MINUTES
NOVEMBER 28, 2022
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance:	Sam Crowl Micah McCarey Jeff Risner Solveig Spjeldnes Alan Swank Ben Ziff
Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:	President Knisely Mayor Patterson Service-Safety Director Stone

Items Discussed:
- Community Authority

President Knisely shared background information on The Ridges Framework Plan of 2015, which has recently shaped much of the discussion of The Ridges. This framework plan was approved by The Ridges Advisory Committee and the University.

Joe Recchie and Conor Willis from Community Building Partners and Misty Crosby, Buckeye Hills Foundation were present.

Joe Recchie, presented on behalf of The Community Partners; the organization was hired by the University some 18 months ago to analyze the assets, with funding from a grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Community Partners have worked with engineers from OHM to review the existing infrastructure network. The Partners identified 4 potential areas:

Homeownership opportunities
Affordable Housing, including Senior Housing
Artisan Live-work units, student housing opportunities
Owner-occupied businesses

The thought would be that this would not be a monolithic development but would consist of small, local development opportunities, including historic preservation. Community

Partners focuses on public-private partnerships. The tools that could be used would be Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), competitive grant funding, state funding, funding for tax credits, utilizing the mechanism of the Community Authority.

There are three pieces of legislation that will be critical:

1: The creation of a community authority that is suitable for a mixed-use development. The partnership would be between the City, the County and the University.

2: To create a community reinvestment area.

3: To approve Tax Incremental Financing.

This concept has been presented to Ohio University President Sherman, and will eventually go to the Board of Trustees for approval, subject to approval of the city and county. The Community Partners would then come back to the City and County for approval. The Community Authority would not require money directly from the City, County, and the University.
Community Partners has met with the Law Director, and the Community Partners will retain legal counsel to assure the Community Authority is correctly formed.

Council Member Spjeldnes asked what it would look like, and when we can see a visual. The group would follow National Historic Preservation guidelines. Mr. Recchie suggested that one could imagine (after being rehabilitated using National Historic Preservation standards) what The Ridges looked like in 1900 with it being well maintained. That is the intention for the look of the existing buildings.
The front buildings (Buildings 2, 3, 4) could be used for 102 senior housing units (with affordable housing units within this); the building behind this could be used for artist live/work space.
Mr. Recchie indicated that he thinks all the existing buildings are salvageable.

Council Member Crowl asked about the University's plan, if no plans were moving forward, to let The Ridges return to nature. Member Crowl asked how that information from the University works with the current plans of The Community Partners.
Mr. Recchie said that it would be two years to get the plan lifted off, with a full build-out over 10 years. The Community Authority can help move this forward. President Knisely clarified that the University's earlier timeline was for letting The Ridges return to nature if no plan was initiated. Mr. Recchie mentioned that the University has been encouraging of the present plan.

Council Member Swank asked about affordable housing, and the price definitions. Mr. Recchie said this would be following the federal rules of the Internal Revenue Code, which is that housing, including utilities, would be no more than 30% of their income, if their income is 60% or less than the median income for the community. For apartments in Athens, this amount would be $450/month. For ownership, some housing could be available for $100-130,000. There may be newly constructed units in the $275,000 range. There may be 6 luxury condominium units that would be available that may be as high as $500,000.

Swank asked if businesses own the buildings as well as the property. Mr. Recchie said there would be some property that could be sold, and the revenue from the sales could be used to invest in the renovations of existing buildings, or building of new buildings. Council Member Swank asked if the current entities would be displaced.
Mr. Recchie stated they do not anticipate that existing operations such as the Child Development Center would be displaced.

Council Member Ziff asked if there would be protection of the existing buildings if the buildings were sold. Mr. Recchie stated that the Community Authority would establish standards, and conveyance would be subject to a building permit, a financing plan, and meeting the design standards of the National Park Service.

Council Member McCarey asked who would make final decisions on The Ridges for housing and businesses. Mr. Recchie said that the University, the City, and the County would each have representatives serving on the Community Authority. As land is conveyed, City zoning would apply. Mr. Recchie also mentioned restrictive covenants could be implemented, and that conservation easements could be employed.

