



## **COUNCIL WORKSESSION MEETING MINUTES**

**April 7, 2021**

**6:30PM Via Videoconference**

### **Attendance**

Members present: Mayor Jody Carney

Council Members: Ms. Giaimo, Ms. Heineman, Ms. Pine, Mr. Reed, Mr. Rucker, and Mr. Terry.

Staff Present: Nathan Cahall (Village Administrator), Renee Sonnett (Fiscal Officer), Dale McKee (Police Chief), Taylor Brill (Zoning Official), Linda Granger (Parks Director) and Haley Lupton (Council Clerk)

**Visitors:** Eric Medici, Karen Eylon, Kayleen Petrovia

### **Call to Order**

Council President Pro Tem John Rucker called the meeting to order at 6:30PM

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **New Business**

Resolution 13-2021: A Resolution Authorizing and Directing the Village Administrator to Enter into a Purchase Agreement with Lovejoy Family, LLC, for Real Property Located Behind 204-240 West Main Street, and Declaring an Emergency

Mr. Terry motioned to waive three hearings for Resolution 13-2021, seconded by Ms. Pine. Five yeas votes (Mr. Rucker, Ms. Pine, Ms. Giaimo, Mr. Terry, Mr. Reed), one nay vote (Ms. Heineman).

Mr. Terry motioned to approve Resolution 13-2021 as an emergency, seconded by Ms. Pine. Five yeas votes (Mr. Rucker, Ms. Pine, Ms. Giaimo, Mr. Terry, Mr. Reed), one nay vote (Ms. Heineman).

### **Work Session Discussion Items:**

#### **Uptown Alley Vacation Discussion**

Mayor Carney met with Mr. and Mrs. Medici and spoke about the vision of the Uptown District. The vacation of the alley next to Mr. Medici's building was brought up as a possible option to close the alley to traffic and make it a pedestrian walkway. Mr. Medici would potentially like to install bike racks and make other improvements.

Mr. Reed would like the Village to remain the owner of the alley right-of-way in case future projects need to be completed. Chief McKee provided input that the police department does use this alley to avoid red lights in the main intersection.

Mr. Medici spoke about past discussions of vacating the alley. The previous plan for the Village suggested closing the alley and leaving a walking path. It cited the fact that there is a dangerous

intersection since pedestrians may not be aware of the alley traffic. During Mr. Medici's business hours, the alley is used by about 4 cars a day. There is wiring for hanging lights already installed, but some construction does need completed on the building first. The long-term plan was to repaint the side of the building and potentially paint a mural. Even though the traffic is one-way, often cars will go through the wrong direction. Mr. Medici thinks the alley is dangerous and should not be open to traffic. It might also allow for additional parking spaces. Bicycle racks installed could also promote bicycle parking from the trail.

Ms. Pine agrees that the alley could be closed to traffic. However, Ms. Pine does not know if giving up the Right-of-Way (ROW) is the best way to do that. If the ROW is given up, the ownership would be shared and then an easement would be necessary. It would also put the burden on the property owners to maintain and improve the pedestrian walkway when it could be a Village responsibility.

Mr. Terry would like to see plans about what part of the alley would be vacated. He is still open to the idea, but more information is needed.

Mr. Medici noted that the sewer from his building and Mr. Troyer's building next door runs down the middle of the alley. The back of the alley is in bad shape. If the Village retains ownership, he would like to see this area improved. Mr. Troyer's input has not been received yet.

Mayor Carney will get a schematic of the alley ideas and will talk to Mr. Cahall about alley improvements and list out the impacts of retaining ownership or vacating the alley.

### **Union County Convention & Visitors Bureau 2021 Business Plan – presentation by Karen Eylon**

In 2019, a strategic plan was launched. Part of this entailed getting survey results from the stakeholders. A five-year plan was designed with five initiatives. To focus the goals, a Business Plan was put together. The Business Plan was shared with Council. Ms. Eylon will take Council's feedback and make sure it is part of the final plan.

