

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of ATHENS CITY COUNCIL (Pub. Hrg.)

Meeting

BARRETT BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

Form 6101

Held MARCH 1, 2021

Council Members in attendance via videoconference: Clodfelter, Crawl, Fahl, Grace, Kotses, Risner and Smedley.

Also present via videoconference: President Knisely, Mayor Patterson, Law Director Eliason, and Auditor Hecht.

Public in Attendance: Alan Swank, Anna Azallion, Anna Birk, Bekah Bostick, Benjamin Byers, Bo Kuhn, Camden Gilbreath, Damon Krane, Jillian Craig, Kelsey Lauriel, Lauren McCain, Leslie Flemming, Maryjane Sanese, Mia White, Raymie McKerrow, Sam Damico, Samantha Garcia, Solveig Spjeldnes, Taylor Burnette, and Thomas Suddes.

Council Member Fahl opened the Public Hearing to discuss the Union Street Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD). She explained that this is a relatively new economic development tool offered by the State of Ohio for use in areas with designated historic structures. The Seaman's grocery store will serve as the historic anchor of this approximately 10-acre parcel. The DRD functions much like a TIF, where for a period of ten years a portion of the real estate taxes (70%) of the improved value are collected within the district and set aside to be reinvested inside the District. This revenue can be used for historic preservation design, public infrastructure improvements, landscaping, etc., is very flexible in usage.

Risner asked how soon the area might show signs of redevelopment.

Fahl responded that there would be some lag time before revenues from the real estate taxes would be collected and available for purposes of reinvestment.

Mayor agrees, the increased valuation may not be captured until 2023. He added, there is currently redevelopment occurring inside the proposed District with Ohio Health's new building. When that property is reassessed under this DRD there will be an increase in taxes because it is no longer vacant land.

Hearing no further questions or comments from meeting participants, and receiving no questions or comments from the public via attendees joining our zoom meeting or via email, the hearing was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Chris B. Knisely
President of Council

ATTEST:

Debra G. Holker
Clerk of Council

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ATHENS CITY COUNCIL: REGULAR SESSION, MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021, 7:00 P.M.

Athens City Council met in Regular Session at the above hour. Due to concerns with COVID-19 the following members met via videoconference: Clodfelter, Crowl, Fahl, Kotses, Grace, Risner and Smedley.

Also present via videoconference: President Knisely, Mayor Patterson, Law Director Eliason, and Auditor Hecht.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At approximately 7:15 p.m. Clodfelter moved to go into executive session to discuss imminent court action, and invited the Law Director, Mayor, Interim Service-Safety Director, Auditor, and EPW Interim Director to attend; Fahl seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Smedley, aye; Risner, aye; Crowl, aye; Fahl, aye; Kotses, aye; Grace, aye; and Clodfelter, aye.

At approximately 7:35 p.m., Fahl moved to come out of Executive Session; Grace seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

Fahl moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of City Council held February 15, 2021; Grace seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Member Smedley announced that March is designated as Developmental Disabilities Awareness month with a focus on people's diversabilities and celebrate their contributions to the community. A series of virtual events is planned this year beginning with a proclamation by the Mayor at his Wednesday Press Conference, along with a fuller discussion of the planned events.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Patterson reported:

- The theme for this year's Developmental Disabilities Awareness month is "Healthy You, Healthy Me, Healthy Community."
- The City is a member of the "Power A Clean Future Ohio." A program is being offered this year providing local governments the opportunity to

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participate in equity coaching for sustainable cities. Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki will be submitting an application for participation. This program will provide four hours of equity coaching for City staff, community members, or organizations for up to eight participants.

- Engineering and Public Works installed a guardrail on Dairy Lane.

ORDINANCES FOR THIRD READING:

0-12-21

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING UNNEEDED OR OBSOLETE MUNICIPAL PERSONAL PROPERTY TO BE SOLD BY INTERNET AUCTION. Crawl moved for Adoption; Kotses seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-13-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2021 STAFFING LEVELS AUTHORIZED BY ORDINANCE 141-20. Crawl moved for Adoption; Fahl seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-17-21

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL RIGHT-OF-WAY PERMIT TO THE UNIVERSITY ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, TO ALLOW A GUARD HOUSE STRUCTURE ON UNIVERSITY ESTATES BOULEVARD AT THE STATE ROUTE 682 ENTRANCE. Fahl moved for Adoption; Grace seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING:

0-19-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 63-20; CONSTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING OF THE STIMSON AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (#315).

