

City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, July 10, 2023

City Hall, Council Chambers

Immediately following the regular City Council meeting on July 10, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilmember Michael Schnetzer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. The agenda was published on July 7, 2023. Councilmember McGregor was absent from the meeting. All other members were present. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

1. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Chairman Schnetzer began by providing a recap of the meeting. He mentioned that the council had a presentation by the administration and then engaged in a constructive dialogue by submitting questions to him. He attempted to eliminate any duplicates and organize the questions for a meaningful conversation during the meeting. The questions were distributed to all council members.

[2023-0109](#)

Capital Improvement Plan Draft

Street Tree Program

The first question, regarding the street tree program's cost estimates, was then addressed to Stephania Ferrell, the Director of Parks & Recreation. She explained that the estimates for the street tree program had been determined and established. However, there was an ongoing administrative discussion about whether the operation of the program should fall under the capital improvement plan or the operational budget. As a result, the outline of the program was included, but the funding aspect was not specified yet. Chairman Schnetzer inquired about a timeline for making the decision, to which Director Ferrell responded that the decision would be made before the final draft of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is presented to the council.

Bryn Mawr Park

Chairman Schnetzer proceeded with the next set of questions, referring to page 20, which contained a table with several line items related to improvements at Bryn Mawr Park. He asked Director Ferrell to provide details on the improvements included in the Bryn Mawr Park line item and also requested a definition of the administration's criteria for determining a "high use park."

Director Ferrell addressed the question, explaining that Bryn Mawr Park was listed in two different tables. One table indicated a scheduled replacement of the playground structure in 2028, while the other mentioned a general park improvement, specifically involving the addition of a restroom facility. Regarding the "high use" designation, she clarified that it depended on the number of amenities and features a park had. Bryn Mawr Park, labeled as a neighborhood park, hosted soccer and sports practices, making it a high-use park where a permanent restroom facility was considered necessary.

Councilmember Bowers inquired if there were any other pocket parks that didn't currently have restroom facilities but hosted sports teams. Director Ferrell mentioned that Shull Park was another facility with athletic use and lacked a permanent restroom facility, making Bryn Mawr Park an ideal candidate for one. Councilmember Bowers confirmed that there were no other neighborhood pocket parks that hosted sports teams. Director Ferrell noted that from a special use park, Pizzurro is another site that does not have a restroom facility that would be ideal.

Vice President Weaver followed up by asking if public safety improvements, such as signage for "children at play" or similar indications, would be considered as part of the park improvements. Director Ferrell responded affirmatively, stating that whenever there was an identified need for public safety signs, they would be incorporated into the park's improvement plans, with the design aimed at reducing vandalism.

Strategic Land Acquisition

Chairman Schnetzer continued with the next item on the agenda, directing the question to the administration regarding the definition of "strategic land acquisition for development." Mayor Jadwin addressed the question, explaining that historically, funds have been appropriated annually for land bank purposes, with the intention of assisting the city in acquiring land for various purposes in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code. The acquired properties could be used for infrastructure needs or future redevelopment, among other identified purposes. The Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) acts as a land bank group and plays a critical role in this process. The annual appropriation amount for this purpose has historically been \$350,000. However, the current budget is for a lesser amount as the goal is for the CIC to eventually become financially independent of the city, with the aim of

creating a revenue stream through the Creekside Redevelopment plan to eliminate the need for the land bank contribution in the future.

East Johnstown Road Improvements

Chairman Schnetzer asked whether the East Johnstown Road improvements be included in the street program rather than a separate project item. Director Komlanc responded to the question, explaining that unlike residential street rebuilds and capital maintenance mill and overlay projects, the East Johnstown Road project involves a comprehensive corridor widening with utility improvements, installation of a multi-use path, storm sewer installation, and utility relocation. The project takes a broader approach to address various improvements along the arterial collector road, US-62 East Johnstown Road. As such, it is separate from the annual street maintenance and reconstruction programs typically seen in the city.

McKenna Creek Concerns

Senior Director of Operations Kevin Schultz responded to the question about considering adding McKenna Creek concerns in the Utility Systems improvements. Director Schultz acknowledged the concerns and requested clarification on the specific area of interest, particularly from East Johnstown Road north to a specific place up Cherry Bottom. Vice President Weaver specified that he was referencing the Eastchester area and mentioned the retention pond from the apartment complex. Director Schultz stated that they would take a closer look at the particular area and suggested tabling the discussion until the next Finance Committee meeting. Vice President Weaver agreed with tabling. Chairman Schnetzer confirmed the Committee would revisit the item at the next meeting.

