

**MINUTES**  
**CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 23, 2023**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Members in Attendance:

Micah McCarey, Chair  
Sarah Grace, Member  
Sam Crawl, Member  
Alan Swank, Member

Administrators and  
Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Auditor Hecht  
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki

**ITEMS DISCUSSED:**

- WTP Salt Storage Roof Slab & Beam Replacement (Project #354, cost increase)
  - McCarey – an increase of \$60,000 has been requested for appropriation and expenditure from the Water Fund for piping removal and replacement and interior concrete repair, amending to increase the total expenditure authorized by Ordinance 126-22 for this project from \$365,000 to \$425,000
  - Swank – asked if the reason for the increase is due to materials and labor
  - Chiki – primarily materials and labor – the City is self-performing to bring the costs down – this piping issue was discovered when dismantling the salt pit – this piping is a mandated replacement
- Storm Sinkhole at 30 Curran Drive (line replacement)
  - McCarey – the storm line under the parking lot that drains both the lot and portions of Second Street and Curran Drive has collapsed and must be replaced – City staff can perform some of the work, but portions are too deep for City equipment and personnel, and will need to be contracted out – the estimated cost is \$100,000 that will need appropriated and authorized to the Storm Sewer Fund as a capital project – the Administration does not believe the contracted portion will be greater the \$50,0000, so bidding will not be necessary
  - Risner – asked if this is one of the City’s older lines
  - Chiki – it is not, however, it is a very deep line that connects Curran and Second Street – City will do a portion of the excavating, but does not have equipment to safely remediate the situation

-Mayor – explained that a 21” line has failed, but this smaller line fed into an even smaller 12” line that then fed into a 24” line – plan is to replace the entire line with a 24” line

-Ziff – asked about the depth of the line

-Chiki – greater than 25’

- Reduction of Single-Use Plastic Bags

-Swank – has been working with the Athens Rethinks Plastic group who will be making a presentation to the committee on February 13<sup>th</sup> – this is a citizen driven initiative

-Amy Delach, Morris – this is another line item in the City’s sustainability plan – if interested in feedback from the Environment & Sustainability Commission, their next meeting is on February 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers – would be happy to support this initiative

- Farmers Market (amend City Code to reflect items that can be sold)

-Swank – this item will be discussed in committee on February 13<sup>th</sup> – request is to amend ACC Sections 11.04.19, 11.04.20, and 11.07.09 to bring them into compliance with what is currently being sold at the market – the current ordinance only lists agricultural products grown by the seller -- Ordinance draft will be available at that time

-Spjeldnes – noted that educational booths and political groups, prior to elections, set up space at the Market

-Swank – Market does have a charter and rules that are enforced

-Mayor – City will take the lead from the Farmers Market Board as to what is permissible, as they manage themselves

- Pickleball and Tennis Courts (possible additional funding)

-Swank – understands this project will go back out to bid

-Mayor – will increase amount of the project to (\$450,000), a significant increase from original bid to provide good quality courts

-Swank – asked if this would require Council action

-President – if there is an increase in the cost of the project it would need to return to Council for approval

-Swank – expressed concern that if this doesn’t move quickly the project will miss the 2023 construction season

-Chiki – bid opening is on February 13 – if additional appropriation/authorization is needed, could request Council give legislation 1<sup>st</sup> reading on February 20

-Crowl – asked if the cost of the pickleball courts and tennis courts will be separated – expressed concern with the increased cost

-Chiki – it is a lump sum project – one will not go forward without the other – idea is to bring some of that estimated cost down by having the City directly purchase asphalt from the plant, rather than including it in the project price – labor will still be done by the contractor

-Swank – asked whether a location change is still possible – the chosen location is often under water

-Chiki – will take concern back to Service-Safety Director

-Mayor – noted that exploring alternative locations could significantly delay the project

-McCarey – acknowledging that there are many different ways to enhance our recreational resources and facilities, asked whether this cost increase changes the priority based on the level of interest by the community

