



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes Committee of the Whole

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

Monday, September 25, 2023

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. The agenda was published on September 22, 2023. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

1. Presentation by Visit Gahanna

[2023-0163](#)

Visit Gahanna City Council Update - September 25, 2023

Lori Kappes, the Executive Director of Visit Gahanna, provided a presentation during the meeting. She began by introducing herself and expressing gratitude for the opportunity to present. She acknowledged that Councilmember Padova regularly provides updates on Visit Gahanna (the Gahanna Convention and Visitors Bureau or CVB) but wanted to offer a more comprehensive overview of their organization's operations. Director Kappes explained that Visit Gahanna is a non-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) with the mission of increasing travel to Gahanna to support local businesses, create jobs, and encourage future investments in the community. She elaborated on the role of a DMO, which includes promoting Gahanna as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image. The organization is primarily funded through lodging tax collected from visitors who stay in Gahanna's four hotels. Kappes introduced the key staff members, including Catherine Eichel, the Community Development and Event Manager; Jarod White, the Marketing and Communications Manager; Amanda Ferguson and Lily Doughty, both Coordinators of the Ohio Herb Center. She highlighted the diverse responsibilities of the staff, such as event planning, marketing, class development, social media management, gift shop operations, gardening, and hosting tours. Kappes also mentioned the dedicated board of directors who volunteer their time and ideas to support the organization. She

presented a graph illustrating the lodging tax collections over the past few years, showing a significant decrease in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While collections have been gradually recovering, they have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. She explained that several factors contribute to this, including increased competition from short-term rentals like Airbnb, the opening of new hotels outside Gahanna, and the rise in long-term stays (30 days or more) in hotels, which are exempt from lodging tax. Lori noted that despite these challenges, Gahanna continues to experience significant development, which may impact lodging tax collections in the future.

Vice President Weaver briefly interrupted Kappes' presentation to seek clarification on the previous slide. He inquired whether the data presented solely represented lodging tax collections or if it included other revenues such as sales or ticket sales.

Director Kappes clarified that it was just lodging tax. She elaborated on how they utilize these funds to continuously promote Gahanna as a great place to visit, live, attend special events, and spend time and money. Kappes highlighted Gahanna's numerous assets, including beautiful parks, trails, waterways, restaurants serving unique cuisine, historic places, breweries, distilleries, and various fun activities and events. They actively showcased these assets through their weekly happenings newsletter, social media, and blogs. Additionally, they promoted Gahanna as an ideal location for celebratory gatherings such as weddings, birthdays, and family reunions. The presentation emphasized their efforts to create reasons for people to visit Gahanna. This included hosting events like the Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival, which attracted over 20,000 attendees, boosting the local economy and raising awareness about the city. Kappes also highlighted the positive impact on local non-profit groups that volunteer during these events. Kappes mentioned the annual Holiday Lights Celebration, a family-oriented event that kicks off the holiday season. Several local non-profit organizations participate, offering special activities and raising awareness for their causes. She touched on Herb Day, an event that draws gardeners, plant enthusiasts, and herb lovers to Gahanna, emphasizing the city's Herb Capital designation. Visit Gahanna's role in promoting the city included developing marketing materials such as the Gahanna Visitors Guide, the Creekside District brochure, the Wedding and Event Guide, the Herb Capital Experience brochure, and the Historic Walking Tour brochure. They also coordinated the Herbal Cocktail Trail Passport, showcasing nine different establishments throughout Gahanna. The organization's advertising efforts reached millions of people, with significant increases in website visits and social media followers. Kappes briefly discussed the Ohio Herb Center, highlighting its classes, workshops, and role as a tourist attraction. The center also hosted tour groups and operated a gift shop offering herbal and Gahanna-specific products. Kappes concluded her presentation by inviting everyone to join the Holiday Lights Celebration on November 19th and thanking the council for their time.

