

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance:

Beth Clodfelter
Micah McCarey
Jeff Risner
Solveig Spjeldnes
Alan Swank
Jessica Thomas
Michael Wood

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials:

President Crowl
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht
Service-Safety Director Stone

Items Discussed:

- Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA presentation by Jesse Powers)
 - Jesse Powers presented (see attached)
 - Wood – the Baileys is a great asset to our community – noted he is aware the County Commissioners do not plan to renew their membership
 - Powers – on January 10, the County Commissioners notified ORCA that due to budget deficits the County would not be paying their 2024 membership dues – ORCA bylaws state that membership dues of \$90,000 are to be paid annually with no expiration date
 - Mayor – is President of the ORCA Board – indicated that he does not have a conflict as he does not receive any benefit from ORCA or the Baileys Trail System – encouraged Council to consider continued operational funding – suggested Council might remove “contingent upon County funding” from earlier ordinance language, and continue on as a stand-alone member – he sees the value of the Baileys on our local economy
 - Swank – requested continued conversation in Committee of the Whole in two weeks
 - President – asked about the timeline for payment of the membership dues

-Powers – there is time to figure this out, noting that ORCA has not been totally reliant on membership dues since 2021 to cover operations, and can cover expenses through the end of 2024 – if there is no organizational support through the membership dues moving forward, that is a larger issue

-President – is pleased with the number of young people from our community who use the Baileys for biking – it is a wonderful sustainable activity

-Clodfelter – asked about the number of miles currently built

-Powers – 58 miles

-Clodfelter – asked about lodging data for those using the Baileys

-Powers – it is currently difficult to capture visitor impact data, but are working on a mobile platform to assist with that information

-Clodfelter – asked about bird watching with all the bicycle activity

-Powers – there are lots of valleys and peaks for good birding – noted that the trail is closed to bikes during the winter

-Clodfelter – asked about hiking with all the bicycle activity

-Powers – winter, of course, would be the best time, but there are multiple roads with lots of access points and separation

-Spjeldnes – asked about trail trackers

-Powers – there are trail counters, but need additional counters to process data for full trail tracking – cost of installation and monitoring is a barrier – automated data collection from counters is costly

-Mayor – added that future charging stations could be used as a data point as well

-Power – in planning this trail system, one of the key indicators for success is that it is right next to the City of Athens with all its amenities, rich culture, and history

-President – noted there will soon be a bridge over the Hocking River, connecting the City's bikeway to Chauncey, and to the Baileys Trail System – a real asset

-a Chauncey resident uses the trail a lot – hopes investment continues

-a Ward 1 resident – uses the Baileys trail for walking/hiking

- a Court Street resident – hopes trail accessibility is being considered

- Proposed Resolution (guidance for addressing local impacts of global crises)
 - McCarey – spoke to problems with such a Resolution (see attached): 1) opens door to Council being asked to offer similar Resolutions on any kind of active conflict – need to include criteria to make that determination; 2) could support further division – need to implement strategies for reducing hate, extremism, and polarization in Athens County – acknowledged that the “draft” Resolution is lengthy and references need for the City to take advantage of its new partnership with Strong Cities Network in order to facilitate different initiatives that will be

demonstrated to help combat polarization; specific factors leading to the adoption of a ceasefire; and finally recognizing that there are not always feelings that the actions of a Resolution are meaningful, but more of a symbolic gesture to global efforts – this can be an opportunity to address the diversity and inclusion issue of polarization, hate and extremism – the City's primary tools for doing that are with the ongoing work of our Athens Community Relations Commission, and this new partnership with the Strong Cities Network – added, this is not on any specific timeline, however, feels there is some immediate need to go on record on the intentions of Council moving forward addressing global issues

-Clodfelter – asked about ways the City can address global issues without the need for a Resolution

-McCarey – could consider working concerns through the Community Relations Commission, or some other body that could make a statement on behalf of the City of Athens

-Thomas – going forward, asked about using the Community Relations Commission and mediation services to partner with the groups to come forward with a Resolution to City Council – could be less divisive, reduce tension, and keep conversations civil

-Spjeldnes – asked about adding a process to the Rules of Council

-President – Rules of Council are considered procedural, but can investigate

-Swank – this could be considered since Council will soon be reviewing its Rules

-McCarey – helpful to learn from recent experience – he is looking for a procedure for local impacts on a global issue

-Mayor – be mindful that a resolution has no power, other than stating Council's thoughts – fails to see any strength in what Council is trying to do with Resolutions

-Swank – read a statement (see attached)

-Thomas – believes that influencing whether the topic is seen as divisive, or unifying, is what Member McCarey is attempting to do with this Resolution – it provides guidance and structure in determining how Council moves forward

-Spjeldnes – agrees – contends that there needs to be follow up in procedural changes to the Rules of Council

-McCarey – acknowledged that his proposed Resolution is attempting to do a lot of things – this "draft" is to get Council thinking about specific actions over the long term it would take to develop a framework for combatting hate, polarization, and extremism – need folks working from all areas of government in order to advance such issues – our influence as legislators is either to enact laws or share Resolutions conveying the sense or values representing our City – asked the Mayor about a possible Resolution in support of our partnership with the Strong Cities Network

-Mayor – a Resolution would be good if we are talking about engaging via the Strong Cities Network when addressing hate, extremism, and polarization, all three equally important

-McCarey – still have the unsettled question of Resolution requests addressing local effects on global issues

-Swank – continues to question what City Council is trying to do here – we've talked about addressing at least three different things: racism; how to deal with Resolutions; and whether to engage with the Strong Cities Network – the fourth that is conspicuously missing is global vs local – should stick with a single-focused discussion – emphasized the need to deal with the local issues of Council – need to focus on problems here at home

-Spjeldnes – encouraged speaking with the Law Director before moving forward



Outdoor Recreation
Council of Appalachia

HELPING COMMUNITIES LEVERAGE THEIR OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS

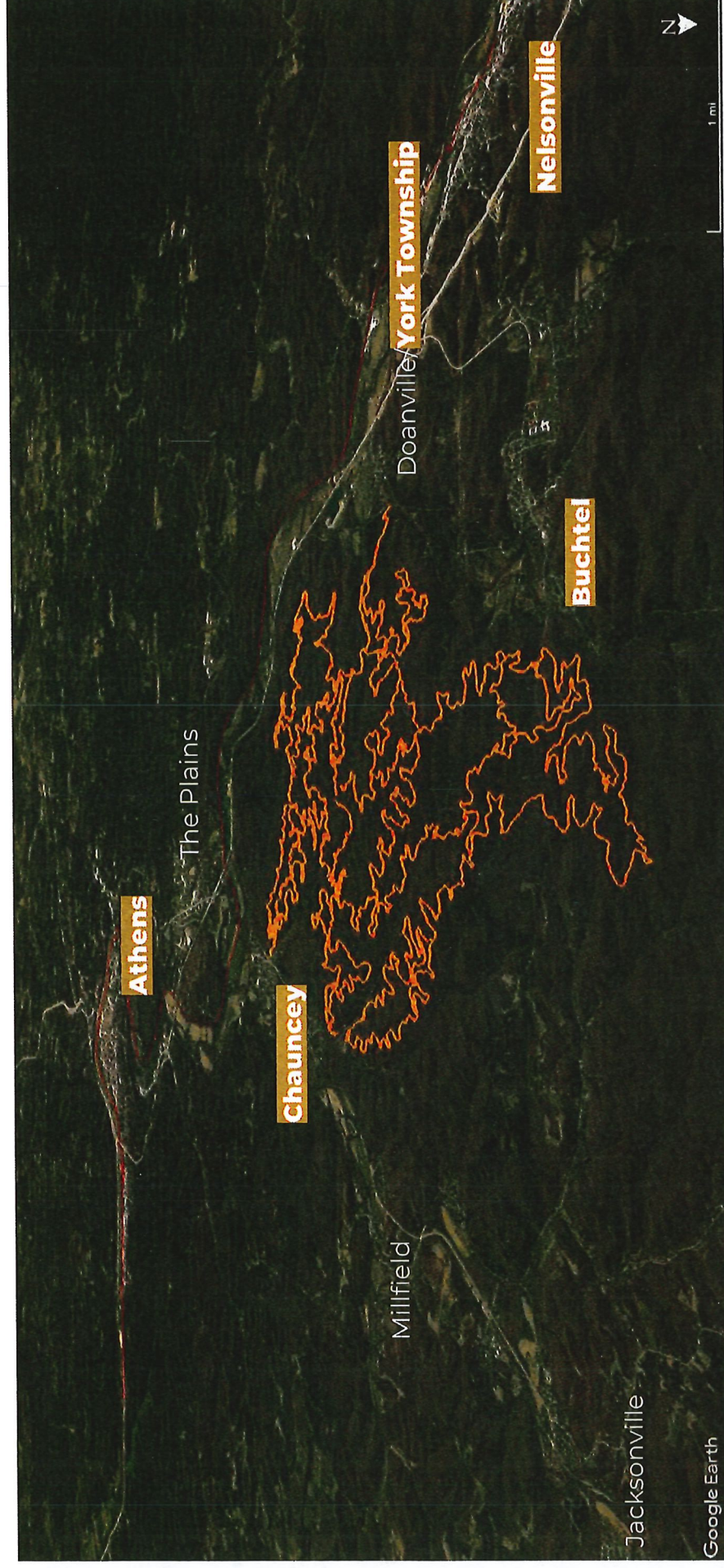
2023 City of Athens Report

Jessie Powers, Executive Director

ORIGIN

2019 The Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) council of governments (cog) was established by **Athens County, City of Athens, City of Nelsonville, York Township**, and the **Village of Chauncey**.

2020 The **Village of Buchtel** joined.





Mission

To develop outdoor recreation opportunities across governmental boundaries that create sustainable and equitable economic development, inspiring communities throughout Appalachian Ohio.



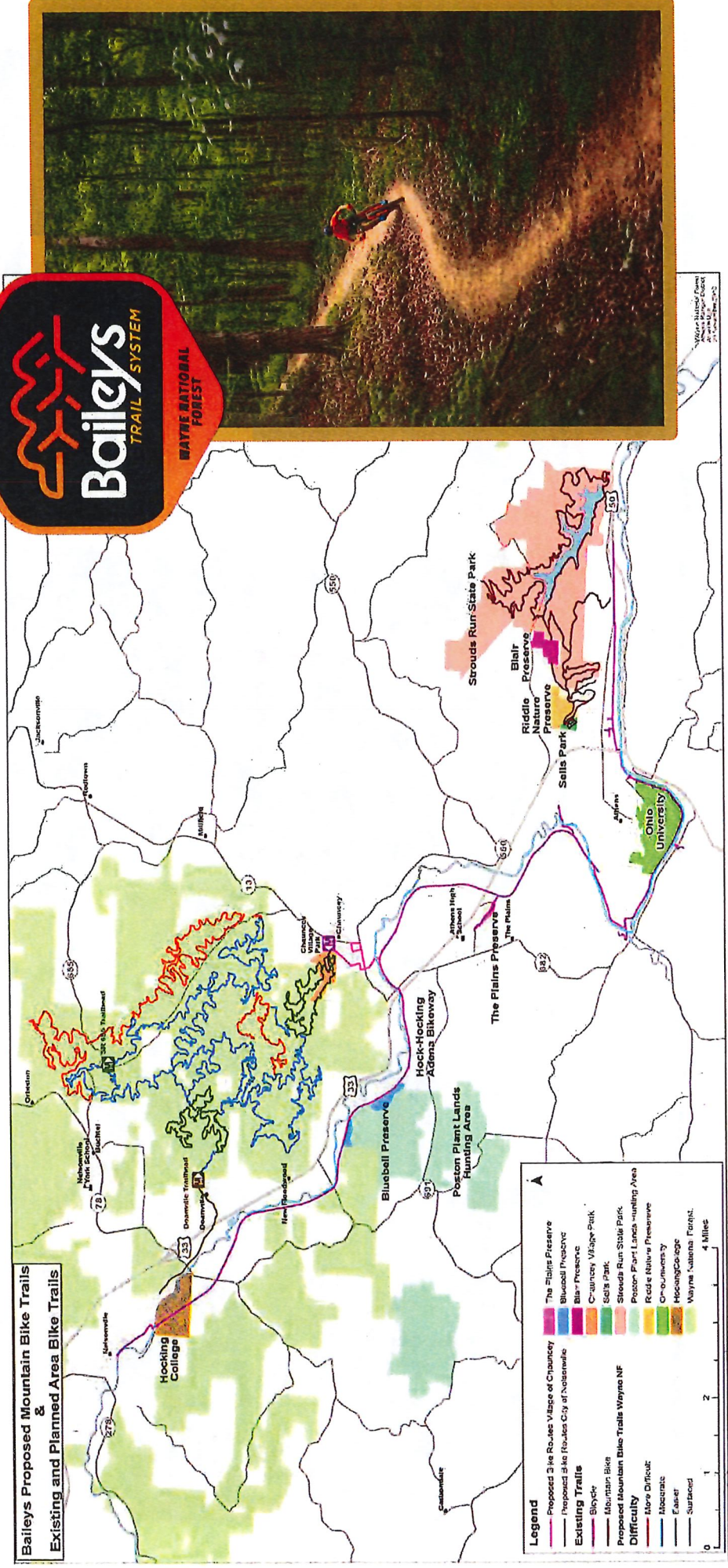
Vision

Form a collaborative entity that expands recreational opportunities within Appalachian Ohio while cultivating a diverse, resilient, and prosperous rural economy to sustain inclusive growth.



