



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

*Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council*

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Monday, March 13, 2023

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

*Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was published on March 10, 2023. Councilmember Schnetzer was absent from the meeting. All other members were present. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.*

**B. PRESENTATIONS:**

[2023-0045](#)

Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan

**Mayor Jadwin:** Mr. Chair, with your indulgence, I will go ahead and kick this off. This is an update on the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan. I have been talking to Council about it for a few weeks. As Director Ferrell and I have shared several times, the Administration has been working on an update to the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan for about the last nine months or so. This project is a refresh to the 2006 Comprehensive Parks Master Plan that was done, as well as the 2015 plan that focused on the operational aspects of the department. In order to engage and begin this process, we engaged Pros Consulting to lead this effort. They are the same organization, in fact the same gentleman, that led the 2006 plan as well as the 2015 plan. This plan, once adopted, will guide future decisions by our Parks Board, by the administration, by this Council on policy, maintenance, programming, project investment and operational expenditures for the Department of Parks & Recreation for the next decade. It covers all of those things. That is why they call it a comprehensive plan. Tonight, we are presenting the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan much the same way that we do with the budget. That is, we will provide you with a copy of the document. We will talk to you tonight about what you can expect to see in this document, how and what information was gathered to inform that document, and how this plan correlates with the long-term Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that we have been working on and we will be bringing to you in just a couple of weeks. Then, we are going to give you some time to review this, digest it, and we will come back to you after the CIP is presented and begin the formal legislative process to have this adopted by Council, which certainly will allow for Q&A discussion and evaluation that needs to happen. Now, I would like to turn it over to Director Ferrell and take it from there.

**Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks & Recreation:** I would actually like to start off [introducing representatives] from the Parks & Recreation Board, as well as the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation. Eric Miller and Jan Ross are on the Parks & Recreation Board as well as the Parks & Recreation Foundation. Lee Tucker, chair of the Parks & Recreation Foundation. I appreciate the support there and look forward to utilizing this plan in the efforts of progress within both of those organizations. I wanted to start off the evening with a representation of the history behind the Parks Master Plan. Similar to what Mayor Jadwin had had stated, in 2006, Woolpert, as well as Pros Consultants, managed the plan. The outcomes of those plans helped to identify the wants and the needs of the community. That formulated the decision making in order to move the department forward. In 2015, there was an update made to that plan. Due to budget constraints at that particular time, the scope of that plan was minimized to operations. Both of those plans provided a lot of process and policies that helped the department make those decisions and make a lot of action within the city. In 2022, the department recognized the need for an update to that plan. Due to the passage of Issue 12, as well as other changes throughout the community, it was the right time to make an update to this plan. The plan is fully comprehensive. It does include everything from operation, staffing, how we maintain, to capital improvements. Due to the historic knowledge and the success of the previous plans, we opted to enter into a contract with Pros Consultants with the support and approval of City Council and Mayor Jadwin. Tonight, we are fortunate to have Mr. Leon Younger, President of Pros Consulting. He is well versed with the City of Gahanna. He has been working with us over the past year with this plan. He will provide an overview of this process.

**Leon Younger, President of Pros Consulting:** I will present to you our overall approach to this plan. Tonight, I know Council just got a copy of the full comprehensive plan, but some of you I know have worked with me over the last six months in sharing information, getting feedback on where we are on certain processes, and certain elements of the plan. Tonight, I am making a presentation about how to read the plan so you are informed. Obviously, there is an executive summary but there is a process that we went through in this work. A lot of times people feel like there is a difference of opinion about what a comprehensive plan is, and for Pros, I started Pros 28 years ago. Prior to that, I was the director of Indianapolis Parks & Recreation and worked in Ohio at Lake Metro Parks in Cleveland, where I was a director there for six years. The comprehensive plan is a guiding document for the community on how a park system need can meet the current and emerging needs of residents and create vibrancy in the in the community. It should embrace the history of the community, is accountable to the present, and looks for the future, and includes an internal assessment, community engagement, data collection and the development of an action plan. It does not focus on one particular asset but provides an understanding of the system Parks & Recreation landscape both today and in the future. Our goal for this plan was to engage the community, leadership, and stakeholders. We had great participation from the Foundation, as well as the Parks & Recreation Board that supported us. We got a lot of input from them on the vision for the park system to ensure there is an appropriate balance between programs, facilities, and services. We wanted to utilize a wide variety of data sources. We included stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings. We did two surveys, one a statistically valid survey, as well as an online survey. We wanted to determine the unique level of service standards to develop an appropriate action for the city. As it applies to Parks & Recreation facilities and trails, we wanted to shape the financial and operational preparedness through innovative opportunities and funding sources. We wanted to develop a dynamic and realistic action plan that creates a road map to ensure long-term success. As Stephanina and

the team is presenting this plan, part of that action plan is to report back to you either quarterly or every six months where they are in the plan, what is being done, what processes are they in, and at what stage are they actually in implementing the plan. As you go through the budget process, and as you go through Parks & Recreation opportunities, they are sharing with you where they are in the various stages and what actually gets approved. The plan is a living document for the next five, six, or seven years, however long you stay with the plan. The next piece of this, and this describes for everybody in the audience, we did a lot of data review. One of the things I found after doing this plan eight years later is how much had been implemented since the last plan. I was pleasantly surprised with the number of improvements that were done in the parks. It was a credit to the staff who basically have a good process in place as it applies to capital improvements and where your assets are in their life cycle. All assets have a life cycle, just at various times. You got some that are needing some updates, like you all know your pool, but in terms of like playgrounds, these are typically updated every 15 to 17 years. They have a great handle [on this]. I was telling Stephania today it is some of the best life cycle work I have seen. We have done 350 to 400 master plans around the country. We have done a lot in this region. We have done Westerville's, Dublin's, and we are working with Delaware, Orange County, the City of Columbus, so I see what goes on here. [Gahanna Parks & Recreation] has done a really good job tracking where their assets are and how functional those assets are. Everything about Parks is about experiences: how to create the kind of experiences that people want to come back, use your facilities, and always talk about "that's the place to go" for having a great experience. We benchmarked you against other agencies. We did a financial analysis of the system, a program assessment. We did levels of service to see where you are in comparison to other agencies, as well as across Ohio. We did surveys. We had 615 return surveys out of 2,000 households, which is a fairly good return on investment. We had 177 return on the online surveys, and of course the demographic trends update, and then the prioritization and capital plan. We did a capital plan, but the capital plan was moved over to the comp plan so that they are in sync with each other. I know the Mayor just said Council have an opportunity to view it. The Parks side of that capital is in that report. Then, [we developed] an action plan. That kind of tells you where that is. One of the things in the survey that we looked at is we asked people, "Do you have a need for something? If you have a need, how important is it?" I might have a need but it is not that important. The intent is to marry, "I have a need" to how important something is. To highlight what people said are most important, it is called a priority ranking, investment ranking. It shares that these are the things that are most important. Your trail system eight years ago was really something important in terms of people wanting to see it completed. And you have done a lot in that, and trails will show up. The reason trails show up, not only here but across the country, as the number one amenity that people are looking for is because you can walk on it, you can bike on it, you can run on it, and it is free. Consequently, that is what people like but they also want a connected system. The way you are heading with your trail system, it actually is a system into itself. The opportunity there still shows up as a very important element of the park system. [Younger continues review of PIR Ratings slide] An Indoor Aquatic Center I know is on your radar, but that still shows up as an important element. Obviously, restrooms at parks. Farmer's market, I know you have a separate group that does a farmer's market, but a farmer's market is an event every week and people like it. Indoor walking/jogging track, which requires some level of a community facility, an outdoor amphitheater, paved trails, outdoor adventure park, multi-use unpaved trails, and then water access and splash pads. In that blue area, there are a lot of other things, and in the low priority area either you have it or your people are satisfied. Golf Course shows up. Golf is

