

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO

COUNCIL MINUTES

July 09, 2007

Special Meeting

The Special meeting of Council was called to order by President Lester, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 4035 Broadway. Roll was called and the following members were present:

Larry Corbin

Maria Klemack

Rich Lester

"Ike" Stage

Editor's Note: Mr. Berry arrived at 6:34 p.m.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and explained that this was a work session for Council to informally discuss their ideas for the Downtown area. He introduced Mr. Martin Jenkins, Organizational Resources Group, who is the Facilitator for the meeting.

1. Mr. Jenkins thanked President Lester and said he is pleased to be here to take part in this opportunity. He explained that he spoke to most of Council prior to the meeting tonight. He said from those calls he understands that no one is interested in impeding the project with Stonehenge Company. It has its own schedule and process that is already underway. He explained that he is a Process Facilitator and his role tonight is to structure a conversation and develop a list of what he finds to be the consensus issues that they want to address. He said he will facilitate discussion among the Council Members and key members of the Administration. No formal decision will be taken this evening.

He began by stating that in his research, he believes there is a need to make some fundamental decisions about confirming the desire for a Downtown Plan; Why do a Plan; What are the Proposed Outcomes; and What is the Context – how does it fit with other efforts. If there is to be a Plan, then discussion needs to take place about the substance of the Plan – the geographical area; the duration of the plan; what are the desired Plan elements; what direction do they want to give to the Administration. Finally, there is time for The Good of the Order.

Mr. Jenkins asked members why they need a Downtown Plan or do they.

Mr. Stage said he believed they did need a plan. The old one was done about 21 years ago and is out of date. He also suspects that 60 – 70% of that plan is complete. A new plan is needed to meet new and current conditions.

Mr. Berry said connectivity to city-owned properties and services. Making sure they are in the right spots to meet the needs of the residents.

Mayor Grossman suggested the continued enhancement of the Town Center with retail, office & residential land uses.

Mr. Stage commented that the shopping center, east of I-71, is a radical change to the whole community and has an impact on the Town Center. Mr. Jenkins suggested that those shops were competition. Mayor Grossman said she didn't feel those shops were competition for the Town Center, as the shops downtown are more unique. Mr. Jenkins stated that there is a changing mix in the area of land uses. All agreed.

Mayor Grossman suggested that we retain our proactive culture.

Suggestions continued with: there be a niche development; maintain the heritage of the City and Town Center; retain existing development and grow development.

Mr. Jenkins then asked what the Outcomes should be. What will this Plan help the City accomplish?

Mayor Grossman suggested it be a guide to land uses.

Mr. Stage said he would like it to be a road map; a product that can be a consensus builder.

Mr. Berry suggested a guide to economic development decisions.

Mr. Corbin stated that it needs to be a flexible plan.

Mr. Jenkins then asked about the Context. He asked how this Plan would fit with other efforts.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the Comprehensive Plan is looking at the entire City. He asked when it would be finished. Mayor Grossman stated that it is in the last quarter of its completion.

President Lester stated the he believes the Downtown Plan would be a compliment to the Comprehensive Plan. It is more of a broad brush plan, rather than a more specific idea on one area.

Mr. Stage commented that he believes the Comprehensive Plan is in the stratosphere with long range ideas. The Downtown Plan gets us to Ohio and the Stonehenge development gets us to Grove City.

Mr. Berry suggested that there needs to be cross-communication with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee with those performing the Downtown Plan. Mr. Stage said Stonehenge should be included in that cross-communication. Mr. Berry suggested that there may need to be some communication with Urbancrest officials, as there was a newspaper article about a development just north of I-270 on Broadway.

Mr. Jenkins asked what the Substance of the Plan should be. What are we planning for?

Mr. Jenkins referenced the boundaries of the Central Business District, the Historical Preservation Area and the Revitalization area.

Mr. Stage stated that he believes the Town Center is the description for today. He said there are points of destination in the downtown that are outside the core "Town Center", such as the grocery store, Beulah Park, Windsor Park, the Library, etc. He wonders how those destination areas can be incorporated.

Mr. Jenkins said he is hearing that the Plan would be for the core "Town Center" and then tie it to the points of destination.

Discussion took place over what the boundaries should be for the "area".

Mr. Boso, Dir. of Dev., commented that the boundaries don't need to be defined. He believes we should give someone the task of reviewing the different areas we already have and tell us if they are correct.

For purposes of consistency, Mr. Jenkins suggested that we call this the Town Center. Soft boundaries were set as: Kingston along the South, First Street along the East, Cleveland Ave. along the North; and properties facing Front Street, including Massinelli's along the west.

