



## **Meeting Minutes**

Monday, June 13, 2016 ~ 7:30 P.M.

Louis J. R. Goorey Worthington Municipal Building  
John P. Coleman Council Chamber  
6550 North High Street  
Worthington, Ohio 43085

## **City Council**

*Bonnie D. Michael, President*  
*W. Scott Myers, President Pro-Tempore*  
*Rachael Dorothy*  
*Douglas C. Foust*  
*David M. Norstrom*  
*Douglas Smith*  
*Michael C. Troper*

*Matthew H. Greeson, City Manager*  
*D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council*

**CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**

Worthington City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, June 13, 2016, in the John P. Coleman Council Chambers of the Louis J.R. Goorey Worthington Municipal Building, 6550 North High Street, Worthington, Ohio. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 P.M.

Ms. Michael appointed Tanya Maria Word as Temporary Clerk of Council for this evening's meeting.

**Members Present:** Rachael R. Dorothy, Douglas C. Foust, David M. Norstrom, Douglas K. Smith, Michael C. Troper and Bonnie D. Michael.

**Member(s) Absent:** Scott Myers

**Also present:** Deputy Clerk of Council Tanya M. Word, City Manager, Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager, Robyn Stewart, Director of Law Pamela Fox, Director of Finance Molly Roberts, Parks and Recreation Director Darren Hurley, Director of Planning and Building Lee Brown, and Interim Police Chief Jerry Strait, and Chief of Fire Scott Highley.

There were 2 visitors present.

*President Michael invited all those in attendance to stand and join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS****Discussion Item(s)****(1) Wilson Bridge Road Enhancements**

*Mr. Greeson presented the following presentation regarding Wilson Bridge Road Enhancements.*

***Background:***

*In 2011, the Worthington City Council adopted the Wilson Bridge Road Plan. The Plan includes a series of recommendations for improvements to this corridor. Included are recommendations to enhance the gateways/entrances to the community, develop new signage, construct a multi-use trail, improve crosswalks, enhance streetscaping and seek grants to help fund such infrastructure improvements.*

*The City subsequently requested proposals for consulting assistance to develop a more detailed enhancement plan to identify specific projects and preliminary cost estimates. The City Council selected MKSK, with sub-consultants GPD for engineering and Studio*

*Graphique for wayfinding, to develop the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor Enhancement Plan. This plan was presented to the Municipal Planning Commission and then the City Council in the fall of 2015.*

*The plan identifies a series of improvements throughout the corridor that, given the cost, will have to be implemented in phases over a long period of time as funds become available. The City's adopted Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes \$800,000 in bond revenue for improvements in FY 2016. Additional resources (over \$100,000 per year) are available from TIF proceeds from the Worthington Place District TIF (The Heights) which can be used for projects that benefit that district.*

*At previous meetings, the City Council has discussed which projects or phases are a priority and strategies for moving forward. There are three near term-areas of focus that represent areas of high priority and some opportunity for submission for grant funding.*

- a) Old Wilson Bridge Road Intersection Signalization (estimated @ \$380k)
- b) Gateway, streetscape enhancements from North High Street to Caren Avenue (estimated @ \$2.18M)
- c) Multi-use path connection from North High Street east along Wilson Bridge Road to McCord Park and the Worthington Community Center.

## **Detailed Discussion By Phase**

### **(a) Old Wilson Bridge Road Intersection**

The City has periodically received concerns from businesses regarding the ability to turn left onto Wilson Bridge Road from Old West Wilson Bridge Road during the P.M. peek rush hour. This problem was exacerbated during construction of Worthington Place, as traffic from Old Wilson Bridge Road that flows through that property to other intersections was cut off. As a result, this intersection was evaluated for a potential traffic signal, considering how it would address the problem and the impact it would have on adjacent intersections. The City Council asked to discuss this recommendation more thoroughly with traffic engineers at a public meeting. Since this request, staff has been discussing this intersection with two separate traffic engineers. Given completion of various other projects in the area, such as the apartments, and most of the US23/270 interchange, we think some additional evaluation might be necessary. Therefore, we recommend that this particular project be postponed until we complete this discussion. Staff will also reach out to area businesses to ascertain their thoughts and concerns. We will have traffic engineering consultants available to discuss this when this complete.

