

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Meeting
Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio
July 2, 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, Superintendent/Assistant Administrator Kellums, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holbert, Parks/Recreation Director McKeown, Fire Chief Penny and Lt. Smith from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Weidman.

Approval of June 18, 2019 Workshop Minutes

Mr. LaBarbara made a motion, seconded by Mr. Connor, to approve the June 18, 2019 Workshop minutes.

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

HCDC Community Reinvestment Act Presentation

Mr. Weidman stated representatives from HCDC were present to speak about the CRA.

Mr. Harry Blanton, Vice-President HCDC, Economic Development Office, and Ms. Katherine Brun, Economic Development Specialist with HCDC, addressed the Board and began a presentation on the CRA. Mr. Blanton gave an overview of HCDC noting HCDC is a non-profit established by the Hamilton County Commissioners to promote economic development in Hamilton County. He stated HCDC works with communities within Hamilton County. He spoke about HCDC programs noting that Ohio law does not allow Townships to do CRAs on their own, therefore, the County has to administer those for the Townships. He said HCDC works closely with Townships and the Township must approve everything that they do.

Ms. Brun continued the presentation by explaining more specifically what a CRA is, stating it is a tool that provides real property tax abatements to incremental increases in value resulting from investments in property. She pointed out that a CRA is for a designated tract of land. Ms. Brun went on to explain how the CRA is set up and stated, once established, HCDC administers the annual compliance around the abatements. She then gave examples of CRAs that have been established within Hamilton County in Anderson Township, Springfield Township, Symmes Township and Colerain Township.

Ms. Brun explained the maximum terms and benefits of the CRA are set by the State of Ohio. She then reviewed the benefits of a CRA noting the local jurisdiction gets to decide on the extent of the benefits up to the maximum set by the State. Ms. Brun reviewed the process to establish a CRA and have it certified by the State and how the applications for abatements work.

Mr. Connor noted the Capital Investment project includes office, hotel and residential and asked if the abatements for those uses could be applied for individually.

Ms. Brun answered yes noting the multi-family residential would be considered commercial as far as the CRA is concerned.

Mr. LaBarbara asked who initiated the process for the CRA with HCDC.

Mr. Blanton answered the developer of the project.

Mr. LaBarbara asked if someone evaluated the property.

Ms. Brun answered yes and explained the housing survey that must be submitted to the State with the CRA application. Mr. Blanton pointed out the HCDC submits the data and the State determines if the geographical area meets the qualifications required by the ORC.

Mr. LaBarbara stated the property has been owned by the developer for some time and referenced articles in the Cincinnati Enquirer and Suburban Life about the development. He then asked if HCDC works with residents in the community or just Township officials. He went on to discuss his reasons for voting against the project and being against the TIF and asked why HCDC wants to develop the area in question as it is a nice area.

Mr. Blanton answered the Trustees make the decision about whether they want to move forward with the development, HCDC administers the CRA and does not make decisions about whether or not it is a good project.

Mr. LaBarbara asked about the time frame for the County Commissioners to approve the CRA.

Mr. Blanton answered the County has 60 days to get it to the State and the State has 30 days to make their determination.

Mr. Weidman asked if any members of the public wished to comment or ask a question.

A member of the public asked if his property was in the CRA if he could opt out.

Mr. Blanton stated a property could be within the boundaries of the CRA but decide not to apply for the abatement.

There was a question about selling a house that was receiving the abatement.

Mr. Blanton answered there is no problem with selling the house as the abatement continues with the house no matter the owner.

There was continued discussion about different scenarios that could occur on a property with an abatement in place and the benefits to the County of a CRA.

A member of the public asked if the decision to establish the CRA had to be unanimous at the Township or County level.

Mr. Blanton answered no, he does not think so. Ms. Brun noted the State makes the final determination and could decide not to certify it if they think it does not meet the requirements listed in the ORC.

Mr. Jack Pflum asked about the legislation and if the Township had a copy of the housing survey to which Ms. Brun referred. He went on to state that this is a big deal and the findings of the report should be discussed in a public forum.

Mr. Bickford showed several options for the boundaries of the proposed CRA and stated if the Trustees vote to expand it outside the area HCDC has already studied, HCDC will have to do more research.

Members of the public continued to ask questions regarding the area's eligibility for a CRA, the details of the CRA and general questions about HCDC and how the abatement rates are determined.

The developer addressed Mr. Pflum's comments about the term disinvestment being used for the area stating it is the only area around there which has not been redeveloped.

Mr. LaBarbara reiterated his view that the project is too large.

