



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Merisa K. Bowers, President*  
*Trenton I. Weaver, Vice President*  
*Jamille Jones*  
*Nancy R. McGregor*  
*Kaylee Padova*  
*Stephen A. Renner*  
*Michael Schnetzer*

*Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council*

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Monday, April 15, 2024

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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#### **A. CALL TO ORDER: Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call**

*Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, April 15, 2024, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver delivered an Invocation and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on April 12, 2024.*

*President Bowers noted that the split-screen function on the streaming service was inoperable and a ticket had been submitted with the vendor. For the presentation and annual report by Visit Gahanna, President Bowers redirected the audience and members to the slide deck linked to the Council agenda.*

**Present** 7 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, Michael Schnetzer, and Trenton I. Weaver

#### **B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

President Bowers noted that there would not be a proclamation presentation for the meeting. Mayor Jadwin asked for Council's consideration in scheduling a proclamation presentation for Arbor Day during the Committee of the Whole on April 22, 2024.

#### **C. PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **1. Joint Resolution/Proclamation Presentation by Council and Mayor**

President Bowers began the meeting by announcing the first item on the agenda, which was to celebrate and recognize Pam Ripley for her retirement after 17 and a half years of service with the City of Gahanna. President Bowers expressed gratitude for Deputy Clerk of Council Ripley's contributions, noting her extensive tenure with the Parks & Recreation Department before transitioning to the Council Office. Ms. Ripley was recognized for her historical knowledge, leadership qualities, and warm

personality, earning the affectionate nickname "Queen Bee" during her time with the Parks and Recreation Department. President Bowers highlighted Pam's promotion to the Council Office in 2021, where she served in various capacities including clerk to the Planning Commission and Records Commission, as well as interim Clerk of Council. She also noted Pam's achievement of the CMC designation, a significant milestone in her career as a clerk. President Bowers announced that a resolution, jointly presented with the Mayor, would be presented to Ms. Ripley in recognition of her service, expressing gratitude and celebrating her accomplishments. Ms. Ripley received the joint resolution from City Council and Mayor Jadwin with applause and congratulations.

Vice President Weaver took a moment to express gratitude on behalf of his colleagues to Ms. Ripley for her dedicated service to both the Council and the City. He acknowledged the essential role of all Council Office staff and City employees but shared a personal appreciation for Ms. Ripley's assistance during his orientation when he first took office. Vice President Weaver expressed his heartfelt thanks to Ms. Ripley and wished her the best in her future endeavors.

President Bowers concluded the recognition by thanking everyone involved, including Clerk VanMeter and other staff members who contributed to crafting the resolution. She expressed appreciation for their efforts in capturing the essence of Deputy Clerk Ripley's dedication and contributions to the City of Gahanna.

## 2. Visit Gahanna Update - Lori Kappes

[2024-0081](#)

Visit Gahanna Update to City Council 4.15.2024 & 2023 Annual Report

Lori Kappes, Executive Director of Visit Gahanna, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to provide an update. She began by referencing the recent annual meeting held at the Gahanna Sanctuary, attended by some members of the Council, apologizing in advance for any repetition in her update. Kappes highlighted Amir Eylon, President and CEO of Longwoods International, as the keynote speaker at the annual meeting. She noted Longwoods' extensive experience in tourism market research since 1985 and its work with over 175 destinations and brands, headquartered in Columbus. Kappes shared an interesting fact that Amir Eylon is married to Karen Eylon, Gahanna's first CVB director. The presentation at the annual meeting emphasized the connection between destination marketing and economic development, with a key takeaway being the phrase "it all starts with a visit." Kappes credited Maura Gast, Executive Director of Visit Irving Texas, for originating this phrase 13 years ago at a destination marketing conference.

Ms. Kappes then shared a slide from the keynote presentation, the "community vitality wheel," which underscored the importance of destination marketing organizations like Visit Gahanna. The wheel highlighted the positive ripple effects of building a place where people want to visit, live, work, and invest, ultimately contributing to the community's overall

well-being. In efforts to promote Gahanna as an attractive destination for visitors, residents, and businesses alike, Kappes mentioned the extensive planning and execution of events by Visit Gahanna, as well as the creation of marketing materials and innovative strategies to attract people to the area.

