



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Trenton I. Weaver, Chair

Merisa K. Bowers

Jamille Jones

Nancy R. McGregor

Kaylee Padova

Stephen A. Renner

Michael Schnetzer

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, September 8, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, September 8, 2025, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was published on September 5, 2025. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION:

[ORD-0039-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT WITH COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC

Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented a request for an agreement for a construction easement with Columbia Gas of Ohio. She explained that Columbia Gas planned a pipeline replacement project with an expected construction timeline from 2026 into 2027. As part of the project, the company requested a temporary construction easement on Taylor Station, as outlined in the attachments included in the Council agenda materials. She stated that the administration respectfully requested an ordinance authorizing Mayor Jadwin to enter into a temporary construction easement with Columbia Gas of Ohio.

Councilmember McGregor asked if the easement was located in Gahanna Woods. Ferrell stated that the city coordinated with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to ensure compliance with their agreement and confirmed that the easement was outside state property. Councilmember McGregor asked whether the easement was located in the parking lot. Ferrell responded that the attachments in the packet provided the clearest reference. McGregor questioned the accuracy of her map, and Councilmember Schnetzer directed

her to page five of five, which the Clerk then displayed on the screen. McGregor asked if the project involved construction of an underground pipeline through the park. Ferrell clarified that the request concerned a construction easement, which provided temporary workspace for equipment and storage during construction. McGregor asked if the easement extended into the woods or remained along the road. Ferrell explained that it was along the road and encompassed less than .02 acres, a small portion of property designated for equipment and storage needs during the project. McGregor then noted that she could see the parking lot clearly on the map, which had not been visible earlier, and thanked Ferrell.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 9/15/2025;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 10/6/2025.**

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0040-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS; AND WAIVING SECOND READING - General Fund Development Contract Services for the Gahanna Community Improvement Corporation

Jeff Gottke, Director of Economic Development, presented a request for a supplemental appropriation from the City of Gahanna to the Gahanna Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). He explained that the appropriation would support efforts in the Creekside District and noted the timing aligned well with the recent "Our Gahanna" strategic plan and plaza renovation discussions. Gottke stated that the appropriation would allow the city to control its own destiny by removing vacant and blighted properties in the downtown area. He emphasized that while the CIC led this work, the project represented a cooperative effort involving Council, City of Gahanna departments, and the community. Gottke introduced CIC members in attendance: George Mrus, Jody Carder, and Betty Collins. He also noted that Councilmembers Padova and Renner, as well as Mayor Jadwin, represented the city on the CIC. Gottke provided a refresher on the purpose of community improvement corporations, explaining that they exist under Ohio Revised Code section 1724 as nonprofit economic development organizations. He stated that CICs commonly handle real estate development, land banking, and business financing, citing examples from neighboring communities including Westerville, Worthington, Dublin, and Hilliard. He explained that Gahanna's CIC was structured as a public-private partnership with representatives from Administration, Council, and the community. He described the request as the latest step in a nearly seven-year effort to encourage redevelopment in the Creekside District. In 2022, the community cast a vision for a vibrant mixed-use area that would increase foot traffic, attract residents, and bolster economic development. The CIC pursued that vision by acquiring parcels for redevelopment consistent with its land banking

strategy. Gottke explained that the CIC relied on a commercial bank loan to purchase 12 parcels and that control of the land was essential for achieving the community's redevelopment goals. He outlined four key questions:

1. **Why now?** Gottke stated that the CIC received a \$500,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development to demolish buildings on the parcels. The grant required demolition by December 31, 2025. To proceed, the loan must be paid off to release the mortgages, since the properties were used as collateral.
2. **What is the payoff date?** He said the target payoff date was September 30, 2025, but emphasized the need to pay sooner if possible because the note carried costs of approximately \$700 per day.
3. **What is at stake?** He explained that failure to act could mean losing the grant funding and leaving blighted properties on Mill Street.
4. **What is the alternative?** He warned that if the CIC defaulted, the bank would foreclose, and the properties would be sold on the open market. That outcome would undermine years of work and potentially leave redevelopment subject to competing private interests.

Director Gottke concluded that the appropriation would allow the city and CIC to control the properties, remove blight, and move forward with redevelopment consistent with the community's vision.

Councilmember Renner commended Gottke and the CIC. He said Gottke presented the story well and noted that control of the Creekside properties was essential. Renner expressed pride in the CIC's efforts and highlighted the importance of the state grant, which would reduce costs and clear blighted properties so that developers could invest. He strongly supported the ordinance and praised his CIC colleagues, Mayor Jadwin, and Gottke for their work.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked Gottke and asked clarifying questions. He inquired about the demolition grant timeline, noting the December 31, 2025, deadline. He asked whether demolition had to be fully completed or only substantially started to meet the grant requirements. Gottke responded that the CIC asked the Department of Development for clarification but believed the deadline could be met based on discussions with demolition companies. Schnetzer confirmed that the CIC formally requested clarification from the State of Ohio and asked to be updated on the response. He then asked if the financial decision was essentially binary, either pay off the mortgages or allow foreclosure, or if other options existed. Gottke stated that no other viable options existed. He noted that while future marketing of the properties could generate returns for the CIC and potentially benefit the city, repayment strategies would depend on redevelopment outcomes. Schnetzer clarified that property marketing was not expected to occur before the end of the

month, and Gottke confirmed.

