

Canal Winchester

*Town Hall
10 North High Street
Canal Winchester, OH 43110*



Special Town Hall Conversation with Council Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

January 14, 2020

7:00 PM

City Council

Mike Coolman – Vice President

Jill Amos

Will Bennett

Bob Clark

Patrick Lynch

Chuck Milliken

Mike Walker

A. Call To Order

Called to order at 7:00 pm by Vice-President Coolman

B. Roll Call

Present – Amos, Bennett, Clark, Coolman, Lynch, Walker

Motion to excuse Milliken made by Walker; seconded by Bennett

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 6 – Walker, Bennett, Amos, Clark, Coolman, Lynch

C. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from 12-8-19 made by Clark; seconded by Bennett; change date at the top of minutes to correct date of 12-8-19

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 4 – Clark, Bennett, Amos, Coolman

Abstain 2 – Lynch, Walker

D. Items for Discussion

Vice-President Coolman asked for each council member to introduce themselves. Coolman proceeded to call up the first name on the sign-in list.

Theresa Stewart was present, but did not wish to speak.

Nancy Diley Smith came forward to the podium. She talked about substance abuse and mental health issues and how it affects everyone in the community. She is director of medication assistance at a treatment center; she wants to help residents in the community; she offered her assistance to council members to help education residents and use her knowledge to pay it forward; she talked about a community health action team, is there a task force for this; Amos stated she would like to meet with her and get it moving and involve the Fairfield Sheriff's department and Madison Township Police department; Lynch commented there is a community health action team that is still active, works with schools, how to get the information out to people who need it; Bennett said the Fairfield County Sheriff deputies are holding a coffee talk at Wigwam restaurant; Walker talked about Tyler's Light program in Pickerington

Katy Santore came forward to speak. She commented to Nancy Diley Smith that the Franklin County Commissioners recently held a meeting regarding opioid abuse. She then spoke about social media in the community and communications back and forth between residents. She asked council about having an official Facebook page specifically for council members to be able to answer resident's questions, instead of going back and forth on unofficial pages and posts; Bennett commented that some council members have their own individual pages and comment with their own opinions and these responses are public record; Walker commented that city officials have open door policy and you can just go into their office and ask questions or send them an email; Coolman stated if you want the facts you need to talk to a city employee directly and not rely on a Facebook page of comments that are just somebody's opinion;

Seth Melvin was present, but did not wish to speak.

Tom Woodward was present, but did not wish to speak.

Eric McGhee came forward to speak. He said he has lived in Canal Winchester for 20 years and has had five kids in Canal Winchester schools; He said there is no where for the youth to go in the community to play and get together; He runs the Central Ohio Youth Athletic Association and it is a mentorship for youth with an open gym and many

activities; he tries to teach kids the do's and don'ts of life; he said we need something in the community for kids to go to and be together; need to incorporate more community activities for kids and include all areas of school district not just the city boundaries, need to include the other side of 33. Amos stated she serves on the Joint Recreation District and they try to keep kids busy and occupied and keep them off the streets; encouraged kids to volunteer in community or just try something new like tutoring; she said there is a new program at the high school called "It Starts with Hello" and it is to encourage one kids to include another kid that might be alone; it helps give kids someone to look up to. Coolman asked him about his youth program; need to grow our youth leagues and have places like McGill Park for kids. McGhee said his program includes all kids from all surrounding areas; all schools around here; we need to bridge this gap; been too divided; need to link programs together and support each other. Walker commented about the purchase of McGill Park and getting a one million dollar grant for the park due to patience and diligence to get these grant funds.

Jackie Marion came forward to speak. She has lived here since 1953. She works at Corner Smiths and is representing the downtown shops and restaurants; the area suffers from too much trash; other problems with the unsafe area at the traffic light when it turns red, cars run the red light, cars make right turns on red. She said there is a parking problem with employees using the two-hour parking spots instead of these spots being left open for customers; she wants to talk to Sgt. Hendershot about it; she wants him to watch this happen from her shop window; there are speeding issues downtown; it needs to be safer for walkers; need safer crosswalks; should issue more speeding tickets to try to deter speeding downtown. Coolman stated in his opinion to make a difference on speeders is to stop them and give them a ticket and a fine, to make them feel it in the wallet. Lynch commented that it is hard to enforce a spot that is only designated for pick-up of a food order; doesn't like idea of parking meters; sheriffs can't police this all day long; shops could put paper on car windshield if the car is there too long; community policing. Coolman said we have a soft approach with the sheriff deputy's level of enforcement.