### **(b) High Street Gateway Enhancements and (c) Multi-Use Path Connection**

The last City Council discussion raised the question which project, the gateway or the trail was most critical to move forward, given limited funding. Council member Norstrom requested that we do some research on the economic impact or return on investment for a trail vs. gateway enhancements. Staff contacted the American Planning Association's

research service and has recently received a large number of articles which we are reviewing. I attached an email from the APA staff that outlined that they had difficulty finding articles that outlined a methodology to compare the impact of these two types of projects for the purposes of prioritizing which to invest in. Additionally, they did not find research on gateway enhancements, but rather placemaking or public improvements more generally. Research is available on the impact of trails and bikeway facilities. With the assistance of our summer intern, Mary Turner, staff is reviewing these materials for relevancy.

Staff also had further conversations regarding our Wilson Bridge Road Enhancement Plan with the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) staff. MORPC will be accepting grant applications for federal attributable funds this summer. \$40 to \$50 million dollars in funding will be available for eligible transportation projects in the region. Most of the funding would become available in 2021 or afterwards. Awarded projects can receive up to 80% of the construction project costs. We learned that both the gateway enhancement and the multi-use path are potentially eligible projects. MORPC staff suggested, at least for the preliminary evaluation round, that we may submit both projects as one, with two phases. We discussed that the gateway enhancement project would be the first phase, because no right-of-way is needed, and that the multi-use path would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. The total construction project request would be approximately \$4,110,000 which would result in a match of at least \$822,000. Staff believes that between the existing bond proceeds, TIF revenues and wise future CIP planning, the City of Worthington could support this level of match obligation. This does not include the preliminary engineering and design costs, which would need to be taken out of the current CIP and are estimated at \$400,000.

Staff is also researching the new Franklin County Infrastructure Bank, which offers low-interest loans up to \$1 million for economic development related infrastructure projects as a possible funding source for the project.

### **Strategy Forward**

Staff is seeking support for the following strategy to advance these important projects:

- Proceed with design of the North High Street to Caren Avenue enhancements and the multi-use path connection so we are positioned to apply for and accept funds as they become available. A contract for these services would be brought back to the City Council for approval.
- Prepare an Attributable Funding application to MORPC for the High Street gateway enhancement and multi-use path connection project.
- Continue evaluation of a traffic signal at Old West Wilson Bridge Road.
- Evaluate the Franklin County Infrastructure Bank and other funding sources for these projects.

## Questions from Council

*Ms. Michael asked have researched and looked at the Ohio Trails Fund. Mr. Greeson replied we might. The attributable funding is 80% federal and 20% local; it's very much like what we're doing in the northeast gateway; many of the State's processes whether it's Ohio Public Works Commission or whether the State Greenways and Trails require more advanced design in a very short construction turn-around time frame and so we have to be much further along in the process than we are today.*

*So going ahead and moving forward with the design on this project which is another thing that we're recommending is Council authorizing us to negotiate with our consultants the design contract will put us in a better position to apply for those funds when the time comes. I am familiar with Ohio Public Works Commission, we will be for instance applying for finds for the northeast gateway for that to help reduce our share of the federal match. I would have to defer to Mr. Hurley on whether we get attributable funds we shrink our 20% match by also applying for Ohio Trails money. Mr. Hurley replied I believe so, but I want to research that a little further.*

*Mr. Greeson reiterated that I do know that we have to be further along because once we get the money you have to move on their timeline.*

*Ms. Dorothy commented back to the Old Wilson Road intersection we're looking at not moving forward with the design, but we are still moving forward with talking with the people that use that. Mr. Greeson replied yes we want to talk more with the people who use it, we want to evaluate it in light of some of the more current development proposals and the fact that some of this work is already being completed and the traffic is behaving a little differently now and really just monitor it a little more closely based on some of the feedback we get. Ms. Dorothy asked so it's not off the table because that's not on the front burner then we're looking at High Street Gateway Enhancement and Multi-Use Path and to move that forward, we're looking at the design of that. Mr. Greeson replied correct.*

*Ms. Michael commented we have High Street to Caren Avenue, and one of the things that you have in there is the Holiday Inn development and what they do at there is going to impact a block of exactly what we're talking about. Mr. Greeson replied that is correct, it will affect the section between the southern property line of the BP and the Caren Avenue right-of-way. We would probably work with them, negotiate with them to construct some of the improvements we identify potentially and we'll figure out which ones we would construct and what we might want them to construct; I think some additional work by the consultants would be beneficial to inform that negotiation when it comes, but all of this will be done in the right-of-way; if we need additional right-of-way for the improvements we want, this would help us understand what we need from them as they redevelop.*

*Mr. Brown shared that in the preliminary look at the Holiday Inn we had warned them that we were going to be asking for additional right-of-way dedication along the West*

