



CITY OF WORTHINGTON
Worthington City Council Minutes
May 18, 2020

6550 N. High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085

CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Worthington City Council met remotely in Regular Session on Monday, May 18, 2020, via Microsoft Teams video conference. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Peter Bucher, Rachael R. Dorothy, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, David Robinson, Douglas K. Smith, and Bonnie D. Michael

Member(s) Absent:

Also present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Law Director Tom Lindsey, Director of Finance Scott Bartter, Director of Service & Engineering Dan Whited, Director of Planning & Building Lee Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Chief of Police Robert Ware, Chief of Fire & EMS Mark Zambito, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Michael invited all to stand and join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- Community Visioning Committee Update

Mr. Sherman explained how with COVID-19 we are in a strange new kind of normal, however, it is important to keep moving forward with a revised and narrowing scope to complete the visioning process on-time. The Committee has asked themselves if this is doable, and in response has realigned and readjusted to today's realities. We are staying open-minded on our new path forward, recognizing things are a little imperfect. We will make sure that the community understands what we are doing, and this is being done

together as a collective group to succeed. COVID-19 makes the continuation of this visioning project all the more important, and it is going to provide us with a more reflective community context. There is no better time to reflect upon the community to demonstrate this now, in this time, and to get to the core of why people love Worthington.

In Council's packet, we provided the most recent slide presentation, that will be conducted by three people from the Committee, with each taking a slide in this virtual platform. As in a live environment, the presentation will be fluid and changing based upon the feedback from the community. He provided an overview of the slides to Council, detailing how they will begin by going over their mission, vision, and goals. They have reached out to 22 different groups across the City and have already made presentations to several of them, including Building Worthington's Future and Project Community Park Worthington, amongst others. In conjunction, we are working closely with Mr. Oliver to create a webinar that will be posted on the website, giving the community access to the slide presentation on their own time.

Mr. Robinson asked how the Committee sees the purpose of the initial outreach presentation to community groups. Is it viewed primarily as a way of getting them and their membership participating or is there actual dialogue that is feeding into any kind of data collection being conducted? Mr. Sherman responded that the main purpose is to drive folks to the website to interact and engage.

Mr. Sherman showed a slide detailing the work the Committee has completed as of today. Upcoming are the four virtual workshops that will be followed by the focus groups. Then there will be a public survey presented in August. Following that will be different visiting sessions to gather information.

We have completed the environmental scan and the community education component of the scope. The community education piece is ongoing right now. This is being accomplished through the website and with the help of the City's media platform. Most importantly is our community plan which is comprised of five pillars: Website, Signage, On-Line Public Input, Social Media, and Mailers. We have partnered with the Worthington Resource Pantry so that with every registration to the website this month, the Committee will make a donation of \$1 to the Resource Pantry. The website itself is very interactive with places to hear what has been heard out in the community and places for the community to tell their stories. As we begin this registration process between now and the end of October, we will be able to see where the different parts of the community are tying in. If we find holes or pockets where folks have not been able to either get online or could not register, we are going to find a way to get to those people. We are working to reach out to Facebook neighborhood pages and are running Facebook ads. There are also going to be yard signs that will be sprinkled around the City talking about "What's Your Vision." We have created a Facebook ad promoting the website registration and sending prepared press releases to social media influencers through the Visioning Committee. We were really pleased to see there are 3,744 members of the community that are part of these Facebook neighborhood pages. Our feeling is that one post can begin the word of mouth that begins spreading what we are trying to create here within Vision Worthington. As of

today, we have an e-newsletter sent on May 4th that had 653 opens and 70 clicks going to VisionWorthington.org. The Facebook ad has had 3,122 people reached with 91 engagements that includes clicks, comments, and shares. We conclude the Speaker's Bureau presentation by asking what your personal vision is, and then encouraging feedback by sharing your thoughts, suggestions, ideas, and concerns. We also encourage registering for updates and participating in the online process.

