

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 9, 2013

7:00 PM

Council Committee Rooms

Committee of the Whole

*Ryan P. Jolley, Chair
Beryl D. Anderson
Karen J. Angelou
Brian D. Larick
Stephen A. Renner
Brandon Wright*

Present 5 - Stephen A. Renner, Brandon Wright, Karen J. Angelou, Brian D. Larick, and Ryan P. Jolley

Absent 1 - Beryl D. Anderson

Additional Attendees:

Isobel Sherwood, Brandi Braun, Dottie Franey, Karl Wetherholt, Mike Andrako, Anthony Jones, Tony Collins, Jennifer Teal, Shane Ewald, Alan DeLoera, Brad Yates from Manor Homes.

PENDING LEGISLATION:

[ORD-0124-2013](#) TO ACCEPT THE FINAL PLAT FOR PROPERTY KNOWN AS VILLAGE AT HANNAH FARMS, PHASE 2, DUBLIN MANOR, LLC, APPLICANT.

Jolley called the meeting for Monday, September 9, 2013 to order; begin with pending legislation for the final plat for the property known as the Village at Hannah Farms.

Sherwood said this is basically a ministerial function; when the final plat is in accordance with the preliminary plat you are required to approve it; the Planning Commission has determined it is in conformance and they did recommend it; it has had first reading; Brad Yates from Manor Homes is here tonight in case you have any questions. Jolley asked for a quick overview. Wetherholt said Phase II is the last 18 lots in the whole development of Hannah Farms; all part of the plan from 2007. Jolley asked for any questions; there were none; clarified no emergency needed for this legislation.

This Ordinance was Recommended for Adoption, Consent

ISSUES - From City Engineer:

Accept Appurtenances - Village at Hannah Farms, Phase 2

Wetherholt said the 2nd issue is for the same subdivision only this is accepting the appurtenances; they are finished and it was paved; Friday they put the asphalt down; our inspectors report that there are no punch list items to be done; it is certified as complete; the way we do this is to have an Ordinance that accepts the appurtenances; he is

requesting it be passed by emergency so they can start building houses and we can start collecting TIF revenues. Jolley asked for questions; there were none.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, no need to come back; 2nd Reading, Consent Agenda with Emergency Language.

ISSUES - From Director of Public Service:

Safe Routes to Schools Sign Program

Franey said my first item is a Safe Routes to School sign program; ODOT is offering standard school zone and pedestrian warning signs for elementary schools; don't have to be a part of the Safe Route to Schools Program even though we are; do have to sign an agreement with ODOT to get the signs; the requirement is they have to be put up within 60 days of receiving them which we can do; these will replace some of our existing signs that are old and worn out and need updated; this is a great deal; we get the signs at no cost; tonight we are asking for an Ordinance to authorize the Mayor to execute the participation agreement with ODOT. Renner said sounds very good.

Wright said I could not find in the report where exactly the signs will be replaced or used. Franey said we are replacing existing signs. Wright said where. Franey said in multiple locations near schools since it has to do with school traffic. Wright asked is Jefferson scheduled to get new signs. Andrako said we tried to hit all the K-8's since that is what was eligible; I can get back to Wright on exactly where they are; our Streets Foreman prepared a map with all the locations so I will check on that. Wright said I am also concerned about Chapelfield and Goshen; those are the 3 that I would like information on.

Angelou said and I am assuming they will be through all the City; and the numbers we are getting are on the sheets we received. Franey said correct. Angelou asked what would be the cost if we actually had to purchase those. Franey asked Andrako did he estimate. Andrako said he did not. Franey said she could get that estimate out. Angelou said they look like better signs so she would be interested in the savings.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, no need to come back; 2nd Reading, Consent Agenda.

