



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

City Council

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Merisa K. Bowers, President
Trenton I. Weaver, Vice President
Jamille Jones
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Stephen A. Renner
Michael Schnetzer

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, November 4, 2024

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, 2024, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver delivered an Invocation and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on November 1, 2024.

Present 7 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, Michael Schnetzer, and Trenton I. Weaver

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. HEARING OF VISITORS:

None.

D. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Street Tree Program Update

[2024-0215](#)

Street Tree Update for City Council 11.4.2024

Director of Parks and Recreation, Stephania Ferrell, introduced Forestry Supervisor Julie Predieri and Parks Superintendent Zac Guthrie to present an update on the City's street tree program. Ferrell noted the significant time and effort invested in the program, largely led by the City's Forester, Julie Predieri. The presentation aimed to provide an overview of the progress made and the future direction of the program. She began with an overview of the forestry division's staffing model, highlighting the current staff (in blue on the slide) and the additional staffing requests planned for 2025 (in yellow). The slide on the right displayed the team's qualifications and certifications, demonstrating the

level of expertise within the division. Ferrell emphasized that both the Forestry Foreman and the Supervisor are frequently invited to speak at industry conferences, underscoring their expertise. Ferrell explained that the division has two main functions: park general operations and street tree operations, which together make up a single team. She noted that the street tree program's time and effort requirements will help diversify the division's responsibilities moving forward. In park general operations, the horticulture team manages tasks such as planting, pruning, and expanding prairie areas, as well as overseeing development plans and responding to horticulture emergencies. This list, while not exhaustive, provides an overview of the division's responsibilities, which are handled by a small yet skilled team.

Director Ferrell transitioned the focus to the street tree operations. She highlighted the team's efforts to address hazardous tree removals and introduce new plantings, with more detail provided in subsequent slides. Ferrell described the street tree program's development process, starting in 2018 with the addition of a highly skilled individual in forestry, Julie Predieri, who brought experience from various municipalities. Predieri used this background to identify opportunities for the City. It became clear that a street tree program was lacking in Gahanna. However, financial constraints in 2019 paused the program's progress. In 2020 and 2021, the team conducted extensive research, including a survey distributed to local municipalities to assess existing programs and gather insights. The participating agencies represented a diverse range of content and program types. Three agencies (City of Upper Arlington, Westerville, and Dublin) served as primary models for the street tree program that would be implemented in Gahanna.

Zac Guthrie, Parks Superintendent, provided further details on the structure and specifics of the street tree program. Guthrie explained that Forestry Supervisor Julie Predieri consulted with organizations throughout Central Ohio and found that Gahanna's street trees were behind those in other municipalities. In the 1980s through the early 2000s, trees were often planted in monocultures, or single-species groupings, in small tree lawns, leading to issues with canopy coverage and overall tree health as disease and other factors caused a decline. It became apparent that Gahanna needed a formal street tree program, as it was one of the few cities in Central Ohio without one. Predieri subsequently developed a plan to establish such a program for the City. Guthrie highlighted two examples to illustrate the canopy issues: a diseased maple on Crossing Creek, slated for removal within the next three to six months, and a Callery pear on Westerdale, already removed due to repeated issues with large limb failures. In 2021, Guthrie and Predieri presented the plan to Director Ferrell, with a primary goal of increasing the tree canopy across Gahanna. The program aimed to improve tree health and reduce hazards by transitioning tree maintenance responsibilities from private ownership to the City. This approach would ensure proper pruning, watering, and mulching, especially during droughts, to support tree health and growth over time. Additionally, Guthrie highlighted the importance of replanting trees in areas with limited canopy, aiming for tree equity throughout neighborhoods.