Connie Spruill came forward to speak. She said she has lived here 25 years and she is president of the Canal Winchester Art Guild. She asked if there would be an opportunity for the art guild to bring in more revenue like they do with the art stroll; would like to offer art displays and paintings to be put into the new McDorman building for display of local artists. She said there is a need for leadership in Canal Winchester; need program for leadership training in the community; what organizations are out there that can do this; teach residents leadership skills, how to run for public office, like city council; current council members and business leaders need to teach others; funds needed to start a leadership board, bring in speakers.

Carolyn Sittler came forward to join Connie Spruill at the podium. Carolyn said we need more places to hang art from the art guild; need more public art displayed

Mark Savino came forward to speak. He is the owner of the Wigwam restaurant. He commented on the downtown parking issues; his customers have trouble crossing the street; he asked if the first spot in front of his restaurant could be designated a drop-off or pick-up spot. Amos asked Matt Peoples to address this. Bennett said we should put this topic on a work session agenda so all city departments can give input. Savino talked about the McDorman building and about keeping a community feel in the downtown area and keeping city functions downtown; thinks city should buy the McDorman building and keep government operations downtown.

Jim Bohnlein came forward to speak. He said he has questions regarding city finances; he said there is a lot on the city's plate to pay for, such as, the McDorman building purchase and remodeling, McGill Park, a bike path, gender road paving, moving the police department, demolishing the senior center and repaving that space. He agrees the current city building is not safe with court cases, etc.; He asked Amanda Jackson if we can afford all of this or will these expenses lead to a cut back in other city services? Jackson responded that we would not be considering the McDorman purchase if we could not afford to do it; she discussed the different city funds that are maintained for

different city services and functions; the grants applied for and ones received; funds from other sources such as state or federal grant programs.

Jeff Fisher came forward to speak. He and his wife Lisa have lived here five years on Columbus Street. He has questions regarding the McDorman building purchase; he is an engineer and works in construction; even though we have the money to spend are we doing the right thing; is this really the right decision financially; is it a fair price? Coolman stated that a lot of this has already been discussed in work session, council meeting, public meeting and it is written in the minutes of these meetings; the diagrams on display here are not set in stone, the plans can still be altered to be sure we are using the space properly; As a follow-up, Amos, Lynch and Walker each made comments; Lucas Haire came forward to give a brief presentation of the McDorman building proposed purchase similar to his prior presentations at prior meetings and Haire answered questions from residents.

Cindi Lynch came forward to speak. She suggested the city do a survey to see what is needed for police coverage; need larger building for seniors than what is proposed in the McDorman building; maybe put community and senior center at McGill Park facility. Bennett commented that one purchase doesn't prohibit the other, that is, the purchase of the McDorman building doesn't prohibit better police coverage; one project doesn't prohibit the other project from happening. Mayor Ebert said there will be an event center at McGill Park that can be rented for banquets and weddings.

Randy Stemen came forward to speak. He questioned the funding for McGill Park; he asked if the 2020 budget includes the funding approval for the McDorman purchase. Multiple discussions and comments ensued among council members and with Stemen.

Marie Gibbons stated her questions were already answered by previous comments.

Bethany Ferguson stated her questions were already answered by previous comments.

Stan Riley came forward to speak. He talked about the viability and the heart of a city is the downtown area; he commented about the downtown areas of Westerville and Newark and that Gahanna has an identity problem with being able to identify where their downtown area is because the city offices are separated from the Creekside area businesses; he said it is best for continuity and growth to keep the city buildings together with shops and restaurants nearby and walkable; it would be a mistake to separate the city buildings from the downtown area.

Coolman thanked all the residents for attending tonight's meeting.

E. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 pm