0-20-21

AN ORDINANCE TO ADVANCE FUNDS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE PARKING GARAGE FUND; AND AMENDING THE 2021 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE.

0-23-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 120-20; AUTHORIZING THE ARTS/WEST FIBER BROADBAND PROJECT (#334).

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0-24-21

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF A GENERATOR TO SERVE BOTH THE CITY BUILDING AND THE LAW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, PROJECT (#336).

0-25-21

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH THE WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING:

0-26-21

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF \$290,000 OF NOTES BY THE CITY OF ATHENS, OHIO, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RENEWING NOTES PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO PAY PART OF THE COSTS OF ACQUIRING NEW PARKING METERS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

0-27-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 29-20 TO INCREASE THE AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURE FOR THE RICHLAND AVENUE PEDESTRIAN PASSAGEWAY PROJECT (#311).

0-28-21

AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE UNION STREET DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (DRD) IN THE CITY OF ATHENS; DECLARING THE IMPROVEMENT TO CERTAIN PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY TO BE A PUBLIC PURPOSE AND EXEMPT FROM TAXATION; REQUIRING THE OWNER OF THE PARCELS TO MAKE SERVICE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES; SPECIFYING THE PLAN FOR USING SERVICE PAYMENTS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN; AND ESTABLISHING A FUND FOR THE DEPOSIT OF SUCH SERVICE PAYMENTS.

0-29-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE ATHENS CITY CODE TO PROVIDE LANGUAGE CONSISTENCY.

0-30-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE, TITLE 3, ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS, SECTIONS 3.07.41, 3.07.42, AND 3.07.43 OF THE ATHENS RECREATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Discussion: Clodfelter asked about changing the name of the Board to the Arts, Parks, and Recreation Board.

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Alan Swank, Townsend Place, is Chair of this Board. He, too, believes Arts and Parks should be included. He also asked that consideration be given to having all terms begin on January 1st for purposes of training.

Fahl expressed concern about having all Board members' terms beginning on January 1st as opposed to having staggered terms.

0-31-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE, TITLE 3, ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS, SECTION 3.07.50, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL ARTS COMMISSION.

0-32-21

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE, TITLE 33, SHADE TREE COMMISSION, SECTION 33.01.01, COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP.

Discussion: Clodfelter suggested removing "shade" from the name of this Commission since the duties of the Commission is to address all trees.

President Knisely indicated that a recommendation from the Shade Tree Commission members would be appropriate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS:

Smedley moved the reappointments of Ric Abel and Steve Sloan to the Income Tax Review Board; Fahl seconded. Reappointments were approved unanimously.

Risner moved to Accept the November and December, 2020 Credit Card Transactions; Crowl seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO SPEAK ON LEGISLATIVE ITEMS AND CITY SERVICES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA:

Damon Krane, Hudson Avenue, echoed sentiments expressed by some Council Members regarding the University Estates TIF. Our community's poverty rate is 3-5 times higher than the national rate where median household income and the rate of home ownership are both less than half the national levels. According to the Athens County Foundation, 38% of households are already paying more for housing than they can reasonably afford. Building more expensive houses doesn't help solve any of these problems.

He questioned calling this an affordable housing project, when affordable housing, according to the U.S Census Bureau, Department of Housing and Urban Development, is defined as housing including utilities and taxes that costs 30% or less of a household's annual gross income. For one of these \$240,000 houses to be considered affordable, the annual household income should be at least \$65,000. That's literally double the median household income in Athens, and would benefit only about the top 25% of households. This type of housing is

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not going to get anyone out of an overpriced rental and into a home of their own, and it won't lower the housing costs of the nearly 40% of local households that are already paying more than 30% of their gross income on housing.

The preface of an Affordable Housing Commission should be to make housing more affordable for those who can't afford it.

He urged Council to take the next logical steps to both kill this deal and work to create an Affordable Housing Commission deserving of its name.

Justin Holub, East State Street, expressed concern with problems his neighborhood is having with very loud mufflers on vehicles. He feels he and others have exhausted all avenues through the Police and Mayor without making any headway in reducing the level of these mufflers. This is not an isolated incident; it has been happening for the last six months. He understands there is an unnecessary noise ordinance and challenged the Council to consider legislation that would limit the decibel level for mufflers within the City.

At approximately 8:10 p.m. Fahl moved to adjourn the meeting; Crowl seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Christine E. Knisch
President of Council

ATTEST:

Daphne G. Walker
Clerk of Council

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