-Mayor – believes, even with the cost increase, there is a need for quality pickleball and tennis courts, and it is appropriate to continue

-Swank – at the December 15, 2022 meeting, pickleball was the #1 priority of the Recreation Advisory Board

-Delach, Morris – understood that the current tennis courts would be vacated with new courts being built at another location, and that the former space would be used for auxiliary parking for the Farmers Market

-Swank – the current proposal for the new tennis courts is behind the Holiday Inn and pickleball courts adjacent to the roller rink – the existing tennis courts area would remain open

-Crowl – was under the impression that the pickleball courts were replacing the outdoor roller rink

-Swank – the roller rink may be smaller, but will remain

-Chiki – the roller hockey area will be reconfigured in order to use that space in a more efficient manner

-Crowl – is hopeful that the tennis/pickleball community is very happy with this half million-dollar project

## **ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. WTP Salt Storage
2. Storm Sinkhole

# MINUTES: JANUARY 23, 2023

## FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members in Attendance:

Sam Crowl, Chair  
Jeff Risner, Member  
Solveig Spjeldnes, Member  
Ben Ziff, Member

Administrators and/or  
Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Auditor  
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki

### ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Appropriations:
  - (\$1,200) to General Fund, Auditor, for new check scanner
  - (\$900) to General Fund, Municipal Court
  - (\$9,000) to DUI Court
  - (\$173,000) to Sewer Debt Fund, for next loan payment
  
- Interfund Transfers
  - (\$80,000) from General Fund, Other Administrative, to Cemetery Fund, fund balance increase
  - (\$160,000) from Parking Garage Fund to Parking Garage Debt Fund, for loan payment
    - Risner – asked about the remaining debt for these renovations
    - Auditor -- \$1 million
  - (\$396,000) from Water Fund to Water Debt Fund
  - (\$5,000) from Parking Garage Fund to General Fund, for Parking Garage advancement
    - Spjeldnes – asked for clarity
    - Auditor – this is to reimburse part of the borrowed funds – not part of renovation debt
  
- 2023 Budget Correction (Cemetery Fund)
  - Correct to the following:
    - T.C. 200-300 – currently (\$900) need (\$15,820), increase appropriation by (\$14,920)
    - T.C. 500 – currently (\$600) need (\$18,400), increase appropriation by (\$17,800)
    - T.C. 600 – currently (\$34,820), need (\$600), decrease appropriation by (\$34,220)
    - Auditor – these are corrections, not additional monies

### ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. 2023 Budget Items

# MINUTES

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### JANUARY 23, 2023

Members in Attendance:

Sarah Grace, Chair  
Sam Crowl, Vice-Chair  
Micah McCarey, Member  
Solveig Spjeldnes, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki

#### Items Discussed:

- Sunday Creek Horizons (2023 Professional Services Contract)
  - Grace – the Administration requests \$7,500/month be appropriated for Sunday Creek Horizons (SCH) for a host of services – total annual expenditure will be \$90,000 – SCH will continue their work on the Armory – the contract will also include 2023 planning, project management, economic development, advocacy, and government relations services – this contract does not require bidding as it is a specialized professional service – work details will be outlined in the contract
  - Mayor – there is a lot of value in continuing our work with SCH
  - Spjeldnes – asked exactly what the City expects from SCH, how long this contracting of services will last, and where we are with the Armory project they have been working on
  - Grace – this is a one-year contract – details of services provided will be part of the contract language
  - Mayor – SCH was invaluable in putting together an Appalachian Communities grant funding collaborative application for the \$500 million the Governor has set aside through ARPA for Appalachian counties – will know this spring whether the City will be funded through this grant – adding, SCH put together an outstanding proposal
  - McCarey – asked about the specificity of the contract
  - Chiki – contract will primarily focus on the Armory project, getting the remote shared workspace operational, coordination of the Appalachian Communities Grant, and performance of some planning duties in the absence of our City Planner
  - McCarey – asked about other areas where the City is using professional consultants on an annual basis