For Tourism Impact, visitor spending had increased in 2019. The growth in visitor spending in Union County increased by 24%, outpacing the State's tourism growth. Branding and wayfinding is a major initiative soon. Understanding what makes our region different is how we will have a successful future. There have been many stakeholder meetings, task forces, and public officials involved in these processes. Sports Event Development, Group Tour Market, and Meetings/Weddings/Special Events will also be a focus and may involve Plain City in the near future. The Convention & Visitors Bureau works with photographers, websites, and marketers, and would appreciate anyone's help on compiling unique stories and photos from around the area.

Ms. Granger thanked Ms. Eylon for sending a videographer to Pastime Park, he did an amazing job and has influenced several people to camp at the park. Mr. Reed asked if the organization is working with the group who is trying to get the Heritage Bike Trail extended into Union County. Ms. Eylon responded that they participate in a Trails Group on a monthly basis, and sees this initiative as critical, and will see if they can get further involved in the Heritage Trail extension and connectivity.

Ms. Pine noted that Plain City is interested in rebranding in 2022. Ms. Eylon would like the conversation started on a partnership for the branding process. Plain City could be part of a county-wide initiative, with a focus on their own area brand.

Ms. Eylon will distribute the Overall Comprehensive Plan to Council and provided her email for future discussions.

### **2021 Supplemental Appropriations**

Mr. Cahall noted that the Plan of Action should be to talk about the highlights tonight about the revisions to the 2021 budget. The first reading will potentially be at next week's Council meeting. If desired, Personnel & Finance will have time to also review the supplemental appropriations. If there are no major policy decisions, Council can then decide to move forward.

Council was sent a memo on the revision highlights. In most of the Capital and Operating funds, the Village came in at or above estimates from last fall. The other items include increasing capital spending and consideration of reworking the debt service portfolio. Operationally, there is an adjustment on the compensation plan. The Cost of the Special Election was added to the General Fund.

The Real Estate purchase was added to the budget, plus some extra funds for closing costs. Mr. Reed asked if the Solicitor's work comes out of the budgeted item for closing costs. Mr. Cahall stated that we could put the Solicitor costs in as a line item.

The other item in the General Funds was a fund transfer to the Pool Fund, due to a better understanding of the operational and staffing costs for the year. The concessions amount needs to be adjusted because it was listed as \$1,500 but should have been \$15,000. This amount is made up on the sales for the year.

The State Highway and Permissive Tax funds are being used this year for some roadway salt, striping, etc. Due to their healthy balances, staff would like to move that money into Street Capital.

There is also a proposal to limit the amount moving into the debt service fund. Staff would like to move this money from the Water Operating fund. The fund came in better than expected and the new home construction revenue came in higher than projected. The extra money can then be used for Street Capital projects, including expanding the paving program.

Mr. Cahall would like Council to think about the Street Capital Fund and the leftover balance due to the Noteman Road project being delayed. The extra funds can be moved to the paving program and to expand the Uptown Streetscape Project.

The Noteman Road was originally divided into funding sources for different pieces of the work. The OPWC application was not successful, so we have the matching dollars leftover. The EPA request is still pending. If awarded, we would get design dollars and then dollars to do the storm sewer work. Mayor Carney reminded the group of the resident requests to do the north side of the sidewalks Uptown. Mr. Reed would like to make sure the bricks are taken care of and the light poles are included in the construction of Uptown. The development at Hofbauer can still move forward even though the sewer work is not done at Noteman Road. Mr. Reed also does not want us to disqualify ourselves from receiving the grant funding. Mr. Cahall noted that we have a backup balance to pay for this project eventually, and we will have time to replenish it if awarded in the future.

The amount received by the Police in 2020 for CARES Act dollars is included in the reduction of the general fund transfer to match previous years.

The other two items include an outstanding amount to the building contractor. It is technically owed but the number is in question, but it is being worked out with the contractor. Staff is also reworking some

items in the debt retirement fund to roll the notes and pay down loan principal. Mr. Cahall is hoping that the Village will be able to pay off the note, depending on if the sewer plant is approved. This will be brought to Council in the future.

### **Noteman Road Project Funding Update**

Per Mr. Cahall, the OPWC portion of funding is halted, and we have the paving and water money remaining. The storm sewer component may be moving forward. Design work can start on the project and we may be able to bid it out before the end of the year. Everything is contingent on the timelines.

