

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 11, 2000

8:15 PM

Council Committee Rooms

Committee of the Whole

Rebecca W. Stinchcomb, Chairman

Karen J. Angelou

L. Nicholas Hogan

Thomas R. Kneeland

Michael O'Brien

Donald R. Shepherd

Debra A. Payne, ex officio

Members Absent: Rebecca W. Stinchcomb and L. Nicholas Hogan

Members Present: Debra A. Payne, Thomas R. Kneeland, Donald R. Shepherd, Karen J. Angelou and Michael O'Brien

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

McGregor, Weber, Isler, White, Hall, Davies. Visitors: Ron Barnes, COTA; Bob Lawler, MORPC; Marie Kiester, COTA. Press

PENDING LEGISLATION

ORD-0224-2000

TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH AMPO, INC., FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRIC AGGREGATION PROGRAM TO ASSIST THE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN THE CITY GAHANNA; TO SUPPLEMENTALLY APPROPRIATE \$7,500; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

McGregor stated he had received a call from George Roby, a resident, who is working with Henry Bell; impression is they would like to submit a competing proposal; will ask Davies to call him and find out exactly what he is proposing.

Angelou noted cartoon in last week's paper; felt it was confusing; are doing something that will be positive; was so negative to this Council; gave wrong impression for something that is a positive for the City; ballot issue was what we want to do; will help provide lower rates for electricity; we are not going to be the aggregator; was a very inaccurate picture of what we were going to do; need to get City's perspective. Vickers urged Council to write individual letters in response. Angelou continued that she felt it was inappropriate; did not reflect at all what we are trying to do; not at all what the ballot issue is; portrays a bunch of inept people trying to put something over on their residents; you can drop out of this; is your chance to get lower electrical rates.

Weber asked if the AMPO agreement included marketing of the whole idea. Payne replied that it did. Davies stated she had met with the Ohio Consumers Counsel; have a vast amount of the marketing material; also working with Upper Arlington on marketing of this ballot issue. Payne stated she would like to see us go ahead with this legislation; ask Davies to contact Roby; share additional information after she speaks with him if it is warranted.

Angelou reiterated that an explanation back to the people of Gahnna for a ballot issue is needed after that cartoon; was an inaccurate depiction of what we are trying to do; can't hold this up waiting for possible interest by other parties.

O'Brien stated that AMPO is here; they are established; other people may be from out of state. McGregor stated that Roby and Bell, retired head of Columbus distribution system, could be of service to us through this process; don't quite understand what they were proposing; not sure if it was in competition with AMPO or in addition to; will have Davies check this out. O'Brien restated he did not want people without faces and names trying to sell us something we can get locally.

Recommended for Adoption, Consent

ISSUES:

COTA Presentation - Ron Barnes & Bob Lawler

Payne introduced Ron Barnes and Marie Kiester from COTA and Bob Lawler from MORPC; doing a follow up to the dinner meetings they have held; talk about congestion and ways to reduce congestion in the area.

Bob Lawler reviewed mobility issues; what are growth projections; why do we have increasing congestion; can't we build more roads; what can we do to maintain our mobility.

Barnes thanked COUncil for allowing them to make their presentation; is time to start to educate the community; was an exciting year last year; went to voters to maintain our existing dollars and was able to get permanent funding; second issue was to expand the system to look at other alternatives; expansion issue didn't pass; start to use our permanent funding to try and better serve our community; have been holding elected official dinners but have never had the opportunity to collectively talk to you; all communities around COTA will have to change; develop and be one of the those tools in the tool kit for congestion; each community has unique different needs; was in Upper Arlington last week and I'm sure their needs are different than yours; need to look at how and what we are doing. Barnes continued that COTA wants to be a part of the growth; overlay our plan with your plan and see how we can do a better job of serving your community to connect the entire community; our planning staff needs to work with your staff to make that happen.

O'Brien asked if there were any plans for internal suburban bus routes; something where I could go from K-Mart to Creekside and go back and forth; recognize need for smaller busses but as populations age feel this will be needed; could go to Senior Center and then back across town to home. Barnes stated that's the whole idea of small busses and transit centers; need to think that through; did not think that the aging population was an issue but it has arisen before; laying out plans for transit centers; is very important to us; you have 2 issues going with rapid growth and with existing residents; connecting to Easton and synergy in that and how you want to do intra travel; operation excellence will take that into account.