Mr. Bickford reviewed the findings of the housing study and Mr. Blanton discussed the process for completing the housing study.

Mr. LaBarbara asked if HCDC had ever done a survey and then been turned down by the State.

Mr. Blanton answered no.

Mr. Connor asked if it was uncommon to establish a CRA in an area where the intended use is different and not just an improvement of the existing use.

Mr. Blanton answered that is not uncommon.

Mr. Connor asked if HCDC has turned down a municipality who requested assistance with a CRA.

Mr. Blanton answered no, saying it is the municipality's decision whether to pursue it not HCDC's.

Mr. Pflum addressed the Board again reporting on a housing study done on a property on Festive Ct. by residents and there was discussion about the condition of the properties owned by Capital Investment Group.

Mr. Weidman addressed the question about what tax money the Township would be "losing" with the CRA by noting that the amount currently being collected, about \$14,000, will remain the same as the abatement is only on the improvements made to the property. In addition, he noted the Township will receive approximately \$400,000 in JEDZ and hotel tax income annually. Mr. Weidman concluded there will be a significant increase in revenue to the Township with the approval of this project.

Mr. LaBarbara said we get the revenue of \$375,000 from one building Redstone on Montgomery Road. Mr. Weidman said you don't know that. Mr. LaBarbara said we are dealing with estimates according to that man (our administrator) and it will be eight years before we see a penny.

Mr. Weidman stated Redstone is a bigger building.

Mr. Bickford stated he would not make the statement that the Township is financially set for years as things can change and expenses, particularly in safety services, are increasing.

Mr. LaBarbara stated the Township is financially set for years to come. He said we are not in the poor house; we don't need this development to happen at this scale.

Chief Penny expressed concerns about possible loss of insurance income for the Fire Department and not having a repeat of what happened to the budget in 2012. He stated he does not look at it as the Township is set for years as there could be changes to existing income in the future.

Mr. Bickford showed the proposed legislation on the screen for those in attendance. He then stated the legislation would establish the geographical area of the CRA the Township proposes to the County and State. Mr. Bickford went on to review the legislation details and show the area proposed to be included in the CRA.

A member of the public spoke up against having his property included within the boundaries of the CRA.

Mr. Connor explained the idea behind including some of the single family residences in the CRA is that those property owners could also take advantage of tax abatement should they make improvements to their properties. He stated the single family residences do not have to be included if the residents do not want to be able to take advantage of the tax abatement.

A member of the public asked if HCDC had done any studies about the effect of a CRA on residential property values.

Mr. Blanton stated he would think it would be a benefit to residents as they can make improvements to their properties and reduce their taxes but he does not know what the valuation is.

Mr. Miller asked if the area can be expanded.

Mr. Blanton answered yes, the Trustees could ask for the CRA to be amended.

There were additional questions for Mr. Blanton and Mr. Bickford about the data collected for the area.

Ms. Brun noted, per the ORC, the CRA must include at least one residential property.

Mr. LaBarbara asked how much money the developer would save with the tax abatement on the development.

Mr. Blanton answered HCDC does not do an analysis on a particular development until an area is established and someone has applied for an abatement.

Mr. LaBarbara asked Mr. Pflum if he was satisfied with the presentation by Mr. Bickford and if he thinks the Trustees should sign the legislation today.

Mr. Pflum said he thinks there should be more time to review the information.

Mr. Bickford stated this resolution does not give any tax abatements, it just establishes the area. A member of the public suggested surveying the residents in the area to ask if they want to be included.

Mr. Weidman noted the area could be amended in future.

Mr. LaBarbara commented Mr. Blanton said he did not expect legislation to be approved today.

Mr. Blanton stated that is not his decision but if the area were expanded beyond what HCDC had included in their housing survey, they would have to collect more data.

Mr. Miller asked when the agreement with the school district comes into play.

Mr. Blanton stated the school district agreement must be set before the individual property owner applies for the abatement.

Parks and Recreation Update

Mr. McKeown stated at the Festival Committee meeting last night, the committee approved the booths for vendors that had submitted proof of insurance.

Mr. Miller stated if the insurance requirement is to be waived, that should be done by the Trustees not the Festival Committee.

There was discussion about the insurance requirement.

There was then discussion about political signs at the Festival.

Fire Department Update

Chief Penny stated he has been working with Jim Craycroft at Kenwood Collection about a tracking system specifically designed for high rise emergencies. H said he is working to put together an emergency action plan for the Collection.

Chief Penny also reported he is getting estimates to replace radios they use to communicate with Kenwood Towne Center and other large buildings.