*Wilson Bridge Road portion and along the High Street portion to actually kind of further the advancement of the things that were recommended in the corridor study.*

*Mr. Foust commented what I took away from staff's memo is that we have great things, we can't do them all at the same time, and in a nutshell we've got to make some choices. Mr. Greeson replied I think this strategy doesn't put you in a position where you really have to make hard choices yet because the first choice is do you agree that the North High Street and Multi-Use trail are the priorities amongst all the other things identified in the plan which is a discussion that we've already had, but assuming that we think we've found a path where we can afford to move forward if we obtain grant funds; so this allows us to try to seek them and if we get them great, we can move forward; if we get part of them, we have to come back and have further prioritization. The challenge with this funding is the cycle that MORPC is going through for federal attributable funds, this upcoming cycle that will ultimately I think be approved in the early part of next year, so we participate in the process all this fall and it will awarded funding for construction that would begin in 2021 for one or the other or both. So the downside is when you spend your own money you can move faster, but if you want the federal government to pay for 80% of it, which I think is in our interest, it kind of takes longer to get the money.*

*Ms. Dorothy indicated I would like to open up that Bike Path to include looking at On-Street protected bike lanes. Mr. Greeson asked you mean in terms of widening the roads to accommodate those or restriping the road. Ms. Dorothy replied either or, just in the engineering evaluation I know that there's less likelihood of crashes with bicycles when you have on-street protected bikes, they're safer than the trail ways because there's more intersections with the trail ways where the cars just drive through a sidewalk crossing or bike trail crossing and there's a lot more potential for crashes and it's safer to have on-street protected bike lanes. Mr. Greeson commented I think we can do that, we can have GPD who is the engineering sub-consultant on this evaluate that as part of their design scope. We will have to ask whether or not with the evaluation will we have enough time to have discussion in order to meet the timeline for submitting the MORPC application. Ms. Dorothy remarked or if they could write it to be able to include an option at a later date. Ms. Michael asked so that we're all on the same page, are we looking at Multi-Purpose Trails now or Protected Bike Lanes or Multi-Purpose Trails and Protected Bike Lanes. Mr. Greeson replied the recommendation I believe in the Wilson Road plan was to construct a Multi-Purpose Use Path from High Street to roughly the Community Center and the on-street protected bike lanes would be an addition to that recommendation.*

*Mr. Foust commented if you were flipping a coin between the two, I'm intrigued by the functionality of the multi-use path connection maybe over gateway enhancements and then I think you had mentioned the Holiday Inn between what's happening with the 270 interchange, it would be nice to see how the dust settles from that and we will in fact have gotten a big shot in the arm in the general area from the 270 interchange overhaul and so it almost seems like throwing money after money that's already been spent by somebody else; layering one enhancement visually on top of another versus the chance to do this entirely different thing that's got some real added function to it, I'm intrigued by that.*

*Mr. Greeson asked for clarification from Ms. Dorothy...did you mean East Wilson Bridge Road or are you talking about the entire corridor. Ms. Dorothy replied well I thought East Wilson Bridge Road is what we were talking about; I wouldn't mind the entire corridor, but I thought we were talking about East Wilson Bridge Road. Ms. Michael commented for additional clarification what we're talking about on these enhancements are not enhancements that are being paid for through the federal government or the others, but these are additional enhancements, additional possible walkability, additional things that would be enhancing the High Street corridor once you're back in the City of Worthington (the actual bridge itself is in Sharon Township), so we're looking at some things along there that would also be tying into the bike and into the smaller use trail. Mr. Greeson commented the Council approved some additions to the ODOT project that were city paid for like the new decorative lights south of the interchange that are in the City of Worthington that are not the standard ODOT lights. This project takes that up a notch, new gateway signage, new fencing, better crosswalks, the best most recent central Ohio project (not that we're mirroring it), would be an example of this is in Westerville just off the 270 interchange, they've done a significant gateway improvement and the name of the road is Westerville Road/State Route 3; that's pretty a little more in keeping with what we're talking about between Caren and High creating a distinctive into what's our most important economic corridor from an income tax standpoint. Obviously mobility has been an important component of this plan and this Council's priorities and we've been looking at trying to create east-west connection. Now I do think we may be able to get some of this project accomplished by partnering with private development both at the Holiday Inn and then if pieces of East Wilson Bridge Road redevelop, over time it could result in our federal project shrinking because we have accomplished some of the trail through, requiring a private developer to construct the part of the path that is on their property; however, that is a piece mill approach as opposed to this which is an end to end approach.*