Angelou stated she felt it was clearly something we wanted to pursue; have an express bus downtown but more routes at more times are needed; even if we could get to Broad Street to take another route; am from Cleveland and you always took the bus; need to get that mindset of not getting to your car; don't know how you change that; is a major issue and concern. Barnes stated COTA has to make that trip as short as possible for you so you don't jump into the car; if you have to drive 30 minutes to bus lines and then 30 to 40 minutes on the bus you won't do it; easy access and being able to get back and forth is primary; no longer are we an 8 to 5 downtown oriented community but that's what the bus system is; there are more jobs around I-270 than there are downtown. Angelou stated she understood that the Development Department has been working with you on getting ridership to our industrial zone.

Weber stated this is the largest urban area that doesn't have rapid transit; are far behind the curve which is horrendous; have seen some of your plans for rail; what will it take to get those into reality; are falling farther and farther behind; know there are plans for rail; why hasn't that happened. Barnes stated that the rail funding was not approved at the ballot last year; we are the 15th largest city in country; we are the largest community without light rail or commuter rail; what we are looking at is T-21 funding; approximately 190 or so transit projects that were on the new start list; have to get on that list to get funded; we are continuing our funding study; MORPC and COTA and

other partners are working on it; Burgess & Niple have been hired to update our study; once that is complete, assuming that everything is justifiable, will take application to Washington to be on new start list; must do major investment study; are proceeding so we can keep momentum going and don't fall further behind; from Washington perspective once we get to this point our congressional representatives understand how important it is to get us on new start list; would then be ready to take next step; staff is aggressively working so we don't fall further behind; had to have permanent funding; now have to do financial plan; major step was permanency; doing MIS update and getting on application list is the next step; do 1 at a time and then move to the next; needs to fit the needs of the community.

O'Brien stated he did not think voters turned rail down; turned down rail on the ground; if presented for overhead rail think it would have passed; in talking with a lot of people they would prefer monorails and overhead transit systems; only thing that makes sense; people were afraid of sharing roads with trains; did vote against it for that reason; have been a proponent of rail for a long time; need to do a better job of coming up with more ideas; it has to be done.

Kneeland stated that people need to have the ability to traverse back and forth; need to give them a reason why they would not want to use car; do a lot of air travel and train travel in Chicago; is there any plan to cater to the commuting executive; of providing work friendly environments on the bus; to be able to connect to the network while engaged in travel; are any of those being considered. Barnes stated they are looking at the most advanced technology we can; especially on trains, they will be equipped to do that; trains are much more sophisticated than busses; would probably look at express busses before regular busses; looking at a user friendly environment so you can work while commuting; 30 or 40 minutes is important to people; has to be one of the selling points from our perspective; need to look at commuting time as productive time.

Payne questioned the time line for transit centers; where does Gahanna transit center fit in offhand. Barnes stated that with issue 21 we adjusted dates; work now as to who can help us to finance; are open to the economic partnerships and opportunities that may exist; East Main Street has popped up because of their redevelopment; development will drive what goes in when; if we can make work what White has planned Gahanna will be jumping ahead.

Angelou questioned traffic patterns at rush hours; they do not go around the City now; with the rail idea if they were different so they would be circular from suburban where people live; in the middle of town bus routes can get you there; suburban communities need the connectivity; large amount of residential is going around and around; here to Dublin in the morning or at night is difficult. Barnes stated that was an excellent observation; have a friend who lives in Jefferston and works in Powell and takes him 1 hour to 1-1/2 hours at times to commute; the ability to get work done probably would give some incentive to use light rail or the bus.

Lawler agreed with the statement; pattern described is taking place; were projecting in 1995 that the north outerbelt traffic will more than double; pattern you see today will be reinforced.

White stated she was on the Light Rail Study Committee before she began here; one of the reasons for going with ground rail is the right of way; easier to obtain as there are abandoned corridors; that's how rail goes; question on the new I-270 express lanes; don't see people allowed to drive higher speeds in certain lanes like we see in other places; multi riders and busses are in there also; could accomplish the same thing cheaper;

ability to get to Worthington, Westerville, and around; with widening of I-270 feel that is something we should look at. Lawler stated that when studied was determined there was not enough distance to give separation of ingress and egress to put those express lanes in. White stated that even if left lane only is allowed to go 70 or you have to have multiple riders etc. to get on those lanes could have an intelligent management system on there; one thing we could do immediately. Barnes stated they would certainly take that idea under advisement; hasn't been planned but can take a look at it; is certainly an issue; will be looking at 300,000 jobs over the next 20 years; enhanced with the development in this northeast area; need to look at how we will move people; issue of expanding the outerbelt right now is that the interchanges are locked in; can build 10 lanes but still have to get off at same location.