important here but you already have it, so it is a low priority. It is really what are we trying to do in the upper, all of the red, and in the blue because that is what people are saying are important to them. Likewise, we did this for programming. I come from the prospect that you are either self-directed program or you are organized recreation. From an organized recreation perspective, the farmer's market, adult fitness and wellness, community special events, cultural enrichment, adult sports, senior fitness and wellness, water fitness, swim lessons, after school programs, nutrition programs, fitness, personal training, and pickleball showed up as the top 12. All of these have wide age segment appeal. People used to think that pickleball was only for seniors but pickleball continues to grow at all levels and is very competitive across the board. This is what your community says. So, if you are trying to please and trying to engage them and trying to support them, these are the kind of recreation programs that drive future development of amenities in your system. Defining the Parks & Recreation, these are your mission, your vision, your core values, and theme. Each one of these provide a direction about how the system wants to be managed, as well as what its future is. The vision is to enhance and preserve Parks & Recreation services, lands, and facilities through high standards of innovation and that positions Gahanna as a leading community and a great place to live, work, and play. Core values: integrity, safety, respect, service, teamwork, exploration, and sustainability. With all of these, this is how the park system wants to be viewed by their users, by Council, by key people in your community. The theme is "explore and grow with Gahanna Parks & Recreation." Key priorities in the action plan - again, when you see the action plan, it is going to give you a goal, an action, a recommendation, who is going to do it, and what are the outcomes that you are going to see come from that. As I opened up, part of this is Stephania's group giving you updates on the processes, where they are in the action plan, but here we want to update and add existing parks, trails, and amenities across the city. You are pretty balanced. When you look at the plan, there are maps that depict how balanced your city is between neighborhood parks, community parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and playground courts. You will see how balanced the city is. The only real weakness, and you all know it, I am not telling you anything [new], but indoor space is a weakness. The Steering Committee that we were working with had Tony Collins, President/CEO YMCA of Central Ohio, and we talked a lot with them about the opportunities. They do not have the ability to build things. They want to manage them but they do not want to build them. We had a conversation with him regarding that, and I recognize that because it is hard to raise money for those things. The second thing is replace and build new recreation facilities and attractions to the city. Seek a dedicated funding source for capital. I know you passed your funding source a couple years ago, which has really helped the system and the city, but this one big ticket item takes a lot of energy. I know that is something on your radar. It would balance the park system for the future. That would mean developing an indoor community center, and how senior services and all of the other core businesses that you are in, and then maximize program options to activate parks and increase use of recreation facilities. The best park systems in the country know how to activate spaces. You create them. That is what makes a great park system. For an example of that, you will see there is a vision. There is a goal. You will see it in the plan. [Younger referenced the Example: Parkland and Trails Action Plan slide] These are the actions listed. The actions go into who is going to do it, when they are going to do it, and what is a measurable outcome that goes with it. I am sharing that with you so you know when you are reading the document how the document flows and why it does what it does.

**Councilmember McGregor:** When you listed, I meant to ask this a couple meetings

ago, what is the difference between trails like you have got trails and trails.

**Mr. Younger:** Soft surface trails and hard surface trails. There are spine trails and then there are link trails. There are loop trails. You have got them all but the intent is taking all your spine trails and linking neighborhoods into the spine trails, so people never have to cross the street. They can actually get on a trail through your city.

**Councilmember McGregor:** Does it take into effect trails in parks, like hiking trails?

**Mr. Younger:** Yes. You have got a lot of nice hiking trails for your natural areas. I know that is one of our recommendations in the plan, to continue to build that. People do want access to natural trails.

**Mayor Jadwin:** I know that many of you were at the Town Hall that we presented last Tuesday. I will let Director Ferrell speak to this as well, but you heard a recitation of a lot of the projects that have been done by the Parks & Recreation Department already or that are underway. What those were showing is projects that were in line with objectives and goals that had been identified under the previous existing Parks Master Plan. There is overlap with the Parks Master Plan and objectives and goals that are now being proposed.

**Director Ferrell:** What we did was take a look at the projects that we already have in play that have either been funded or already in action and tied those together to an action plan to show that there is the justification for the want and the need and the process of how we are going to accomplish these actions. Tying it directly to a specific project or program, whatever that may be, such as an initiative, it helps to draw back to the Master Plan and the work that was done. As I mentioned previously, it really is a living and breathing document. It is something that we will reference often. As Leon stated, it is something that will require updates. As we move forward with plans, if there is a policy change, if there is a request for funding for operations or for capital, we will be able to tie it back that directly to the Master Plan and how that would impact the action plan positively.

**Mayor Jadwin:** This document is very thick. You can read it online. I do not know what page the action plans start in this item. It is an appendix item. I would encourage you to make sure as you go through this document you take a look at those action plans. That is what effectively will guide us once this plan is adopted and we have the discussion and tweak this as necessary to meet Council's approval. Those action plans that are listed in the back is what we will use as we do the budget, as we work on the CIP, as we prioritize programs, projects, operations, and staffing. Setting those goals and objectives within this plan is what will create the bumper guards as we go forward. For example, Councilmember McGregor brought up trails. If Parks were to come and say we are going to put a Taekwondo facility in every Parks' facility because our park superintendent likes Taekwondo, and that is what we are going to do. Well, that is not anywhere in the action plan. It does not make sense for us to do that. Are the projects and the programs and operations that we are proposing to bring forward consistent with this plan? That is what will guide us. [Speaking to Mr. Younger] Did you mention the funding aspect of this and how this plays into funding?

**Mr. Younger:** We identify funding sources that you should consider to be as broad as you can. I know the Foundation has been a real asset for you but we need more funding sources. Most park systems have 25 to 30 different funding sources because

they cannot get it from one single funding source. They are usually getting it from a combination of user fees, sponsorships, foundations, and from grants. On a hundred-point grant with the state, this plan gives you 10 bonus points by just having an approved document because the documents follow what the state guidelines are for system master plans.

**Vice President Weaver:** Thank you. I think that last point really underscores the benefit of a plan to the community. I know, Mayor, you have talked in other contexts about this city has had plans over the past decades and now we are in a spot where we are trying to implement some of those plans and act on them. I think it is easy if you are just standing back and you are not in the day-to-day work of it, you do not see the real benefit of having that guide in doing the job and having the plan. There is dollars and cents. Being able to have the extra bonus points when you seek outside funding, I think that is important.