The program was structured into three main phases, which were introduced to the Council in 2022 as part of a five-year plan. Phase one focused on

removing hazardous trees and addressing structural defects and pest-related issues. It included hiring a forestry supervisor, adding a maintenance worker, and allocating \$120,000. Phase two included introducing in-house stump grinding, code updates, community education, increased staff and equipment, and additional budget support. Phase three encompassed tree replacements, further code revisions, continued education efforts, staff increases, and budget growth. In 2023, a significant number of ash trees became hazardous due to limbs and entire trees falling into roadways, largely because of the emerald ash borer infestation. The Council granted a supplemental appropriation mid-year, allowing for increased staffing and equipment to handle these hazards. The City allocated funds for the removal of ash trees and their replacements, which were scheduled to be completed by the end of the fall season. In 2024, the program received continued support, with appropriated funds allocated toward removals, new plantings, stump grinding, and other maintenance activities specifically for street trees.

Forestry Supervisor Julie Predieri provided an update on the current operations of the street tree program. She outlined the main functions currently in place, including tree removals, tree pruning, tree planting, and stump grinding, many of which are new services introduced in 2024. Predieri explained that tree removals are prioritized based on public safety, addressing hazards identified by staff and through public requests, though all requests are verified to ensure they meet removal standards. Approximately 50% of removals are handled in-house, with the remaining 50% contracted out. Pruning efforts focus on safety, addressing clearance issues around stop signs, bus stops, and traffic lights. Currently, about 90% of pruning is done in-house. Regarding tree planting, Predieri noted that this is limited to replacement plantings following City-initiated or Park-initiated removals, such as those resulting from sidewalk maintenance projects. Residents are given the opportunity to opt in for a new tree the year following a removal in front of their property. Tree planting is primarily contracted, with about 95% outsourced and only 5% conducted in-house. Stump grinding is now conducted for every removed tree, with costs covered by the City, and the property owner is responsible for turf remediation.

Predieri addressed the prioritization of operations and funding. She emphasized that the program's two main funding areas are tree removals and replacement plantings. The hazard removal program is guided by safety concerns, with a focus on high-risk areas identified through emergency call-ins or a history of tree failures. Each tree designated for removal is inspected by an ISA-certified arborist and a tree risk assessment qualified professional, often involving multiple inspections for verification. Predieri explained that a legacy of monoculture plantings has led to clusters of aging or diseased trees, resulting in mass removals in some neighborhoods. While these removals can be disruptive, they allow for more strategic replanting, adhering to updated code requirements for tree spacing and sometimes accommodating a greater number of trees than the original layout allowed.

Communication with residents has been a key focus of the program, with efforts to ensure that property owners are notified in advance of any tree removals near their homes. Notification methods include letters, door

hangers, phone calls, and email updates, especially for the tree replacement opt-in program. Predieri and the team have also attended HOA meetings and provided information in City publications. She clarified that certain tree projects fall outside the Parks and Recreation Department's jurisdiction, such as sidewalk maintenance, utility clearances, and private property development. In such cases, the Parks and Recreation Department provides input but does not manage these projects.

Predieri discussed challenges faced by the street tree program, including sidewalk conflicts, public misunderstandings about program goals, and the emotional connection many residents have with trees. These issues have been further complicated by the need for ongoing code changes to align with new operations. Looking forward, Predieri noted that hazard removals would continue, particularly as the City transitions from deferred maintenance to a proactive management approach. She highlighted two budget requests for 2025: an urban forestry management plan and inventory, and a pear management and outreach plan, both aimed at gathering data and improving strategic planning. The program will continue replacement plantings and eventually expand to citywide plantings, structural pruning, and plant healthcare initiatives. Predieri emphasized that the primary goal of the street tree program is to improve and increase tree canopy in Gahanna. By expanding tree services, collaborating with other departments on tree-related projects, and enhancing public outreach and education, the program aims to contribute to a more sustainable Gahanna.

Questions from Council:

President Bowers expressed her gratitude to Forester Predieri, Director Ferrell, and Superintendent Guthrie for their presentations. President Bowers asked a broad question for the benefit of viewers, seeking clarification on the importance of street trees and a healthy tree canopy to the community.

Ms. Predieri responded by emphasizing that trees are valuable assets that provide numerous benefits, including increasing property values, offering shade, slowing traffic, enhancing aesthetics, and contributing to environmental health. She added that people are generally more at ease around trees, which has a significant, albeit sometimes unnoticed, impact on residents' feelings toward their neighborhoods.

