

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of ATHENS CITY COUNCIL (REG. SESS.)

Meeting

BARRETT BROTHERS - DAYTON, OHIO

Form 6101

Held MARCH 18, 2024

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL: REGULAR SESSION, MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024, 7:00 P.M.

Athens City Council met in Regular Session at the above hour with the following members present: Clodfelter, McCarey, Swank, Spjeldnes, Thomas, and Wood.

Also present: President Pro Tem Risner, Mayor Patterson, and Law Director Eliason.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

Swank moved approval of the minutes of the Regular Session of Council held March 4, 2024; McCarey seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Member Spjeldnes has received messages from business owners along West Union Street with concerns about the one-way traffic due to construction, as it is severely impacting their profits and they are hoping for some relief. They also questioned when the construction will be completed. She requested the Administration speak with the affected businesses about their options, as this is a real concern.

Council Member Swank has received similar correspondence, and he has visited three businesses in the area. On March 6, Larry's Dawg House had its slowest "Weenie Wednesday" in 25 years, with revenue down 50%; the Slice House is cutting hours; fortunately, the flower shop has a lot of phone and internet business. All three businesses have requested a weekly schedule of the traffic patterns in order to adjust their staffing accordingly.

Council Member Clodfelter has heard concerns about construction on Dairy Lane and West Union Street, both of which go to two of the four polling places. The Board of Elections has assured her that directional signs will be posted before the polls open tomorrow morning.

Council Member McCarey has shared with Council Members the details of an opportunity to attend an upcoming Webinar by the Strong Cities Network on strategies to combat polarization, extremism, and hate.

Council Member Wood has also received concerns from business owners on West Union Street and understands the Mayor has been responsive to those concerns.

Also, Council Members have received a number of emails regarding the Baileys Trail System, and he shared one from Dr. Shannon Moore, a local

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veterinarian, citing her desire for the City to continue to fund ORCA through an annual membership dues; and a second from Laura Sauers, owner of the Baileys Lodging Company, specifically tailored to those visiting the Baileys, encouraging the Council to continue its funding commitment to this sustainable, community connected recreation that promises significant economic development, and quality of life.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Patterson reported on the following:

- Immediate corrective actions taken with the issues regarding the West Union Street construction area.
- The City is, again, being recognized as a Tree City USA recipient.
- Briefed Council on his recent visit to our Sister City of Ostroh, Ukraine.

Spjeldnes thanked the Mayor for his advocacy.

McCarey asked how this experience shaped the Mayor's thoughts about our City's engagement in international issues.

Mayor Patterson is resolved to continue this relationship and to build out connections between our partner City of Ostroh, Ukraine.

ORDINANCES FOR THIRD READING:

0-12-24

AN ORDINANCE CONVEYING CITY-OWNED PROPERTY LOCATED AT 83 COLUMBUS ROAD, TO THE ATHENS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (ACIC). Swank moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-20-24

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING PERMANENT BIKE PATH AND UTILITY RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENTS FROM THE ATHENS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES. Swank moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING:

0-10-24

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT(S) FOR CONSTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING OF THE CITY SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS, PROJECT

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#330; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Risner moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to get the construction underway; McCarey seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously.

Risner moved for Adoption; Wood seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-24-24

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE UNNAMED RIGHT OF WAY ON HERROLD AVENUE TO BE DAVISON COURT. Swank moved for Suspension of the Rules for purposes of public safety; McCarey seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Swank moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-25-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 62-23; AUTHORIZING PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE STATE ROUTE 682/56 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS, PROJECT (#357). Discussion: Spjeldnes pointed out there are some issues with the design and would like confirmation that the design can still be altered.

Mayor confirmed that changes can be made. He shared the idea of possible grant funding of an accessible pedestrian flyover for safe pedestrian passage. Other sources of funding continue to be explored to grow out the scope of this project.

Wood asked about including traffic impact mitigation.

Mayor responded that this is already a part of the plans.

0-26-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE, TITLE 17, MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX, CHAPTER 17.01, [IN GENERAL], SECTIONS 17.01.011(B), AUTHORITY TO LEVY TAX, AND 17.01.012, PURPOSES OF TAX; RATE; AND CHAPTER 17.01.09, ANNUAL RETURN, SECTION 17.01.091(A)(1), RETURN AND PAYMENT OF TAX.