**Councilmember Angelou:** Regarding the length of this, is this like a 20-year or 10-year [plan]?

**Mr. Younger:** Typically, depending on how fast they move on the plan, most agencies write it for a 10-year strategy. A lot of agencies get it, all the recommendations, done seven or eight years. When they know they are going to finish the plan, they will do another update because they want to stay ahead of what the public's expectation is of the park system.

**Councilmember Bowers:** If I could just address process a little bit to start, we, as you guys all know, received this document at less than two hours or about two hours ago. So, clearly not enough time for us to review it. I heard from the Mayor's comments that you intend to have this back as part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

**Mayor Jadwin:** After. So, we presented this the same way that we have when the budget typically has been presented, where you receive the budget the same day that it is presented to you. It really was, here is the work. Understand how it came together. Here is an overview of what you can expect to see. Now that you kind of understand what you are reading, go back and take a look at it. Then, we will come back in a few weeks in April after you have time to adjust it, after we talk about the CIP and that is presented to you, and we will begin those discussions so that you can see how the two meld together. I think the conversation makes a lot more sense after you have an opportunity to hear both of those. It is a significant document. It is going to take you some time to get through it. We want you to be thoughtful about it, but it is difficult to read if you do not understand what it is you are looking at and what the overall objective and goal of the plan is. That was part of the reason why we decided to present it the same way that we do the budget. Hopefully that helps.

**Councilmember Bowers:** [Speaking to Mr. Younger] So, you will be back when we have this back again to Committee of the Whole?

**Director Ferrell:** The intention was that I would bring it forward that first meeting of April to answer any questions that you may have.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Since that will be really the only time we have to ask substantive questions, it might be best if we have the consultant here as well to explain some of the process, not that you, Director, would not be able to do that but since we

really do not have the opportunity to ask much in the way of substantive questions tonight.

**President Renner:** Director Ferrell and I talked a little bit about this. One of the things that I was recommending is that we keep the Parks Master Plan as a discussion item on our Committee of the Whole so that as our colleagues are starting to go through and digest, we can probably keep that dialogue fresh and in front of us instead of waiting until April. This would be on a continual basis until that time. Is that still amenable?

**Director Ferrell:** Absolutely. I think that is fair.

**Mayor Jadwin:** We do not expect this to be, "Okay, here it is. Adopt it and move on." We expect this to be an ongoing dialogue. The goal is certainly to have this adopted by the end of the year, but I do not know that we had a firm timeline. That is up to Council's will.

**Councilmember Angelou:** There is going to be lots of "why should we" or whatever. It is going to be I think something really wonderful for the community.

**Vice President Weaver:** I will wrap things up on this one just by expressing our thanks, thanks to your Board and Foundation members for being here and for all that you do. Thank you, Mr. Younger. We will look forward to welcoming you back in a couple weeks.

### C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[ORD-0016-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH STRAWSER PAVING COMPANY, INC., FOR THE 2023 STREET PROGRAM ST-1101

**Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering:** On March 1, the City received bids for the 2023 Street Program. Included for reference is a map indicating the scope of work, street rebuilds, asphalt overlay, and some preventative maintenance, crack seal, slurry seal, as well as the bid summary. We received two bids, one from Strawser Paving and the other from Decker Construction. This is comparable to past programs between five-and-a-half to six miles worth of pavement reconstruction and preventative maintenance and street rebuilds. Staff is recommending award to the lowest and most responsive bidder, Strawser Paving, inclusive of an alternate for the Woodside Green parking lot. Bids came in on the base bid just under or around four percent over the engineer's estimate and total, with the Woodside Green parking lot right around five percent over the engineer's estimate. We are seeing some of the trends on asphalt and concrete with labor and material costs going up but still within the 10 percent. We are recommending award to Strawser.

**Vice President Weaver:** I appreciate you touching on the increase in cost. In full disclosure to my colleagues, I had read in the *Dispatch* today an article that spoke to just that issue about the increase in costs, particularly as it relates to asphalt. Even [Komlanc's] predecessor was quoted in the article. I sent that along and appreciate you touching on that. Questions from colleagues?

**Councilmember Bowers:** I wanted follow-up because the two bids were relatively

close to each other. Decker was within 10 percent of the bid from Strawser. Have we been tracking total final costs with all of our vendors, at least in the Engineering Department or particularly with Strawser to see where they have fallen within our 10 contingency that we allocate for these projects?

**Director Komlanc:** Yes, as far as projects from years' past, when there is a change order issued, we look at whether there was a field condition that otherwise necessitated that work and track that. I can share that information on a follow-up that.

**Councilmember Bowers:** That would be helpful. I think that the question that I have is when we are looking at such a narrow margin between these two bidders, is the lowest bidder consistently giving us accurate bids, since we have a history of using Strawser or are we seeing them underbid potentially?

**Director Komlanc:** And then make up for it with like change orders? [Bowers responded, correct.] That has not been my experience, but this is my first year in the program. Will definitely look at that as we evaluate the program at the conclusion of the of the project. There is about a \$200,000 difference between the two.

**Councilmember Bowers:** This is the third year or fourth year that we have used Strawser for our street program?

**Director Komlanc:** I know that they were the lowest bid last year. I cannot speak to other years, but I can research that and report back. [Bowers responded she would appreciate that.]

**Councilmember Padova:** To your knowledge, have we used Decker in the past or recent past?

**Director Komlanc:** I do not know that. I have worked with Decker in other governmental agencies that I have worked for. They do great work as well.

**Councilmember Padova:** Has working with Strawser been a good experience?

**Director Komlanc:** I have had comparable experience with both. It has been very good.

**Councilmember Padova:** I also noticed that the Woodside Green parking lot was actually lower for Decker. I am guessing we are not able to split those awards separately. [Director Komlanc responded, no.] Just thought I would ask.

**Councilmember McGregor:** After this year, how many miles of Detroit streets do we have left?

**Director Komlanc:** I do not have the inventory of Detroit streets, but I know a significant number of those have been rebuilt. We also have streets that have water-bound macadam streets, and the base of those streets deteriorate just as well. We will be rebuilding other streets throughout the community over time.

**Vice President Weaver:** Director, do you mind clarifying for those of us who are still relatively new on Council what the Detroit-style streets are?

**Director Komlanc:** That is an integral concrete where you have the concrete base and the curb and gutter monolithic pour. Then, over time, the concrete pavement came in disrepair and an asphalt overlay occurred over top of that, and then caused drainage issues along the curb where the curb and gutter would be. In certain instances, poor underdrain, with the lack of underdrain and storm water carrying the drainage under the pavement, causes base failures. As a part of the rebuilds, we are putting in curb and gutter that has underdrain to protect the base and preserve the longevity of the roadway.

**Vice President Weaver:** As it relates to this particular item, about a year ago when this last came before Council, there were some concerns about the quality of work from Strawser. I think your predecessor, and then Director Crawford as well, expressed that any issues were being adequately addressed by the vendor and was comparable or within that same range of acceptable errors that would be corrected. Has the past year proven to be similar?

**Director Komlanc:** As far as punch list items, it has been similar.

**Vice President Weaver:** Like honeycombing and stuff like that would come back. I know that was curbs.

**Director Komlanc:** Those items would be on punch list and likely did not get a good vibration in getting that concrete through the forms to get a more monolithic and full concrete section. We do have inspection through in-house technicians, as well as third party consultants out there inspecting the work and accepting and rejecting that work and placing it on punch list for corrective action towards the tail end of the project.