Values

**Community
Quality of Life
Sustainability
Innovation
Inclusivity
Shared Stewardship**



HISTORY & TRACK RECORD: 2019

- MAY- ORCA created
- JULY- ORCA Advisory Committee created
- Athens-Wayne Outdoor Asset Development Corporation Created
- DECEMBER- Athens City Council votes unanimously for Pay for Success

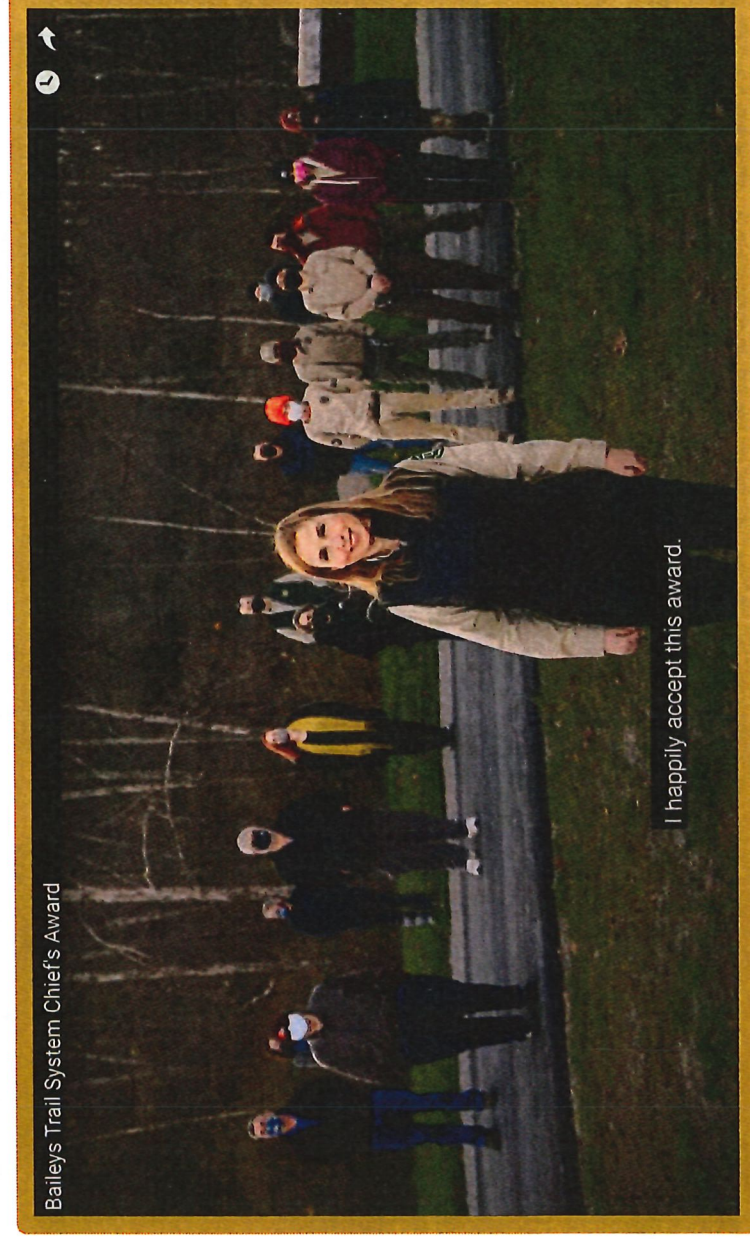
Regional Strategy



HISTORY & TRACK RECORD: 2020

SEPTEMBER: ORCA Executive Director Hired: Jessie Powers

- Phase II construction administration and reporting completed
 - First Baileys merchandise made available
 - Organizational policies and accounts established
- Match Fundraising Campaign Generated \$20,000 through ACF & Donors
- Baileys Trail received Forest Service's Highest Honor: **Chief's Award**



HISTORY & TRACK RECORD: 2021

- ORCA Executive Director submits (and receives) ARC POWER Grant
- ORCA Executive Director advances State Budget Request of **\$2MM** to support construction of Baileys Trail System
- AWOADC received impact investment of **\$200K** from Athens CTY Foundation
 - Sponsorship Policy Established
- Online sales capacity added to website
 - New merch featuring local artists
- **OCTOBER:** ORCA ARC POWER Grant commences

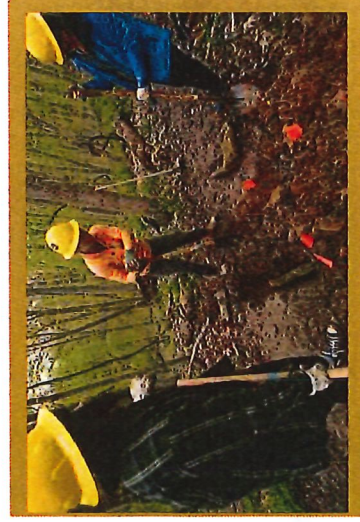
- First Americorps, ORCA Sustainable Recreation Manager: Elle Dickerman



Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grant: Gateway Communities and Sustainable Recreation Project Partners



- July 1st, 2020-June 30th, 2021 the Baileys Trail System had a **total economic impact on the Athens County, Ohio economy of \$5,299,052 with \$3,642,161 million directly attributed to trail tourism**, according to the draft *Ohio University Economic Analysis of the Baileys Trail System*.
 - Baileys Trail System's first year of operation concludes in June.
 - **26 of 88 trail miles complete**
 - **5 more miles under construction**
 - Chauncey- Dover Park Trailhead (also a community park) operational with portable restrooms
 - Doanville- York Trailhead (second trailhead) was completed June 2021
- **3146 volunteer hours** logged (since 10/20)



\$5.3
MM

31
miles

3146
hours



HISTORY & TRACK RECORD: 2022

- New Staff Hired: **AUGUST:** Elle Dickerman, Sustainable Recreation Director, & Lucas Blankenship, AmeriCorps Sustainable Recreation Manager **DECEMBER:** Delia Palmisano, Communications & Philanthropy Director
- Welcomed New Sponsors– Ohio Health & Athens Roller Derby
- Maintained Trails- ORCA staff worked with volunteers that gave **1,793 hours** with an estimated value of \$53,700

ORCA Staff



Jessie Powers
(she/her)



Elle Dickerman
(she/her)



Delia Palmisano
(she/her)

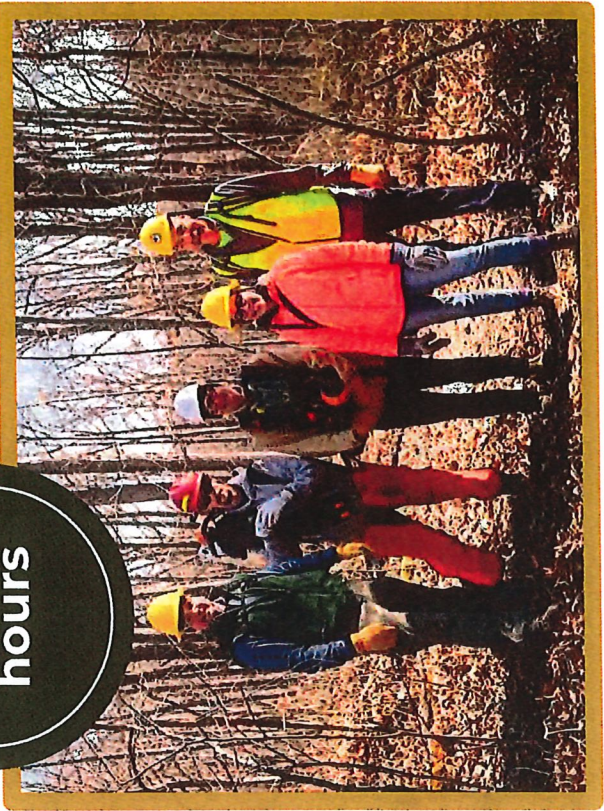


Lucas Blankenship
(he/they)

