

# MINUTES

## CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### MARCH 28, 2022

Members in Attendance:

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

Administrators and  
Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely  
Mayor Patterson  
Service-Safety Director Stone

#### ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Tennis and Pickleball Courts
  - McCarey – legislation was recently referred back to committee – input has been received from the Recreation Advisory Board – asked for an update from Service-Safety Director Stone
  - S-S Director – requests an appropriation of \$250,000 to the APR Income Tax Fund and \$50,000 to the ARPA Fund to expend on construction of said courts – the authorized expenditure will be slightly higher to include design work that was appropriated earlier – the Arts, Parking and Recreation Director will be applying for a NatureWorks Grant – if received, it will offset some of the cost of this project, approximately \$35,000
  - McCarey – asked how the plans have evolved for this project
  - S-S Director – the price tag was higher when the courts were being built on the west side of East Park Drive, with one of the major cost drivers being site prep due to soil condition and building a base – the revised plan will place the pickleball courts on the old Ohio University airport runway behind the Community Center that already has pavement that would not require the additional earthwork, plus easier access to electricity, driving the cost down
  - McCarey – understands the timeline for this construction completion will be summer, 2023
  - Swank – understands there will be a reconfiguration of the proposed solar arrays
  - S-S Director – need to prepare for that to occur – accessing the land owned by the Hocking Conservancy District, south of the Public Library, may be

problematic – City is looking at other options – reviewing placing all of the arrays east of US 33 – the solar array project will need to be approved by City Council  
-Swank – such a move may eliminate the possibility of putting two tennis courts in that area

-S-S Director – if a decision is made to put the tennis courts in this area, the solar array will need to be placed elsewhere – looking at possibly replacing the panels that are currently over the Community Center parking lot with more efficient panels – also looking at the Wastewater Treatment Plant site – adding, the more you breakup the solar array, the more efficiency you lose

-Swank – it is reassuring that the City will work to make the courts happen at the proposed location – shared concern that the City may remove the hockey rink area or reduce its size to make space for the pickleball courts

-Mayor – noted that the current tennis courts will be available for repurposing of other outdoor programming – adding, the Director is also looking at relocating, and has gotten public feedback on other locations for two dog park areas, one for large dogs and one for small dogs

-Crowl – feels he would be remiss if he did not bring up other recreation issues – he is in support of the tennis and pickleball courts, however, wished to remind Council that the soccer and ultimate frisbee communities do not have adequate space for their sports – soccer fields are currently in the floodway and it is very difficult to play in that area – need to support all of our recreation groups

-Ziff – asked the reason for building new tennis courts instead of rehabbing the existing courts

-Mayor – due to high water events the current location is not the best

-Swank – since 1990 those courts have been under water 21 times – undermining the soil in the area

-Spjeldnes – while these courts are costly, she feels there is the potential to enhance the community by adding the pickleball courts – understands it can be a draw for tournaments

-Swank – agrees, the courts could be an economic driver

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

1. Tennis & Pickleball Courts
2. NatureWorks Grant Application

# MINUTES: MARCH 28, 2022

## FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members in Attendance:

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

Administrators and/or  
Other Elected Officials:

Acting Mayor Knisely  
Service-Safety Director Stone  
Auditor Hecht

### ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Athens County Library: Imagination Library
  - Nick Tepe, Director – early literacy is important (see attached)
  - Spjeldnes – asked how families find out about this program, how it is being promoted
  - Tepe – families receive information on this program from Athens City Schools, clients of Hopewell Health Centers and Jobs & Family Services, as well as through the Public Library
  - Mayor – noted that, at the time of birth, Ohio Health offers enrollment in this program
  - Swank – this is a great program and encouraged Council approve the proposed funding
  - Tepe – noted that all books mailed out are age appropriate to the child
  - Risner – appreciates this program, and feels the proposed funding request is reasonable
- Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA)
  - Jessie Powers, Executive Director – (see attached) explained that the 2019 updated ORCA bylaws commit the members to three annual payments of \$90,000 – explained the Council of Governments (COG) was created to deliver economic, social, environmental, and health benefits associated with outdoor recreation asset development, specifically the Bailey Trail System – in 2021 an additional (5) miles of trail was built, increasing the total mileage of the planned 88-mile mountain bike optimized trail system to 31, spending a majority of the 2021 membership dues – a \$2 million State budget award was received to develop the Bailey Trail System, trail miles and the adjacent infrastructure needed for support – this will guarantee that we reach a destination level trail system – 2021 saw some great visitation success – initial estimates resulted in an additional \$5.3 million of economic impact in Athens County, with \$3.6 million being a direct impact – anticipate that will grow even more as at least 59 miles of trail will be reached due to that budget award – another grant award from the Appalachian Regional Commission was received to support ORCA and partners like AceNet, Rural Action, Ohio's Winding Road, and the Buckeye Trail in

developing the outdoor recreation economy in Southeast Ohio, from trail construction, providing support to entrepreneurs, and engaging communities in ways they can reap some of the benefits associated with outdoor recreation

-Crowl – is in full support of continuing the City’s membership – asked about conversations with the Athens County Commissioners and renewing their membership

-Powers – they are members and complying with the bylaws, and they have paid their \$90,000 membership dues for 2022

