CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO
COUNCIL MINUTES

November 16, 2020 Regular Meeting

Council reviewed the agenda in Caucus at 6:30 and the regular meeting of Council was called to order by President Houk at 7:00 p.m. by a virtual Webex connection due to the Coronavirus-19 pandemic, as temporarily allowed by the State.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Roby Schottke *Aaron Schlabach* *Christine Houk* *Randy Holt* *Ted Berry*

1. Mr. Schlabach moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting and approve as written; seconded by Mr. Schottke.

Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes

2. President Houk recognized members of the YMCA for a presentation.

Mr. Tony Collins, CEO, provided an update of the operations of the YMCA. He thanked everyone for the CARES Grant dollars, so they can offer care and services to the citizens. He said Grove City is the largest attended Y in Central Ohio. Even now, with the limited operations, the daily attendance is the highest. He said the impact of COVID-19 has knocked them down, but they are getting their feet underneath them and continuing to serve the residents. They have been able to provide first responder child care; homeless shelter; outreach for food and services. He said they have been open since June, in a socially-distanced, safe environment. There has only been one (1) case in one of the buildings. He said they are looking to expand hours, barring any changes from the Governor. He said they appreciate the partnership with Grove City and want to continue discussions of what that partnership looks like in the future.

3. The Chair read the agenda items and they were approved by unanimous consent.

Mr. Holt moved to add Res. CR-53-20 under Finance; seconded by Ms. Houk.

Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes

The Chair recognized Mr. Schottke, Chairman of Lands, for discussion and voting under said Committee.

1. Ordinance C-58-20 (Authorize the City Administrator to Execute a Pre-Annexation Agreement with the Virgil H. Sidner Trust and the Elizabeth Ann Sidner Trust for approximately 290+ acres located North of S.R. 665 and East of U.S. 62) was given its second reading and public hearing.

Mr. Chuck Boso, City Administer, explained the details of the Agreement. He said it would require property owner to annex the 200+ acres from Pleasant & Jackson Townships. The zoning upon annexation would be rural/agricultural; the 1994 Community Reinvestment Area would be required to be extended – giving the property a 100% abatement for 15 years; the land owner would have to become part of a New Community Authority – which requires the payment of 15% of the new property tax value; the City would enter into an Economic Development Grant Program for any profits from farming on the land - to grant income tax back to property owners for any agricultural.

Mr. Schottke stated that this is just the Pre-annexation Agreement and there would be other pieces of legislation needed. Mr. Boso said yes – the services resolution; the annexation ordinance; the ordinance to extend the CRA; the ordinance to enact the New Community Authority.

Ms. Houk voiced her concerns over the expansion of the CRA; the Economic Development Grant refund for agriculture. She said there may have been a time where this was needed, but doesn't believe it is necessary in 2020. She said she does not share the entire vision for what is trying to be accomplished. She said this agreement gets the ball rolling and she has sticking points with it.

Mr. Schottke asked Mr. Turner, Dir. of Finance, how much property tax and income tax is being received. Mr. Turner said none.

Mr. Schlabach asked what the effective difference is between a CRA and a TIFF. Mr. Turner and Mr. Boso explained the primary differences between the two – CRA's abate the increased value of a property for 15 years, with taxes still being collected on the existing value; TIFF's redistribute the tax, there is no tax break.

Mayor Stage noted that this property was discussed 17 years ago because of the strategic importance of being able to control our own destiny, particularly with property north of S.R.665 and adjacent to the landfill. He stated that about 80% of our existing CRA's have matured and no tax abatement is being given. He said, of the 20% left, 200+ acres is owned by SWACO and has generated zero benefit. Additionally, SWACO does not pay property tax. He said this is trying to build the inventory of developable sites for future development. He said this is to position the City for the same benefits that everyone has realized with Stringtown Road development, etc.

Ms. Houk asked if any business in the City has left after the 15 year abatement was exhausted. Mr. Boso, City Admin., said he did not know of any. He then shared charts of the existing Community Reinvestment Areas within the City and the taxes that have been realized with the tax abatement. He said without incentives, it puts Grove City at a disadvantage against other Central Ohio municipalities. Mayor State followed-up and noted that 97% of all the space in the city is leased. While he knows of no business that has left, the fact is there is very little space left for any business to move into. Ms. Houk stated that this is supposed to be driving the revenue stream and job creation. She asked what the driving force is behind this. She said although the existing property value stays, the real property improvements will not be taxed.

Mr. Holt commented that he sees this as a positive step in controlling development in the area. He said SWACO is looking for symbiotic businesses to put in next to them. He said every City has to have tools for development. He said he doesn't want any more landfill-related activities in this area and believes this will prevent that.