**President Renner:** I just have a follow-up on that. When your projects go out public for whatever given street, will it be known who a resident could call or contact in case they see issues or have issues? Let me just preface a little bit about Strawser. There is a little bit of a friction with our residents. You were not here during that time last year, but there were some who called into question the fidelity of their work, if you will, my street also included, such as with inverted downspout pipes with the curbs. I am just more interested in who can residents call when they see something or they have issues?

**Director Komlanc:** They can call the Engineering Department. We have a project administrator. Brian Kennedy is our new project administrator. He will be overseeing it, as well as engineering technicians and inspectors. We will be having some assistance from a third-party vendor as well to augment staff.

**Mayor Jadwin:** If I could add, I do remember the lengthy discussion we had at Council. I think that was the program before last year. Maybe it was the 2021 Program? I do not believe that we had the same types of issues with the 2022 Program.

**Vice President Weaver:** Since there were some follow-up items, this will come back to Committee.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/20/23; Further Discussion in Committee of the Whole on 3/27/23; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 4/3/23.**

**D. ITEMS FROM THE COUNCIL OFFICE:**

[RES-0011-2023](#) A RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING THE OHIO GOVERNOR AND MEMBERS OF THE OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO RESTORE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS

**Vice President Weaver:** This was a resolution strongly urging the Ohio governor and members of the General Assembly to restore the Local Government Fund to pre-recession levels. My colleagues might recall that the Ohio Municipal League a couple weeks ago sent out a plea to members urging the municipalities to not only contact their legislators but also to pass a resolution and do whatever they could in support of the restoration of the Local Government Fund. Thanks to Ms. Bowers, we worked together to put together this resolution doing just that. I also want to express my thanks to Director Bury for providing us with some of the statistics I believe are included in the memo. Happy to answer any questions. Any comments from colleagues?

**Councilmember Angelou:** It would be wonderful if it can happen. I listen to some things that [suggest] we are going to be paying more taxes, and indeed that would certainly not create monies to be coming. I am trying to be very nice about it. However, it would be wonderful to have all of that back. I do not know how much is not back. Clearly, we could use it because we certainly would like to have swimming pools and all these community things.

**Vice President Weaver:** I think that Ms. Angelou underscores a good point. The cuts to the Local Government Fund were not done overnight. It has been years in the making. Communities have been forced to rely on other funding streams to make up for that difference.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/20/23.**

[RES-0012-2023](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING MARCH 2023 AS THEATRE IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH

**Vice President Weaver:** This resolution is recognizing and honoring March 2023 as Theatre in Our Schools Month. Very similar to the resolution that was presented last year, I am hoping to have some folks from the high school next week in attendance. There is no secret behind it. I am a proud GLHS theatre alum here and Otterbein musical theatre alum. I believe strongly and passionately in theatre and the arts in our schools. I appreciate my colleagues' consideration. I know I am not the only artist up here on the dais.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/20/23.**

**E. DISCUSSIONS:****1. Facilities Update - 825 Tech Center Drive (Sr. Dir. Operational Services)**

[2023-0050](#) Items for Discussion on Council Facilities at 825 Tech Center Drive

**Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations:** [Referring to visual displaying on the screen in Chambers]. By way of review, we were here about a month ago, February 13. We went over the first few engagements that we have had with our design architect. As you see on the screen, these are the guiding principles that each time we meet as a design team we go over and keep in mind when we are talking about the design of 825 Tech Center Drive. I like to keep these in front of everybody as we go through the process, as the architect likes to go through the process with us. A lot of the things that we have been doing in the four weeks is benchmarking. We have done site visits in Marysville, Dublin, and Westerville. In Westerville, two different groups have been there. We have done those four tours in the last four weeks and got to see a lot of different designs, including things we like and things we do not like. I think it is just as important to look at things that are not as becoming of our project, so we know what not to do, as well as what to do. We have looked at things like finish quality. When we walk in this City Hall in this particular Chambers, it is finished in a certain way. We got to see a lot of different parts and pieces, things that we like from a Police Department standpoint and things that we like from an Administration standpoint. This has guided the last three or four weeks that we have been working with the design team in order to design 825. They have walked us through this process. They continue to walk us through this process. Again, this is one of the slides that I showed last month, but some of the things on the site that we that we like and things that we want to enhance and design around versus some of the things that maybe need some improvement. Those are all things part of the schematic process. We are looking at the outside of the building. We are looking at the inside of the building. We are looking at different flows and how things work. Not calling out any of the three locations that we went and saw, but there were some that flowed very well from a Police Department standpoint or an Administration standpoint, and there were others that did not. There were nice parts and pieces, units that we can maybe pick up and put down as part of the design. Chief was able to see, for example, distances from where an officer would grab his duty bag and have to head out the door in order to get into a cruiser. Maybe they were just too great, and we are able to comment on those things to our design architect so we can make sure that we are having a responsible or better design than maybe some of the other places that we saw. That work continues, that schematic design for the interior of the building. What we have also done is hold meetings with individual departments. That has refined the space program. We spend a lot of time with Chief and the police folks to talk about understanding what a 2,000 square foot room looks like. Make a note of that because [Chambers] is about a 2,000 square foot room. Is that large enough? Is that not large enough? What are some of the reasons and challenges why it should be bigger or should be smaller? Storage is a great example of this. When we talk about storage, I know that we all are hoping and wishing that we return back to paper time, where things were mailed to us and memos were written and paper was received, but the reality of it is that that is not the direction in which we are headed. So, do we need these large storage rooms that have many file cabinet cabinets in it such that would consume a lot of space? The answer there is obviously no. Those are a lot of the things in a lot of the decisions that we are beginning to refine and make. Where I would like to continue next is with some questions for you folks. I do not believe that there is ever a question that does not already have an answer to it, or what I will say is a prescribed answer to it. What we see at the top of the screen in the next few slides here are questions for you folks and some things that we can have dialogue around. What is the Council Chambers' planned capacity? The capacity of this particular room is 131 people. I do not know why we cannot be 132 or 130, but it is 131 people as established by the fire marshal. The planned capacity at 825 will be about a total capacity of 150 people. That is a seating capacity of about 120 to 140 people and

the 10 of you that sit around the dais. There are really 11 that sit around the dais when we take a tech person into consideration. It will have a dedicated staff space of about 12 people. Staff will have a place inside of Council Chambers that they can come and sit with a table in front of them and prepare. In some instances, this even provides a little bit of a buffer between the presenter and the audience, which brings about the total capacity to approximately 150 people. I think the key part here is that the lobby, and the way in which the lobby is designed, will accommodate an overflow type crowd to the point where it would be equipped with AV equipment so that the conversation is heard out in the lobby, which is adjacent to Council Chambers. It also serves as a place that if we were having a larger gathering, people could also be watching this meeting out in that particular space as if they were in the room. I can pause here and take questions.