Ms. Kappes highlighted the significant media attention Gahanna received last year, including a six-page spread in *Ohio Magazine* and a full-page article in *Columbus Monthly* featuring Amanda Ferguson from the Ohio Herb Center and her recommendations for visiting Gahanna. She noted that these instances of free media coverage were just a few examples of many, and the total media impressions for the year surpassed 36 million, representing an 8% increase from the previous year. In addition to media impressions, Ms. Kappes shared the growth in website visits and social media reach. VisitGahanna.com saw a 24% increase in visitors, while Facebook reach increased by 207% and Instagram grew by an impressive 341%. She also highlighted the growth in Instagram stats for Creekside Blues and Jazz, with a 106% increase in followers and a 230% increase in engagement.

Ms. Kappes proudly announced that Visit Gahanna received three Ruby awards from the Ohio Travel Association for their exceptional efforts, which stand for Recognizing Uncommon Brilliance Yearly. Additionally, they were honored with three state tourism achievement recognition awards, known as STAR awards, from the Ohio Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. These accolades were particularly meaningful as they were judged by experts in the marketing field, underscoring the significance of the recognition received by Visit Gahanna.

Ms. Kappes provided an update on the events hosted by Visit Gahanna, starting with the Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival (CBJF), which saw a return to pre-COVID attendance numbers last year. The festival attracted attendees from 27 different states and various cities across Ohio, marking its 25th year as Gahanna's signature event. Ms. Kappes noted the promising start to this year's festival preparations, with online ticket sales already double compared to the previous year. Prior to CBJF, Visit Gahanna will host Herb Day, promising another enjoyable celebration of spring. Ms. Kappes emphasized that these events are made possible with a portion of the lodging tax collected by Gahanna's four hotels. While the lodging tax income for 2023 slightly exceeded the previous year's, it remains below the collections from 2019. Ms. Kappes explained that the decline in lodging tax collections does not necessarily indicate a decrease in visitors to Gahanna. She highlighted factors such as the opening of new hotels in nearby areas, competition from short-term rentals like Airbnbs, and exemptions for extended stays at certain hotels. Despite these challenges, Visit Gahanna remains committed to maximizing resources and continuing their efforts to promote the city.

Ms. Kappes discussed the financial outcomes for Visit Gahanna over the past year, highlighting both the income and expenses associated with various events and activities.

Income Overview:

**Lodging Tax:** The income from the lodging tax was slightly below the budgeted amount.

**Holiday Lights:** This income primarily came from sponsorships but also fell short of expectations.

**Other Event Income:** Included revenue from annual meeting tickets and the Creekside Charity Chocolate Walk, where all profits were donated to local charities through Give To Gahanna.

**Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival:** This was the major source of income, with admissions, beverage sales, and vendor fees exceeding the budgeted projections, which compensated for the shortfalls in other areas.

Expenses Overview:

Expenses were generally well-managed, with some categories slightly over and others under budget. The Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival not only turned a profit but also significantly supported the financial stability of other events, particularly the Holiday Lights, which inherently costs more to produce than it generates in income. This intentional budgeting allows for the enrichment of community events despite the financial deficit.

Ms. Kappes concluded by inviting the council and public to access more detailed information through the annual report, available via a QR code or linked to the meeting's agenda and opened the floor to any questions regarding Visit Gahanna's financial report and activities.

Vice President Weaver asked about the lodging tax revenue, specifically questioning whether it was feasible to anticipate a return to pre-pandemic levels given the current trends. Ms. Kappes responded by acknowledging the challenges, particularly with the local hotel landscape where two of the four hotels cater primarily to extended stays, affecting the lodging tax contributions. She mentioned that their budgeting had been adjusted to a more conservative approach in response to these limitations. Additionally, Weaver inquired about the impact of short-term rentals like Airbnb on traditional hotel lodging and the local tax revenue. Ms. Kappes confirmed that there are approximately 25 such rentals in Gahanna, suggesting a shift in visitor accommodation preferences that might be influencing the lodging tax revenue.