Mr. Berry stated that we no longer have any space for new economic development/new jobs. He said a Green Technology Park with high paying jobs could be developed. However, because of the Dump, it must be incentivized to bring in any development. He said if we can control the land, via zoning, he thinks this is a positive step because the public will be able to weigh in to any future development. He said would like to have a theme and something that is attractive for the community.

Mr. Robert Ruth, resident, stated that he realizes this is a problem area, however he voiced apprehension over expanding the Community Reinvestment Area. He said voters in the District approved tax levies for certain services. By doing this, Council takes those taxes away and gives them to wealthy developers.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Schottke moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Holt.

Ms. Houk	No
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	No

2. Ordinance C-64-20 (Approve a Special Use Permit for a Day Care Center for Kiddie Academy Grove City located South of Stringtown Rd. and East of Buckeye Parkway) was given its first reading. Second reading and public hearing will be held on 12-07-2020.

3. Resolution CR-49-20 (Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a Carriage House Garage located on the Southwest corner of Columbus St. and Arbutus Ave. in the Historical Preservation Area) was given its reading and public hearing.

Mr. Larry Titus, property owner, was present to answer any questions. He said he wants to build a garage that compliments the era of the home and accepts the stipulation, and with no habitation.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Schottke moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Holt.

Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes

4. Resolution CR-50-20 (Approve the Development Plan for Balanced Family Academy located west of Hoover Road and north of S.R. 665) was given its reading and public hearing.

Mr. Schottke reviewed the stipulations and deviations recommended by Planning Commission. He said the deviations should go away when the rest of the property is developed.

Mr. Kyle Rauch, Dir. of Dev., provided an overview of the project.

Mr. Canter Bean, architect, was present and accepted the stipulations.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Schottke moved it be approved; seconded by Ms. Houk.

Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes

5. Resolution CR-51-20 (Approve the Development Plan for Beulah Park – Section 2 located south of Southwest Blvd. and east of Demorest Rd.) was given its reading and public hearing.

Mr. Kyle Rauch, Dir. of Dev., explained the stipulations and changes to the Park Street traffic calming circle.

Mr. Don Plank, attorney, was present to answer any questions and agreed to the stipulations.

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Schottke moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Schlabach.

Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes

The Chair recognized Mr. Holt, Chairman of Finance for discussion and voting under said Committee.

1. Ordinance C-60-20 (Levy Special Assessments for the Stringtown Road Sanitary Sewer and Waterline Improvements) was given its second reading and public hearing and Mr. Holt moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Schlabach.

Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes

2. Ordinance C-62-20 (Transfer $137,500.00 from the Deposit Trust Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund for Borror Road funding) was given its second reading and public hearing and Mr. Holt moved it be approved; seconded by Ms. Houk.

Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes

3. Ordinance C-63-20 (Authorize the City Administrator to enter into Agreements with the Chillicothe Telephone Company for the installation and maintenance of Fiber to the Data Center containing the City's Server Infrastructure) was given its second reading and public hearing.

   Mr. Holt explained that this will save the City about $22,000.00 per year.

   There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Holt moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Schottke.

Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes

4. Ordinance C-65-20 (Reduce the Appropriation Amounts for Various Funds) was given its first reading. Second reading and public hearing will be held on 12-07-2020.

5. Ordinance C-66-20 (Appropriate $50,000.00 from the S.R.665 Tax Increment Equivalent Fund for the Current Expense of paying Franklin County Auditor Collection costs) was given its first reading. Second reading and public hearing will be held on 12-07-2020.

6. Ordinance C-67-20 (Appropriate $20,000.00 from the Scioto Township Joint Economic Development District Fund for the Current Expense of making payments in accordance with the JEDD Contract) was given its first reading. Second reading and public hearing will be held on 12-07-2020.

7. Ordinance C-68-20 (Appropriate $250,000.00 from the General Fund for the Current Expense of removing a Portion of Arbutus Ave. for the intended Town Center Park) was given its first reading. Second reading and public hearing will be held on 12-07-2020.

8. Resolution CR-52-20 (Extend the date by which the City Administrator must report to Council under Ord. C-21-19 to January 15, 2021) was given its reading and public hearing.

   Ms. Houk stated that this ordinance was adopted in June, 2019 and the premise was to effective increase efforts toward accountability and transparency for contracts over $100,000.00. She said she e-mailed Mr. Boso on 6/22/2020, listing this as an outstanding item; she mentioned it at the Council meeting on 9/18/2020; she called Mr. Holt and talked over the history of this ordinance. She asked what will change between now and 1/15/2021; have Requests for Proposals been put out for any of these contracts. She suggested that no appropriations be approved for any of these contracts until we are compliant with the ordinance.