Projects listed without next steps/updates

Director Schultz explained that the current document includes over 80 projects, and the level of detail provided varies for each project. Some projects have more information and updates listed, while others may not have detailed next steps or updates. He mentioned that the document is still undergoing revisions to address questions, clarifications, and typo corrections. Director Schultz informed the committee that the final document will be slightly different from the current version, and some of the projects will be filled in with additional information. He also requested that if the committee members have specific requests for updates on particular projects, they should let the administration know, so they can ensure that next steps and status updates are included for those specific projects.

Replacement and Relocation of Skate Park

Chairman Schnetzer raised the question about the rationale for the replacement and relocation of the Skate Park, which was shown in Exhibit PK-24-082 on Page 90 of the PDF. Director Ferrell responded, explaining that

the current location of the Skate Park at Shull is not ideal due to frequent flooding and silt buildup that damages the equipment. The park has reached the end of its useful life, and investing more money into the existing location would not be responsible. A new site at Lower McCorkle, adjacent to the Big Walnut Trail and outside the floodway, has been identified as a better location. This new location would accommodate the improved bike park, skills track, Safety Town, and other skate elements, creating a reimagined site.

Councilmember Bowers added that a constituent had raised concerns about whether the resident usage justified relocating the skate park or if the funds could be better spent on other recreational activities. Director Ferrell responded that the new facility would not be a traditional skate park but rather cater to adventure sports, reflecting current recreational trends. The goal is to create a multi-generational facility that appeals to both youth and adults. Director Schultz mentioned that they are considering renaming the project to better reflect its purpose, ensuring clarity about the nature of the improvements being made.

Herb Center Parcel and Redevelopment Plans

Chairman Schnetzer raised a question about item PK-27-81, specifically in regards to the Herb Center building at 110 Mill Street and how it fits into the broader development plan for the area. Mayor Jadwin responded, stating that it is undetermined at this time how the Herb Center building fits into the broader plan under the Creekside Redevelopment strategy. The Creekside Redevelopment strategy, which was presented over a year ago, suggested the possibility of developing the parcel collectively with surrounding parcels, possibly as a hotel. However, there are no immediate plans for that right now. She noted the CIC has options to purchase surrounding parcels but currently owns other properties outright. As of now, the immediate focus of the CIC is on the properties and parcels it owns outright for redevelopment. The inclusion of the Herb Center building in the CIP is more of a placeholder in the event that something happens with the building. The city wants to ensure they keep track of what maintenance is needed, but the immediate focus for CIC's redevelopment is on other parcels.

Woodmark Woods Reserve Sidewalk

Chairman Schnetzer inquired about item PK-24-02 on page 23 of the document (page 24 of the PDF), specifically asking for further elaboration on the plans for the parcel associated with the Woodmark Woods Reserve sidewalk. Director Ferrell clarified that there are no specific plans for the parcel itself. The area in question is part of the Woodmark Woods Reserve and has a missing sidewalk, which is located close to Thistle Avenue. The main purpose of this improvement is to address the missing sidewalk, particularly considering the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements. The project aims to enhance the sidewalk corridor on the west side.

Loop Trail at Sunpoint Park

Chairman Schnetzer referred to item PK-28-01 on page 24 (page 25 of the PDF) which mentioned another trail item and asked if it connects to anything, possibly referring to the Sunpoint loop trail. Director Ferrell confirmed that the PK-28-01 project involves the creation of a loop trail within Sunpoint Park. Loop trails are popular among park users as they can enjoy the park's amenities, such as playgrounds, while strategizing their walking or running distances. Sunpoint Park was identified as an ideal location for expanding and improving the loop trail. Chairman Schnetzer added that at Academy Park, coaches often have older kids they are coaching, and younger kids may be with their parents or grandparents. These coaches frequently use the loop trail to keep the younger ones preoccupied and engaged.