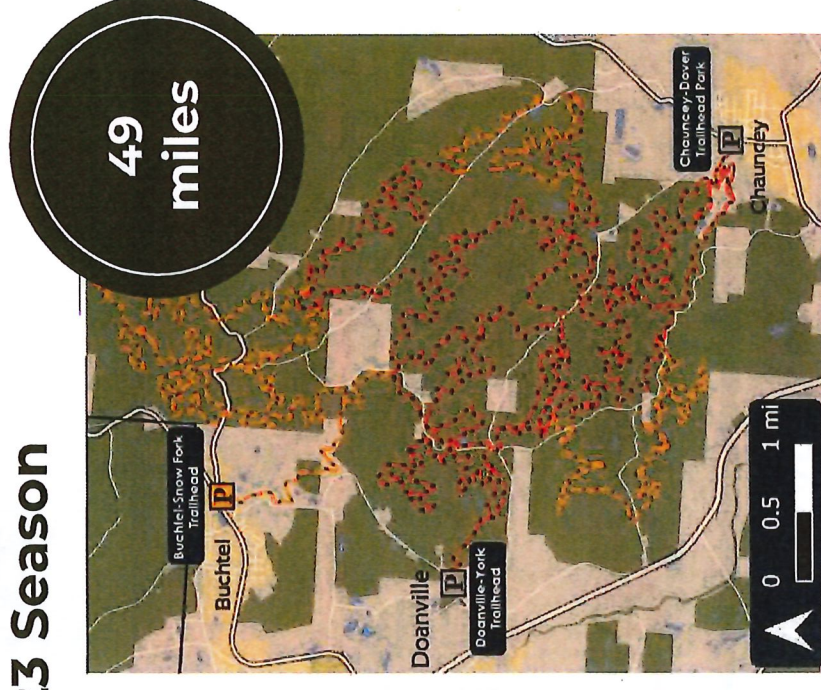
Sponsors



**1793
hours**



- Secured a **\$3MM ODNR Abandoned Mine Land Grant**- to construct a ~5,000 square foot multi-purpose Baileys Visitor Center in Chauncey
- Started Planning- **10 County Recreation Asset Assessment & Development Plan** (supported by ORCA's 2021 ARC grant)
- Launched Baileys Trail System MTB Rental- with local & student discounts
- Built Trail- Expensed more than \$460,000 of 2021 State budget award to construct **18 miles** of professional built MTB optimized trails, creating **49 trail miles for 2023 Season**



- Submitted **\$17.9MM (~\$15.2 MM in Athens County)** Collaborative Grant Application: *Southeast Ohio Nature, Heritage, and Art; Sustainable Tourism Anchor Development to Transform the Appalachian Ohio Economy*
 - Project will receive partial funding **~\$4.1MM** supports construction of Baileys Trail System Trails, Buchtel-Snow Fork Trailhead, and provide training and equipment to Baileys Trail System First responders, (including City of Athens)

SOUTHEAST OHIO NATURE, HERITAGE, & ART *Sustainable Tourism Anchor Development to Transform the Appalachian Ohio Economy*

This project proposal strategically builds catalytic tourism infrastructure, enhances the region's workforce, and increases healthcare access to transform the region into a rich and inclusive destination, safely offering something for every visitor. **This project enhances regional quality of life, which positively affects Ohio's ability to compete nationally and globally.**

PROJECT LEAD

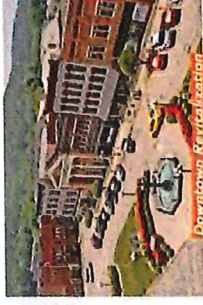


CONTACT
jessie@orcaohio.com
740-677-0113

SOUTHEAST OHIO NATURE, HERITAGE, & ART



Outdoor Recreation



Downtown Revitalization



Outdoor Recreation



Tourism Workforce Development



History & Heritage



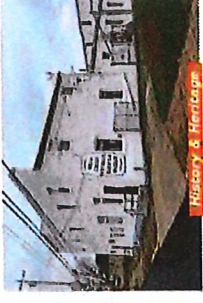
Environmental/STEM Education



Arts & Entertainment



Healthcare



History & Heritage

ANCHOR PROJECT MANAGERS



Additional Details in Appendix of FULL PROPOSAL



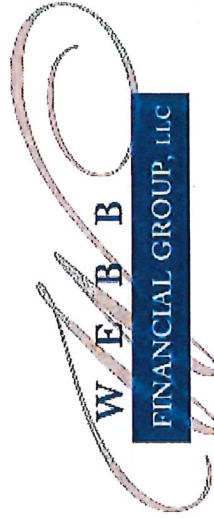
HISTORY & TRACK RECORD: 2023

- New Staff Hired: **AUGUST:** Zach Bihlman, Finance Director, Rachel Thayer, Americorps Sustainable Recreation Manager, Chloe Challacombe, Communications Manager Americorps
 - Maintained Trails- Volunteers gave over **2000** hours
 - Welcomed New Sponsors- Trek and Webb Financial Group
 - Built Trail- Completed **9 More** Miles of MTB trails
- Secured a **\$4.1MM Grant**- Appalachian Community Grant, Southeast Ohio Nature, Heritage, and Art Sustainable Tourism Anchor Development

Sponsors

TREK

BIKES · SERVICE · GEAR



**\$4.1
MM**

**27
miles**

**2000
hours**

ORCA Staff



Jessie Powers
(she/her)



Elle Dickerman
(she/her)



Delia Palmisano
(she/her)



Zach Bihlman
(he/him)



Rachael White
(she/her)



Chloe Challacombe
(they/she)

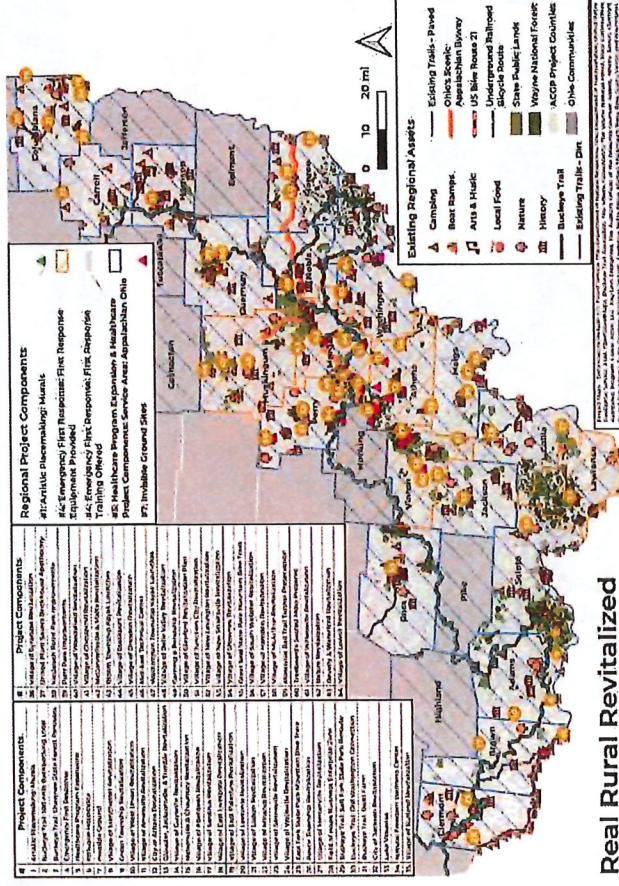
- Fundraised- Hosted the **1st Annual Baileys Dirt Fondo**, with over 110 riders
 - Expanded- our MTB rental and retail shop, with 8 seasonal employees
 - Welcomed New Partners- **16 new counties:** Adams, Brown, Clermont, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Nobel, Perry, Pike, Ross, Vinton, Washington
- resolved to join ORCA