Authorize Contract/Online Bill Pay

Franey said we are ready to move forward with offering online bill pay

and electronic bill presentment of our utility bills; in order to prepare for this, we formed a committee; it included Utility Billing, Finance and IT; we interviewed 3 pay provider companies that offer this service; we laid out a comparison of all 3 of the services and prices; we unanimously decided to recommend *Official Payments*; I laid out costs in the report; they offer pay provider services to the majority of utility companies that offer online payment; we have a utility billing discussion group that covers most of the state; we can do surveys easily within it; overwhelmingly *Official Payments* is the pay provider of choice among that group; the initial contract with them is for 2 years; then it is automatic renewal every year after that; after the initial term you can cancel with a 60 day notification; tonight we are asking for legislation authorizing the Mayor to enter into that agreement; we are asking for emergency so we can roll this out and inform people of this option in the quarterly update with utility bills beginning January of 2014.

Wright said what is the business case that is moving us toward online bill payment; is there a demand. Franey said we would like to move toward monthly billing; to do that we would have to increase staff because right now we bill quarterly; monthly billing would mean 3 times the effort; a number of years ago we started to try to get any task that we can done automatically to move in that direction; if we automate enough tasks we could minimize staff additions when we go to monthly billing; online bill pay is one of those; it cuts out processing and makes it more streamlined; then if they add bill presentment, we stop printing the paper bill and mailing it saving on postage; another step in streamlining it; these are things we are trying to do to posture ourselves into the best position possible to go to monthly billing if we decide to do that to help people budget better.

Wright said what is the time frame to integrate trash services and go to monthly billing. Franey said I hesitate to guess on that; a lot of factors to consider like cost; we just try to make changes in our processes that put us in a better position to make that decision down the road; it is a goal because we think the bills are getting high enough that it is difficult for people to budget for a quarterly payment.

Wright said in looking at the fees, are those charged to the citizens who would be paying their bills or to the City. Franey said we are choosing for the City to pay those fees; really the users are paying the fees because that is all part of the operating expenses; it comes out of the proprietary funds; we pay them now; if someone pays with a credit card today we are paying those fees; it is not a change to the customer; if we shifted those costs to the customer that would be a culture change; could change down the road, but for now we are choosing to keep it the same with the City paying fees.

Angelou said if people don't want to pay fees, they can still pay in person as always. Franey said that would be a choice if we were going to pass those fees on to them. Angelou said that is what I meant. Franey said we are choosing not to pass it on directly to the customer; we are not saying if you pay online you have to pay an extra \$2. Angelou said but it could happen; someday you would want to pass it on, then people could also have the choice to pay in person or by mail.

Jolley said fees are a common business expense for business owners; beyond more convenience for residents, are there other benefits to online bill payment such as reduced delinquencies and collections that would make the fees easier to accept. Franey said in general online bill pay is all good; in addition to all that you say, we tend to get money faster; save on printing charges and postage and envelopes; right now it costs us to process payments; starts to be a trade off and can be close. Jolley said so there will be some cost decreases. Franey said I see that down the road.

Jolley said you did request emergency on this. Franey said yes so that we may have it all put together for a roll out on January 1.

Angelou said how many commercial utility bills are there. Franey said we have 558 commercial accounts.

Jolley asked are condos and apartments who have central meters considered commercial or residential. Franey said I don't know for sure; based on this 558 number, I would guess residential. Angelou asked do we have any apartments now that have single meters. Franey said most are master meter; we have a master meter to the apartment complex; then the apartment management can separate them. Angelou said I thought most apartments were going away from that; they used to pay for the water but now they pass it along. Franey said you will see a lot where there is a master meter that we bill from, and we like that because we stop maintaining lines right at the master meter; then apartment complex management chooses to manage and meter all the apartments so they are billing their residents and maintaining their own lines; we like it this way; when they have breaks or leaks, it is their issue and they are paying for that water instead of the other rate payers.

Larick asked what is the driver to go to monthly billing. Franey said to help the customers to budget better; a \$300 water bill can be difficult; hard for some people to budget; some set up monthly automatic payments and pay monthly, but for others it is a struggle.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, no need to come back; 2nd Reading, Consent Agenda with Emergency Language.