Aquatics and Community Center Plans

Director Ferrell provided further information about how the existing aquatics facilities fit within the plans of a community center. She explained that both the aquatics facilities and the indoor community recreation center were highly prioritized in the Parks Master Plan data. The aquatics plan is currently evaluating the three existing bodies of water to determine the best path forward. Simultaneously, the plan will consider the resolution of aging facilities and how they fit into the community recreation center project. The aquatics plan will play a crucial role in informing the future development of the community recreation center.

G-Net Program Outsourcing Question

Chief of Police Jeff Spence addressed the question regarding the G-Net program. He stated that there have been no internal discussions about outsourcing G-Net. Instead, they have had a management agreement with Columbus Fibernet for G-Net since February 2009. G-Net is considered critical infrastructure, and many public safety services run through it or are interconnected to other municipal services. The department is careful and vigilant in ensuring the proper care, custody, and control of the G-Net network due to its importance for public safety operations.

Signage Sponsorship

Director Ferrell addressed the question about funding sponsorship for signage. She explained that to date, they do not seek sponsorship for permanent signage. Mayor Jadwin clarified that they do not seek sponsors for temporary signage but rather recognize sponsors in temporary signage.

Utilization Studies for Link to Literacy Trail

Director Ferrell provided information about the Library Link to Literacy Trail project. The trail was identified by the resident-led Bicycle and Trails Advisory Committee (BTAC) and aims to connect to the Big Walnut Trail and the existing bike route, as well as the community recreation trail that connects to

North Hamilton. The purpose of the trail is to address safety concerns and provide a safer route for cyclists who currently face challenges using the bike route on Granville due to high traffic and restrictions on riding on the sidewalk. The Parks Master Plan identified trails as a high priority for residents, and they desire a connected and expanded trail system with the Big Walnut Trail moving north to south. The Link to Literacy Trail is one of the first connections to achieve this goal and improve walkability and bikeability in the community. Regarding funding, grant applications have been submitted to the Clean Ohio Trails Fund and the Recreational Trails Program for alternative funding. The department is actively seeking external resources to support this project, as it aligns with several criteria for grant funding opportunities.

Reconciliation of Cost Estimates for Aquatic Facilities Plan

Director Ferrell acknowledged that there was a discrepancy in the projected cost estimates for the aquatic assessment facilities plan. The exhibit on page 117 of the PDF showed a figure of approximately \$12.6 million, while the table displayed a much smaller number of around \$6 million. She clarified that the difference was due to a typo, and assured that it would be corrected in the final draft.

Concluding Remarks & Next Steps

Chairman Schnetzer proposed two options for the scheduling of the Finance Committee meeting. He asked if there was an appetite for a Finance Committee meeting after the Committee of the Whole meeting or if they should skip it and give another week to digest the document.

Director Schultz provided some schedule changes, suggesting that they slide everything down by two weeks, introducing the final draft of the Parks Master Plan on July 31st and having the second reading for the CIP on August 21st. He mentioned that this shift would allow the Parks Master Plan to be adopted before the CIP, as requested by some council members. Director Schultz also stated that they were open to questions and input on priorities and projects from the council members.

Councilmember Bowers raised the question of when Council could weigh-in and evaluated the need for further dialogue on the matter before the final document. Director Schultz confirmed that they were open to receiving input on priorities and potential changes to the document based on councilmembers' feedback. He explained that the document was relatively fluid at this point, and minor revisions could easily be made.

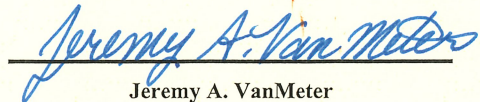
Chairman Schnetzer inquired about the timeline for submitting questions and revisions. Director Schultz clarified that questions should be sent to Schnetzer by Wednesday and to the administration by Thursday, and they would provide answers at the next meeting on Monday.

After discussing the timeline and logistics, Chairman Schnetzer asked for

confirmation from the council colleagues if they agreed to come back for the Finance Committee meeting next Monday. The council members agreed, and Chairman Schnetzer instructed them to send their questions to him, and that the meeting would be scheduled accordingly.

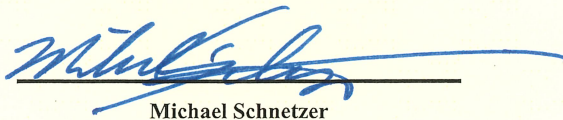
C. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Finance Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.



Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the Finance Committee, this
24th day of *July* 2023.


Michael Schnetzer