**President Renner:** Colleagues on Council, I apologize. Mr. Schultz is reminding me of a document he did ask us for early input on these things that he is presenting. I gave it to Jeremy, who gave some very thoughtful high-level responses on this. I meant to then turn around and share with all of you. I just forgot, but this is your opportunity whether it is in the document or not. Kevin is asking for input on these matters. Again, you have a document that outlines all of this. I sent it to everybody tonight.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I will also make the note that this is not your only opportunity, but for some of the guiding parts and pieces or principles that the architect is using, some of these questions need answered.

**Vice President Weaver:** One thing, and I did a very quick skim [of the document], so it might be in here, but did you factor in space for the presenters?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** In the 150 total presenters, like outside guests such as Leon, he is not counted in that number.

**Mayor Jadwin:** Well, that would be part of the seating capacity overall, though, correct? [Sr. Director Schultz responded correct.] I mean, he is factored in.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** He is factored in, just not accounted for specifically.

**President Renner:** [To Councilmember Weaver] I do not think you are asking something that is more of a specific layout type of thing and we are not to that level yet. Correct me if I am wrong.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** That is correct. There are some design features that we will talk about on the next slide, but how it is arranged, such as is it arranged in this fashion where we have two tables sitting at the front and we are presenting in that fashion, those are very detailed design decisions that we can make somewhere down the road. We saw some Council Chambers, for example, where the presenter is off to the side and presenting a little bit more off by his or herself, which was nice. It has its pros and cons, but those are all things that, when you guys consider what the dais feels like and how you interact with the public or a member of staff, are some decisions that we will end up having to make further down the road.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I do not want to cut anybody off if you have specific feedback for Mr. Schultz, but I know for me the agenda item was just a general facilities update. I am not prepared to give direct, specific feedback. This is an

incredibly important project. I would like to have the opportunity to really weigh this out and give very thoughtful feedback. Maybe a suggestion would be to have a couple six o'clock workshop meetings just before a Committee or a Council meeting, if that works with timing, so that we can have some time to look over what Mr. Renner has forwarded to us tonight. Now that we know that this is where we are at in the stage, I would like to have that opportunity. [Sr. Director Schultz responded sure.]

**Mayor Jadwin:** I think we would prefer that because we have very detailed meetings and it is very easy to get lost in the weeds, and to do that within the context of an actual Council meeting, I think it would be difficult. Having the ability to have those discussions through a workshop, it would still be a publicly noticed meeting, but having that just be the topic that we have to work through, I think would be very helpful.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I know if it is more than three of us, it needs to be you know publicly noticed. If it is three or fewer, it can be in a more informal workshop working session. Happy to bring that back to Council and to be open, but when it is a workshopping through some of these space ideas and things like that, I would be happy to be able to sit at a conference room table and engage in that space with [Sr. Director Schultz].

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I would say, to the Mayor's comments, we recognize the importance of the project and whatever time you need from us or a project committee team, whatever that looks like. Sometimes Council goes a little bit long, so I cannot promise after Council necessarily, but before, or on a Tuesday afternoon, whatever that might look like and whatever is easiest for you guys, if we need to have some one-on-one conversations where we are sitting down around this particular set of drawings where we are free to do that, whatever you seven really feel is the appropriate mechanism to do that, we are open to any and all suggestions. This is obviously just as important to you folks as it is to every resident out there in the city.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Do we know offhand if we have any special or six o'clock meeting next week or the week after? [President Renner responded he did not know of anything.] Is that something that my colleagues would be interested in doing?

**President Renner:** Sure. It is something that we talked about previously. I just was not aware that we are actually at that granularity. I do not think we need a workshop meeting to talk about overall seating capacity, but once we get down to the some of the nuts and bolts about what layout is and what we need, absolutely.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I agree, Mr. Renner, we are in a schematic design phase. That is where you get a diagram of where things are being placed inside of the building and what a potential space could look like. Sometimes these things look more formal than they really are. I do have some visuals on this screen. They are harder to see and harder to look at. If I could, I will go through the rest of my questions because the architect needs to continue to move. That is not to say that we do not have a dialogue or an opportunity for dialogue next week, the week after, or whatever that might be. I have three more slides. [Vice President Weaver asked to proceed with finishing up with the rest of the slides and then take the temperature on what the will is for next steps]

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I will go through the slides and then you guys can have some dialogue afterwards. What are the design features of the Council Chambers? We will have a double high ceiling similar to what we have in this room now. The room is going

to be a little bit wider because of the next two bullets. We will have a shorter dais. We have heard a lot in the short time that I have been here is that the dais is a little bit too imposing, a little bit too formal. We have seen a lot of smaller daises that are a lot more welcoming to the public. This is a comment that Jeremy made in one that is very much appropriate, but for you guys, it is hard for (I'm imagining it is hard for) Ms. Angelou to see Ms. McGregor sitting down at the other end of the dais. If you were to get a little bit wider and a little bit more in... [Councilmember Angelou said you cannot see the ones in the middle.] Right. It is hard to see somebody. If the dais was arranged in a slightly different fashion, in a sharper "U," you guys would have a whole lot easier sight line to have conversation and dialogue. It would promote some more conversation. Also, from a technological standpoint, those are things that we do not always think are in play. But from a technological standpoint, are the iPads, in this example, something that works well for you guys or does not work well. As we go through the design process, what is necessary? If you guys did not have an iPad as an example as a design feature, if there was a screen on the back wall there that you guys could look at, as opposed to turning your neck, would that be helpful? I think each and every one of you would say yes, but I know at some point in time there were monitors on the dais for you guys to see what was up on the screens. Those features will be discussed as we go through the process. Those are some of the things that the design team wants to get a handle on. I think based on other conversations that have been had over the years, we know that the height of that dais has been a challenge for some. Next question here, Council and Committee held in a single room. One of the things that we see is the formality of this room is good and bad. I know why we have the formality of this room. It is to support the livestream. You guys used to have Committee meetings in the room next door. The room next door I got to imagine is challenging for a meeting that would be a larger size. I think it would actually be challenging for just this size room to have this size meeting right now next door. Right now, with what we are planning, there is a lot of pressure on the first floor to make sure that we can put everything that is needed on the first floor. To make a second room, i.e., even a separate courtroom or a separate room that would house a smaller meeting than maybe City Council or a Planning Commission meeting that we saw last week with a lot of people in the room, of that size on that first floor would be challenging. In addition, one of the things that we have struggled with as a committee is these mass assembly spaces in general terms. We have been picking those off one at a time. That secondary committee room is one of the rooms that we have not considered; however, my last bullet there is a large caucus room that seats 20 to 25. If you were having an executive session, you could go in there, and there is plenty of room for staff, for visitors, whoever might be coming into a meeting like that. It is also of sufficient space that if we were having just a workshop, we could potentially have it in that room. My last slide deals with public access to Council Office and staff offices and meeting spaces. With staff offices and meeting spaces, right now we are planning on two closed offices, one for the clerk and one for the deputy. This also does not include, and I know that you share a suite with the City Attorney, the City Attorney accounted for in these totals here. As a note, there are workstations for two records clerks. One of those is a future clerk. You are in the process of hiring a records clerk right now. Then, there are two additional spaces, so if you needed to sit down for a half an hour before meeting, you would have a space to go and sit a laptop and work at a desk. There are shared offices that are accounted for. These are attached to Mayor's Court. These are the prosecutor offices. If somebody was coming in for a traffic citation, they would meet with the prosecutor in this same office and/or conference room. It is a little bit unclear right now as to whether those are going to have small conference tables or whether that would have a full desk for the prosecutor to have a conversation around. Then,