-Risner – asked for any projection as to when the trail might reach completion

-Powers – again, hoping to complete the trail to 59 miles this year, however that may roll into next year’s construction season, depending on the weather – the \$2 million State budget award is not the full build out, so will continue to pursue investments in order to reach project completion

-Crowl – asked about the construction season

-Powers – approximately May to November

-Spjeldnes – understands it will be a draw for tourists, boost business, and help business expansion in our adjacent communities at the trailheads, as well as offer healthful outdoor activity for our community members

-Powers – this trail system is hoping do all of these things – upon completion this will be the largest contiguous trail system east of the Mississippi River in order to reach the national stage – utilizing the Bailey Trail System, not just to put trail miles on the ground, but as an anchor asset to secure other strategic infrastructure investments like connection with the HockHocking Adena Bikeway – it is absolutely building a tourism destination – believes there is value in an entire region offering recreational opportunities, attracting a family of visitors for a week vs a weekend

-Spjeldnes – asked about encouraging entrepreneurship

-Powers – a new market of consumers will be arriving, creating opportunities for new businesses to meet that demand

-Mayor – a Voinovich School study has looked at the economic impact in terms of tourism and money being spent at \$3 million + with just the existing number of trails – clarified that City funds being used for this membership fee is from tourism dollars, not general income tax – this trail will help raise up our local economy and keep it strong

-Swank – asked what other political entities, aside from the County, pay dues to ORCA

-Powers – according to the bylaws it is only the two entities, City and County, with a population above 20,000 – other entities provide a \$500 in-kind contribution – the projected economic impact of the Bailey Trail System in 2018 was \$40 million in increased spending and 78 new jobs in Athens County – this takes into account the trail’s close proximity and the amenities offered by the City of Athens

- Authorization to Replace Community Center Roof

-Crowl – the estimate for the new roof is about \$428,000 that includes the engineering design, and an anchor system for the solar panels that will be

installed at a later date – will use remaining funds in the Community Center, Phase II Fund (old levy funding), supplemented by the Arts, Parks, and Recreation Income Tax Fund (new levy funding)

-S-S Director – added, the Community Center was built 20+ years ago and the roof is nearing its useful life

-Spjeldnes – asked about the lifespan of the new roof

-S-S Director – he will check and provide the exact estimated lifespan – it will be at least 25 years, but he will find out

-Swank – asked what affect the solar panels may have on the roof

-S-S Director – he will check into that and report back

- Staffing

-Crowl – request to remove assistant Groundskeeper at (0.365 time) and add an additional full time groundskeeper, eliminating the Meter Repairer (staff member has retired), and adding an additional Parking Enforcement Officer in current staffing levels (these are all Union positions)

-Stone – last year when the AFSCME 2403(1) contract was approved, the Groundskeeper position became a part of that Union contract and should be removed from the Non-Union pay grades – a new job description for Parking Enforcement Officers has been written to include meter repair, and moving them from an (A4) pay grade into that of the (A5) Meter Repairer – there is less meter repair activity since moving to the smart meters – a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will need to be authorized by City Council and approved by AFSCME 2403(1) in order to make these changes – it is a \$.25 hourly pay increase for the Parking Enforcement Officers – added, there will be significant revenue increase by adding an additional Parking Enforcement Officer – this is the right time to make this change due to the recent retirement of the meter repairer

-Spjeldnes – questioned needing an additional Parking Enforcement Officer

-S-S Director – parking enforcement is a necessary evil because the City does not have a lot of on-street parking spaces – one of the purposes of the streets is to allow businesses to thrive through vehicular parking turnover, and that can only be achieved through enforcement

-President – residential neighborhoods, like Ward 1, also do not have enough off-street parking and residents may need to find space on the street – parking enforcement, through the City's 24-hour parking regulation, helps keep vehicular turnover on those streets as well

-McCarey – asked about the general workload of our Parking Enforcement Officers and whether we have needed this additional staff member for sometime

-S-S Director – complaints have been received from business owners regarding a lack of enforcement in certain areas, so, yes, there is a need – storage parking in the neighborhoods has been another complaint

-Mayor – City is getting ready to deploy some 20-minute parking meters, strategically placed in the uptown area, for patrons to quickly run into a business to pick up an item and then leave – these will require a somewhat higher level of enforcement due to the short timeframe

-Swank – asked if the 20-minute meters will be easily recognizable

-Mayor – they will

- Appropriations

- (115,900.00) to APR Income Tax Fund (Community Center Roof)

- (\$5,000.00) to Community Center Phase II

- (\$20,000.00) to Street Rehabilitation Fund (first payment to OPWC for Stimson Project)

- (\$1,000.00) to Storm Water Fund (postage for certified mailings)

  - Spjeldes – asked for clarification on the type of mailing

  - S-S Director – violations must be sent by certified mail to maintain enforcement of the City's storm water quality

  - McCarey – asked whether these are residential violations

  - S-S Director – most are from large construction sites, fewer from small businesses and residential

  - Risner – asked if this is strictly for the Hocking watershed

  - S-S Director – by and large the Hocking is the main tributary, but it is for all river/watershed systems within the City

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

1. ORCA
2. Community Center Roof
3. Staffing
4. Appropriations