President Bowers concluded the discussion and thanked Director Kappes for her insights and participation.

**D. HEARING OF VISITORS:**

None.

**E. CONSENT AGENDA:**

**1. Minutes - To Approve:**

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0079](#)

Committee of the Whole Minutes 4.1.2024

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

### End of Consent Agenda

**A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Renner, to Pass the items under the Consent Agenda as published. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

### F. RESOLUTIONS:

[RES-0016-2024](#)

A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION HONORING AND COMMENDING PAM RIPLEY, DEPUTY CLERK OF COUNCIL, FOR HER YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA

**A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Weaver, that the Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

[RES-0017-2024](#)

A RESOLUTION CELEBRATING EARTH DAY APRIL 22, 2024 AND COMMITTING TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE PLANET THROUGH ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF PLASTICS ON ECOSYSTEMS, WILDLIFE, AND HUMAN HEALTH

Councilmember Renner expressed his appreciation to Clerk VanMeter for contributing a title to the resolution he was presenting, which aligns with Earth Day themes and focuses on sustainability and plastics. Renner emphasized the urgency of addressing the impact of single-use plastics on the environment, highlighting local opportunities for recycling these materials, such as the bins at Giant Eagle and services provided by SWACO. He underscored the importance of enhancing recycling systems beyond the current local capacities, advocating for a broader perspective on what can be achieved in plastic recycling markets. Renner argued for a systemic approach to sustainability, which isn't just about individual programs or amenities but involves a comprehensive view of all processes to ensure current needs are met without compromising future generations' resources. Finally, he stressed the importance of collaboration, both internally within the community and with external organizations, to leverage expertise and enhance the effectiveness of sustainability efforts.

Councilmember Schnetzer appreciated the comments from Mr. Renner. He expressed his intent to elaborate on the topic of personal agency. He shared his passion for fishing, noting how fortunate he feels to have Big Walnut Creek near his home, where he frequents several times during the warmer

months. He recounted seeing litter, such as Mountain Dew bottles, Kroger bags, and bait containers, which he found disheartening when people fail to clean up after themselves. Councilmember Schnetzer highlighted that many true outdoorsmen and conservationists try to remove more trash than they bring. He noted the City of Gahanna has placed trash cans at many trailheads and urged the public to be mindful and ensure they take out whatever they bring in while using the trails and enjoying the riparian corridors.

Councilmember McGregor shared her recent experiences related to the heavy rains from the previous week, which caused the nearby creek to rise rapidly and recede slowly, leaving debris in her yard. She noted that each time the creek flooded up to the bridge, it deposited a variety of items, including numerous bottles ranging from soda bottles to water bottles, as well as cans. She and her family typically clean up the debris, which she believes originates mostly from runoff from people's yards. Councilmember McGregor emphasized the importance of residents policing their own yards, especially those living near streams, as discarded items do not remain contained but end up downstream or in other people's yards, such as hers, affecting the broader environment along the Big Walnut Creek.

Councilmember Padova discussed her recent reflections on living more sustainably and the proactive steps she has taken to question her purchasing habits. She shared that she has developed a set of questions that help her consider the impact of her purchases, particularly concerning plastics. Councilmember Padova noted that while most people recognize obvious plastic items like bottles and milk cartons, she has become more conscious of less noticeable plastics, such as those found in clothing from fast fashion, which significantly affect the environment. She often asks herself about the cost, composition, lifespan, and necessity of items before buying them, focusing on finding more sustainable alternatives. Councilmember Padova encouraged others to ask similar questions before purchasing items that could contribute to landfill waste, highlighting the prevalence of single-use plastics in contemporary clothing. She concluded by thanking Mr. Renner for his work on the resolution.