   Mr. Boso, City Admin., acknowledged Ms. Houk's timeline. He stated it has been a crazy year and he underestimated the time it would take to prepare requests for qualifications. He said it is not a request for funding. He said this ordinance affects three professional services: legal, engineering, and tax collection. He said he hopes to have them advertised in the next 10 days. From them, they will receive qualifications that can be used to negotiate payment to each. He apologized for his oversight.

   There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Holt moved it be approved; seconded by Mr. Schlabach.

Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	No
Mr. Holt	Yes

9. Resolution CR-53-20 (Authorizing the use of Local Coronavirus Relief Funds to be distributed to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Jackson Township and Franklin County Public Health) was given its reading and public hearing.

   Mr. Holt explained that this distributes Coronavirus Relief Funds as sub-grants. The monies must be used under the same terms and timelines as the City and there isn't much time left.

   There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Holt moved it be approved; seconded by Ms. Houk.

Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes

Mayor Stage noted that if the Auditor rejects the use of these funds as an allowable expense for the Jackson Township Medic, the City will split the cost of the medic with the Township. He said this is the only one that has a caveat attached to it.

The Chair asked that any new business to be brought before the attention of Council be done so at this time.

1. Mr. Berry stated that he and Mr. Holt have been brainstorming over the parks and felt it was a good time to share some options and opportunities. Mr. Holt said when talking about parks, they are including: Downtown, Beulah Amphitheater, Beulah entrance, Breck Park, and Pinnacle Park. He said he feels they should be look at more holistically, in order to make some strategic decisions. For example, he believes the old library site should be a minimal park with green space and our monies should go toward Beulah Amphitheater and entrance; and not make two big parks for those two places. He said a package with: Beulah, the old library lot, Breck Park gazebo & paths; plaza and entrances to Beulah = financing options. They ticked the General Bond box because the City has some bond capacity available and it is a good time to borrow money. He said public input would be needed, but he would like to have a plan for them to review and comment on. He said the purpose tonight is not to figure it all out, but he would like to get the ball progressing so legislation can be submitted and move forward on some of these parks. He share another package for Pinnacle Park. He said this funding source would be the TIFF and these funds need to be put to use. Mr. Berry said this is an attempt to put some framing around some of this and get the ball moving.

Ms. Houk commented that Pinnacle Park has a conceptual plan as well as a commitment of Pinnacle TIFF dollars that are tied to the Pinnacle Quarry development. She said there needs to be a real conversation about the debt limit and current percentage; the debt limit that is already tied to Beulah Park. She also noted that, as it relates to the prioritization of the Beulah Amphitheater, the property owner purchased the land for $4.975 million; the City invested $3 million of Racetrack Redevelopment funds for this property; $6 million in Bonds for Columbus Street extension; $5 million for infrastructure on the site; $$$ for land purchase for the new Brookpark Middle school; dollars for infrastructure improvements to Southwest Blvd. & Demorest Road; dollars for exploring the Plaza development. She said there will need to be a really compelling case to the residents of what is an appropriate investment in Beulah Park in the short term. She said with all the balls we currently have in the air, she asked that we be mindful of the time that we are in right now and the uncertain impact that this pandemic will have on the community.

Mr. Schottke thanked Mr. Berry & Holt for thinking of all this and creating a conversation about them. He said he is willing to listen and think about ways to get these things done in a timely manner instead of a little bit at a time. He said he believes that Beulah Park is the gateway to the western side of the City and it is a total change in how people are perceiving large developments.

The Chair recognized members of Administration and Council for closing comments.

1. Mayor Stage reported that the CEO and CMO of OSU James Hospital came to visit and they are looking for more space. He reported on the Working Capital Grant Program, which is almost exhausted for the second time. He noted that Columbus put out a new policy on minor misdemeanors, which Grove City does not embrace. He said we will continue to uphold our laws and protect our citizens. He noted that the 2021 proposed budget is on-line for review. It all works if the pandemic lets up and the State Legislature doesn't change the tax administration. He thanked Prime One and the Church of the Nazarene for hosting a pop-up COVID test site, free of charge. He said with everything happening this year, the city was able to complete three (3) playgrounds and he shared pictures of each.

2. Mr. Holt announced that there would be a Finance Meeting on 11/23 at 6:00 p.m. to review the 2021 Appropriations detail.

3. After comments from Council and Administrative staff members, a motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous consent.

Adjourn at 8:51 p.m.

Tami K. Kelly

Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council

Christine Houk
Chair