Council Member Spjeldnes noted the earlier comment of approximately $7.1 million dollars for underground infrastructure. Mr. Recchie clarified it would be water and sewer and electric connections. The costs for Buildings 2,3,4 renovations would be closer to $36 million.

Mayor Patterson mentioned the Community Authority Board, and its structure, which is stated in Ohio Revised Code: the municipality has a member; there are (3) citizen members, and (3) representatives from the developers.

Service Safety Director Stone commented on the history of following The Ridges, including The Ridges Framework Plan that had strong citizen input. He stated that this Community Authority is the way he thinks that the community can move forward on restoration of the Ridges, and that he supports the current plan.
Athens County Economic Development Council Executive Director Mollie Fitzgerald added her support of this Community Authority.

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Resolution/ordinances in January 2023.

MINUTES: NOVEMBER 28, 2022
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members in Attendance:	Sam Crowl, Chair Jeff Risner, Member Solveig Spjeldnes, Member Ben Ziff, Member
Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:	President Knisely Mayor Patterson Service-Safety Director Stone

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

City Fire Contract: Council Member Crowl mentioned that Article 16 needs to be clarified, and to incorporate the minor changes made when the fire staffing was reorganized.

Salaries: 4.5 % year 1 (retroactive to 11/5/22), 4.25 % for years 2 & 3.

Service Safety Director Stone indicated that he hopes the changes to Article 16 will be incorporated into the contract before the first reading, but it could be incorporated later by a Memorandum of Understanding.

Appropriations:
$16,100 to the Arts, Parks & Recreation Debt Fund
$96,000 to the General Fund to cover salaries in the Mayor's office for the DEIA Coordinator, and the Mayor's Office administrative support

Third Party Health Insurance Administrator – to continue with current company
Member Swank asked if the City reviews other company offers, and the Mayor responded that, yes, in fact this company is a fairly new company the City is working with.

Stop-Loss Excess Loss Medical Insurance
The Third Party Health Insurance gets bids for this coverage (that provides insurance coverage beyond the cap of $110,000)
Service Safety Director Stone confirmed that this firm was one of five that were reviewed by the City for this coverage.

MINUTES
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
November 28, 2022

Members in Attendance:	Sam Crowl, Member Micah McCarey, Member Solveig Spjeldnes, Member
Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:	President Knisely Mayor Patterson Service-Safety Director Stone

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Mollie Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council (EDC) – presented the attached.

Funding received this year was highlighted, including $5 million towards the Port Authority from the Economic Development Administration. This will create 100 jobs, with the project going to bid by the 4th quarter of this year.

Brownfield Remediation funds totaled $1.4 million, with portions of the funds that will be used to restore two city properties: 83 Columbus Road and 63 South Court Street.

Downtown Revitalization funding was obtained for projects in Chauncey, Glouster, and Albany.

Albany Industrial Park plans were shown, which is hoped to be the next site for light industrial development.

The Economic Development Council is supportive of the City's approach in applying for the Appalachia Community Grant Program, with funds for renovation of the Athens Armory. This will be a regional project with several other communities for remote work sites.

Ms. Fitzgerald highlighted several funding tools, which include the Port Authority supporting the Rt. 682-located WODA project with a bond.

Ms. Fitzgerald highlighted that she will be serving on the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC).

Ms. Fitzgerald also highlighted repurposing the CDBG Revolving Loan Funds that will be directed toward minority & women-owned businesses.

Council Member Crowl asked about 63 South Court Street, which is owned by a local group. The property owner is working with the Port Authority. The developer is interested in a hotel and retail space.

Council Member Swank asked what businesses are looking for as they start a new business or move to Athens, which Ms. Fitzgerald identified as:
Financial Support (through programs like Jobs Ohio) & tax incentives, which show State & Community support
Housing
Workforce (including partnerships with Ohio University and Hocking College)

Ms. Fitzgerald said that 80% of the EDC’s efforts are working with existing businesses to expand. The other 20% of their time is to attract new businesses.

Mayor Patterson praised Ms. Fitzgerald’s work, including working with the Downtown Redevelopment Districts, including the work with Stuart McDonald. The Athens Tire & Machine work was also highlighted.