Vice President Weaver referenced a recent presentation by Jeff Speck at the MORPC Summit on Sustainability, highlighting the notion that trees along walkways or bike paths enhance comfort and encourage alternatives to driving. He echoed Ms. Predieri's comments on the calming effect of trees and public art and expressed appreciation for her insights. Vice President Weaver then asked about the timeline for addressing hazard trees, seeking clarification on whether the program has an annual target for removals or if re-evaluations are conducted as trees age.

Ms. Predieri explained that the urban forestry management plan anticipated for 2025 would provide data to inform a more specific timeline. She acknowledged that many mature pear trees still exist in the community and

mentioned that a pear-specific management plan is also planned for 2025. For the current year, particularly in the fall, the focus has been on identifying and addressing trees that are dead or in poor condition. She highlighted the role of Kody Rubright, the City's tree risk assessment qualified professional, who collaborates with her to assess trees in the worst condition. Although unable to provide a precise completion percentage, Ms. Predieri confirmed that more work remains, and the team aims to have more comprehensive data next year.

Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for the ongoing progress of the street tree program, noting that it was an initiative he has supported since his election and first heard about during his campaign. He recounted an incident in Ward 4's Riva Ridge area where a pear tree split and nearly harmed children playing nearby, illustrating the hazards posed by aging pear trees. Weaver expressed his satisfaction with the project's progress and thanked Ms. Predieri for the attention given to this issue.

Councilmember Padova thanked the team for the update on the street tree program and asked about the process for tree replacements following removals tied to the sidewalk maintenance program. Specifically, she inquired whether trees removed as part of the sidewalk program are added to the replacement list or simply removed without follow-up.

Ms. Predieri explained that residents have the option to opt in for a tree replacement following the sidewalk maintenance program. She noted that the forestry team collaborates with the Engineering Department to maintain a list of trees removed due to sidewalk maintenance. The following year, affected residents receive a letter offering them the opportunity to opt into the replacement program. Predieri added that they are working on additional outreach methods to increase participation in this opt-in program.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification on the timeline, asking if replacements generally occur the year after a removal.

Ms. Predieri confirmed that the current process aims to replace trees the year following removal, though the team is working to speed up this timeline. The process involves on-site measurements to ensure code compliance, marking curbs, communicating with residents, and coordinating with contractors. She expressed hope for a faster timeline in the future.

Mr. Guthrie added that the first round of replacement plantings occurred in the spring of 2024, following ash tree removals in 2023. The planning process begins in the fall and requires six to nine months to organize, communicate with residents, and obtain necessary quotes and orders. He commended Ms. Predieri and her team for their diligent planning efforts.

Councilmember Padova asked about the process for residents who do not have any trees in front of their property and may wish to plant one. She questioned if they need a permit and whether there are restrictions on tree species.

Director Ferrell clarified that, under the current program, residents can opt to have street trees planted if they wish, but they are not required to do so. The project allows residents interested in adding a tree to their tree lawn to participate without a mandate.

Mr. Guthrie confirmed that residents may plant a tree in the tree lawn independently of the program if they complete a Right-of-Way permit, which is reviewed by Ms. Predieri to ensure the tree species is appropriate for the location. Once approved, residents may proceed with planting at their own expense.

Councilmember Padova then asked if residents who plant their own trees are responsible for maintenance.

Mr. Guthrie affirmed that current City code places maintenance responsibility on the resident if they plant a tree independently.

President Bowers asked a follow-up question regarding the sidewalk maintenance program, specifically about whether removing tree roots is a feasible solution to sidewalk panel issues.

Ms. Predieri responded that the Engineering Department's contractor includes an arborist who handles such evaluations. She provided input on evaluating roots early in the process, though assessing roots can be complex and involves some risk. While there is an effort to save trees when possible, trees with significant surface rooting issues, such as pears and honey locusts, are generally removed when root cutting is involved due to the associated hazards.