Vice President Weaver expressed his gratitude to Director Kappes and acknowledged the hard work of her staff, volunteers, and board members.

He thanked them for their dedication and noted that their efforts were greatly appreciated. Weaver then opened the floor to questions or comments from his colleagues.

Councilmember Angelou pointed out that the golf course is also one of the assets in Gahanna. She emphasized the importance of including this asset on the list, as it is something people would like to know about. Angelou expressed her appreciation and thanked Director Kappes for her presentation.

2. Public Arts Policy - Status Update & Discussion

Vice President Weaver brought up the topic of the public arts policy status update and discussion. He mentioned that at the September 5th meeting, Mayor Jadwin had promised to do some work and return with an update. Weaver expressed his hope that the Mayor would be able to provide that update now.

Mayor Jadwin provided an update on the public arts policy. She mentioned that following discussions in April and May, she engaged with the City Attorney and outside counsel to establish a best practice process for creating and implementing a legally appropriate arts policy. Mayor Jadwin identified members of the resident advisory panel from various sectors in the community, including the arts community, parks, schools, and legal backgrounds. On September 18th, she issued an order to officially establish a seven-member panel. The Mayor explained that the panel's task was to recommend an arts policy for adoption, governing the appropriate display of artwork on public property in the city. She had sent an email to the panel with potential meeting dates for next week. Mayor Jadwin stated that the panel had until October 31st to provide a recommended policy, with the possibility of an earlier submission.

Vice President Weaver asked if the Mayor could share the individuals comprising the community panel.

Mayor Jadwin provided the names of the individuals comprising the community panel:

- 1) Natasha Davis, a Gahanna resident and lawyer.
- 2) Nikki Galiardi, a member of the Parks and Recreation Foundation.
- 3) Sharon Iseringhausen, representing the schools' Community Arts program.
- 4) Kevin McGinn, an artist within the community.
- 5) A member of the Gahanna Area Arts Council.
- 6) Robert Mullins, a sculptor with experience in placing artwork in various communities.
- 7) Julie Hess, representing the Art Garden Academy.

She noted that the seven members would form the advisory panel for developing and recommending an arts policy.

Vice President Weaver sought clarification regarding the scope of the charge for the community panel. He indicated that the Mayor's statement suggested

a broader focus beyond just a content moderation policy.

Mayor Jadwin clarified that the panel's charge is broader than just a content moderation policy. She explained that the panel is tasked with researching and developing a recommended arts policy, which may include the establishment of a separate commission to govern the appropriate display of artwork on public property. The panel will work with outside counsel to ensure legal compliance and will ultimately make a recommendation to the Mayor regarding the arts policy and the process to be followed.

President Renner inquired about the outside counsel that the mayor referenced for consulting on this process.

Mayor Jadwin confirmed that she consulted with the law firm Isaac Wiles, specifically Mark Landes and Aaron Glasgow, who are experts in First Amendment matters. They will be guiding the process of developing the Arts policy.

President Renner inquired about a rumor regarding the snow blades, which have traditionally been painted by school children and displayed at the Holiday Lights event. He asked for clarification on whether this program had been shut down and if it would impact the display.

Mayor Jadwin clarified that the rumor about the snow blades program being shut down is not true. The service department was preparing the snow plows to be painted, and the deadline for completion is October 31st, which should allow enough time for them to be displayed at Holiday Lights. She also mentioned discussing parameters with Ms. Iseringhausen, emphasizing the need for neutrality in depictions to align with the forthcoming policy.

President Renner expressed his appreciation for the mayor's clarification. Councilmember Angelou also expressed her relief that the rumors regarding the snow blades program being shut down were not true.

Councilmember Bowers sought clarification regarding the timeline for adopting the proposed content moderation policy, confirming that it would be implemented before October 31st.

Mayor Jadwin clarified that the proposed content moderation policy would be presented for adoption no later than October 31st, ensuring that it would be in place by November 19th. She also mentioned that the Arts Council had proposed policies that could potentially expedite the process.