-Mayor – Economic Development Council (EDC), Athens County Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) – Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) – return on investment is important

-Auditor – added, ongoing Human Resources consulting with Clemans-Nelson

-Grace – the City is paying for a level of expertise that is not available within our staffing

-Swank – asked if it is typical for cities to hire lobbyists

-Mayor – is very typical for cities to hire advocates in securing potential funding

-Auditor – the City's membership with the Ohio Municipal League absolutely includes lobbyists

-Swank – asked if there is a process in place to review the City's return on investment

-Grace – there are no guarantees with this type of work – historically have been successful – would be prudent to require a report from SCH on their activities and achievements

-McCarey – asked if it is the City's intention to have SCH specifically look for opportunities to help the City advance its progress with our 2040 Comprehensive Plan

-Mayor – it can happen

## **ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. Sunday Creek

# MINUTES

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### JANUARY 23, 2023

Members in Attendance: Jeff Risner, Chair  
Sarah Grace, Member  
Alan Swank, Member  
Ben Ziff, Member

Administrators and/or

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

### ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

- Ad hoc Committee on Pedestrian Accessibility (plan presentation)
  - Risner – noted that an email and addendum have been received from Heather Cantino and will be made part of the record (see attached)
  - Diane Bouvier, ad hoc Committee Chair – this evening the Committee will present their final report and Pedestrian Accessibility Plan – referred back to Resolution 14-21, adopted December 13, 2021 and sponsored by Council Member Arian Smedley, in support of an ad hoc Committee to review pedestrian accessibility, most importantly, the condition of existing sidewalks – the ad hoc Pedestrian Accessibility Committee Members are as follows: Dianne Bouvier, PhD, MBA, Med, and Disabilities Commission Representative; Steve Patterson, PhD, Mayor, City of Athens; Rob Delach, BS, Resident Representative; Neil Ryan, BS, Student Representative; Solveig Spjeldnes, PhD, MSW, MA, City Council Representative; and Stephanie Hunter, BA, Committee Member in actum
  - Stephanie Hunter – stated that 34.9% of Athenians walk their commute, the third highest rate of any city of any size in the entire country – 9 out of 38 miles of sidewalks are ADA non-compliant; 373 out 886 corners are ADA non-compliant; and 37 miles of streets are missing sidewalks – the Committee is recommending going above and beyond federal ADA standards – let’s build the future we want: federally compliant; environmentally responsible; connecting our community; and promoting economic development
  - Rob Delach – presented recommendation categories (short and high range impact and short and long-range generalized impact) with key recommendations based on best practices and community input that includes: implement a list of

prioritized sidewalk and accessibility projects; create a sidewalk program to: 1) enhance sidewalk condition assessments, 2) adopt and communicate sidewalk standards, and 3) establish sidewalk funding sources; work with neighborhoods to develop 10-year pedestrian accessibility plans; adopt the ODOT multimodal design guide for pedestrian facilities in Athens; and create a permanent Pedestrian Accessibility and Bicycle Committee

-Solveig Spjeldnes – spoke to Federal and State Funding, i.e. Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG), ODOT Small City Program, ODOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) – Athens’ property owners are responsible for the care of their sidewalks, and the City’s current process funds this through property owner tax assessments – this system has failed across the nation due to its time commitment and political considerations – cities need to get creative with funding – identified the following funding models: 1) Sidewalk Replacement City-Resident Cost-Sharing Program (maybe); 2) Annual Sidewalk Assessment Cost-Sharing Program (yes); 3) Inside Millage (no); 4) Countywide Sales Tax (no); 5) through a Tax Levy (propose); and 6) use current Street Fund to create ongoing sidewalk projects – the US Dept. of Transportation Federal Highway Administration states: “Several communities...have shifted responsibility of sidewalk maintenance away from property owners in order to address a backlog of sidewalk maintenance ...allocated a budget for pedestrian facility maintenance...”