Mr. Robinson asked if all the surveys are going to be completed online or whether there be a hard copy available. Mr. Sherman said that there will be postcards going out to promote the website relaunch, the SOAR workshops, and the Survey Monkey public survey. Second will be a mailer that will have return postage. We are asking folks for feedback leading into the bigger survey that will happen in August. Throughout the thread of the website and through these, there will be small individual little survey questions that will be asked. Depending on the environment in October, his sense is that this survey will be virtual, but they will follow up on it accordingly. At this time he believes that is probably the way it will go, but they are open to suggestions.

Ms. Dorothy asked about the mailer and how we had a goal of reaching 80% of the people in Worthington. Our current composition of the Visioning Committee does not have as much diversity as we have in the community. We were hoping to get as many people involved as possible. She asked where the mailers will be going to and how are we going to try to make sure we get as many people in our community involved. Obviously, we skew more upper class and white, but we do have people who have a lot of diversity and a lot of different backgrounds. Mr. Sherman responded the Committee is reaching out and using lists that have been compiled by several Council candidates to make sure we touch everybody and every household that we can in the community to promote this diversity that you have rightly pointed out. Ms. Dorothy asked which Council candidates provided this list. Mr. Sherman replied we did not go to specific Council people, but rather, you reached out during your campaigns to go door to door. What we have been able to do is take this list of 5,917 residences to mail these postcards. Ms. Dorothy said she would like to get more information about these residents. She said she hopes it is every household and apartment complex in Worthington. Mr. Sherman said that it is, we have reached out across the City, and he would be happy to provide Ms. Dorothy with the list. Ms. Stewart said that she believes the mailing list came from Ms. Brown that she uses for the City's mailed newsletters and other mailings.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2020 Joint Meeting
- Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION Mr. Bucher moved, and Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to approve the aforementioned meeting minutes as presented.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON LEGISLATION

President Michael declared public hearings and voting on legislation previously introduced to be in order.

Ordinance No. 10-2020

To Amend Section 1123.30(b) and Section 1123.73 to the Codified Ordinances of the City of Worthington to Modify the Definition of Dwelling Unit and Add a Definition of Transient Guest to Tourist Homes in the Definition Section of the Planning & Zoning Code.

The foregoing Ordinance Title was read.

Mr. Greeson detailed how staff identified the need to tighten up the language in our code regarding short-term rentals for residential properties of less than 30 days. If you recall, we introduced this ordinance quite a while ago and it was referred to the Municipal Planning Commission who considered it and has recommended along with its approval.

Mr. Brown provided some background, explaining how within the Planning and Zoning Code we do not have a perfect code and from time to time we will examine it and realize it needs to be brought up-to date. There has been an increase in Airbnbs, and Worthington currently does not permit short-term rentals within our jurisdiction. Many of our surrounding jurisdictions regulate them in some fashion, or many of them do not permit them at all. Staff has always considered any short-term rental or residential property for less than 30 days as a tourist home. A tourist home is defined as a building other than a hotel where lodging is provided and offered to the public for compensation for not more than 15 individuals and open to transient guests. The reference to transient guests is one of the things we felt we needed to clarify in the code because there were several questions about what transient guest means. Looking at the Ohio Building Code, transient is described as pertaining to 30 days or less. We also looked at the definition of dwelling units. Within our definition section, a dwelling unit references the rental or lease on a weekly, monthly, or longer basis. So, we felt if we were clarifying the definition of a tourist home and providing a definition of transient guests, then the definition of a dwelling unit should not reference items for a weekly basis.

As many Councilmembers know, over the past six months we have had some Airbnbs pop up. The most predominant one was in Colonial Hills off Park Boulevard where an individual purchased the home strictly to use for rental income as an Airbnb for its primary purpose. With that, we went and talked with the property owners, cited them, and they ended up appealing and going before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) in March. The BZA felt that use met the definition of a tourist home. With that, we felt there was a need to come to the City Council to clean up that definition of a tourist home, clean up the definition of dwelling unit, and add a definition to transient guest.

