

MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Beth Clodfelter
Sam Crowl
Chris Fahl
Peter Kotses
Sarah Grace
Jeff Risner
Arian Smedley

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

Items Discussed:

- Arts, Parks & Recreation (Director Terri Moore)
 - President – Director Moore will not be attending this evening – Mayor Patterson will be providing an update

 - Mayor – confirmed with Director Moore that she did not have any firm updates at this time – she plans to come before City Council upon determining the dates, work status, and work assignments with programs associated with virtual streaming at ARTS-West – looking at how things will unfold under the Ohio Department of Health guidelines, currently it appears that 40 persons can be in the ART-West facility – broadband access needs to be improved at the facility in order to provide virtual programming – he is exploring the use of CARES Act funding to install fiber up to ARTS-West – he is also working with The Government Channel on needed equipment to be able to offer streaming of virtual content out of the facility – again, Director Moore continues to work through remaining details to bring the Program Specialist back onboard with ARTS-West

 - Smedley – so, no update, only that Director Moore is working on it
 - Mayor – that is correct – acknowledging that one of the roles of the Arts, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is to be kept apprised of all employment decisions

 - Crowl – asked if it would be helpful to provide questions to Director Moore in advance of her presentation to Council – he understands there have been some

classes that are currently being offered, and questioned how the decision is being made in terms of allowing classes to go forward along with the decision to close ARTS-West

-Smedley – is curious whether the plans to install fiber is a part of Director Moore's plan, or is that outside her plan

-Mayor – it is part of the Mayor's plan, knowing that current broadband to the facility is neither reliable or stable – the City's IT Director is exploring that fiber installation

-Kotses – asked if there is an adjusted timeline for Director Moore to attend City Council

-Mayor – Director Moore has indicated that she could come before City Council at its next Committee meeting, or soon

-President – a written report (outline/timeline) from Director Moore to the Council Members prior to her appearance before City Council would be helpful

-Auditor – added, she has had several conversations with Director Moore over the last couple of months about the department's finances – when you're not bringing in any money, the City can't afford to keep the doors open and pay staff – Recreation and Community Center budgets rely on income tax, which is steadily declining, as well as rental and program revenue – she hopes the community will be patient and understand that the City continues to support the arts and recreation, and further that they recognize the financial impact of COVID-19 on City resources

-Emily Prince – appreciates everyone's support and recognition of the importance of ARTS-West in our community – she does understand the budget constraints – clarified that arts and recreation will never be revenue generating, but can possibly be income neutral – City needs to continue to maintain the facility as well as a staff person – without a staff person who knows how to do art programming and understands curriculum and the community, a cold start in January will make it much more difficult for the writing of grants with deadlines this year, otherwise will need to wait for next grant round in April – there is a lot that needs to be done now even without the facility being open – community members have offered to help and we need to take advantage of that

-Brandon Thompson – serves on the Arts, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – the ARTS-West facility was discussed in their most recent meeting last Thursday, and their next meeting is scheduled on October 15th – reiterated the need to think about funding the arts in a different way – understands this is a challenging time and we all need to think creatively

-Kotses – support from a “Friends of the Arts, Parks and Recreation Council” would be helpful – additional funding ways can be found when pairing a non-profit with government – this is a viable platform that should be explored
-Thompson – acknowledged that this is being explored by the Advisory Board

-Chelsa Morahan, Member of the Athens Municipal Arts Commission (AMAC) – arts and recreation, so important to everyday life, are typically the first cuts made when there are financial concerns, and should be supported by community funds – AMAC has begun discussion about starting a 501c3 non-profit for “Friends of ARTS-West” – a fuller discussion should be held with the Arts, Parks & Recreation Department, the Arts, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and AMAC to collaborate on a single “Friends of the Arts, Parks & Recreation” non-profit to support all of the programming throughout the community – hopes a solution can happen sooner rather than later

-Clodfelter – serves as the Council liaison on the Arts, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and she would be happy to speak with Director Moore about the possibility of such a collaboration with ARTS-West

MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sam Crowl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Peter Kotses, Member
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Prior Year Expense (EPW)
 - Crowl – a verbal agreement was made to purchase salt truck bed liners – there was a miscommunication about the quote – EPW understood that the total price of the equipment for the three trucks would be \$18,000, \$6,000 per truck – the second truck was already in the process of being fitted when an invoice for the first truck was received and the amount was \$18,000 for each – the third truck will not be fitted, and an additional \$15,000 is being requested to pay a prior year bill

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Prior Year Expense

MINUTES
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Chris Fahl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Sarah Grace, Member
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials
via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

Items Discussed:

- Herrold Avenue (major subdivision)
 - Fahl – this is a recommendation by the Planning Commission – one large parcel will be divided into three commercial parcels – this area is zoned M-Industrial – the plat also contains two right-of-way dedications to the City in order to meet the minimum recommended thoroughfare of 60 feet for a local industrial road
 - Grace – asked if this is part of the plan for the extension of Herrold Avenue
 - Mayor – this has no bearing on the extension of Herrold, and one is not contingent upon the other
- Luhrig Road Zoning Designation (for proposed annexation)
 - Fahl – the Planning Commission is recommending an R-3 zoning designation for a planned affordable housing development on this property proposed for annexation
 - Smedley – asked about a traffic study
 - Fahl – a traffic study will be done
 - Kotses – asked whether that part of Luhrig Road will become a City street
 - Mayor – suspects that it will not, but will get back to Council on that

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Herrold Avenue Major Subdivision

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Peter Kotses, Chair
Sam Crowl, Vice-Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Temporary Sidewalk Extensions (parklets)
 - Kotses – this is the pilot program for special use of the right-of-way allowing business owners in the uptown area to offer extended outside seating during the pandemic by applying to use up to two parking metered spaces – this pilot program expires on September 30
 - Deputy S-S Director – while this (parklet) program started as a pilot it was with the idea that it could be something sustainable in the long-term – multiple businesses took out applications with a lot of interest and enthusiasm, but only one business, Brenen’s, followed through – of the other businesses, one temporarily closed, another found the language prohibitive due to challenging street slopes
 - Jessica Thomas, owner of Brenen’s, expressed her appreciation of the pilot program – it has been helpful to their business – the Brenen’s parklet accommodates ten outdoor dining seats and has been very successful – believes additional parklets will attract tourism – she hopes this program will become permanent, and that City Council is willing to extend the pilot this year beyond September 30th, possibly through the end of October – of course, it would be weather dependent
 - Crowl – has dined at the parklet – it is well designed, and he would like to see more of them in the uptown area
 - Clodfelter – during this COVID-19 pandemic providing more outdoor seating is one of the safest things we can do to support out locally owned restaurants and keep patrons safe – agrees that adding more parklets in the uptown area could help Athens become more of a destination for lunch or dinner

-Mayor – suggested extending the pilot date to November 15th – he has not received any negative feedback about the parklet – it has been both aesthetically and functionally successful – would like the Council to make this a permanent policy, sooner rather than later

-Risner – is ready to move forward with a more permanent plan

-Smedley – agrees moving forward as well – would like to be sure the issue regarding the problematic terrain will be addressed in the legislation when making this a permanent policy

-Chiki – those changes are very minor and can be easily adjusted – he has received feedback from other businesses about participating next year – while eateries are the major component, others are also interested in outdoor sales space with the idea of turning it into park space when the business is not open – purpose is to be versatile

-Smedley – reminded everyone that each parking space used by a parklet is then replaced by a space elsewhere in the uptown, so there is no loss in uptown parking, just enhancing the outdoor space

-Grace – supports this plan – questioned whether specific dates are needed since our weather really fluctuates from year to year – she doesn't view the outdoor season as an only warm weather opportunity

-Clodfelter – agrees that greater flexibility in the dates should be considered – questioned since there was only one participant this year that maybe the pilot should run for an additional year before moving toward a permanent plan – she loves the idea of the parklets, but gathering more data could be useful

-Kotses – questioned if these parklets might interfere with street closure events
-Deputy S-S Director – special event street closure is already included as part of the pilot application process – they may need to be removed – understands that the Brenen's parklet can be removed easily and quickly – also, cautioned that setting dates can be flexible, but believes there need to be clear boundaries

-Kotses – is amenable to extending the pilot and offering a more permanent opportunity if the needed changes can easily be made

- Vendor's Licenses (reduce fee, temporarily)

-Kotses – understands that a request has been received from one of the vendors

-Mayor – a request was made for a temporary reduction in the permit rates due to COVID-19, and Ohio University is not at full student on-campus enrollment – such a reduction would offset a decrease in sales – will be a positive step in assisting our local commerce struggling under this global pandemic

-Crowl – supports this and asked if similar relief could be made to brick and mortar restaurants that may want to put out tables and chairs on the sidewalk

-Mayor – there is currently no permit process for outdoor tables and chairs as long as they do not extend more than 5' from the building – need to assure free and safe passage for pedestrians – encourages businesses to take advantage of such outdoor café seating

-Crowl – believes the parklets and outdoor seating adds to the ambience of uptown Athens

-Fahl – reminded all that alcohol is not allowed outside the building premises

-Risner – asked about the current number of permits

-Crowl – there are no current vendors with a monthly license

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Pilot Extension
2. Sidewalk Extension Permanent Plan
3. Vendor's License Fee