Councilmember Renner expressed his gratitude for the team's efforts in growing the street tree program and acknowledged the challenges in maintaining a program around living organisms. He highlighted the importance of trees in combating heat island effects, referencing Columbus's climate action study that mapped heat intensity across different times of day. He pointed out how Gahanna's perimeter demonstrated a cooling effect from its tree canopy and stressed the role of trees in long-term climate resilience. He then inquired if there were efforts to identify and address areas lacking tree cover.

Director Ferrell explained that as the City continues to refine the code language, the program's transition of responsibility for street tree maintenance to the City is ongoing, with completion anticipated in early 2025. She added that part of this transition involves educating residents on the benefits of street trees as they are offered the opportunity to opt into the replacement program.

Councilmember Renner confirmed his understanding and appreciation, then shared his observation of tree loss in his neighborhood over the past 24-25 years, particularly due to the emerald ash borer. He emphasized the importance of educating residents on the value of preserving existing trees. He expressed concern over recent oak tree removals by residents and asked

if there were plans for addressing the struggling trees along Stygler Road.

Ms. Predieri responded that she, too, had noticed the condition of the crab apple trees along Stygler, which are prone to disease. Currently, these trees are removed as they die. She noted that, while these trees are problematic, they do not present the same level of risk as pear trees due to their smaller size. Predieri suggested that replacing the crab apples should be done gradually to avoid dramatic changes to the landscape. Overhead power lines limit the types of trees that can be replanted in that area, and crab apples have been placed on the City's prohibited list due to their susceptibility to disease. This list, reviewed every three years by the Landscape Board, allows for flexibility in updating recommended and prohibited species.

Councilmember Renner asked if the City plans to address these trees next year, noting that the issue frequently comes up.

Director Ferrell explained that the current focus remains on addressing trees that pose immediate hazards due to the overall decline in the City's canopy. While there is a desire to improve the canopy, the priority is on managing hazards first to establish a safe foundation for future improvements.

Councilmember McGregor asked Ms. Predieri which tree species are being selected for replacements, expressing curiosity about the specific types chosen.

Ms. Predieri explained that the small tree list is the most limited but includes options like Japanese tree lilac, commonly planted along Taylor Road, as well as serviceberry and some smaller maple species. She highlighted the program's aim to move away from monoculture plantings and increase species diversity, which provides resilience for the canopy. Predieri noted that being part of the Columbus Tree Commission and networking with other foresters has allowed her to share insights and adopt successful tree species lists from nearby communities.

President Bowers asked about the estimated timeline for completing the urban forestry management plan in 2025.

Mr. Guthrie clarified that there are two distinct plans: a pear tree management plan, which will be handled in-house starting in 2025, and a broader tree management plan. Ms. Predieri had begun preliminary work on the broader management plan before her leave, and the department will soon put out a request for proposals from contractors to assist with this project. Once a vendor is selected, work on the overall management plan will begin.

Director Ferrell added that an inventory of street trees will be included in the scope of the management plan to establish a baseline for future progress.

President Bowers requested clarification on the anticipated timeline for the management plan's completion.

Mr. Guthrie estimated that the plan would take approximately 9 to 12 months

to complete, depending on the scope of work and inventory breadth. Ms. Predieri referenced Columbus’s recent urban forestry master plan, noting that Gahanna’s smaller inventory of approximately 6,000 street trees would likely allow for a quicker turnaround.

President Bowers expressed the Council’s interest in ongoing updates on the management plan, emphasizing the value of the program’s interdisciplinary benefits to the community. She encouraged open dialogue with the Council on the program’s progress.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked the team for their work and noted his own experience encountering fallen trees during door-knocking, underscoring the program’s importance. He encouraged Ms. Predieri to include information on the memorial tree program in future community outreach efforts. He shared his personal positive experience with the program, suggesting that increased awareness could help bolster canopy improvements and foster community involvement.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2024-0208](#) Council Regular Minutes 10.21.2024
The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0209](#) Finance Committee Minutes 10.21.2024
The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0210](#) Committee of the Whole Minutes 10.28.2024
The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0211](#) Finance Committee Minutes 10.28.2024
The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Resolutions:

[RES-0039-2024](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 2024, AS "NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH" IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA
The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

3. Ordinances for Second Reading and Adoption:

[ORD-0063-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - TIF Fund (2240) Contract Services and Bond Retirement Fund (4310) Professional Services

The Clerk read the Ordinance by title. The Ordinance was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

End of Consent Agenda

President Bowers noted that while Resolution 0039-2024, regarding Native American Heritage Month, was scheduled for adoption on the consent agenda that evening, there would be no formal presentation at this meeting. She expressed hope that a ceremonial presentation could still be arranged for the next regular Council meeting.

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Renner, to Pass the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

F. RESOLUTIONS:

[RES-0040-2024](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT NATIONAL VETERANS DAY, AND HONOR THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF VETERANS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

President Bowers announced that Council had been invited to present Resolution 0040-2024 at the Veterans Day Memorial event scheduled for Monday, November 11, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial. She extended an invitation for members to join her and Mayor Jadwin in presenting the joint resolution/proclamation at the event.

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

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

G. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0066-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH POD DESIGN FOR ACADEMY PARK IMPROVEMENTS

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

[ORD-0067-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AMENDED AND RESTATED JOINT SELF-INSURANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE CENTRAL OHIO HEALTH CARE CONSORTIUM; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

[ORD-0068-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH THE BOARD OF HEALTH OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT (FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH) FOR 2025 PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

[ORD-0069-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES SECTION 505.14 - DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS ANIMALS

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

H. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk - None.
2. Council

President Bowers informed Council of two upcoming events. First, she shared that Councilmembers were invited to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Orthopedic ONE at 605 Crescent Place on Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. She noted that Jessica Hilts, Management Analyst for the Council Office, had prepared a certificate of recognition. President Bowers confirmed that she, along with Councilmembers McGregor, Padova, and Weaver, planned to attend the event. Second, President Bowers highlighted an upcoming event hosted by Ohio Women in Government, which will feature a panel of diverse women sharing their journeys to political office. The event is scheduled for November 21 at the Community Impact Center, 215 North Front Street. She emphasized the presence of notable speakers, including State Senator Michele Reynolds, State Representative Munira Abdullahi, Reynoldsburg City Council President Meredith Lawson-Rowe, and Westerville School Board member Anisa Liban. The panel will be moderated by Ifra Aliawl, the DEI Chair for Ohio Women in Government, who is also a Gahanna resident and serves on the steering committee for the City's Strategic Plan and in volunteer roles with the Gahanna-Jefferson School District. President Bowers encouraged any interested Councilmembers to attend this event.

I. REPRESENTATIVES:

1. **Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Weaver**

Vice President Weaver reported the next CIC meeting will be Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. in the Committee Room.

2. **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Weaver**

[2024-0212](#)

Councilmember Weaver's MORPC Report to City Council 11.4.2024

Vice President Weaver provided an update on the 2024 Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Summit on Sustainability, themed "Growing Better Together," held the previous week. He noted that nearly 700 community leaders and stakeholders from across the region gathered to explore innovative sustainability practices and celebrate achievements through the Regional Sustainability Awards. Vice President Weaver highlighted key events from the summit, including plenary discussions on sustainable growth, economic equity, transportation mobility, and housing diversity across the region. He referenced the keynote address by Jeff Speck, author of *Walkable City*, which emphasized the importance of walkable, connected urban spaces in fostering community equity, resilience, and health. Vice President Weaver acknowledged the value of having Mr. Speck visit Gahanna to share his insights at an event held Wednesday evening and commended the Administration for organizing the engagement. Vice President Weaver also noted Councilmember Renner's remarks at the summit on the core values and practical solutions offered by Ohio University's Voinovich School for Leadership and Public Affairs' Master's in Sustainability, Resilience, and Security. He extended congratulations to Councilmember Renner on his participation. Additionally, Mayor Jadwin, in her role as Vice Chair of MORPC's Sustainability Advisory Committee, offered remarks and participated in presenting awards. Vice President Weaver expressed appreciation for the presence of his Council colleagues, City staff, members of the Administration, and Clerk VanMeter and his team, who attended the summit and engaged in various breakout sessions. He concluded by thanking everyone involved.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova shared information about upcoming holiday events. She announced that the Holiday Lights Celebration would take place on Sunday, November 24, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and mentioned that volunteers are needed for the event. She directed those interested in volunteering to sign up on the website. She also mentioned the Santa Race scheduled for Saturday, December 7, 2024, noting that volunteers are needed for this event as well and can sign up through the Visit Gahanna website.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones extended congratulations to Gahanna Lincoln High School's TV and documentary series for receiving nine nominations for the 2024 National Student Production Awards, known as the "High School Emmys." She encouraged everyone to view the Lincoln Live recordings, which are available daily and shared online through Instagram, noting the high quality of the students' work. Councilmember Jones expressed pride in the program and commended the students for producing content on par with professional journalists from major networks like NBC and CBS. She concluded by congratulating the program on this significant achievement.