-Bouvier – process used by the Committee: collected sidewalk accessibility data; reviewed City practices and City/State/Federal codes/law; adopted Safety, Proximity, Accessibility, Connection, and Ease (SPACE); conducted a survey (787 respondents) and focus groups; researched funding options; and drafted the Athens Pedestrian Accessibility Plan – the message is clear: 1) Athens’ walkers and rollers seek SPACE; 2) Sidewalks are a public good; 3) Current processes and funding are inadequate; 4) Long-range funding is needed; 5) City Administration, City Council, and community must make a commitment; and 6) It’s time to make our sidewalks accessible and build the future we want – next steps: Council Members can add substantive comments to Google doc by February 1; Voinovich School experts will do final edits and formatting; the ad hoc Committee hopes the final version will be complete by mid-March; and this plan is a major first step – the next steps will require an implementation group – it is important that this plan keep moving forward

-Swank – asked about sidewalk grinding

-Bouvier – sidewalk grinding is milling down to level uneven sidewalks for safety – less expensive, short-term solution with a huge impact

-Swank – need to improve crosswalk accessibility in upcoming Washington and West State Street projects, and asked the best way to accomplish this

-Bouvier – recommended including a qualified ADA-trained person as part of the construction team to oversee ADA requirements – using paved, stamped concrete instead of using bricks for crosswalks

-Delach – the Disabilities Commission, Accessibility Committee, has completed rock and roll audits providing guidance to the City Administration with details and recommendations – agrees, it is critical that these next two projects are done right

-McCarey – the ad hoc Committee’s sidewalk plan is consistent with the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan – asked about incorporating art onto the sidewalks

-Hunter – art was discussed and would dovetail nicely with the plan, adding interest to the sidewalks

-Crowl – asked if the Committee has a recommendation for neighborhoods that do not currently have sidewalks

-Bouvier – initially, every neighborhood should have a sidewalk on at least one side of the street – understands that each neighborhood has its own personality – need to connect with neighborhoods

-Crowl – appreciates it will be a case-by-case basis

-President Knisely – thanked the Committee and acknowledging former Council Members Arian Smedley and Peter Kotses as well as City Planner Paul Logue

-Natalie Whitman, Fairview – is a walking commuter – 100% supports this initiative – City needs to take a step forward in making these good choices for our community – would be supportive of a tax levy or a cost-share program – this initiative is in the best interest of the City’s pedestrian public

-Carolyn Lewis – is encouraged by the work of the Committee and urged the City to make our sidewalks better for everyone

-Amy Delach, Morris – the Committee’s plan is important from a sustainability perspective – the Environment & Sustainability Commission’s 2030 goal is to have 70% of our community routinely walking and biking – the best way to meet this goal is by improving our infrastructure

-Glen Matlack, Morris – sidewalk maintenance over the years appears to have been small sections of isolated sidewalk repairs scattered around the City – suggested the City needs to look at the sidewalks as a connected system – is pleased with the recommendations of the Committee, and urged the City Council and Administration to move them forward

-Matt Flanigan, Fort Street – lives adjacent to the Court/Fairview stairs that are in general disrepair, as well as sidewalks in the near uptown area – is pleased with the finding of the Committee and would support a levy to fund their recommendations

-Grosvenor resident – many sidewalks are inaccessible to strollers – supports whatever can help make this better

- West Washington Sidewalk & Safety Improvements (Project #335, cost increase)
  - Deputy Service-Safety Director Chiki – explained that an increase of \$70,000 is requested for appropriation and expenditure from the Street Fund in order to award the alternate bid for additional sidewalk removal/replacement, and increasing the total expenditure for this project from \$150,000 to \$220,000
  - Swank – clarified that the expansion would include the east side of Shafer
  - Mayor – yes, this additional work will correct a lot of sidewalk that is in very poor condition
  - Ziff – this is an important project to the west side community
  - Delach – endorsed expansion onto Shafer – the west side has some of the worst sidewalks in the City, and this is one of the key areas that really needs improvement

## **ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:**

1. Project #335