O'Brien asked if there was any chance of seeing a proposal for elevated rail. Barnes stated he can't rule it out; as we update our MIS will be looking at that. Kiester stated that one of the problems with elevated is building stations; costs go up dramatically; to build stations on the street we are at one level; if you tunnel looking at 4 to 6 times the cost and elevated is 6 to 10 times the cost; Vancouver and other cities have been successful but is extremely expensive. O'Brien stated that the costs need to take into consideration the use of rail as also transporting utilities; leasing spaces for fiber optics and power; do take that into consideration.

Payne thanked everyone for coming out; do want to work with you; glad to have this opportunity to hear your plans; ask Council Members to contact Barnes or Lawler if they have any additional questions.

Creekside Update - Al Groves

Groves stated that at last meeting identified a possible area for parking garage between Carpenter, Mill, and High; went on both sides of proposed channel; considerable discussion about making that smaller; could change that from parking to transit; combining is definitely a possibility; new parking garage facility is 180' x 360' on south side of Carpenter and would park about 400 autos; it is intended that the structure would have shops at creek level and at street level; presented rendering of what it could look like; doesn't look like a parking garage; have creekside level, street level, and 2 parking levels above; 52,000 s.f. of office space on top floor; could be office or condos or some usage of that nature; probably not what it will look like but gives you an idea of putting a facade on the structure; have elevations for all 4 sides to give you a better idea; atrium area in center that would go all the way through; the window looking things would be a type of grill work that would allow air to go through; fold out shows entire phase 1 project as it stands; flood wall comes down along creek and just north of the post office; then carry wall east to Mill Street and go across and come around this parking complex; that provides us with flood wall that completely encircles the project area; remove soil inside that flood wall and creates a basement space under there and creek would go through the center of it and all down at creekside level; is an opportunity for developing the creekside retail areas; also create a green belt along the one side and transition back to plaza. Kneeland asked if it would all need excavated; is an area on the west side of Mill that is retail at creek level; behind is a service level and additional parking at creekside level; that parking can be utilized for condos or residential units on that side of street; need to have parking that relates to those units; need enough spaces to accommodate residential or some office; space will be at premium for parking; took dirt out and calculated cost of wall; did increase height of wall from original because we needed to be 3' above flood level; higher than we started out with and more expensive but don't have to build down this way until we are ready to develop down there; is all protected as it is.

Groves continued that the detail of the gate has been seen; also show you a channel cross section; in bottom of that channel will have PVC pipe to carry brine and freeze the bottom of the channel to make ice skating rink; would be about 580' with an average width of 30' but would be wider in spots; ice making equipment goes in parking garage and there is a company out of Toronto that is doing it consistently; total cost of that would be \$500,000; but what it does is open up the opportunity for restaurants, kids ice skating, lights, music, sound activity; all the things you want Creekside to be during the winter; just like the summer, but not Polaris. Angelou stated she felt this was a fantastic opportunity to look at adding this component; will provide recreational opportunities for all year. Groves continued that will be a need for some utility relocation; only one looked at so far is sanitary sewer; will need to abandon a piece of that where it is located where channel would be; remove that and construct a new line over to High Street that ties in to existing line; proposed cost would be about \$200,000 for the relocation; all utility relocations will have to be looked at but primary will be the sanitary; will have to rebuild that someday anyway. Was noted that Jackson will be bringing information to Council shortly on the condition of the current sewers; is not good news; this is a project that may have to be done whether Creekside goes forward or not; what is not analyzed yet is the storm sewer; don't want any street drainage at all going into this project; will probably be some storm sewer work needed; may need to reroute that in some way. McGregor stated that we did replace a sewer on the Clark and Oklahoma project that was totally blocked.

Groves stated there are good firm cost estimates on channel, bridge, and wall; detail is in latest packet; total cost of infrastructure includes \$5 million for parking garage and that number is subject to fluctuation depending on how fancy we get on facade; total cost for infrastructure is \$17 million; land that is shown in footprint based on appraised values is \$6.2 million for a total of \$22.9 million for project as currently laid out; have been talking with Desmond Associates on the parking garage; will be authorizing them to go ahead on some preliminary work on parking garage; authorize them to get me that information so we can tighten figures down.

