

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Meeting
Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio
June 18, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman Weidman, Vice Chairman Connor, Trustee LaBarbara, Fiscal Officer Porter, Law Director Miller, Administrator Bickford, Zoning Administrator Holbert, Parks/Recreation Director McKeown, Assistant Fire Chief Cooper and Lt. Smith from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Superintendent/Assistant Administrator Kellums and Fire Chief Rob Penny were excused.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Weidman.

Approval of June 4, 2019 Workshop Minutes

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to approve the March 19, 2019 Workshop minutes.

Mr. LaBarbara stated he would like his remarks about the 75th anniversary of D-Day to be added to the June 6th Trustees meeting minutes.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Connor: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Planning & Zoning Update

Mr. Holbert reported that Planning and Zoning has been extremely busy with the number of zoning certificate applications up to 193 for the year and violations and complaints are also up. He stated the Zoning Department accepts payments through E-Gov and the Trustees did a great job allowing us to use that making the application process easier.

Mr. Holbert stated the Firestone at 7800 Montgomery Road is hosting a fundraiser for Madeira Athletic Boosters and has asked that the zoning certificate application fees be waived for the temporary tents. There was discussion about setting a precedent for other non-profits.

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to deny the request to waive the zoning application fee for the fundraiser at Firestone.

Mr. Porter called roll. All Voted: Yes.

Mr. Holbert reported there are now a total of nine applicants for the Land Use Steering Committee and he has begun to receive requested information back from incomplete applications in response to emails he sent. He stated he also has two applicants for the Zoning Commission vacancy. Mr. Holbert will set up interviews within the next two weeks and give a list to the Board.

Mr. Weidman commented he is glad that the extra effort in advertising brought in more candidates and that he hopes we can speed this process through.

A resident inquired about his application and Mr. Holbert reported on the items he had received from that applicant.

Upcoming Public Hearings

Mr. Holbert reported Case 2019-06P2 for Graeter's will be heard by the Board of Trustees on July 11th. Mr. Holbert stated he plans to begin sharing the staff reports and architectural plans for zoning cases with the Board at the Workshop meetings and showing the PowerPoint presentations and presenting the cases at the public hearings.

Nuisance Property Resolutions - 8566 Plainfield Rd. & 12198 Fieldsted Dr.

The resolution "Providing For and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 8566 Plainfield Road, Sycamore Township, OH 45236" was read. A motion was made by Mr. LaBarbara, seconded by Mr. Connor, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye. Resolution No. 2019-68 passed this 18th day of June, 2019.

The resolution "Providing For and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 12198 Fieldsted Dr., Sycamore Township, OH 45249" was read. A motion was made by Mr. LaBarbara, seconded by Mr. Connor, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye. Resolution No. 2019-69 passed this 18th day of June, 2019.

Resolutions Zoning Cases 2019-05P2 and 2019-07MA

The resolution "Approving a Site Plan for the Development at 8608 Blue Ash Road in Sycamore Township" was read. A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye. Resolution No. 2019-70 passed this 18th day of June, 2019.

The resolution "Approving a Major Adjustment to a Planned Unit Development for the BRE DDR Crocodile Sycamore LLC Development Known as Kenwood Square Located in the Kenwood Special Public Interest District" was read. A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye. Resolution No. 2019-71 passed this 18th day of June, 2019.

Parks and Recreation Update

Mr. McKeown thanked the maintenance crew for their hard work trying to keep the fields playable as much as possible with the rainy weather. Mr. McKeown reported Festival planning is going as planned.

A resident asked what soccer fields were available for use. Mr. McKeown answered.

A resident asked if there was an actual budget for the Festival and what the anticipated net cost to the Township will be. Mr. McKeown answered we are on target to meet budget barring any unforeseen circumstances, noting he has cut back as much as possible. He stated a list of expenditures can be provided.

Fire Department Update

Assistant Fire Chief Cooper reported there have been about 2010 calls for service in 2019 so far, including both fire and EMS runs.

Assistant Chief Cooper reported the Fire Department participated in a "Touch a Truck" event at Coney Island. He stated the Fire Department has launched a Facebook page and has its own twitter account.

