit A: Scope & Timeline:

White talked about the separate zoning category for Olde Gahanna; people wanted their property to be zoned residential single family so that is what we did; whole new zoning to protect people. In the center of Creekside separate zoning district.

Kelley thanked White for the presentation. Hogan said he is concerned with how the City finances the project; we have cash carryover, but he asked Isler flat out if he is recommending this project, and he is not (Isler); he is simply saying the funds are there; not wanting to give the impression that he is supporting. Hogan continued to add up figures to see how much of the carryover would be left. White said we would be generating revenue in excess of what we are spending. Angelou said we have very stable investments; Isler would tell us if our investments were compromised. Angelou said we also have to look at the number of new employees that have been proposed; this will impact the carryover; we do have 3 large projects on the table.

Hogan said it is Council's responsibility to discuss the money; will have disagreements; Planning Commission did their job, but it is our job to speak to the money. Hogan said his constituents have asked when Creekside will end; does the City anticipate subsidizing developers in the next 5 years? White said there could be and no there doesn't have to be; is a CRA area; community reinvestment area; chance for tax abatement.

McAlister said can the City do this; should the City do this; is a democracy; why would there be 25 million; like a wolf and a sheep voting on what to have for lunch. McAlister said with this carryover we must be taxing people too much; protect the minority from the majority; why are we taxing people to build another park in Gahanna; \$2 million plus \$2 million and then another just to have a park in Gahanna; founders of Gahanna didn't do it right so in 2002 we have to come in and build a town square; whoever grab the most.

Kelley said should we do this; should we do something; he has had calls from constituents; it is his responsibility to look at this and look to scale it down as people have asked; can we scale this down and move on that.

Angelou said she feels that McAlister is in a minority when it comes to Creekside. She is elected by the people and has been elected for almost 20 years; is this a prudent way to spend taxpayers dollars; not agree that we are spending \$2 million for a park; this project will continue to keep us vital; we have the very best Finance Director we could have; he is prudent; does the project stand on its own merits; lead to increased productivity that will pay for it; consider it infrastructure; definitely of benefit;

concerned with the underground utilities; where that fits in.

McAlister said not 1.75 million or \$2 million; now to \$4 million doubling the cost of the park plus the cost that exists already. George Parker is a good architect, but why is he the only architect the City can use; see what other architect's can come up with; need to see an end to the developing. Why is the City in real estate development; why are taxpayers being forced to pay for this.

Kelley said we have agreed to disagree; he still respects everyone.

O'Brien said he has changed his position on the underground utilities; can paint transformers and use shrubbery to disguise; more realistic approach. He continued that City Council was courageous 25 years ago in starting the Industrial Park; was not a popular thing but look at it now; we are doing the same with Creekside; they were considered tyrants and wolfs; our founders located the first City Hall on Mill Street and over 30 years ago the old municipal building was built and look at the complex; this is foresight; all the infrastructure that has been put in all over the City.

Payne said as a Council member, if she hears there is a large carryover then that tells her she is doing a good job; frugal spending or and bringing in more revenue than planned by this council; doing the things needed to continue to bring more revenue into City; Creekside will bring more revenue into our downtown; bring back to vitality.

Hogan said we have to get back to what the residents want, and that is less money; he can support a plan that puts out less money; look at the wonderful fountains at Easton, that draws people; certain parts of the plan will not draw people; need more water movement; what about some citizen ownership with brick walkways purchased by citizens with name on it; in honor of people like the Memorial; that has been a great success; grass and moving water will still attract the developers that we want to attract.

Angelou said does the project stand alone; what does it bring; Candy Greenblott said Creekside brings the heart of the City. There has been a division in Gahanna for many years; cleaning the Creekside area up and seeing how beautiful it is; it is a natural resource that brings the community together. Creekside also adds to the quality of life; started project as a vision in 1995; future development will probably pay for itself. She is working with the CVB, will include a historic section and hotel; be a destination for people; if we build it they will come; is a good thing.

Kelley said he was hoping Council could come to a compromise between Council and residents; can support \$1 million project; without the tower and waterwheel will still bring developers; can attract people with fountains as Hogan said. McAlister said he could support \$1 million with a different design and fountains.

White said you can take a project down or lessen it so much that it becomes null and void; have to understand that we have already spent \$50,000 to \$60,000 with Stilson and that is for this design; the plan determines the scope of services; the investment in the property will determine the return; if we sell the property, not get the return; hard to get out of it what we paid; is a long term investment. As long as Council authorizes the money we will go back and downsized the project; each time compromising the development; so low that it will not have the economic return.

Thom said that Creekside is the area to pull our whole community together; like Angelou said there has been the east side verses the west side; it pulls the entire community together; is the heart. Gahanna is where it is now because of the foresight of former

Council members; taking the cancel on an Industrial zone; not a popular idea; but it has paid off and will continue to pay off for a long time; good investment. We have scaled the Creekside project down from what was first discussed; have come down to something that is workable and affordable; is a first class development.

Kelley said at some point he would like to come to a consensus; we can change the scope or bring it for a second reading. Hogan said he can support Kelley's proposal for \$1 million; will not cheapen the development.

O'Brien said nothing he has heard has changed his mind, he wants to go forward to second reading for the full amount; Thom and Payne said they agreed.

Kelley, Hogan and McAlister all said they can support a \$1 million project. McAlister said he does not buy that there would not be any development at Creekside without the help of politicians and bureaucrats; he is an anti politician, politician.

Angelou said she has been the swing vote many times in her 20 years on Council; she had hoped for a consensus.

Kelley thanked everyone from coming.

Recommended for Adoption

Donna Jernigan, CMC/AAE, Deputy Clerk of Council