obviously adequate storage for some of the work that you do. I know I made a joke earlier about we do not get paper, but we do get paper. Jeremy can attest to having paper. So, we need to accommodate and make sure that even if the paper is only temporary, there is a place for it to be processed. There will be some room or lobby space or meeting area where you can have a comfortable sit down with some nicer furniture, those types of things that you would see in a waiting area. The last question that I have formally is public access to the Council Office. Right now, we walk through the entire City Hall to find Jeremy back in his office because wayfinding through this particular building is tough. How publicly adjacent does the Council Office need to be to the front of the building? I do not necessarily know that you need a public window, as an example, but should the offices be directly off of the main lobby of the building? This is probably one of the more critical questions and one of the questions that would guide that first floor and how it comes together from a Mayor's Court and Council Chambers and Council Office standpoint. With that, I can take any questions. I can hold. You can send me emails. Whatever you are most comfortable in getting me some of that information. I can synthesize it and send it back out to you as a group so you can see what everybody's thoughts were.

**Vice President Weaver:** I think for me it might be helpful if in the immediate future we could send in questions based on this and on the document Mr. Renner shared. If we could send any questions or comments to Director Schultz, copying the Mayor, and maybe we can aim for a workshop in the sooner rather than later to address and discuss those in more detail.

**Councilmember Bowers:** [To Sr. Director Schultz] You are looking at existing blueprints and looking at programming? Yes, I would love to sit down and look at that with you. [Sr. Director Schultz responded sure.]

**Councilmember Padova:** I have a question as far as timeline. How quickly do you need to have this information? You said you need to get information to the architect to keep that moving. What is the timeline looking like?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Every week we meet there is a solid revision as to each of these spaces. The sooner, the better, especially on that last question: how publicly adjacent does Council Office need to be? That is critical. One of the bigger challenges right now is the smaller and tighter that first floor space gets, as an example, it shrinks the new construction potential and then pushes uses up into the building. What happens in the lobby impacts the entire building program at this time. The longer this schematic process takes, the longer it will take for us to get into design development documents. I know I did not directly answer your question, I apologize.

**Councilmember Padova:** I guess more specifically, if we were to meet next week before our meeting, would that be delaying things too much or would that be ok? [Sr. Director Schultz responded that would be ideal] Currently, is the thought to have Council Offices on the first floor? [Sr. Director Schultz responded yes] So, the public access is just if it is in the front, if it is in the back, how actually visible it is?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Correct. If I go back to this picture here, I think you can all see in the lightest portion of that where you have the shadow protruding out into the area. That picture is the existing building. Then, you have that long shaded area where the shadow protrudes into. That is all new construction of that double high ceiling. City Council Chambers will be in the front of the building. People will walk in through that

main lobby and see Council Chambers almost immediately. The further we push that back in the building, the further you are away from the lobby. If somebody was to come and see Jeremy during the day or whatever, he would have to walk out and meet them in a public location and escort them back into the more secure portion of the building. So, how far forward Council Office should be is really the question. There are really three zones, the public zone, the intermediate zone where you are really close but there is maybe one secure door, and then there is further security as you get deeper into the building. It is just a secondary layer of security once you get deeper into the building. It has its pros and cons depending on where you.

**Councilmember Angelou:** I would assume that our Clerk here would have some kind of voice on this whole thing. [He is] there every day and every evening. [To Clerk VanMeter] I think that you need to be part of this at this point. I do not come here every day and spend hours, so I think this is something you should be part of.

**Mayor Jadwin:** I know we have appreciated Clerk VanMeter's input thus far. I certainly think it is up to you. I think it would be helpful to have him in this if we are going to have a workshop next week for him to participate in.

**President Renner:** Getting him involved in that document was one of the first steps, but now I am hearing some information that is a little bit new to be fair. So, we will hurry up and get the workshops scheduled so that we are not delaying anything.

**Councilmember McGregor:** I am just so happy [about dais considerations] so we do not look like talking heads up here.

**Councilmember Padova:** [To Sr. Director Schultz] Also, I want to thank you for the thought put into having additional space if we are at capacity. I was at a Planning Commission meeting back in the late summer or early fall when there were people sitting outside [Chambers], myself included. It was very hard to hear what was going on. I know I was emailing you about turning up the volume. It will be nice to have an additional space where people can still see and hear what is going on, even if the room is full. Thank you for thinking about that.

## 2. Tobacco Retail Licensing - Franklin County Public Health

[2023-0029](#)

### FCPH Draft Template - Tobacco Licensing

**Vice President Weaver:** This item is coming back before Committee. I know we have had a couple of presentations. Speaking with President Renner, I think my goal in having this back is to get a sense from colleagues on what is the will of Council. Where do we want to go? What would we like our process to look like? To kick things off will turn things over to Mr. Renner.

**President Renner:** I think you fairly summarize the salient nature. If everybody recalls, we did have public health come in and give us somewhat of an update about where they are. They did provide even after that updated drafts of what licensing contracting is. My own personal opinion is I think I am more comfortable with going after the licensing aspect, but I am not an attorney and I do not understand some of the things that are in this contract. We need to understand what our liabilities are. I am not so comfortable with the outright ban on the flavored vaping and that kind of stuff. Again, my personal opinion is that we just focus and put meat in the licensing

agreement and go in that direction. I think Mr. Weaver is right. We need to understand from the Council body what are the things that we want to target in the license.

**Vice President Weaver:** [To Matt Roth, Assistant City Attorney] I had mentioned to the City Attorney a couple weeks ago if his department could take a look at some of the draft ordinances and if there were any concerns with pursuing one or the other. Has there been an opportunity for that yet?

**Matt Roth, Assistant City Attorney:** I do not know if Mr. Mularski did. He never mentioned it to me. I saw this on the agenda tonight and had my own thoughts, but it is not something Mr. Mularski and I have discussed. [Vice President Weaver said he would happily take Mr. Roth's thoughts] There is a distinction here with these type of Health Department violations versus what is already criminal. It is criminal in Ohio to sell cigarettes to people under the age of 21. That is enforced by the police. I know our police did a sting operation last year, and I do not know if the chief recalls, I think there were two license holders that were cited out of that when they went city-wide and tried to make purchases with an underage person, which is what we do with alcohol sales. What is proposed by the Health Department is licensing them and them doing some enforcement as well as what is already in the Revised Code, which I do not think is a bad thing by any means, it is just different from what we have ever done before. I think the reality is there is not as much cigarette enforcement as there is sales of underage alcohol enforcement. The state does have a whole police agency that goes after alcohol license holders.

**President Renner:** Thank you for sharing that, Mr. Roth. I definitely appreciate that. Some of the other aspects of this is the education. That is what really attracted me is Public Health doing an enforcement and also doing an education with each one of these vendors. Our Police Department is not for that. They are not trying to do that. The city, I would not be really asking the city to do that as well because Public Health is the entity that knows how to do that. I just wanted to reiterate that there is an educational component that is really nice before we even get to the enforcement process.