President Bowers concluded the discussion on litter and single-use plastics, expressing appreciation for the passionate contributions from her colleagues. She reminded everyone about the upcoming litter cleanup event hosted by Make Gahanna Yours on April 20th at Friendship Park, encouraging participation as it is a family-friendly activity that addresses the types of litter issues discussed by Councilmembers McGregor and Schnetzer. President Bowers then shifted the discussion to express her concerns about plastic pods used in laundry and dishwashers. She explained that these pods are encased in polyvinyl alcohol, which is marketed as water-soluble. However, she noted that while it does dissolve, it breaks down into microplastics that contaminate waterways. She shared her personal disappointment upon discovering that the only one powder dishwasher detergent available at her local Kroger, leading her to order alternatives from Amazon, despite recognizing the inherent issues with that solution. Urging the community to reconsider the use of such pods until manufacturers can

develop an environmentally friendly alternative, President Bowers wrapped up the meeting, expressing her gratitude for the Council's commitment to environmental issues.

**A motion was made by Renner, seconded by Schnetzer, that the Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

#### **G. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION, WAIVER & ADOPTION:**

[ORD-0025-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN UPDATED BUILDING AND ZONING FEE SCHEDULE; AND WAIVING SECOND READING

*President Bowers introduced the ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.*

**A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Schnetzer, that the Ordinance be Waived for Second Reading. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

**A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Jones, that the Ordinance be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

#### **H. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION, WAIVER & EMERGENCY ADOPTION:**

[ORD-0026-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL CHAPTER 1315 ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR FROM PART THIRTEEN - BUILDING CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

*President Bowers introduced the ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.*

**A motion was made by Jones, seconded by Renner, that the Ordinance be Waived for Second Reading. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

**A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Padova, that the Ordinance be Adopted as an Emergency. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

#### **I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:**

1. Clerk - None.

2. Council

President Bowers provided several updates from the Council Office during the meeting. She began by informing the council about the implementation of a uniform email communication tool for councilmembers, coordinated with

Director Schultz. This new system will support individual councilmember newsletters, with Director Schultz offering training sessions for councilmembers interested in utilizing this tool. President Bowers encouraged those interested in training to contact either herself or Clerk VanMeter. Continuing with the updates, President Bowers expressed gratitude to Clerk VanMeter for his significant efforts in staffing the management analyst role. She acknowledged his work in revising the job description, duties, and focus of the role based on the current staff's strengths and skills, as well as the desired scope of skills for the office. She reported that they received 17 applications from strong and diverse candidates and are in the process of interviewing six of them based on the strength of their applications aligning with the job requirements. Lastly, President Bowers mentioned progress on the Clemans and Nelson position audit, expressing gratitude for Director Vollmer's support. She and Clerk VanMeter completed a comprehensive Position Audit Questionnaire (PAQ) to accurately assess the skills, time, and expectations for the council clerk and deputy clerk positions. This audit aims to align salaries more appropriately with the skills and duties required for these roles. President Bowers concluded by inviting any questions from council members, encouraging them to reach out to Clerk VanMeter or herself for further clarification.

**J. REPRESENTATIVES:**

**1. Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Weaver**

Councilmember Renner informed Council the CIC would meet Tuesday, April 16 at 8:00 AM in the Committee Room.

**2. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Weaver**

Vice President Weaver provided several updates during the meeting. He began by announcing the departure of Dr. Kerstin Carr, MORPC's Chief Regional Strategy Officer and Senior Director of Planning, who was leaving to pursue a new career opportunity. He then informed the Council about an upcoming event on May 1st, where MORPC would be convening local governments in the Central Area, focusing on collaboration for community planning responsibilities within and outside of the I-270 beltway, particularly in transportation development and sustainability. Vice President Weaver also highlighted the next commission meeting scheduled for May 9th, which would feature Colonel Andrew Powers, Commander of the Ohio Air National Guard's 121st Air Refueling Wing at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base. This meeting aimed to shed light on the base's importance in national defense and ongoing agreements with local governments to improve efficiency and provide essential services. Additionally, he mentioned Money Mondays, which meet remotely every Monday from 1:00 to 1:30, covering various topics related to community development. He noted that the upcoming topic would be the Community Development Block Grant program. Lastly, Vice President Weaver announced the first annual Ohio Traffic Safety Summit scheduled for May 20th and 21st in Columbus. This summit would



provide opportunities to hear from speakers, participate in workshops, share resources, and network with colleagues from across the state, with registration being free. He noted the significance of the summit coinciding with Distracted Driving Month.