Councilmember Bowers expressed her appreciation for the clarification regarding the scope, deliverables, timeline, and the composition of the advisory panel.

Vice President Weaver asked if the panel's work would be ongoing, with the content moderation policy and additional deliverables subsequent to that based upon coordination with outside counsel, or was it the mayor's goal that the panel's work ends October 31st?

Mayor Jadwin clarified that the resident advisory panel's primary responsibility is to craft and recommend an Arts policy, and their work would be considered complete once this task is accomplished.

Councilmember Bowers asked Mayor Jadwin if she would circulate the order that the mayor issued last Monday.

Mayor Jadwin responded that she would be happy to circulate the order in the morning when she is better able to connect to a computer.

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE:

[ORD-0068-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - Water Meter Fees

Shawn Anverse, Director of Public Service, presented the need for an ordinance authorizing a supplemental appropriation for water meter fees. The Department of Public Service had received funds for water meter fees over the last quarter, which were currently unappropriated and unencumbered. The department requested an ordinance for supplemental appropriations to address this matter.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 10/2/2023; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 10/16/2023.

D. ITEMS FROM THE COUNCIL OFFICE:

[RES-0032-2023](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING MR. MARK LOWRIE

Vice President Weaver spoke about a resolution concerning Mr. Mark Lowrie, a teacher at the high school known for his work in broadcast journalism and television. He noted that Mr. Lowrie had been recently honored as the 2024 Ohio Teacher of the Year by the Ohio Department of Education. Vice President Weaver mentioned that Mr. Lowrie had expressed his availability to receive the resolution the following Monday. He also clarified that this was either the first or second "Proc-olution" related to this matter and that it would be presented jointly by the Mayor and Council. Vice President Weaver shared that he, the mayor, and others had attended the ceremony where Mr. Lowrie received the honor. He expressed excitement about Mr. Lowrie's upcoming visit and welcomed any edits to the resolution.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 10/2/2023.

[ORD-0069-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO TRAFFIC CODE SECTIONS OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA; TO PROVIDE FOR PENALTIES; TO PROVIDE FOR CODIFICATION; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Vice President Weaver turned to Clerk VanMeter to discuss the item. Attorney Mularski interjected that there were differences in opinion between himself and the chief of police on this matter. He mentioned that he had recently learned that they were not aligned on this matter, despite his initial belief that they agreed. Attorney Mularski requested that the issue be tabled to allow for further discussions between him and the chief before presenting it.

Vice President Weaver said that when the city attorney was ready to proceed, this would come back to the Committee. He also acknowledged the Committee's receipt of suggested changes and edits from residents, noting that they were addressed to Councilmember Bowers. Weaver inquired if the City Attorney and Chief had seen the suggested changes. Attorney Mularski acknowledged receipt of those suggested changes.

Recommendation: Held in Committee. Postponed for further review by City Attorney.

E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:

[ORD-0070-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - Developers Escrow Fund and Capital Improvement Fund

Joann Bury, Director of Finance, presented a request for supplemental appropriations. The first request was related to the Developer Escrow Fund, which had seen an increase due to rising construction in the city. A supplemental appropriation of \$350,000 was requested for this fund. The second part of the request was for the sidewalk program. It had been previously approved that 50 percent of the program costs would be allowed for those who self-performed the work in 2021 and 2022, up to the engineer's estimate. Requests for reimbursements had started to come in, but the appropriations for these reimbursements were not yet in place. Therefore, a request for supplemental appropriations in the capital improvement fund to cover these reimbursements was made.

Councilmember Bowers expressed her gratitude to Director Bury and Director Komlanc for their work on addressing and improving upon an initial model for the sidewalk maintenance program. She praised their efforts, noting that the changes made the model more resident-friendly.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 10/2/2023; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 10/16/2023.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Trenton I. Weaver
Chair