- Partnered- **ORCA served as the Ohio lead** for 17 Appalachian Ohio Counties and ODNR to Appalachian Regional Commission **ARISE** planning grant in partnership with The Pennsylvania Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship to strategically support rural destination development
- Supported RCAP's **Real Rural Revitalized** (RRR) ACG Application—Projects for City of Athens total ~\$6.3 million Projects in Athens County total ~\$25.3MM

LEAD APPLICANT: Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
SUPPORT FROM: Vinton County Development Department & Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia

Real Rural Revitalized





SOUTHEAST OHIO ASSETS:

- Home to 15 State Parks, 3 Nature Preserves, 7 State Forests
- Only National Forest in Ohio, The Wayne
- World-Class mountain Biking: Baileys Trail System
- 14 Hunting and Fishing Areas
- Rich Heritage with Coal & Brick Industries
- Rural Traditions and Craftsmanship



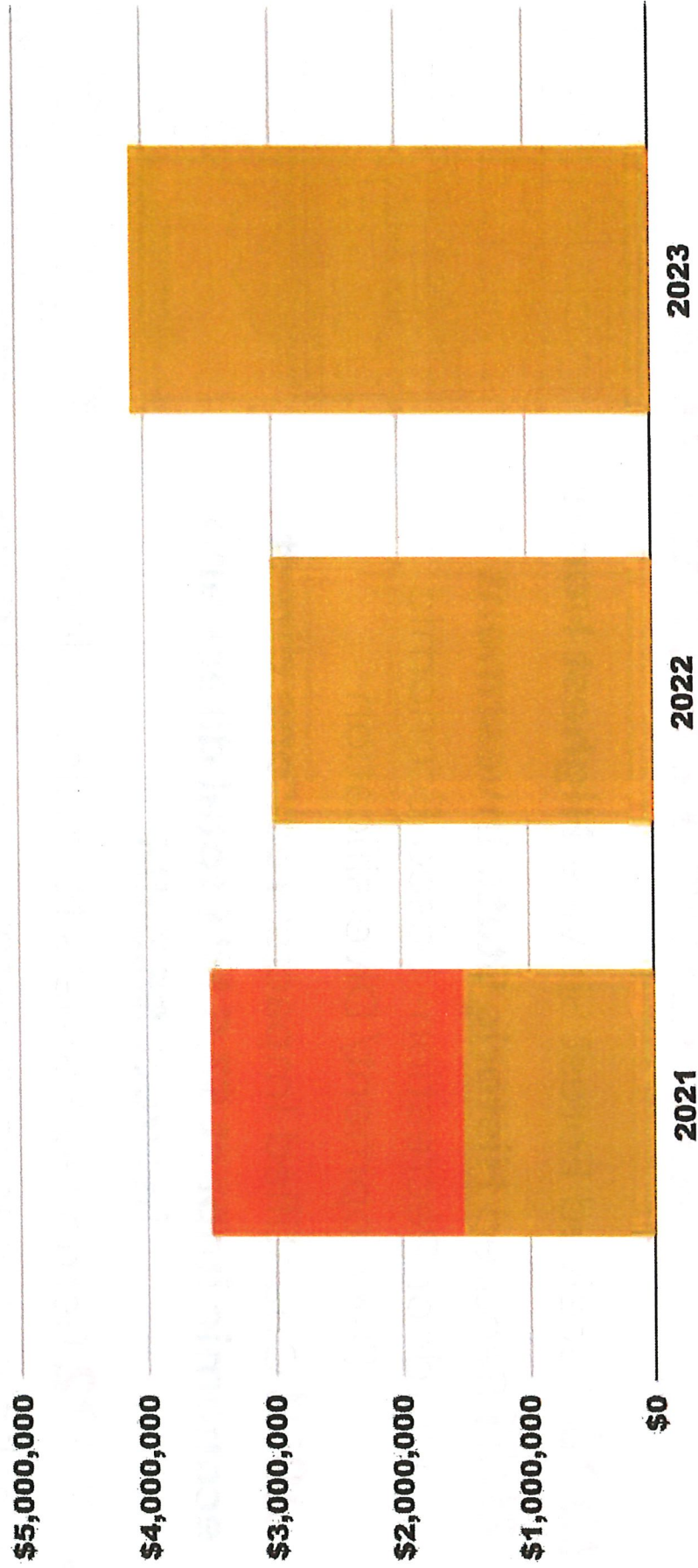
NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA ASSETS:

- Home to over 2 Million Acres Of Public Land, 29 State Parks, 8 State Forests, Allegheny National Forest
- 2 National Wild & Scenic Rivers: the Allegheny and the Clarion
- Largest Elk Herd in the Northeast
- Some Of the Darkest Night Skies in the World
- Rich Heritage with Oil and Lumber Industries

SUMMARY: Investments

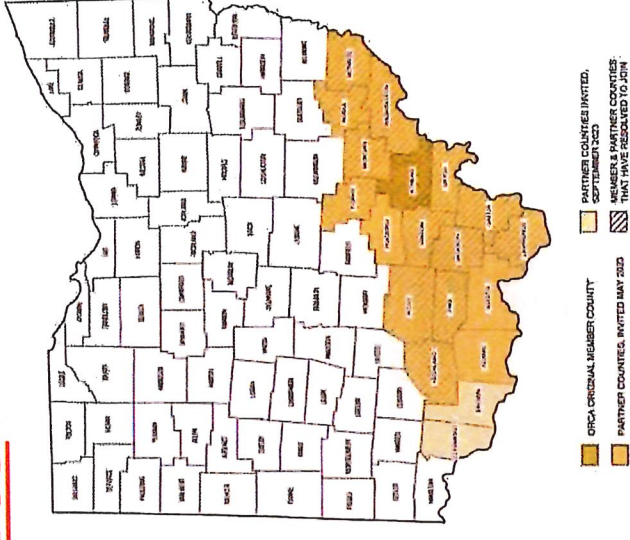
SEPTEMBER 2020- December 2023 ORCA Staff Secured Investments