### **3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova**

Councilmember Padova referred to Director Kappes' earlier presentation to Council as the report for the CVB.

### **4. School Board (SB) - Jones**

Councilmember Jones provided updates from a special meeting held by the school board on April 4th. She announced that Cliff Hetzel has been selected as the new treasurer for the district. Currently serving as the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Hetzel will assume the treasurer position once a replacement for the COO is onboarded. Councilmember Jones expressed the district's excitement about Hetzel's increased role, noting that he obtained his treasurer's license last winter and will take on additional responsibilities. Additionally, Councilmember Jones mentioned that the district adopted a new language arts curriculum at the April 4th meeting, which aligns with new state legislation. She acknowledged the community's interest in the curriculum, as seen on social media, and assured that the district considered all feedback when presenting the new curriculum. She encouraged individuals to watch the recording of the April 4th board workshop meeting for more information. Concluding her updates, Councilmember Jones reminded everyone about the upcoming regular school board meeting scheduled for Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

## **K. OFFICIAL REPORTS:**

### **1. Mayor**

Mayor Jadwin began her report by reflecting on the recent eclipse, noting the emptiness of City Hall during the event as everyone was out experiencing it. She mentioned the eclipse event held by park staff at Sunpoint Park, where COSI glasses were distributed, and reminded attendees that the glasses could be recycled at the Gahanna library or any Columbus Metropolitan Library branch until April 18th. Mayor Jadwin expressed her awe at the spectacle of the eclipse, admitting that she had underestimated its impact. Moving on to recent events, Mayor Jadwin discussed a meeting at the Gahanna Senior Center with the MSA design team regarding plans for the new Senior Center portion of 825 Tech Center. She highlighted the renderings shared and the input received from members of the senior center, expressing gratitude for their participation. The Mayor provided updates on ongoing projects, including waterline reconstruction along Havens Corners Road and fire hydrant flushing by Mifflin Township division of fire. She also mentioned training exercises by Jefferson Township Fire in Big Walnut Creek and recent staffing changes, including retirements and new hires. Mayor Jadwin encouraged residents to apply for available positions, such as

entry-level maintenance workers and seasonal positions in the Parks and Recreation department. She also mentioned upcoming events, including Memories of the Big Walnut Country Club with Reita Smith and various activities scheduled for Saturday, such as the Cleaner Greener Gahanna litter cleanup, shred and e-recycle day at City Hall, and the Walk in Our Boots 5K. Lastly, the Mayor announced the start of the tree giveaway program in celebration of Earth Day and highlighted the city's efforts in recycling education and distracted driving awareness. She encouraged residents to drive safely and pick up Drive Safe Gahanna decals available at City Hall.

## 2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan provided a brief update during the meeting, stating that the tobacco preemption litigation, filed jointly with the City of Columbus, has been initiated. She assured the Council that she would provide further updates as the litigation progresses.

### L. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember McGregor shared her experience of witnessing the eclipse, expressing surprise at how captivating the event was. She recounted her trip north of Marion to watch the eclipse with family and marveled at the unique atmosphere during totality. Councilmember McGregor reflected on the rarity of such events and the generational significance, noting that the baby present at the eclipse would likely be 75 years old by the next opportunity to witness a similar phenomenon. Transitioning to the topic of sustainability, Councilmember McGregor recalled attending a summit on sustainability hosted by MORPC a few years ago. She mentioned Goodwill's participation in the summit and highlighted their willingness to accept all clothing donations, even items that may not be immediately saleable. She emphasized that while some clothing may not be suitable for resale in the United States, it can still serve valuable purposes elsewhere, such as being sent to third-world countries or repurposed into rags or shingles. Councilmember McGregor urged everyone to donate clothing to Goodwill rather than discarding them, emphasizing the organization's ability to sort and utilize donated items effectively. She concluded by stating that donating to Goodwill is a meaningful way to reduce waste and keep items out of landfills.