ISSUES - From Clerk of Council:

Resolution - Peace Lutheran Church

Sherwood said Councilwoman Angelou has requested a resolution for Peace Lutheran Church; they are celebrating 175 years in Gahanna; the church has provided information for a resolution; it will be similar to the one we did for Stoneybrook's 50 years. Renner said I did not realize they have been here 175 years. Angelou said I was talking with Sherwood and said maybe it is the oldest one; she thinks Mifflin might be older; maybe not; of course the Sanctuary is the oldest building. Sherwood said their 2nd building; their 1st building was a small one room dwelling next to the cemetery on State Route 62.

Recommendation: Resolution, Consent Agenda.

ISSUES - From Director of Finance:

Resolution/Franklin County Budget Commission

Teal said last week we received the Resolution from the Franklin County Budget Commission; it is standard language that they provide accepting our 2.4 million property tax collections for 2014; and they provide estimates based on their calculations of valuation and collection trends as to what they believe that will bring in; we have populated that into the budget calculation; the next step is for Council to approve that Resolution; it needs to be approved by October 1; it does just need 1 reading so I was hopeful we could take care of that at the next Council meeting.

Jolley said and this is required by ORC. Teal said yes and if we don't turn this in, they won't collect property tax for us.

Recommendation: Resolution; Consent Agenda.

2nd Quarter Financial Presentation

Teal said this update is a bit late; you will see me again in a couple of weeks for the next round; tonight I am providing a brief update on the 2nd Quarter Finances that ended in June; it is late due to the change in banks that we are mostly finished with, but were right in the middle

of when this closed; we didn't close the month as quickly as we normally would; there were no major issues; it just takes awhile to clean up the books and reconcile the statements when there are more banks in play; so we were not on our normal schedule for quarterly reviews; the update memo did go out to Council on August 1 and has been on the web; this looks different than in the past; I am streamlining the format so I cut and paste once; the content is no different.

Teal provided a power point presentation of the 2nd Quarter Financials; a copy is available in the Council office and on the web.

Larick said transfers are under revenue so I am thinking it is an influx; is it truly an influx of money or transfers between accounts. Teal said that one in particular is from the Eastgate TIF; it is money that was not in the General Fund that is now in the General Fund; if we do not make the transfer the funds are not available to be spent; this puts them in the universe of resources.

Jolley asked for any additional questions or comments.

Renner said when is the end of the 3rd quarter. Teal said at the end of this month; we close about 10 to 12 days into the following month; we are able to report on it by the end of October; we would speak to it at the 2nd committee meeting in October; August is not officially closed; I have pulled some preliminary numbers to see and it was pretty much on track with what we saw through 2nd quarter; nothing surprising; we have been watching the year really closely as we have been working on various activities for revenue and forecasting; don't know of anything to pop up as a surprise.

Jolley said I noticed through the first half of this year we are already at 70% of budget for recreational income; I remember hearing a lot of that was from the golf course since the Airport Golf Course was closed; do we have any update on that and what it might look like going forward after this year.

Teal said as we track through the following 2 months; they came on after June; there was not a continuance of that spike; in my limited knowledge of recreation funding, I know that most folks who buy pool memberships do that early in the summer; that always spikes the recreation revenue there.

Collins said I do not have our recent updates in front of me; we try to do a month to month update of our revenues for pools and golf but can't tell you exactly where we are projecting to finish; will tell you we were ahead of previous years performance in our last reports; with the golf course, it is weather related as far as green fees; the weather has been fine; wouldn't say we have lost any ground on that; for next year,

I know that we did benefit from the Airport Golf Course closing but not by a large percentage; it is more weather related and the quality of the course along with the service we are able to provide; 2 years ago we had a rough weather summer and we took a large hit; it is a hard business to predict.

Meeting Adjourned.

Della Brandenberger, Reporting

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
day of 2013.*

**Isobel L. Sherwood, MMC
Clerk of Council**

Stephen A. Renner