Infrastructure Programmatic



SUMMARY: Highlights

- **2020** Received Forest Service **Highest Honor**
- **2021** Secured **Historic State Investment** in Outdoor Recreation- based Economic Development/ Diversification
- **2021** Quantified Impacts: **Year one direct economic impact \$3.6 MM total direct and indirect \$5.3MM**
- **2022** Removed Barriers to building local wealth by securing investment to build **turn-key commercial space**
- **2023** Partnered- **16 Counties**, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and **Pennsylvania Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship**



Newly approved state budget provides critical \$2 million for Baileys Trail

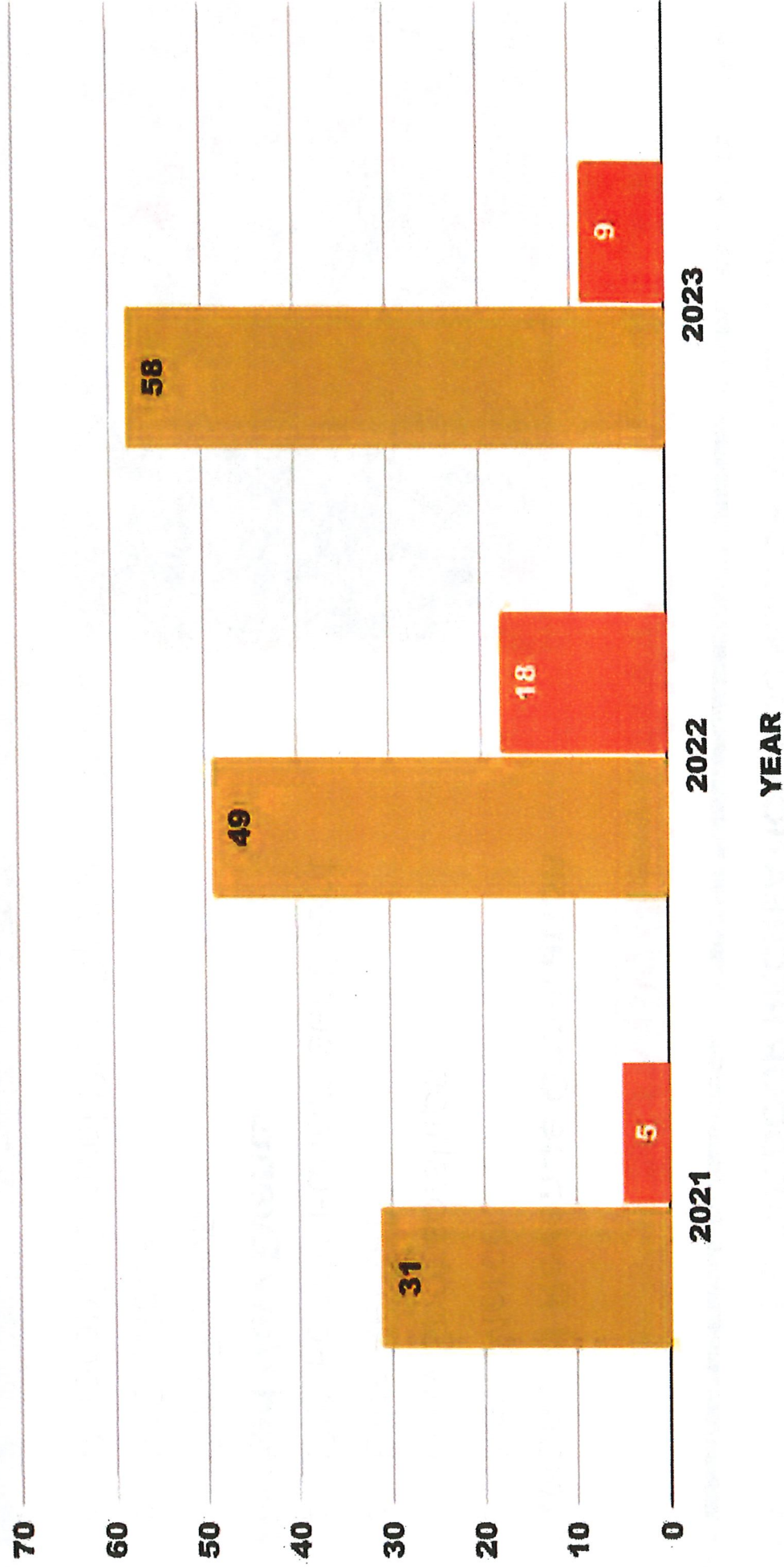
By Ben Peters, Athens News-Examiner Editor Jul 1, 2021 Updated Aug 11, 2022



SUMMARY: Trail Mileage

2021- 2023 Constructed & Maintained Baileys Trails

■ TOTAL TRAIL MILES ■ NEW TRAIL MILES



SUMMARY: AWOADC

- **Advanced Revenue Generation**
 - New Merch
 - New Sponsorships
 - Bike Rental
 - Dirt Fondo Fundraiser Event
- **Hosted New Events**
 - Run Baileys
 - NICA Race
 - Pelotonia Gravel Ride Optional Route



A RESOLUTION OFFERING GUIDANCE FOR ADDRESSING LOCAL IMPACTS OF GLOBAL CRISES

Introduced by Councilmember McCarey (or by All City Council Members, TBD)

WHEREAS, the City of Athens is devoted to cultivating a City that ensures all members of the community are supported; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens is committed to creating a future where community members of diverse races, ages, religions, ethnicities, citizenship statuses, gender identities, socioeconomic groups, sexual orientations, are welcomed and can thrive in an intersectional democracy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens acknowledges the work of Council by declaring racism a public health crisis in Athens City Resolution 10-20; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens condemns anti-Asian, anti-Black, anti-Semitic, Hispanophobic, Islamophobic, and all forms of racism; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens acknowledges the devastating effects of global crises including but not limited to war, genocide, racism, poverty, climate change; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens understands citizens' requests both in support of and in opposition to local elected officials using their leadership positions to amplify citizens' international concerns to state and federal policymakers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens acknowledges receipt of citizens' requests both in support of and in opposition to Athens City Council adopting a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and opposing genocide and other war-related humanitarian crises throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, approximately 70 U.S. cities have passed resolutions calling for a ceasefire, including the Ohio cities of Akron, Dayton, and Athens, with the City of Athens having adopted R-02-24: A Resolution Calling for an Immediate De-escalation and Ceasefire in Israel and Occupied Palestine; and

WHEREAS, the Strong Cities Network's publication, *Navigating Local Impacts of Global Crises: Ten Considerations for Mayors and Cities – Lessons from the Israel-Gaza Crisis* indicates, "City leaders and councils will need to consider and balance

whether such resolutions and debates can achieve their desired ends or whether they will simply stoke division within their communities”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens acknowledges local concerns that Ohio citizens’ tax dollars indirectly support the war in Gaza through the Ohio Treasury’s confirmed purchase of Israeli bonds; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens has received an opinion from the Athens Law Department advising against the City Council adopting a ceasefire resolution because “Council has never adopted a resolution calling for a ceasefire in an active armed conflict” and because “Council resolutions should be within the scope of issues that arise in local government. Adopting a resolution of this nature opens the door to similar resolutions with tenuous connections to the daily affairs of running local government”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens supports strengthening local efforts to promote peace and social cohesion; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens is committed to investing in public safety and in services that ensure all community members’ safety, health, and well-being are centered; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens is one of six North American cities working with the Strong Cities Network over a two year period ending September 30, 2025 to develop and implement strategies for preventing and responding to hate, extremism and polarization; and

WHEREAS, due to their understanding of local communities, mayors and other local leaders are well-placed to identify the priorities of their residents and develop innovative approaches to identify and address feelings of exclusion, injustice and marginalization before they manifest in violence and to mitigate the social and economic consequences if they do; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Strong Cities Network is to provide a global platform through which cities can share and exchange practical, impactful approaches to addressing rising hate, extremism and polarization that threatens social cohesion worldwide; and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, OHIO:

SECTION I: The City of Athens hereby confirms its commitment to supporting the work of the City's Athens Community Relations Commission, which is charged with reducing intergroup tensions, promoting tolerance and goodwill, and ensuring equality of treatment and of opportunity of all person regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, marital or familial status, religious belief, age, or disability.