0-27-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2024 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 130-23.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING:

0-28-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2024 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 130-23; AND AUTHORIZING AN INTERFUND TRANSFER.

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0-29-24

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN-AND-NOW CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT TO BIS DIGITAL; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Risner moved for Suspension of the Rules in order to pay this invoice in a timely manner; Swank seconded. Suspension of the Rules was approved unanimously. Risner moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-30-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 65-23; AUTHORIZING ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR REHABILITATION OF THE STIMSON AVENUE BRIDGE, PROJECT (#358).

ONE-READING RESOLUTION:

R-03-24

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS INSTITUTE A HIRING FREEZE FOR POSITIONS FUNDED BY THE CITY'S GENERAL FUND UNTIL A POSITION REVIEW HAS TAKEN PLACE. Risner moved for Adoption; Swank seconded. Discussion: Swank asked about the position review and whether it will be done for only those positions that are vacant at this time and throughout the hiring freeze.

Mayor explained this is a soft hiring freeze for vacant positions. A position review will be conducted with an official of the Auditor's Office, likely the President of Council, himself, and the Service-Safety Director.

McCarey asked for clarification on the end date of December 31, 2024.

Mayor responded that if the revenue is not coming in as anticipated to the end of the year, it will be in effect until the end of the year. However, it could be lifted earlier in our budget year, with improving revenue.

Adoption was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS:

Thomas moved to Accept the February 2024 Financial Reports; Clodfelter seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Thomas moved to Accept the December 2023 and the February 2024 Credit Card Transactions; Clodfelter seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

McCarey moved to confirm the Mayor's Appointment of Dr. Anu Gupta to the City-County Board of Health; Clodfelter seconded. The appointment was approved unanimously.

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Spjeldnes moved to approve the appointments of Amy Lipka and Mary Abel to the Affordable Housing Commission; Swank seconded. The appointments were approved unanimously. Discussion: Swank noted that in today's luncheon with Ohio University President Gonzalez all agreed that it is important to continue our work to provide affordable housing in all income categories.

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

Catherine, Congress Street resident, encouraged a City Council Member to step forward and represent the City on the Council of Governments (COG).

Shannon Pratt-Harrington, Hudnell Road, spoke on behalf of Zero Waste Productions, a local business that does recycling and composting at music festivals and events, and uses our local compost facility for waste diversion and zero waste products. They work in eleven states, working 38 events last year that brought 11,000 pounds of compost into our community. She expressed concern for the future of our compost facility.

John Wood, Amesville resident and City taxpayer, thanked the Council for its support of the Baileys Trail System. He understands the City has just placed a hiring freeze on the funding of positions within the General Fund but hopes they will consider continued funding of the Baileys to improve that future tax revenue.

Mike Moulton, Graham Drive, is a mountain biker and trail runner/hiker, looks to the Baileys not as recreation but as an economic development tool for our community. Mountain bikers come to the Baileys not only from the Columbus, Dayton, and Marietta areas, but from multiple states, citing Wisconsin and Michigan. He is a big advocate of these trails.

Sean O'Malley, Angel Ridge, echoed other speakers remarks, and spoke about the need for continued promotion of the Baileys.

The Mayor stressed that the ORCA membership fee for the Baileys has been budgeted for this year and funds are currently encumbered for that payment. He asked the Council to be mindful that half of the transient guest tax revenue goes into the General Fund.

Aaron Thomas, Avon Place, appreciates efforts to make Athens a more business-friendly community, but we need to do a better job of attracting and retaining our area businesses. He questioned the City's shade tree policies as a deterrent.

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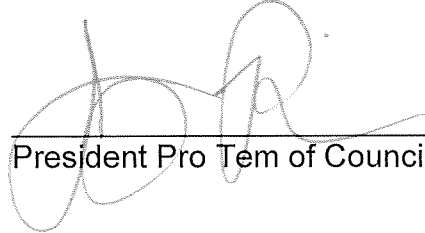
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At approximately 8:30 p.m. Swank moved to Adjourn; McCarey seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.



President Pro Tem of Council

ATTEST:



Clerk of Council