**Councilmember McGregor:** I think when we had someone from the Board of Health here, I asked if they had any examples of where they had cited people before. I do not know if that has ever [happened]. I mean, has anybody been cited? How effective is the licensing? Have there been fines paid? Apparently, we are not the first ones to do this, so if nobody has ever been cited, I kind of doubt the efficiency of the operation. If it is a big enough problem to do this, then there should be some citing. I know kids are doing it because my grandson said the other day that kids in the middle school are. I asked, "How do they do that?" He said they blow into their sleeve when the teacher is out of the room.

**President Renner:** [Speaking about his son's experience] He says that there are certain restrooms to go to that are smoke-free but there are other restrooms that are not. [Councilmember McGregor asked if he meant they were either designated smoke-free or they just go there] Yes, you do not go to certain restrooms because you know that it is going to have smoke. [Mr. Roth said they should all be smoke-free] I understand that. While I really do not think that we are going to solve the school's problem, what we are trying to do is still reinforce keeping tobacco sales away from children. That is why I really like the education component of this. Public Health will go to these retailers and help them understand the nuances of product placement, what

that whole process is of what to do.

**Councilmember McGregor:** Can we get some statistics from this?

**President Renner:** Yes, you are asking good questions. The Public Health Department is the only one that actually can give answers. Maybe what we can do is with Jeremy's help, detail what our questions are from the Council body and then send those over to the Public Health Department. [Vice President Weaver said this sounds like a good plan]

**Councilmember Angelou:** [Referring to an item attachment] On the converted from C, the census place, and it has all of the cities here listed, some of them have "yes" in that they are already working but some of them have empty spots. I am questioning why they would have empty spots.

**Councilmember Padova:** I believe those are ones that have already passed.

**Councilmember Angelou:** Dublin has nothing there when it says "interested."  
[Councilmembers Angelou and Bowers conferred on the item attachment] Ok, I guess.  
[President Renner stated he believe Councilmember Padova was correct]

**Councilmember Padova:** I think those are the ones that have already passed. So, there is nothing there for whether they are interested since it has passed. I believe that all of the ones that have passed have been within the last few months. Is that right? So, I am not sure that they would actually have any statistics on it.

**Councilmember Angelou:** Actually, it looks like they do not want to even discuss it rather than taking it apart because they have the other ones after. [Additional comments from various members that were not audible]

**Councilmember Padova:** [To Councilmember McGregor] That one is done by Columbus Public Health, not Franklin. Maybe we would want to reach out to Columbus Public Health rather than Franklin County [Councilmember McGregor said Padova was correct]

**Vice President Weaver:** I think if the Clerk is going to be reaching out to Public Health, if there are any questions in the meantime before this comes back, could we send those questions to the Clerk, and he can get those over to Public Health.

**President Renner:** By this Friday, if you have questions, send them to Jeremy. Jeremy will compile them and then send them on to a Public Health. We can copy everybody and just see it that way.

**Councilmember Angelou:** I think the point of "has this been working" because already people have done it, if you could get back from the Board of Health that... because if nothing is happening, then nothing is happening. If kids are still going in and getting them, that is just sick. That is something that we should be closing down, if that is true.

**Councilmember Padova:** Mr. Roth, you said that there was a sting operation. Did you say that was on tobacco [Mr. Roth said he believed so] Or was it alcohol? Chief, are you doing those frequently?

**Jeff Spence, Chief of Police:** On tobacco and alcohol we do them periodically throughout the year. Generally, they are complaint-based. We will get tips from parents who say their children had purchased tobacco or a vape device at a certain location. Then, we will go out and we will work several in the area, including the businesses that we get complaints on, but we will do several, not focused on one particular business. We do this a couple of times a year. I do not have a number, but we also do underage alcohol sales as well.

**Councilmember Padova:** Have you found that there have been... how do those go? Are there a lot of people that are selling the vape products to...?

**Chief Spence:** I would say, in general, people are in compliance. Occasionally, if we do have a business that we get tips on, we will generally issue a citation. I think we had two the last time.

**Councilmember Padova:** Would you be able to look back and see? Send some of those numbers to Jeremy, just so that we have a better idea of what it is like?

**Chief Spence:** Sure, like the number of businesses we checked versus number of citations issued? [Councilmember Padova said that would be ok]

**Assistant City Attorney Roth:** I think last year they focused on gas stations and convenience stores. They do not get a lot of complaints for like Kroger selling cigarettes to minors. Normally, they found after going to, I think it was more than 10, they had two that they cited.

**Councilmember Bowers:** [To Chief Spence] Could you include with that the consequence? I understand that the criminal consequence would be directed at that individual clerk that made the sale and not at the business. So, if you could include that information, the misdemeanor level, and the statute under which they were cited, that would be helpful. [Chief said ok]

**Vice President Weaver:** I think that gives us a bit of a sense of where we want to go. I appreciate it.

### 3. Zoning Code Update (Department of Planning)

[2023-0059](#)

#### Zoning Code Updates

**Mayor Jadwin:** I will begin and then pass off to Director Blackford. I asked to have this on the agenda tonight. As Council is aware, Planning Commission last week met in these Chambers again to review and vote upon a proposed project for a gas station in the northeast corner of the city. I do not have to tell Council there was a great deal of consternation about that project based on the collective emails that we were all receiving from residents, as well as comments that were made that night in the Chambers. I know many of you, and almost all of you, were here that night. Although I have no role or vote in Planning Commission, I nonetheless sat in this chair as I do for nearly every one of their meetings because I view their meetings as important. They take legislative action on behalf of the City. I view it as an opportunity to hear concerns and questions from residents, as well as the types of concerns and questions the

Planning Commission is raising. As you know, I think it was a little frustrating for all of us because neither the Mayor nor Council has a voice or a vote in any aspect of this particular project. That is just not the way our project is established under Code. It just does not allow for Council input, and as Mayor, I do not ever get to vote on anything. I sit here and offer my opinion on some things sometimes, but I do not ever get to vote on anything. We just do not have that legal ability to do so in a project that was of the type that came before Planning Commission and then BZBA and back to Planning Commission. Given the questions and some of the comments and concerns that were raised by residents and given some of the confusion that very clearly exists around what the process is, who decides what, and when, I did think it would be helpful if I invited Director Blackford to come here this evening to give you an update on an ongoing project that we have had. That is the work that we have been doing in rewriting our Zoning Code. Director Blackford previously stood before you on another presentation and shared that our Zoning Code as it currently exists was written in the late 1950s. We embarked upon the project of updating our code more than a year ago. That is a project that has been near and dear to Director Blackford's heart, probably a little too near and dear at times. That project is extremely tedious and detailed. I think maybe you have seen some articles in the newspaper. The City of Columbus is currently rewriting their zoning code. I think it has been two plus years in the making, including soliciting input from pretty much everybody, from developers to residents to businesses, etc. Our goal has always been to have an updated code, a modern code, officially adopted by Council by the end of this year and to have a code that reflects current development trends, as well as a code that keeps an eye toward the future of what we can expect to see coming. In the meantime, we will be pursuing "low-hanging fruit" changes. Director Blackford very shortly will be taking some of those low-hanging fruit changes to Planning Commission. Those simply will be very subtle changes to clean up how the code reads to make it easier for our residents to understand, particularly as we start to get into the springtime with permitting in sheds and fences and those types of things. The way that our code currently reads, it can be very difficult to understand, so some of those low-hanging fruit changes, we will be bringing those forward. I did ask Director Blackford to be prepared to come to you tonight to talk about the status of that project. Again, it has been going on for more than a year. [He will talk about] the work that has been done so far, what the next steps look like, and then to outline for you what the projected timeline looks like for you and your input in this project as well.