SECTION II: The City of Athens hereby confirms its commitment to building a long-term community cohesion and resilience framework so that partnerships can be drawn on as part of a whole-of-city response when/if hate or extremism emerges or polarization rises, or in support of ongoing efforts to address discriminatory historical or structural legacies or injustices.

SECTION III: The City of Athens hereby confirms its commitment to inviting citizens' input into the city's ongoing diversity and inclusion-related strategic planning efforts as reflected in the Athens 2040 Comprehensive Plan and in Athens City Council's "Resolution Reaffirming the City's Commitment to Racial Equity" (R-06-23) for the purposes of promoting open dialogue between city officials and the Greater Athens Community and to better understand peoples' lived realities and aspirations.

SECTION IV: The City of Athens hereby confirms its commitment to investing in and supporting data-based and evidence-based policies and analyses thereof, which allows our city to better understand threats to social cohesion in our community and builds capacity to collaborate around frameworks that effectively address local grievances and remain responsive to a continuously changing and increasingly interconnected and dynamic threat environment.

SECTION V: Athens City Council confirms its intention to limit resolutions calling for ceasefires in active armed conflicts to those deemed genocides by the United Nations International Court of Justice.

SECTION VI: The City of Athens hereby confirms its commitment to partnering with the Strong Cities Network and with local organizations to explore the concerns and opportunities identified within this resolution.

SECTION VI: This Resolution shall be in full force and effect at the earliest moment permitted by law upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

Our experiences with verbal clues have taught us that when we hear someone start a sentence with the word “while” we know that it will almost certainly be followed by a “but.” While I recognize Member McCary has spent a great deal of time on this proposed resolution, a careful reading of the proposal leads me to offer a few “buts” this evening.

First, what is the purpose of the proposed resolution? On first pass, because it was written before last Monday’s vote on Member Wood’s resolution, it appears to be an ace in hole or second chance effort in case the first one didn’t pass. Because Council did pass the first resolution and this second resolution addresses some of the same specifics of the war in the Middle East, I wonder if it’s really necessary - in other words, what is its true purpose?

Second, is the word guidance in the title. Webster defines guidance as - advice or information aimed at resolving a problem or difficulty, especially as given by someone in authority.” In the weeks before last Monday’s vote, we received guidance from the law director’s office as how we should handle or more specifically, not handle the first ordinance. Will we also be handling the guidance of this proposed ordinance in the same manner as simply an opinion that we can chose to follow or ignore?

Third the resolution cites as an authoritative source - the Strong Cities document - that specifically states that “city leaders and councils will need to consider and balance whether such resolutions can achieve their desired ends (purpose) or whether they will simply stoke division within their communities.” Based on the threats directed at council during the past three meetings as well as communications from city residents to council members to “tend to the business of the city,” I would contend that the recently passed resolution has done more harm than good or as Professor Suddes states in yesterday’s Columbus Dispatch - “is not going to rattle any diplomatic chanceries” and that subsequent similar actions may only serve to exacerbate those divisions.

In conclusion, I’m concerned about the purpose of this proposal as well as its necessity not to mention the effectiveness of the measure and its appropriateness to come before council.

Section 1 - is charged with reducing intergroup tensions, promoting tolerance and good will, and ensuring equality of treatment and opportunity of all persons - WHERE

Section V - confirms its intention to limit resolutions calling for ceasefires deemed genocides by the United Nations International Court of Justice.
- WHAT about other human disasters.

1) If we follow this, then we would not have passed the previous resolution. "The court issued its interim ruling on Jan. 26 with six legally binding provisions, including those ordering the Israeli army to: prevent acts that might be considered genocide in the besieged enclave; allow humanitarian aid into the strip; punish incitement to genocide; submit monthly reports; and take measures to protect Palestinians."

<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/02/09/un-court-has-ruled-on-gaza-genocide-case-heres-what-happens-now.html>

<https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-genocide-court-south-africa-27cf84e16082cde798395a95e9143c06>

MINUTES: FEBRUARY 26, 2024

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members in Attendance:

Jeff Risner, Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member
Micah McCarey, Member
Michael Wood, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:

President Crowl
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht
Service-Safety Director Stone

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Athens City Code (amend to update Title 17, Municipal Tax)
 - Auditor – changes are to correct and update wording to match State Code
 - President – asked about the need to continue to include tax rates effective from 2016 and 2017
 - Auditor – need to include these for those who file delinquent taxes
 - Clodfelter – questioned the tax rate set by the State
 - Auditor – the State provides for a general tax collection of 6% tax and anything over that is through special levies passed locally
 - Spjeldnes – asked about the question of taxes withheld for those working from home
 - Auditor – a recent court decision ruled in favor of municipalities – any taxes collected in 2020 do not have to be refunded
- Project #330, Sewer System Improvements, (Tabled 0-10-24)
 - S-S Director Stone – good bids were received – will need to increase the funding amount – the increase will allow for contingency and construction inspection – explained this is the State Route 56 lift station, funded by the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF)
- Court Personnel Budget Shortfalls
 - Risner – questioned whether Council can withhold using General Fund dollars for Court staffing
 - Auditor – grants have been received for special programs operated by the Court, DUI and Diversion – if the City wants to continue these programs, the staff salaries will need to be supported by the General Fund – explained that revenue received from the grants will not support the necessary fulltime staffing – Council needs to decide whether it wants to support the shortfall using General Fund dollars
 - Wood – expressed concern with the loss of services without funding
 - McCarey – would like Council to receive a report on the effectiveness of these grant programs