J. OFFICIAL REPORTS:**1. Mayor**

Mayor Jadwin provided several updates on recent and upcoming City activities and events. She began by celebrating the graduation of the inaugural class of the Gahanna Citizens Academy. The academy started with 20 residents, with 18 completing the five-week program, which provided them with an in-depth look at City operations through sessions with department heads, hands-on activities, and facility tours. Mayor Jadwin noted the positive feedback from participants and mentioned that some expressed interest in a level two session. A spring session is being planned for another 20 residents, information will be provided on the City's website once details are finalized. The Mayor also expressed appreciation for residents who attended the recent event featuring Jeff Speck, where about 200 individuals registered. Mr. Speck's presentation was part of the MORPC Summit on Sustainability and additional workshops held in Gahanna. Although the presentation was not recorded, Director Vollmer will continue updating the Council on progress with the Comprehensive Transportation Mobility Plan. Mayor Jadwin briefly revisited the recent Gahanna Energy Plus town halls held on October 22, 2024, both livestreamed and recorded for later viewing on the City's YouTube page. She encouraged residents with questions about the program to access resources, FAQs, and contact numbers on the City's website, noting that while opt-out letters were dated October 17, 2024, with a 21-day response window ending November 7, 2024, residents can opt out of the program at any time. Mayor Jadwin shared that she attended the monthly meeting of the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association (COMMA) on Friday. This meeting, hosted in Bexley at the Governor's Mansion, provided a unique opportunity to speak directly with Governor DeWine and discuss key issues such as the protection of home rule, local government funding, tax structures, and infrastructure needs. The Mayor emphasized the importance of state support in addressing growth-related challenges in Central Ohio and expressed appreciation to the governor and his wife, Fran, for their hospitality. She congratulated the Parks and Recreation Department for hosting another successful Gahanna Goblin Fest, noting the enjoyable and spooky atmosphere enjoyed by both children and families. Mayor Jadwin reminded residents about the City's pumpkin composting and political sign recycling program, with bins available at Shull Park through November 29, 2024, for pumpkins, gourds, and political signs. She confirmed that the Veterans Day ceremony, organized by the Gahanna Veterans Committee, will be held on Monday, November 11, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial. Mayor Jadwin invited everyone to attend this moving event, reminding attendees that City Hall will be closed that day. Finally, she announced an upcoming "Breakfast with Columbus Business First" networking event on Friday, November 15, from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. at The Peak at Edison on the third floor. This annual event, free but requiring registration, provides an opportunity for business owners and leaders in Central Ohio to network and explore opportunities in Gahanna. Mayor Jadwin encouraged everyone to register through the City's website, highlighting that it is one of Business First's

best-attended events each year.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamarasan provided a brief update on the Speed Way Towing litigation, noting that she recently attended the oral arguments for the case in the 10th District Court of Appeals. She informed the Council that the proceedings were recorded and are available for viewing on the 10th District's YouTube page. Attorney Tamarasan expressed optimism about the arguments presented and noted that they are now awaiting a decision on the matter.

K. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Jones announced that her October constituent report is now available and attached to the meeting agenda, detailing accomplishments and activities from the past month.

President Bowers shared that Councilmember Renner, a student in the Ohio University Master's in Sustainability, Resilience, and Security program, has been invited to serve on the regional Central Ohio Climate Action Plan working group for Energy and Water Systems. She congratulated Councilmember Renner for this opportunity to contribute his expertise on a regional level. This collaboration, involving Sustainable Columbus, MORPC, OSU, Power a Clean Future Ohio, and Impact Ohio, aims to create a unified approach to climate action, with a comprehensive climate action plan update anticipated in July 2025.

Councilmember Renner expressed gratitude for the opportunity, noting that he is part of one of the four technical working groups, specifically focused on Energy and Water Systems. The other groups cover transportation, commercial businesses and buildings, and workforce development. He emphasized the regional scope of the initiative, spanning ten counties, and highlighted the importance of continued efforts to improve air quality and energy efficiency, including retrofitting housing for cost savings and addressing lead paint exposure. Renner outlined additional focus areas, such as improving water and wastewater efficiency, which are energy-intensive processes. He mentioned the group's goal to identify alternative energy sources and streamline these systems, as well as the workforce development aspect aligned with the federal Justice40 Initiative as part of the Biden-Harris Administration. Renner noted that the working group had its first brainstorming session, bringing together members from various organizations, including SWACO (Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio) and the City of Columbus; he encouraged further representation from other counties. The anticipated output for the project is a climate action plan by July 2025, which will involve six to seven months of intensive work by the technical working group.

Councilmember Padova congratulated Councilmember Renner on his new role in the Central Ohio Climate Action Plan working group, noting how his commitment to sustainability has inspired her to make small changes toward

a more sustainable lifestyle. She also shared her experience attending a mock voting event with President Bowers at Gahanna Lincoln High School, where students participated in a simulated election. Councilmember Padova described the setup as realistic, with registration, assigned voting numbers, and even signs on the walls, allowing students to experience the voting process. She noted that Lincoln Live will broadcast the results of the student mock election at 10:00 a.m. the following day and encouraged everyone to vote on Election Day.

Councilmember Schnetzer extended congratulations to Councilmember Renner, recognizing the importance of his involvement in the regional climate action efforts. He then encouraged residents to vote, emphasizing the significance of voting as a cornerstone of representative democracy. He urged voters to conduct their own research on issues and candidates, rather than relying on party labels, and reminded everyone that democracy works best when citizens are informed and engaged. Schnetzer closed with a reminder of unity, sharing a quote from former President George H.W. Bush's letter to his successor, Bill Clinton, in which he closed, "You will be our President by the time you read this. Your success is our country's success. I'm rooting hard for you. Good luck!"

Vice President Weaver congratulated Councilmember Renner and echoed Councilmember Schnetzer's call for residents to vote, adding a reminder for voters to be patient and kind to poll workers, who are volunteers.

President Bowers thanked Councilmember Padova for sharing details about the high school's mock election and extended gratitude to Tiffany Hanna and the Extended Support Services (ESS) teachers, staff, and students who organized it. She announced that she and Councilmember Jones would host a "Budget and Breakfast" constituent hour on Friday, November 22, 2024, at 8:15 a.m. at Cafe Creekside. This informal event offers residents an opportunity to discuss the proposed budget, learn about the budgeting process, and share thoughts with Councilmembers. President Bowers expressed appreciation for Councilmember Schnetzer's comments on the importance of voting and shared a personal story about her family's history. Her great-grandparents immigrated from Lebanon in pursuit of opportunities and democratic freedoms, which influenced her grandmother and great-aunt to never miss an election. President Bowers highlighted the importance of taking her children to vote to instill the significance of civic engagement and encouraged residents to not only vote but also stay involved in local government through Council meetings and community advocacy.

[2024-0213](#)

Councilmember Jamille Jones' Constituent Report - October 2024

L. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2024.*

Merisa K. Bowers

DRAFT