Councilmember Renner shared his family's experience of traveling to Wyandot County in northwest Ohio to view the eclipse, highlighting the historical significance and engaging conversations with locals. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect with people from rural Ohio and gain different perspectives, enriching their family experience. Adding to the discussion on sustainability, Councilmember Renner mentioned his concerns about stormwater runoff and emphasized the importance of directing water downward rather than horizontally. He hinted at discussing this topic further in an upcoming class. Councilmember Renner expressed gratitude to his colleagues for passing the Earth Day resolution and appreciated the diverse perspectives shared during the meeting. He acknowledged the issue of

stormwater runoff as close to his heart and indicated his intention to delve deeper into it. Finally, Councilmember Renner paid tribute to Pam Ripley, acknowledging her dedication and contributions to the community. He commended her for obtaining her CMC certification and thanked her for her years of service in the public sector.

Councilmember Padova expressed her gratitude to Councilmember Renner for his commitment to sustainability and for raising awareness on environmental issues, particularly with the Earth Day resolution. She acknowledged that his dedication has influenced her own behavior, leading to increased mindfulness about the materials entering her household. Councilmember Padova shared that she often considers what Councilmember Renner would think about certain choices, guiding her towards more sustainable decisions and reducing impulse purchases, plastic use, and checking fabric materials. She admitted to some missteps in her sustainability efforts, humorously mentioning an unsuccessful attempt with laundry detergent sheets and eventually resorting to purchasing pods. She jokingly wondered if Costco's return policy included accountability for environmental impact. Councilmember Padova expressed her appreciation for President Bowers' contributions to the discussion on sustainability during the meeting. Councilmember Padova again thanked Councilmember Renner for his dedication to sustainability and for educating her and her colleagues on environmental issues.

Councilmember Schnetzer expressed his appreciation to the city staff, particularly the Gahanna Police Department and the Public Service Department. He acknowledged the increased presence of residents on trails and sidewalks due to warmer weather, which led to concerns about speeding on roadways. Councilmember Schnetzer shared that he promptly communicated these concerns to Chief Spence and Director Schultz, who responded swiftly by deploying speed trailers, increasing patrols, and planning longer-term mitigation measures. He emphasized the personal level of service provided by the city staff, noting that despite Gahanna's sizable population, residents still benefit from a small-town feel and rapid response to community concerns. Councilmember Schnetzer extended his gratitude to Chief Spence, Director Schultz, and the Parks & Recreation Department for their dedication to ensuring public safety and maintaining sports fields and baseball diamonds despite challenges posed by weather-related postponements and cancellations. He recognized the hard work and efforts of everyone involved in preparing the facilities for use.

President Bowers began by again congratulating Pam Ripley on her years of service to Gahanna and Sophia McGuire on her promotion to Deputy Clerk of Council, expressing excitement for her continued growth within the city. She also mentioned the upcoming records management game day organized by Deputy Clerk McGuire, wishing her success in turning a seemingly mundane task into an enjoyable activity. President Bowers attached her constituent report for March to the agenda, highlighting the busyness of the month and announcing her next constituent hour scheduled for Saturday, May 11th at 1:00 at the Gahanna branch of the library. She then discussed her attendance at the affordable housing learning exchange

session hosted by the Greater Ohio Policy Center. President Bowers noted the participation of various Central Ohio suburbs and larger cities in the metropolitan areas. The session focused on two main topics: rental and mortgage assistance, and property tax increases. While direct cash assistance was emphasized by larger municipalities, smaller suburban communities like Gahanna explored alternative ways to support residents, such as offsetting costs of sidewalk maintenance. Regarding property tax increases, President Bowers mentioned the sensitivity around this issue, especially considering its role in funding public education. She expressed interest in having a representative from the Franklin County Auditor Office, such as Bethany Sanders, provide an update on property tax processes, appeals, and forecasting during a future meeting.

[2024-0080](#)

Councilmember Merisa K. Bowers' Constituent Report - March 2024

**M. ADJOURNMENT:**

*With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.*

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**Jeremy A. VanMeter**  
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this  
day of 2024.*

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**Merisa K. Bowers**