

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO
COUNCIL MINUTES

July 14, 2012

Special Meeting

The special meeting of Council was called to order by President Berry in the Council Chambers at 8:40 a.m., City Hall, with the following members present:

Mr. Davis Ms. Klemack-McGraw Mr. Berry Mr. Bennett Ms. Albright

1. The purpose of this meeting was to update the Retreat items listed for the Town Center. Those items were:

- Pizzuti proposal
- Perimeter parking around Lumberyard site and green space in middle until great opportunity happens.
- Expansion of Library to make focal point of Town Center
- Community Center for Grove City (like Westerville Athletic Center)
- Realign parking in T.C. and buy green house on Civic Pl.
- Increase housing opportunities/zoning to encourage T.C. residency

Council and the Mayor reviewed each item with the following discussion:

- Pizzuti proposal

Mayor passed out a recap of Pizzuti's status. He said they have architects engaged to do massing and layout studies. They have met with the Library several times.

The Mayor said the Administration threw in the look at the Safety building and City Hall for needs with them. He said the Mayor's Court is too busy for the space. Pizzuti is to have a summary to Administration by the end of the month.

Pizzuti is also talking to private property owners. The Mayor explained that this is a private developer doing this on their own and not for the City.

A preliminary development concept and financial proposal is to be presented to Grove City at the end of August/beginning of Sept. A refinement will follow at the end of Sept. The Mayor said this is a very aggressive timeline.

Mr. Berry commented that the overview from Pizzuti suggested apartments, condo's., more housing downtown. He asked for general thoughts from Council.

Mr. Bennett said he would like to see consideration given to possibly increasing density for single-family "cape cod like" homes in the Town Center area. He said we can't just arbitrarily rezone properties and must understand our constraints. He thought some high end apartments could be acceptable.

Ms. Albright agreed. However, she has heard Pizzuti change the number of apartment units each time they talk to groups. Mr. Boso said that is due to the refinement of the project.

Mr. Davis said he likes what he hears. He said it is a little secretive in some respects, but he understands the balance. The Mayor said there is no secret with our part. Pizzuti is dealing with individual property owners and that may seem a bit secretive.

Ms. Klemack-McGraw said she too is excited about the potential. She believes empty-nesters would enjoy being able to walk to places and be in the Town Center area.

Mr. Berry said it sounds like we are all on the same page when it comes to housing. He said we need to be ready for any possible changes in zoning.

- Perimeter parking around Lumberyard site and green space in middle until great opportunity happens.

Mr. Berry said with the interest in the Town Center now, anything we do with this area now has to be temporary. He asked if everyone agreed.

Mr. Davis agreed. Mr. Bennett agreed, but believes it still needs cleaned up and a little attention be given to it now. Ms. Albright said she is interested in seeing what Pizzuti has to offer. Ms. Klemack-McGraw said that area is an eye-sore and something needs to be done now to enhance it for the Town Center. Mr. Berry agreed with Ms. Klemack-McGraw. Although, he doesn't want to put a ton of money into it.

All agreed that what is done now is temporary and something should be done to improve it. **Mr. Berry asked Mr. Boso to look into putting in grass and cleaning up the site; allowing for parking as well, and bring that to Council, hopefully by the August 6 meeting.**

Council reviewed the green-frame plan for perimeter parking around City Hall. They discussed the preliminary cost estimates for these improvements.

Mr. Boso said if you don't know what the interior is going to be used for, you may not want to put parking around the exterior that may need torn out later. Mr. Berry said Pizzuti said that parking would be needed regardless.

Mayor Stage said he believes you need to separate out the idea of parking versus aesthetic improvements. Parking spaces can be added more cheaply.

After further discussion, **the Mayor said they would refine the proposal for the Grove City Road corridor and work on that potential. They will also look at the gravel area of the lumber yard and the Front Street site.**

- Expansion of Library to make focal point of Town Center

Mr. Boso said the Library has had a preliminary review done of their property. They have a footprint of an expansion for their building. In terms of trying to put the puzzle together, discussions are taking place with the Library to determine if spending \$2.2 million on an expansion would be the best opportunity or if moving to a new area would be better.

Mr. Berry noted that it has been said that the Library is the biggest driver of people coming to the Town Center. This expansion looks like a band-aid for them.

Mr. Davis said there is good discussion with the Director of the Library. There is a potential for a move. It would take some assistance from the City to do this. He believes this is acceptable.