**Michael Blackford, Director of Planning:** Brief presentation tonight. Again, as the Mayor said, she used exact words I would, and that this is extremely tedious to write a Zoning Code. That is not something that staff can do alone. We do have a consultant. The company is ZoneCo. That is an Ohio group. [The firm has] one of the premier folks that does zoning code rewrites. The principal is a former attorney for the City of Cincinnati and also a planner. They have rewritten several of the zoning codes in this region and do the work throughout the country. In fact, he speaks regularly at a lot of our industry functions, and does that on a country-wide basis, not just within this particular region. Again, we have we partnered with ZoneCo. We are on approximately our fifth draft of the Zoning Code. It feels like 500, but I think it is really more like five. With this last draft feedback that staff gave the consultant, we are hoping that the draft code is at a condition that we can start sharing and then having some meaningful engagement opportunities with Council, Planning Commission, and the community. We already have engaged with the community as part of this project. A couple of years ago, we did a survey, not to be confused with our Land Use Plan survey, similar but different. The focus of that survey was on the architectural standards, materials,

signage, things of that nature. We have already engaged with community. That will be forthcoming in the future as well. Upcoming events in the second quarter here, which is almost upon us, we do plan on having some workshops with City Council and Planning Commission. When I am all done, I would love to have any feedback on topics you all would like to like to discuss. We are going to take that information, revise the zoning code as necessary, and we are also going to have some opportunities to engage with the community. One of the things that we are targeting is to be involved in the community events, perhaps at Creekside during some activities down there to solicit some input that we normally do not get in the governmental process. The goal, as the Mayor said, is definitely to have adoption by the end of this year. Hopefully, that is a little bit sooner rather than later. We are working on some low-hanging fruit. In a couple of weeks, I will be covering those changes before you. This is to improve the permitting process. In these changes that we have worked on, it does not adversely affect the Zoning Code rewrite. Again, these are pretty simple, straightforward changes that will be taken forward to you here in the very near future. There are a few items I would like to cover on what might we expect from a new Zoning Code and what not to expect here. One of the things that has been lacking, in my opinion, and I think it has also been identified with Go Forward Gahanna and some of the other initiatives City has gone through, is that our current Zoning Code lacks design standards with teeth. What do I mean by that? If you are not familiar with our design standards currently, in most areas of the city we have language such as harmonious colors and quality building materials. At the end of the day, that means something different to everyone. We need things that are a little bit more specific. That is what we are going to try to draw out from all the engagement opportunities but get away from "harmonious colors." With a lot of zoning codes, if this is the route we want to go, and this is something that we have talked about, we can have specific color palettes. We can have a limitation on colors, the amount of glazing and things like that. Those are things that most modern zoning codes have some level of standard. What is the right level for us? We will figure that out as we go through the engagement process. Updated zone districts: zone districts by uses and development standards. The Zoning Code has been around for a long time. It has basically been added to. It has never really been rewritten. If we dial it back and we go back to the 1975 Zoning Code, we will see that the uses, the terminology really have not changed, the types of zoning, and the types of uses. After a certain amount of time, the city evolves. It certainly evolved a lot since 1975. I think it is a great opportunity with a Zoning Code rewrite to really look at what uses are appropriate and in what locations. Then, we want to place those zoning categories strategically to promote the goals and values of the community. That is part of where do we want uses to happen from a zoning standpoint, where do we see those zoning districts being located throughout the city? In my opinion, this is probably a good engagement activity, but obviously there can be other ones. This one is very important for staff. We get a lot of feedback from folks, even architects and engineers who do this for a living, that our code is not really formatted in a way where anyone can really find anything. That means people do not look. So, it is a burden on the internal and external customer. One of the major goals and objectives is a modernized code that is much more concise and easier to navigate and understand. Here in a moment, I'll put up just a quick image of what our current Zoning Code looks like and what our proposed code will look like. The current code is 399 pages if you were to print it out. It is an extremely large document for a suburban zoning document. It is very heavy on legalese. There are not a lot of tables and charts. When you look at more modern zoning codes, you get more to pictures, plain language, and charts rather than very verbose legalese. What not to expect with the Zoning Code rewrite, you cannot stop development requests. People will always have the right to propose something. That is

the owners of the property with their authorization as just a matter of process. There is no way to stop development requests. You cannot consider who the tenant or the company is. Those are things that are not a Zoning Code issue. That is what the legal parameters are for property rights. Also, notice requirements have come up a lot. That really delves into a lot of different areas. I would say that is also in the Charter. There are limitations of what can be done in the Charter as well. The Zoning Code plays a role, but it also branches out into to other areas. [Demonstrating on the screen] I'll just kind of scroll through, if you are curious, if we were just to look at an example of the Zoning Code, here is our current Zoning Code, and when you scroll through this, again reading is not something a lot of people do for recreational habits anymore. It is tough to get folks to stop and read things. This is one zoning category. I am still on the uses. We have gone through two-and-a-half pages just for one zoning category here. Very detailed. A lot of things that should not be in code is in our current code. If we take a look, here is a use table in the draft code. This is a total of just over two-and-a-half pages and this would be for all the zoning classifications, not just one. Again, we are consolidating in one area things that are just scattered throughout the current code. That is one of the main functions, improvement there. I would love any feedback as far as the process, especially with topics that we might want to cover with future workshops.

**Vice President Weaver:** Thank you for the presentation. I think, for me, the item that stands out most is the workshops with the Planning Commission and Council. I appreciate being involved earlier in the process rather than later so that we can have that input and dialogue as a body. Questions and comments from my colleagues?

**President Renner:** Director, when do you expect some of the workshops will begin with Council and with Planning and then with the public?

**Director Blackford:** Council and Planning Commission should be the second quarter. We just recently provided a lot of comments for the consultant to revise, but hopefully that document gets us in a place where we feel really comfortable in looking at it and talking about it and making tweaks, rather than large changes. I would say April or May.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I will just offer feedback. Again, thank you to the Mayor and to Director Blackford for bringing this item to Committee tonight. There has been a lot of discussion around zoning, not just rising out of the current proposal, but regionally there has been a lot of conversation on the topic. I appreciate that you have included multiple references to the Land Use Plan even in tonight's presentation. Mr. Schnetzer and I were reflecting on what an incredible resource tool and document that is. Yes, it predates a pandemic but also still contains a lot of really valuable guidance for this community. I certainly feel that we need to keep our eyes on it and use that as informing our land use.

**Councilmember Angelou:** When is the next time for the Charter [to be reviewed]? [Mayor Jadwin responded 2026] This is also needed.

## **F. ADJOURNMENT:**

*With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.*

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**Jeremy A. VanMeter**  
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this  
day of 2023.*

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**Trenton I. Weaver**  
Chair