- Auditor – reviewed Court reports back to 2017 – expenses have not changed significantly, but the Court revenue has decreased
- Mayor – strongly encouraged Council to request the judicial branch to attend and provide information
- President – the judicial branch was invited on a number of occasions
- Clodfelter – agrees that information would be beneficial to the Council – questioned how long the General Fund would be needed to pay these grant expenses
- Spjeldnes – grant information should be made available to the Council – the Court needs to be transparent
- Auditor – Court is its own entity – Council doesn't have as much authority over the Court
- Risner – read an email from Judge Grace (see attached)
- Auditor – the Judge has filed a Journal Entry with the Auditor for this funding
- Swank – this is the third time Council has asked the Judge or a representative from his office to attend a meeting – would personally like to see how effective these programs have been – these are taxpayer dollars Council is being asked to approve – again, asked to extend a fourth invitation for the presence of a Court official to answer questions – this is a common courtesy to share information
- Auditor – ORC states, with limitations, that the City is required to fund a Municipal Court
- Spjeldnes – a conversation about these programs could be a facilitating tool for to get people to see the value of them
- President – asked for an explanation of a Journal Entry
- Auditor – it is a legal order from the Judge – would need to bring in the Law Director for further clarification – absent of increasing the appropriation, she requested the Council approve decreasing the funds requested to avoid a negative on the March reports

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Title 17 Amend
2. Project #330

MINUTES

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

Members in Attendance:

Alan Swank, Chair
Solveig Spjeldnes, Member
Jessica Thomas, Member
Michael Wood, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:

President Crowl
Mayor Patterson
Service-Safety Director Stone

Items Discussed:

- Renaming a New Right of Way that intersects with Herrold Avenue (Davison Court)
 - Swank – this right of way is on the City's west side – Athens City School students participate in a co-curricular opportunity evolved out of a classroom, known as the Andrew Jackson Davison Club – this evening we have three Athens High School students who will present, along with Lacey Rogers, on this program
 - Lacey Rogers, City's DEIA Coordinator, introduced the student speakers from the Andrew Jackson Davison (AJD) Club – this Club started at the Athens Middle School five years ago and has since expanded to three other schools – the Club has raised awareness about the first Black attorney in Athens and continues to raise awareness about local history and has done a lot of amazing work in our community – Club members are here to request renaming of the City right of way to Davison Court
 - Athens High School students provided a brief history:
Eliza Brown was born into slavery, escaping slavery in 1863, she found a Union encampment with General George Custer's troops – after the War she was employed as a housekeeper for the Custers – she remained employed by the Custers until 1869, and was paid a monthly pension until her death in 1912 – she befriended Libby Custer who came to visit Eliza when she was living in Athens – during the Civil War Eliza was known for her brave and selfless actions – Eliza moved to Ashville County Ohio to attend school where she met and married Andrew Jackson Davison on July 4, 1873 – thanked retired Athens Attorney Bill Walker who taught the students about Andrew Jackson Davison (AJ) in 2019 – AJ was born into slavery in Alabama – after the Civil War he traveled to Ashtabula County Ohio with two Union soldiers – Davison became one of the first Black attorneys in Ohio and the first Black attorney in Athens County – the Davison's first moved to Albany, Ohio in 1873 – the couple purchased a home in Athens City on West Washington Street, formerly known as Dean Avenue, that

runs right behind the Middle School from which he could walk to his law practice on Court Street and the Courthouse – Davison died in the Athens County Home in 1922 – there was no gravestone at his gravesite in the West State Street Cemetery to commemorate this extraordinary, inspiring, and remarkable man until W.E. Peters placed a headstone many years later

-- Andrew Jackson and Eliza Brown Davison are significant citizens in the story of Athens – they are excellent representatives of Athens' heritage – as proud Athenians it is our duty to honor them by naming our new street Davison Court – it is the right thing to do by our City Government

-Emma, one of the speakers, shared that she was one of the founding members of this Club in 2019 – this Club presented an opportunity for her to be passionate about something in her middle school years, and this passion carried her through high school – she will be attending college next year, which was something she never thought she would do, and she is thankful for that

-President – attended the Black History Month event at the Middle School that included a presentation by the Andrew Jackson Davison Club, and he hopes it continues

-McCarey – mentioned the growing optimism he has for community events like this

-Clodfelter – thanked the Club for bringing attention to these important people who are part of our community

-Thomas – recalls the first event and congratulated them on its continued growth; it is impressive

-Spjeldnes – is pleased this co-curricular school activity inspires young people to continue their education

-Mayor – announced that at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday there will be a dedication at the site for the Davison Court naming

-Swank – recognized Athens Middle School Faculty Sponsor Angie Hall

-Mayor – thanked the students for their passion in taking on this historic element of our community

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Renaming R O W

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

JANUARY 26, 2024

Members in Attendance: Solveig Spjeldnes, Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member
Micah McCarey, Member
Jeff Risner, Member

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Crowl
Mayor Patterson
Service-Safety Director Stone

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

- Amend City Code (exceptions for parking prohibited in restricted areas)
 - Wood – this is a constituent request to allow overnight parking in the uptown area – uptown parking is restricted between 4:00 – 6:00 a.m. for street cleaning, with a \$40 ticket to violators – he questioned how often street cleaning occurs on the weekends – this is a minor change that could be beneficial to community members
 - Mayor – the street sweeping schedule between 4:00-6:00 a.m., is Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings, and on high impact street closing events – this restriction affords access for cleaning – is concerned that if the parking restriction is lifted, there will be increased litter, as well as the return of storage parking – pointed out that the Parking Garage is for long term parking – a clean, litter free environment helps our uptown economy – it is important to improve the appearance of our uptown community – feels strongly that this is not the right move to make – reminded business property owners that they are responsible for sweeping their properties which includes 18" out from the curb into the street – Mayor will share the street sweeping log
 - Swank – agrees, weekend long term parkers need to use the Parking Garage – asked if there is a parking charge in the Parking Garage on Sunday
 - S-S Director – there is no charge on Sunday
 - Swank – this would eliminate a parking citation on Sunday – questioned whether free garage parking could be offered, after 6:00 p.m., on both Friday and Saturday nights – street sweeping is important for the cleanliness of our uptown area
 - Solveig – noted that with upcoming renovations in the Parking Garage, understands there would be fees 24-7
 - Stone – will review weekend revenue derived from parking in the garage from Friday 6:00 p.m. through midnight on Saturday

-Thomas – verified the consistent operation of the street sweeper, noting that several business owners would be upset if the street sweeping was discontinued on Saturday and Sunday mornings due to the amount of litter in the streets from weekend nights – agrees, storage parking is also a concern – business owners have heavily advocated for street sweeping on Saturday and Sunday mornings

- Amend 0-62-23, State Route 682/56 Intersection Improvements, Project #357)
 - Spjeldnes – this Ordinance authorizes preliminary engineering services for this project – after bidding, there needs to be an increase in the design cost from \$350,000 to \$750,000 – City Administration will implore ODOT to significantly increase the award of outside funding to address the needs and higher cost – noted increased traffic concerns with the recent large development on State Route 682 – could include a small roundabout on State Route 682, just north of the larger intersection roundabout to slow traffic and improve ingress/egress on both sides of the street, and will include pedestrian/bicycle accessibility
 - Stone – a safety study yielded adding lanes and traffic signalization, or a roundabout –ODOT landed on constructing a roundabout – will go back to ODOT for a request of additional funding – pointed out the local government pays for design and 20% of construction costs, and ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration pays for 80% of construction costs
 - Swank – asked about the timeline
 - Stone – can be bid as early as July 2025 – will fit as much of the construction as possible into the summer months when schools are out of session, as this project will be extremely impactful on traffic – it will be a challenging construction project

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Amend Project #357