Mr. Cahall would like to know if Council would like to reapply for OPWC funding this year. We can also budget to complete the work ourselves. If we reapply, and the field is less competitive, we will have a good chance of receiving the funds. Mr. Reed asked if Noteman water work can wait until the full package is feasible. Mr. Cahall responded that yes, other infrastructure projects could be prioritized over Noteman Road until it is determined that it should move forward. Repaving could go out to bid after the budget is approved. During this process, staff plans to ask for alternates, and Council could determine to fulfill those projects.

Mayor Carney suggested, after talking to Union County Tourism, it sounds like there will be an increase in visitors to the Uptown District and suggests that the sidewalks be mirrored on both sides. Ms. Pine and Mr. Terry would like to prioritize Uptown as soon as possible.

Mr. Cahall will put more money in Uptown Improvements. The North side will need designed and would like to go ahead and the South side can go out to bid. We will also know better where the Village stands financially after the parking lot and south side sidewalks are put out to bid. Mr. Reed also asked if we could expand the south side sidewalk as well. This will be a future construction item.

### **ODNR NatureWorks Grant Applications**

Linda Granger reviewed the ODNR Natureworks Grants that the Village will be applying for on June 1. Council will see resolutions to obligate the funds for these grants. Mr. Reed would like to make sure these items are budgeted for, even if the grant is not received. The survey sent to residents was successful in identifying the priorities of the improvements at the new Madison Meadows park.

### **Rock the Clock**

Mayor Carney would like to partner together with Rock the Clock, since we participate so much in the event. In the past, the Village has sponsored the stage. Chief McKee let Council know that Mr. Dawson has always paid for the officers on special duty. Mr. Rucker would like to be careful before forming a partnership with a business. Mayor Carney responded that it would be with the non-profit, but we would need more details. Mr. Reed has heard negative feedback about the event from some residents. Ms. Carney noted that this year's acts are non-controversial. Mr. Reed also responded that, if the Village is partnering with nonprofits, maybe they should open it up to other organizations. Mr. Rucker thinks that this could be a slippery slope and is hesitant to have the Village pay for the event.

Ms. Pine would like to know what the Village is committing to, and maybe we could budget the contributions in 2022. In 2019, the Village sponsored the stage for \$1800. The money did not go to the non-profit but directly paid for the stage.

Mr. Terry is open to the idea of sponsoring a stage again or making a contribution but would like to open it to other groups. Mr. Lafayette's opinion is needed. Ms. Granger would like to make sure that Village staff is not over extended. Mayor Carney will reach back out to the requestor and we can plan better for 2022, if desired. She will also reach out to Mr. Lafayette for some guidance.

### **Farmer's Market**

Mayor Carney met with a farmer's market vendor who reached out about the direction of this year's farmer's market at the flatiron location. UpCo does not have a volunteer to be market manager this year. Ann and Roger Weeks have agreed to be the contact at the market, but the market still needs volunteers and someone to organize the vendor setup. If the Village sends the letters to the vendor and collects the fees, the Weeks family would be the onsite manager.

Ms. Pine noted that this event benefits the residents and the farming community. If the Weeks will be the main organizers, the Village would need to know exactly what the responsibility would be if taken over. Staff would then need to evaluate to see if it is something that can be done. The location may also need evaluated. It may be easier to put it in a location where street closures are not necessary.

Mr. Rucker has concerns about partnering with a non-profit to complete these activities. Mr. Lafayette's opinion would be needed. If the Village takes it over completely, this may be an option. Mr. Terry needs more information about the request. Mr. Reed asked if it would be possible to form a Community Improvement Corporation, where the Village could give them funds. Madison County's CIC may also be interested in helping out with the farmer's market. Village staff involvement will also need to be evaluated. Council will explore reaching out to high school or college students interested in agriculture, and other internships that they are aware of.

### **Executive Session**

Ms. Pine motioned to go into executive session, seconded by Mr. Reed. Six yea votes.

Executive Session – Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 G8- To consider confidential information related to the marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets, or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance, or to negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance.

Ms. Giaimo motioned to leave executive session, seconded by Ms. Pine. Six yea votes.

### **Meeting adjourned at 9:04pm**

Minutes submitted by Haley Lupton, Management Analyst