Assistant Chief Cooper reported the newly promoted officers began their new roles this week. He then reported on the use of tablets by the Fire Department which enables them to initiate EMS reports in the field and allows for access to the database for occupant and contact information.

Sheriff Department Update

No report.

Community Reinvestment Act – HCDC Request

Mr. Bickford reported on a request from HCDC, Hamilton County Development Corporation, the economic development arm of Hamilton County, about creating a Community Reinvestment Area for the property surrounded by Kenwood, Happiness Way and part of Frolic. He noted a Township cannot create a CRA that's why it has to come from the County. Mr. Bickford noted a CRA is an economic development tool that allows for real property tax exemptions for newly developed property. He explained the details on how a CRA works and noted the property owner initiated the request for a CRA with HCDC and HCDC then approached the Township. He said the point of the CRA is to facilitate economic development for the future and noted it must be approved by the State of Ohio.

Mr. Bickford showed the minimum area involved in the proposal and pointed out two additional options of expanding the area of the CRA for the benefit of surrounding properties. This would allow for incentives to surrounding single family property owners to make improvements to their homes.

Mr. Bickford went on to explain some history of CRAs and said there are nine CRAs currently in unincorporated areas of Hamilton County that HCDC has pushed through, most recently in Anderson Township. He then discussed the options for tax abatement and why, if the Board chooses to move forward with the CRA, he recommends a school district agreement be attached to it to take advantage of the 100% abatement for 15 years.

The Board asked questions of Mr. Bickford.

Mr. Bickford continued to elaborate on the details of how a CRA works and there were additional questions from Board members and the public.

Mr. Weidman stated he is partial to one of the options Mr. Bickford showed in the PowerPoint which he said protects the neighbors from future commercial expansion and provides benefits to the residents that are in proximity of the development.

There was discussion about the CRA being site specific and the other options which expand it further.

There was then discussion about what kinds of public infrastructure improvements would be funded by the CRA. The developer was present and stated public infrastructure improvements planned include signalization, road widening, turn lanes, utilities and a public parking garage.

A resident asked if the area needed economic development. Mr. Bickford discussed the success of the Kenwood neighborhood and how the mall and the surrounding areas support each other to keep from becoming depressed as has happened in other communities such as Tri-County.

Mr. LaBarbara asked who decided that this area was depressed economically.

Mr. Bickford answered HCDC did a housing study which concluded the area meets the criteria for a CRA. There was discussion about how the area could be eligible when an investor is willing to put so much money into it. The developer explained that at the time the project was initiated, it was anticipated to have a TIF and noted that almost every major development within Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati has had that economic boost for public infrastructure because the project cannot afford the kind of public infrastructure they are being asked to provide. He stated the CRA is the alternative means to provide the necessary infrastructure since Mr. LaBarbara doesn't support the TIF.

A resident present asked additional questions particularly about the requirement that there be a JEDD in place. Mr. Bickford discussed the JEDD.

A resident requested someone from HCDC attend a Township public meeting to present information about the CRA.

Mr. Weidman asked about the process and if there would be a public hearing held by HCDC.

Mr. Bickford reviewed the process and stated there would not be a public hearing.

There were additional questions and comments from the members of the public present regarding the CRA as well as discussion of the roles of the Township, County and State in decision making.

Mr. LaBarbara discussed his reasons for being against the development saying instead of trying to go around the will of the people to make this work there should be an attempt to downsize the project which is too dense.

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to direct Law Director Miller to prepare a resolution in support of the CRA based on the conditions described in Mr. Bickford's presentation.

Mr. Connor commented this is an alternative, legal means of financing the infrastructure and, as he voted for this project because he believes it to be in the best interest of the entire Township, he sees no reason not to bring a resolution back to talk about it.

Mr. LaBarbara stated this is against the will of the people.

Mr. Weidman said CRAs are used all over Hamilton County and he doesn't see any reason not to support it for this project, noting the improvements will be public not private.

Mr. Porter called roll. Mr. Connor: Aye; Mr. LaBarbara: Nay; Mr. Weidman: Aye.

Festive Court Vacation Review – Hamilton County Request

Mr. Bickford reported on a request to vacate a Township controlled right of way on Festive Court and turn it over to the Private property owner. He said in order for it to be vacated, the ORC requires the request be handed over to the County Engineer's office and the County Commissioners. He said in this case there is common ownership on all sides of the proposed development. He said the County is looking for comment from the Township on whether the right of way should be vacated. Without comment, they will assume the Township approves and it will be divided up among the adjoining property owners.