*Mr. Norstrom commented staff for looking into the issue, unfortunately we didn't find the information that I had hoped would be out there; so there's basically no criteria for determining the priority of the investments we're going to make and given that and what we've learned from MORPC I think the approach that is being recommended by staff is a good approach. The 2020/2021 is problematic but if we can get the federal funding I think it's well worth the wait. The other thing is we do the designs, do we give the consultant a budget or do they give us the budget for the improvements because the numbers that we show here for example \$2.18 for the gateway and \$1.93, what if we told the consultant we only wanted to spend \$1.5 million. Mr. Greeson replied through our planning process and all of the input that we got from the steering committee, Municipal Planning Commission and Council, we identified a whole menu of things that would be desirable to have in that gateway. Obviously you and I have been involved with projects where we've said "this is the budget I have to construct my house, what can I build with that"; I suspect that we'll have to have things that are optional and that if we get federal funding to pursue them, we will and if not....*

*Mr. Norstrom replied we should do what we want whether we get federal funding or not. Mr. Greeson replied okay. Mr. Norstrom commented it's still the taxpayers money, so the*

*question is what is it that we really want and then the federal funds are just a way to pay for it, again we're dealing with a relatively small capital budget given all the demands on it, I understand how it was put together, but I guess my question is there are decision points in here that are really policy decision points as we go through this and we need to be involved in that. Mr. Greeson replied I think we get at that through two things (1) the grant application and (2) the scope of services with the consultant.*

*Mr. Norstrom indicated I shared this at the last meeting that this would be something that someone from Council should probably be involved with staff as we work through these issues.*

*Mr. Troper asked has anyone said that we need to study the corridor from 161 to Wilson Bridge Road on High Street. Mr. Greeson replied in terms of land use, in terms of infrastructure no. I think the only area where we've developed a specific comp plan amendment was the UMCH site, but no we have not done a corridor wide plan from 161 to High looking at land use and infrastructure. Mr. Troper commented I just feel like you're a mile away from downtown Worthington and you wouldn't know it, so I guess I'm trying to make some type of connectivity, signage, bikes, something that says you're in Worthington. Mr. Greeson remarked we're investing a lot in downtown, we're investing in Wilson Bridge Road, how do we connect the two; we'll start with the wayfinding signage.*

## **VISITOR COMMENTS**

**Sean Demaree, 313 Highland Avenue.** *Mr. Demaree commented as I listened to the presentation presented this evening by Mr. Greeson and as I look at it, it looks good to me, but in conjunction with the Worthington Galena Road project, the one thing that always concerns me are the railroad tracks; when the train comes, the traffic stops in its tracks; I would urge you or suggest to you if you could look at maybe on the East Wilson Bridge Road corridor where the railroad tracks are and look at putting in some sort of underpass so that the traffic kept flowing. You're going to spend money doing a road project; you're going to spend money doing another thing, but if traffic doesn't flow right it interrupts the balance of everything. Mr. Greeson responded I appreciate that; the project that has been funded the federal attributable funding process and the project that you approved for design and eventual construction for the northeast gateway did not evaluate an underpass as part of that. It was applied for and funded as primarily an improvement to that intersection to relieve congestion there; it does factor bike and pedestrian mobility over the tracks, but does not do a grade separated crossing.*

*Ms. Stewart commented I do recall that during the public meeting regarding an intersection improvement that was held, our consultant EMH&T had entered into some conversations with members of the public that were at that meeting and that had suggested that and they indicated some of the challenges they saw with that kind of proposal and why they didn't really think it was feasible along Wilson Bridge Road there. I don't recall whether or not any of that got into the written report in relation to the public comments, but we can certainly go back through and see if any of the information*

*that they verbally stated to the people at that meeting actually made it into the report or just get more information from them related to that.*

**Judy Anderson, 510 Olenwood Avenue**, *asked about the enhancement of the parks; I know that it is not on your list of priorities, but I would like to know when is it going to be looked at because that was a key aspect of the enhancement, the tress, the lighting. I just don't want this to be forgotten. Mr. Norstrom asked which park are you speaking about. Ms. Anderson replied Olentangy and also McCord Park, they said they were going to put signage and tree lines along there. Mr. Greeson replied you are correct, those are two of the elements among many recommendations that were in the plan and we believe those are also important; Mr. Hurley brings them up in every staff meeting we have on the Wilson Bridge Road Corridor.*