What we are proposing for the language, is to add one additional sentence that transient guest means a person or persons occupying for 30 consecutive days or less. Under the language for dwellings, dwelling means one room or rooms connected together. It is the weekly portion we felt needed to be removed from the new definition to be consistent with what was proposed with the tourist home's 30 consecutive days. There were conversations in the MPC that there needed to be guidance from Council if there were to be an interest in looking at areas in the City where a tourist home may be relevant, or where Airbnbs may be permitted or conditionally permitted with certain conditions. They felt that what came before Council tonight at least started the process of cleaning up the code language, so we are not putting our boards, commissions, or Council, in a situation where there is conflicting information and conflicting codes. He noted that in the last six years, we have only had about a dozen complaints concerning Airbnbs in the City. Typically, once we contacted the property owners and had a discussion with them, they stopped. Only the most recent one has appealed our decision to the BZA.

Mr. Robinson asked that Mr. Brown articulate what some of the arguments would be to allow some form of tourist home. He asks that question not advocating, but just to understand some of the basic principles or arguments made on both sides of the issue. Mr. Brown responded that at least some of the jurisdictions we talked to have looked at it as an income producing opportunity. In talking to the City of Dublin, they were looking at regulating Airbnbs, but limiting it to only ten days a year. Theirs are associated with Muirfield and the events associated with that, so there are different mechanisms in play. Upper Arlington defines theirs as 30 days or less and do not permit them. Columbus has gone through a revamp of regulating their Airbnbs and registering them. Every jurisdiction has done it completely differently.

Mr. Bucher asked to clarify that with these changes we would not be prohibiting a more traditional stockpile of rentals or annual leases. Mr. Brown said that is correct, if you wanted to rent a room out in your house, we are not going to prohibit that. The 30 days or less creates a high turnover volume and we heard from many in the neighborhoods about the number of people going in and out of the house. Many started the campaign that the neighborhoods are for neighbors. It created a good discussion on whether there may be situations or areas of town where it may be appropriate. But hearing from the immediate neighborhoods, they did not feel that it was appropriate. Mr. Bucher asked if we have a good estimate of how many of these houses in the neighborhoods are frequently posted on Airbnb and other sites. Mr. Brown said in the past six years we have had maybe twelve. We are not always out perusing and cruising the sites to see what is going on. Sometimes it is complaint driven and we will get a call. Nine out of ten times when we have the conversation with the property owner and give them time to correct the issue they come into compliance. Mr. Bucher said lastly that he would be in support of looking into fitting this in a practical way into our code. Any way we can move forward with looking into how other municipalities handle it and if there are recommendations, he is supportive.

Ms. Dorothy said she wanted to make sure she understands the situation and what is going on right now. We are living in interesting times and it seems like things are changing daily. Right now, we have a BnB ordinance, we have a hotel ordinance where we collect the tax

for the City that would go into a fund for a convention and visitors bureau and other such things. We make sure there are extra regulations, but we also want to encourage businesses and people to visit Worthington. This is new and sometimes we have some bad actors. This is a way to keep evolving with the times to make our neighborhoods as livable as possible. She asked how we got to this point. Mr. Brown shared that this code language is from 1971. Updates, tweaks, and modifications are always going to be needed. He thinks that back in 1971 there was probably a term for the short-term rental, but it just was not as predominant as an Airbnb, Home Away, or VRBO. Building off Mr. Bucher's comment, there may be situations in Worthington, certain zoning districts, where they might be easier to handle and easier to monitor. There are certainly opportunities to look at, but right now this cleans up and tightens the regulations. He does feel for the property owner that purchased this property thinking they could do something. He wishes they would have talked to us first in the Planning Department and we would have been able to ward off these problems beforehand. This is more about cleaning up the code, so we do not have another situation where it is putting neighbor against neighbor and property owner against property owner. It also puts you as Councilmembers and board and commission members in the limelight and not always in a way that is productive. Ms. Dorothy expressed how she appreciates staff looking into this and cleaning up the language. She thinks we will probably have to continue revisiting our zoning code, but at this moment this is a very good stop-gap measure. She has heard people on both sides of this, and she is inclined to keep on revisiting this issue in the future.