Mr. Bickford stated if the road is vacated, it would become a private drive should no development occur. He said he spoke to Mr. Kellums and, from a Township standpoint, there are no issues with vacating the road.

Mr. Connor asked if the process of vacating the road would take place in advance of a project.

Mr. Bickford answered it can take place at any time. In this case, it is a request from the property owner.

Mr. Weidman asked about the time table on it.

Mr. Bickford answered he thinks 90 days.

Mr. Weidman stated his only concern would be the tenants still living there but he believes the tenants will all be out of the apartments within 60 days.

Mr. LaBarbara stated according to Ted Hubbard, if no comment received from the Township by July 3rd they will move forward with it.

Mr. Bickford stated that is correct.

A member of the public commented the County already has this topic on an agenda for a vote.

Mr. Miller stated he does not know that they are voting on it; it could be up for discussion as the County gave the Township until early July to respond.

A resident asked who owns the property saying it must be valuable.

Mr. Bickford answered it is dedicated right of way so it is in fee and has no parcel number assigned to it.

The resident then said if it is Township owned it cannot be vacated without a unanimous vote.

Mr. Miller answered the Township does not vacate it the County does.

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to allow the County to vacate the right of way.

Mr. Porter called roll. Mr. Connor: Aye; Mr. LaBarbara: Nay; Mr. Weidman: Aye.

Purchase Orders Over \$2,500

Mr. Bickford presented the following purchase order for approval:

GA HC Reit II Seasons CCCRC
\$24,999.00

Temp & SH Easement Montgomery

A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve this request.
Vote: All Aye

Mr. Weidman asked Mr. Bickford to facilitate getting a representative from HCDC to attend the Workshop on July 2nd to present CRA information.

Mr. LaBarbara stated there should be an open house in the evening.

Mr. Weidman stated the Workshop is a public meeting.

Mr. LaBarbara objected to that stating it should be an open house in the evening so that more residents could attend.

A member of the public asked for clarification saying he thought it would be presented at a public meeting before the Trustees take formal action.

Mr. Weidman stated there will be time for public comment before any action is taken.

There was continued discussion regarding whether to hold a separate public meeting prior to the Workshop to discuss the CRA. Mr. Bickford commented there were a lot of public hearings for the development, it was approved, and the CRA is necessary for it to be successful.

A motion to enter into **Executive Session to discuss Property Acquisition and Pending Litigation** was made by Trustee Connor and seconded by Trustee LaBarbara.

Vote: Weidman: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Connor: Aye.

End regular session: 10:39 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 10:40 a.m.

End Executive Session: 10:53 a.m.


Back in regular session: 10:53 a.m.

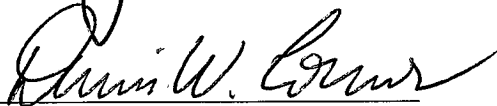
Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to authorize up to \$10,000 in legal fees for potential mediation in the Moeller High School case.

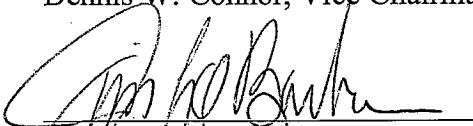
Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

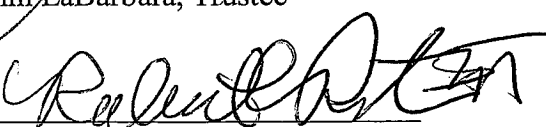
A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Connor and seconded by Trustee LaBarbara. Vote: All Aye.

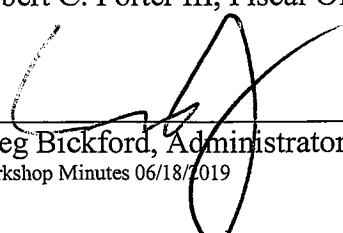
End regular session: 10:55 a.m.



Thomas J. Weidman, Chairman

Dennis W. Connor, Vice Chairman

Jim LaBarbara, Trustee

Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

Greg Bickford, Administrator
Workshop Minutes 06/18/2019