Mr. Bennett said there is some excitement. He said the current Library building has the potential to add a second floor if they want, instead of sprawling. He said he is open to the idea. There are opportunities to maintain the historic flavor of the Town Center yet enhance it with new development. We need to maintain the strength of our Town Center.

Ms. Albright said she appreciates the Library's position. She said she is open to looking at all potential opportunities for all three of the big users – City Hall, Safety building, Library.

Ms. Klemack-McGraw said we have a tremendous potential and would be willing to look at moving the Library and looking toward the future. She said the Library is the focal point.

The Mayor said their model for the Town Center many years ago, was the City of Hudson. They have a library as their focal point.

Mr. Berry said the City owns the lot directly west of the existing library. An idea would be to expand in that direction as well and perhaps link City Hall to the Library. Could we all co-exist under the same roof, or close to it?

The Mayor said that is why Pizzuti, a professional developer, is looking at scenarios. Mr. Davis said he really appreciates the way Pizzuti has worked with the Library Director. He is a proponent of stand-alone libraries.

Many ideas were shared and it was determined that all were interested in entertaining the idea of moving the Library, City Hall within the Town Center.

Ms. Klemack-McGraw said she has talked to the Library Board and they are very sensitive about moving the Library to the main drag. They don't want to get into something that they can't maintain in the future. Mr. Davis said he appreciates this comment and doesn't want to continue sharing ideas, because this is what has pushed them back into their shell in the past.

Again, the consensus was that we will talk openly about all potential options and allow the open dialogue to continue.

Mr. Boso noted that we all realize the value of the library to this area and should be ready to make some bold moves.

- Realign parking in T.C. and buy green house on Civic Pl.

Discussion then took place over the home on Civic Place and pursuing the purchase of this property. Mr. Boso said we would all like to have that piece. They have engaged Rebecca Sommer and Andy Furr to discuss this with the property owner to get to a price more closely to the appraised value. Mayor Stage said we all feel that we should acquire this property, but the issue is tolerance to cost. He asked if we had an offer to the property owner. Mr. Boso said yes, but he isn't sure if it is acceptable. Mayor Stage asked if eminent domain is a possible option. Mr. Bennett said this is a lady's home and we must be sensitive to that. All agreed to pursue this. Mayor Stage noted that this acquisition would not be for parking only. It may add some, but the whole corridor needs improved. All agreed and asked it be pursued now.

- Community Center for Grove City (like Westerville Athletic Center)

Mr. Berry said he likes the idea of having one in the Town Center. He said he thinks it would be a draw for the area and goes to Ms. Albright's comment of having recreation here.

Mr. Boso shared what other communities have done recently and the potential costs associated with it. He said these examples are too large for the Town Center. He said it will take a new revenue source.

Council agreed to keep this on the radar. They believe there is merit to it.

Mayor Stage said they would get an ordinance ready to allocate a Study.

- Increase housing opportunities/zoning to encourage Town Center residency

Mr. Berry said this was discussed under the Pizzuti topic.

2. In addition, Council and the Mayor discussed the opportunities/challenges surrounding the potential with Beulah Park and the role the City should play.

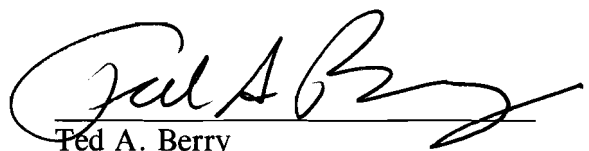
Mayor Stage said this is not our property and the owners changed the State Constitution. They have the power to do things beyond our scope. We have had open discussion with them. It is zoned for a specific use. The Race Track will be open through the 2013 season. He said we allow tax abatement on that site, so we do have some leverage with that incentive. He said we are willing to work with them and they know it. However, they are more interested in opening their casino and moving their license before getting into any discussions.

Mr. Berry voiced support for the City owning this property. He said we need a large open space and is not interested, at this point, in adding more housing to this area. Mayor Stage said the City needs taxable property. He is just not ready to discuss any potential ideas. Mr. Berry said this meeting is just to put ideas out and let everyone know what they are thinking. Ms. Albright said there is an historical value to that property and those buildings, so if there is any potential to retain that historical value, she sees the need. Mayor Stage said we are losing an industry. One thought is how can we retain part of that industry, if desired.

3. A motion was made and approved by unanimous consent to adjourn.

Council adjourned at 10:40 a.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council


Ted A. Berry
President