Chief Penny also stated the ISO inspection was completed and results will be back in a few months. He noted the Department received the annual donation from Lyondell Chemical and discussed how that money would be spent.

Maintenance Department Update

Mr. Kellums reported Sycamore Road work continues noting eastbound traffic will be closed between Blue Ash and Plainfield from July 15th through December 20th. He also said Maintenance Crews are around the Township doing base repairs on roadways.

Mr. Kellums stated he received a lower bid from another company to do the work on the wall in front of Kenwood Towne Center.

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to direct Law Director Miller to prepare a resolution authorizing a contract with Parks Development for work on the rock wall in front of Kenwood Towne Center.

Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. LaBarbara asked about trees being replaced on Sycamore Road as part of the construction. Mr. Kellums stated agreements are already in place with homeowners for that.

Mr. Bickford stated he had the resolution ready for the Trustees to review regarding the CRA.

The resolution "Establishing and Describing the Boundaries of Proposed Sycamore Township Community Reinvestment Area 1, Requesting That the Hamilton County Commissioners Create and Designate the Sycamore Township Community Reinvestment Area 1" was read by Mr. Miller. A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. Weidman, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Connor: Aye; LaBarbara: Nay; Weidman: Aye
Resolution No. 2019-72 passed this 2nd day of July, 2019.

Planning & Zoning Update

Mr. Holbert reported Land Use Steering Committee interviews will begin July 8th noting there are eight applicants. He said there are two applicants for Zoning Commission alternate.

Mr. Holbert reviewed concerns he had about the Bank of America project approval and asked the Board to vote on how he should interpret the materials requirement. There was discussion about how the 50% brick or stone requirement should be interpreted. It was decided that the materials as shown on the Zoning Compliance Plan should be accepted as submitted.

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, that staff approve 50% stone overall on the building as shown. Mr. Porter Called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Holbert made comments regarding the property maintenance concerns for the Capital Investment Group properties and noted he met with CIG and they are taking care of the issues.

Mr. LaBarbara stated there are tall weeds behind the Taco Bell property again. Mr. Holbert stated he has requested Mr. Clark to keep a continuing record of that property.

Cell Tower Design Requirements

Mr. Holbert reported on his concerns about cell towers in the right of way.

The board directed Mr. Miller to research it and come up with legislation with guidelines for the cell towers. Mr. Connor stated he appreciated Mr. Holbert's proactive approach to the issue.

Upcoming Public Hearings

Mr. Holbert reported on Case 2019-06P2 for the proposed Graeters on the Verbargs property which will be heard at the next Trustees meeting. He pointed out the landscape plan proposed is deficient and discussed a possible easement agreement with the Township to the adjacent park. He noted Zoning Commission voted 4-0 in favor of the development with conditions.

Nuisance Property Resolutions – 11950 3rd Ave and 7745 Kennedy Lane

The resolution "Providing For and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 7745 Kennedy Lane, Sycamore Township, OH 45242" 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. 2019-73 passed this 2nd day of July, 2019.

The resolution "Providing For and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 11950 3rd Avenue, Sycamore Township, OH 45249" 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. 2019-74 passed this 2nd day of July, 2019.

Purchase Orders Over \$2,500

Mr. Bickford presented the following purchase orders for approval:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Blanket Vendor | Utilities Fire | \$12,000.00 |
| Blanket Vendor | Station Uniforms | \$3,000.00 |
| Blanket Vendor | Bunker Gear | \$3,000.00 |
| Blanket Vendor | Building Costs Fire | \$4,000.00 |
| CS Solutions | Underground Utility Locator | \$7,691.00 |

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

Schedule

Mr. Weidman pointed out on the schedule of upcoming events that the first Thursday of the month is the July 4th holiday so the Trustees meeting has been moved to July 11th.

Mr. Miller stated after two years, the Township has finally closed on the Degaro property.

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

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

End regular session: 11:10 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 11:18 a.m.

End Executive Session: 11:23 a.m.


Back in regular session: 11:25 a.m.

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

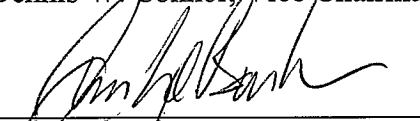
End regular session: 11:26 a.m.



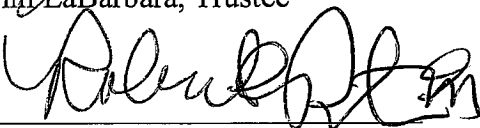
Thomas J. Weidman, Chairman



Dennis W. Connor, Vice Chairman



Jim LaBarbara, Trustee



Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer



Greg Bickford, Administrator