*Quite frankly those are elements that are probably not competitive for grant applications and that we're going to have to identify approaches to financing locally meaning through our CIP process and we'll be having those discussions in the fall about what other elements of our plan can we fit into the Capital Improvements Plan of the City. Right now there's a limited amount of money for improvements to the Olentangy Parklands, a trailhead; there's some funding for improvement to McCord Park Playground, but the larger entry features which were at around \$300,000 in the corridor plan are at this point unfunded, we have been brainstorming some ways to approach that.*

*Ms. Anderson asked do you have a timetable as to when the traffic assessment for the intersection of Old Wilson Bridge Road and Wilson Bridge will be completed. Mr. Brown replied I believe we were going to wait to evaluate the 350 Building and the Holiday Inn site. Mr. Greeson replied we literally met with our consultants today and we don't have a timeline as of yet.*

*Mr. Norstrom commented if I understood your discussion earlier, it is not as congested at that intersection as it once was. Mr. Greeson commented that during the P.M. peak period particularly around 5:00 P.M. when people were emptying out, that the left hand turn from Old West Wilson Bridge Road to Wilson Bridge Road is challenging; there is a lot of traffic that is once again like it did before flowing through Corporate Hill and the Mall property and going to those other lights even though they are conveying through non-public streets, their doing that as opposed to going to the public intersection. Both the traffic consultant and staff observed that some recently; we think that the number of those turns that are being made are fewer than they were and we're getting less complaints. Essentially what happens is the traffic light at Reiber when it turns red and OfficeScapes can come out and Reiber can come out, it creates enough gaps for the left hand turn of Old West Wilson Bridge Road and so that's why looking at the 350 building being full is important or at least doing some not full study evaluation but some kind of planning level analysis and also seeing what some of the traffic study results are from the Holiday Inn project as that moves through the development review process would be helpful; and then talking to Worthington Industries and others about what they're experiencing and what their employees are saying.*

*Ms. Michael indicated to Ms. Anderson that we don't when these things are going to be done and so until they're done and the buildings are filled and cars and people are there, we really don't have that much to evaluate.*

**MOTION** Councilmember Foust made a motion to approve the strategy as outlined in the memorandum dated June 9, 2016; bringing back to Council a scope of services for moving forward with design. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Norstrom.

**The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.**

## **(2) Financial Report**

*Mr. Greeson asked Mrs. Roberts to provide an overview of the report and indicated that staff is requesting a motion from the City Council acknowledging the report.*

*Mrs. Roberts presented the following:*

*Fund balances for all accounts increased from \$22,022,526 to \$22,588,263 for the month of May with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$565,737.*

*Year to date fund balances for all accounts decreased from \$21,263,095 on January 1, 2016 to \$22,588,263 as of May 31, 2016 with expenditures exceeding revenue by \$1,325,168.*

*Expenditures for all funds tracked at 90.85% of anticipated expenditure levels.*

*Year to date revenues for all funds are below 2015 revenues by \$566,437 and above year to date estimates by \$569,573.*

*The General Fund balance increased from \$10,974,873 to \$11,308,556 for the month of May with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$333,682.*

*The year to date General Fund Balance increased from \$11,250,077 on January 1, 2016 to \$11,308,556 with expenditures exceeding revenues by \$58,478.*

*General Fund expenditures tracked at 93.2% of anticipated expenditure levels.*

*Total General Fund revenues area above estimates by \$136,790 or 1.27%.*

*May 2016 income tax collections are above year to date 2015 collections by \$297,871 or 3.08% and above estimates by \$163,673 or 1.67%.*

**MOTION** Councilmember Smith made a motion to accept the May 2016 Monthly Financial Report as presented this evening. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dorothy.

**The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.**

## **REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS**

## **REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**DOROTHY** – *on Sunday attended the Walk Worthington event that was in conjunction with Worthington Historical Society and discussing the historic structures; enjoyed seeing the people enjoying our community on bike and foot.*

**NORSTROM** – *attended neighborhood meeting discussing Parks this past Saturday. Mr. Hurley did an excellent job on the presentation; it was fun to see what in the parklands.*

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION** Councilmember Troper made a motion to meet in Executive Session to discuss Labor Negotiations. The motion was seconded by Foust.

**The motion carried by the following voice vote:**

**Yes 6** Norstrom, Smith Foust, Troper, Dorothy, and Michael

Council recessed at 8:20 P.M. from the Regular meeting session.

**MOTION** Councilmember Troper made a motion to return to open session at 8:52 P.M. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Smith.

**The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** Councilmember Dorothy made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Foust.

**The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.**

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 8:52 P.M.

/s/ Tanya Maria Word  
Temporary Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this  
5<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016.*

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael  
Council President