Councilmember McGregor expressed concern about the \$5 million request, noting that it was a significant amount. She recalled the city's history with large-scale projects, citing defaults in the late 1970s and early 1980s related to the industrial zone, when Councilmembers were personally fined by the Supreme Court before the city eventually restructured the project. She also pointed to Creekside's history of bankruptcy and said these experiences fueled her skepticism about the current proposal. She cautioned that without learning from history, the city risked repeating it. Director Gottke acknowledged her concerns. He explained that the current effort differed from past attempts because it involved the CIC's structure, the city's resources, and a community-informed redevelopment strategy. He emphasized that these factors provided a stronger foundation than previous efforts, which were led by private developers. McGregor clarified that the city itself assembled parcels for Creekside in the past, and Gottke apologized, noting he was referring specifically to the 12 parcels in question.

Mayor Jadwin asked Director Gottke to speak to how other communities used CICs to spur redevelopment. Gottke explained that cities such as Whitehall, Lancaster, Worthington, Dublin, and Hilliard successfully employed CICs or similar organizations to assemble sites and manage redevelopment. He also shared examples from his previous experience in Knox County, where land banks served similar purposes. Mayor Jadwin thanked him for the context.

Councilmember McGregor reiterated her skepticism but praised the CIC members for their dedication and hard work on the project.

Councilmember Jones raised a concern she expected from residents about the high dollar amount. She asked where the money would come from and whether it would impact other community priorities. Gottke responded that the funds would be used to advance redevelopment by transforming the parcels into mixed-use development consistent with the city's Land Use Plan and zoning code. He said the redevelopment would increase residents, foot traffic, income tax revenue, and vibrancy in Creekside. Mayor Jadwin added that the redevelopment strategy was informed by both the community and private developers. She emphasized that controlling the property was the only way to ensure the city's vision could be achieved. She also explained that most parcels were vacant and blighted, including one so deteriorated that a visitor from Columbia Gas became physically ill after entering. She stressed that these properties were no longer inhabitable and needed demolition. By owning the land, the city could guide redevelopment rather than leaving it solely to private owners, subject only to zoning regulations. Finance Director Joann Bury clarified that the funds would come from the unreserved,

unappropriated balance of the General Fund, meaning they were not earmarked for other purposes. Councilmember Jones thanked Mayor Jadwin and directors for clarifying. She summarized that if the city did not act, it would lose the opportunity to realize the community's vision for Creekside.

Vice President Weaver expressed gratitude to CIC members for their long-term efforts. He noted that he first heard of the project early in his Council service as a former CIC representative and appreciated that it reached this point nearly four years later. Weaver asked whether all 12 parcels were slated for demolition. Gottke confirmed that the demolition applied to the structures on all 12 parcels. Weaver asked if demolition costs might exceed the grant. Mayor Jadwin explained that the city was seeking contractor estimates and could return to Council for a supplemental appropriation if the difference exceeded \$100,000, though another party might help absorb costs. Weaver stressed the importance of property control, echoing economic development experts who advised that ownership was necessary to achieve the city's vision. He stated that cleared, vacant land would offer a far better opportunity for redevelopment than deteriorated buildings. Gottke confirmed that it was preferable to have demolished parcels ready for redevelopment. Weaver then asked about the next steps if the appropriation were approved. Gottke responded that once the loan was paid and demolition completed, the properties would be marketed for redevelopment. Councilmember Renner added that regardless of the outcome, the demolition would lower redevelopment costs and improve opportunities for future investment.

Councilmember Padova thanked Gottke and the CIC members for their work. She described Creekside as the heart of the community and emphasized its value as a place where residents gather and connect. She stated her support for the investment and expressed appreciation for the CIC's efforts.

Vice President Weaver asked if there was further discussion. Hearing none, he noted that a waiver was requested and confirmed the item would appear on the regular agenda for the following week. He thanked Director Gottke and the CIC members for their presentation and attendance.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading with Waiver of Second Reading and Adoption on Regular Agenda on 9/15/2025.

D. ITEMS FROM COUNCILMEMBERS:

Councilmember Padova:

[RES-0040-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE SEPTEMBER 28, 2025, AS NATIONAL GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY IN THE

CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Padova introduced a joint resolution and proclamation to recognize September 28, 2025, as National Good Neighbor Day in the City of Gahanna. She explained that the idea stemmed from watching Daniel Tiger with her child, noting that the show, inspired by Mr. Rogers, emphasizes the importance of being a good neighbor. She said the message was timely and valuable for society. Padova shared that she discussed the idea with Mayor Jadwin several months earlier, connecting it with the spirit of Supporting Gahanna Together Day, which began in 2020. She discovered that President Jimmy Carter established National Good Neighbor Day in 1978, which aligned with her vision. She noted that September 28 would coincide with the Mill Street Market and that she was working with the Historical Society to incorporate activities there. She further announced that she was partnering with the library to promote the observance. On September 27, she planned to visit the library's 11:00 a.m. story time to share information about National Good Neighbor Day with children and parents. The library would provide crafts and coloring pages for children to complete and deliver to neighbors, as well as book displays on neighborhood building, being a good neighbor, and fostering community. Padova stated that the ultimate goal was to inspire residents to meet new neighbors, reconnect with existing ones, and strengthen community ties. She emphasized that knowing one's neighbors builds a safer community, spreads accurate information, and fosters stronger relationships.

Mayor Jadwin thanked Councilmember Padova for the initiative and said she was thrilled to partner on the effort. She remarked that the observance extended the city's efforts such as Supporting Gahanna Together Day, Make Gahanna Yours, community litter cleanups, and neighborhood food truck events. She stated that Gahanna led by example in building community and good neighborhoods, and she described the joint resolution and proclamation as a tribute to the "heart of Gahanna."

Councilmember Renner also expressed support. He stated that at the heart of the resolution was respect and emphasized that the community remained respectful even amid diverse opinions. He said the observance would serve as a reminder to show respect and to greet one another, and he thanked Councilmember Padova for introducing the joint resolution and proclamation.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 9/15/2025.

E. 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 2025.

Trenton I. Weaver