Groves stated that Planning Commission recommendations are included in latest report; first recommendation was a minimization of density; is crucial that it be high density; want to watch controls on it so it doesn't say no more than 2 story; on north end of project parking garage needs to be 4 story; idea that is coming forth from different people is to get Olde Gahanna as it used to be - it didn't use to be; this has to be a festival place; has to be an experience; will have to have high density; most exciting time in San Antonio is when you have to walk your way through the crowd; you don't do that with low density; this business on transportation was appropriate tonight; if you get enough housing back there you cut down on some transportation problems; move back in rather than the urban sprawl; second recommendation is for setback and open space requirements for the canal to be maximized; don't agree with that; don't want wide open spaces on the canal. Angelou noted it would then be similar to Kansas City; is nothing there but some green patches and boats running up and down; was a flood control project and is not quaint; not what we want.

Groves continued that we did reduce parking structure; next question became availability for more parking; is room for another one on north side of Carpenter; would fit in nicely; could be bridged across and connect; could even put on west side if developer came around that would be willing to do; could build structure there that had retail at street level with same attributes; in Olde Gahanna have almost 2000 parking spaces; problem is they all belong to somebody; not everybody can use them; may have a situation where you do a collective use of parking; going back to the recommendations, a defined theme works but not sure we want to emphasize mom and

pop operations; see where we would have first class restaurants etc; may have a mom and pop operation with skates; rest of recommendations are great.

Groves stated we have gone through 2 independent marketing studies; you do need them; problem with a typical marketing study is that it will come back with a set of statistics on how many shoe stores you have; what your share of market would be, etc;; is all based on statistics; none of it captures what the vision of this would be; this is unusual; take that market study and be very careful what you get from it.

O'Brien stated we need to look at what Wexner has done with Easton; all are unique shops; we have to do the same type of marketing; don't want a cookie cutter cross section of the country. Groves stated that we are not looking for the same market Easton is looking at; they are unique shops to his development; we can do same thing for Creekside.

Angelou stated we did discuss the fact that we have this plan; looking forward to adopting; a large component of that is price; need to look at funding structures for that; ask Isler to put that together for us; possibly have a meeting with Isler, White, Greg Stype and myself; a package of what the various options of funding are available; may be 1, may be 10; as a Council we don't know what's out there; feel this is something that needs to be done to be prepared for the public hearing; figures are not in concrete public hearing is coming close; need to have these various options. Isler stated that we can't bond it all; put together a package and discuss at next Finance meeting. Angelou set a Finance Committee meeting for the first committee night in October.

O'Brien asked when we were going to start utilizing CIC as an entity to purchase and hold our land versus the City doing that; that solves a lot of potential problems; comes back to funding aspect. White stated that Weber is still working on that. Kneeland noted they had talked about that briefly in CIC tonight; some of the issues raised concerned owning and developing property and turning over to CIC; discussed their ability to be able to develop, their purchasing power and owning property over and above what is committed to the City; too many unknowns right now to know where we are going; we need to provide direction to CIC to let them know what part they need to play; they are ready to work hard. Angelou noted that funding piece plays into that; if we don't feel we can fund it then we need to look at other alternatives. White stated that one of the things with the price tag on development is looking at partnerships; as Barnes said earlier about the transit center, is not a bad idea; fact that transit center revolves around economic development makes it easier to promote and to sell; easist connection for us would be Easton and Gahanna to work as a cooperative; some possibility between those issues. Groves stated we need to know the return from the project; whatever land return would come from it and subsidized to some extent initially more so than later; significant return because you have two levels - the creek level and the street level; square footages have value; values going up from there; need to think in those terms. O'Brien stated this was something that needed to be added to our public hearing; need to look at return also. Angelou stated that Isler will do that; he will be looking at returns on capital and ultimate returns under TIF, also at way to service the debt as it goes towards the whole project; maintenance costs haven't been addressed either; will put together a package; need to be ready to respond.

Kneeland noted that we have the preliminary report from Fishel; really want to move this along; possibly meet next week after regular meeting or in Committee of the Whole basically devoted to this issue onnext committee night. Clerk reminded that post office discussion will take place next week during regular meeting. After discussion,

consensus was to meet after regular meeting. Payne stated she would call for a Committee of the Whole next week after the regular meeting.

ISOBEL L. SHERWOOD, CMC/AAE, Clerk of Council, reporting