It was agreed that the area shouldn't be boxed in. It should start with the core "Town Center" that was implemented from the plan done in the 1980's and expand upon it in the new plan.

Mr. Jenkins asked about the Duration of the Plan.

Mr. Corbin commented that with the growth of the community, he believes a five – ten year plan is best.

Mr. Jenkins asked what the Elements should be.

Mayor Grossman commented that we need to be careful not to put the planners in a box.

Mr. Berry said an inventory needs to be done and look at the infrastructure and land uses.

Mr. Stage suggested that the influence of the existing corridors and influence of future corridors needs to be included. He said he would like for the Plan to provide 5 strategic points. For example: Protect the Core City; No conversion of residential uses; etc.

Mr. Jenkins suggested 5 strategic principals. He said he hears Mr. Stage saying he wants a Policy Plan. A guide to what the cities policies ought to be relative to applications for rezoning, strategic principals as to where to invest community dollars, where to influence development to produce the kind of community you want.

Mr. Jenkins asked what Direction to give to the Administration.

Mr. Jenkins commented that in terms of the RFP, we don't want to box in the consultants. He also heard that they want to preserve the neighborhoods and consider expanding the HPA.

It was determined that the process needs to have: Lots of input; lots of communication with Council, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, Stonehenge, and the Public.

Mr. Berry said there needs to be a timeline to get this done.

It was suggested that six months be set. President Lester said he believes that six months is aggressive. He believes the work of the Planner may be done in six months, but getting the Plan may take nine months or more. Mr. Corbin said he was flexible, but if no time limit is set, we will be waiting a year from now. President Lester agreed.

Mr. Jenkins asked Mr. Boso if an RFP could be written, based on the discussion tonight. Mr. Boso asked if it was a consensus to do an RFP. If so, what does Council see as their involvement in that process? He said we don't have to do an RFP. He already has a proposal from a company that covers about 90% of the issues tonight. He said he wants everyone to be certain of their roles.

Mr. Stage said if the discussion from tonight is placed in the RFP, then Council does not need to be involved in the RFP process. Mr. Berry agreed.

Mr. Boso asked, more specifically, if Council wants the Administration to advertise for consultants.

Mr. Corbin said if we already have a proposal that does most of this, why reinvent the wheel. Mr. Berry said the RFP process wouldn't exclude Mr. Elmer's proposal. Mr. Boso said in a normal RFP process, you ask for consultants. You are not allowed for prices. You would interview those consultants; choose your top three; begin negotiating the price; bring the negotiated proposal to Council for approval. Mr. Stage clarified that we are exempt from doing an RFP. Mr. Boso said that was correct. He confirmed that Council would not be involved in that process. Mr. Stage said that was correct. Mr. Boso said then what they suggest would be it. Mr. Stage suggested that hybrid RFP be done. He suggested that a couple of other consultants be contacted to provide pricing for a study. Mr. Boso, said just so there is no confusion, when Administration comes back three months from now, they will say – here it is. Mr. Jenkins asked for confirmation. Council said yes.

Mayor Grossman commented that there will be plenty of input and communication throughout the process.

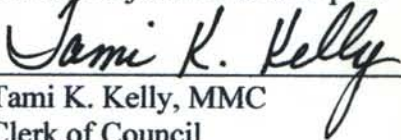
Ms. Reichard clarified that the six month clock starts after the award of the contract. Mr. Jenkins agreed.

2. Mr. Jenkins turned the meeting back over to President Lester. President Lester thanked Mr. Jenkins for getting them through this element of the process. He asked Mr. Boso if it was clear to him what he has been asked to do. Mr. Boso said yes.
3. President Lester opened the floor for citizens to offer comments about the meeting. He said they are just beginning this process, and answers may not be readily available tonight.

Many attendees offered comments on their thoughts and ideas for the Town Center and the hybrid RFP. Comments included:

- Looking at the viability of relocating Grove City Road.
- Consultant complete a survey via the internet and utilize the city's web site; e-mail.
- Concerns voiced over the plan from Stonehenge and it moving forward without direction from this Plan.
- Concern voiced to find the best consultant.
- Concern voiced over performing an RFP when it isn't necessary.
- A desire for all the "Lamp Lighter" signs to be brought back to the Town Center and not used out along Stringtown/Buckeye Parkway.
- An emphasis on sustaining what we have and building growth upon it.
- Include the Town Center Merchants in all communication.

Council adjourned at 8:20 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council


Richard D. Lester
President