MOTION

Mr. Smith made a motion to amend the ordinance in the second and third WHEREAS clauses and in Section 1. to add Section 1123.30(b) Dwelling Unit. The motion was seconded by Mr. Myers.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

There being no additional comments, the clerk called the roll on Ordinance No. 10-2020 (As Amended). The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Bucher, Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Michael

No 0

Ordinance No. 10-2020 (As Amended) was thereupon declared duly passed and is recorded in full in the appropriate record book.

Ordinance No. 16-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Design Costs of the Rush Run Stream – Huntley Bowl Improvements and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 708-20)

The foregoing Ordinance Title was read.

Mr. Greeson explained how Council had previously heard a presentation on this in April discussing how retrofitting the Huntley Bowl could better manage stormwater and control erosion in the Rush Run corridor. This is the design legislation for that project. We are recommending Council move forward with the design. The project itself was included in 2020 Capital Improvements Program and is budgeted for \$420,000. The design costs are \$37,000.

Mr. Whited said the only question is which design from the multiple options. His recommendation is to do the largest design that requires some excavation and maximize the greatest potential to attenuate and mitigate the waters in Rush Creek. The consultant will start work within 21 days or so and the project should take 3-4 months. He would like to bid this winter and have construction start in the spring.

Mr. Myers asked Mr. Greeson about his budget analysis presented at the past meeting and how this was characterized as a must do project. Mr. Greeson said that was correct. In the CIP reductions we did not reduce this project. Mr. Myers asked for brief justification for why this is in the must-do category. Mr. Greeson explained our view is that this is the foundational project along the Rush Run corridor with the largest, most significant impact on the erosion that is occurring. It is necessary in order to begin healing the stream and may prevent the need for other things to happen in the future. Not moving forward may make the problems downstream worse in the future. Mr. Whited noted that the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed have already applied for a 319 grant from the Ohio EPA.

There being no additional comments, the clerk called the roll on Ordinance No. 16-2020. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Bucher, Michael

No 0

Ordinance No. 16-2020 was thereupon declared duly passed and is recorded in full in the appropriate record book.

Ordinance No. 17-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the West Wilson Bridge Rd. Municipal Public Improvements TIF Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Design Costs of the Corporate Hill Extension Improvements and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 709-20)

The foregoing Ordinance Title was read.

Mr. Greeson described how we have talked a lot about Corporate Hill and the Old Wilson Bridge area for many years. Given the importance and traffic concerns expressed by businesses in the area, one of the solutions identified that has been discussed is exploring the extension of Corporate Hill Drive so it better connects to Old West Wilson Bridge Drive and preventing the need for businesses to traverse through private property to make their way to the light. Additionally, the congestion of Old West Wilson Bridge and Wilson Bridge Road is sometimes problematic during peak hours. This ordinance would appropriate funds from The Heights Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to help move that project forward, including the variety of analysis that needs to occur up to and including design. TIF dollars must be spent in proximity to the actual development in which the TIF District was set up. So, this is the perfect type of public improvement project to pursue using the TIF funds.

Ms. Dorothy shared how this will help relieve some vehicle traffic and we want to ensure that we keep one of our most important employers happy and in Worthington. She asked what other features are included for other modes of traffic. Mr. Greeson responded that Council adopted a Complete Streets policy. We included in the RFP for the design that any design would need to evaluate how we can accomplish Complete Streets. So that would include making whatever is designed here accommodates all modes of transportation. It is a tighter area and the tension here is going to be between accommodating the extension without impacting too many parking spaces that exist in that area to support businesses. We are going to try to squeeze as much as we can in a small area, but we would want to accommodate things like a sidewalk and a way for pedestrians to traverse that area. We think that it is good for the businesses in that area, the employees in that area, and certainly residents that may be trying to get to other amenities in that area.

There being no additional comments, the clerk called the roll on Ordinance No. 17-2020. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Bucher, Robinson, Michael

No 0

Ordinance No. 17-2020 was thereupon declared duly passed and is recorded in full in the appropriate record book.

Ordinance No. 18-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for an Appropriation from the Capital Improvements Fund Unappropriated Balance to Pay the Costs of the 2020 Street Improvement Program and all Related Expenses and Determining to Proceed with said Project. (Project No. 707-20)

The foregoing Ordinance Title was read.

Mr. Greeson presented how Councilmembers have seen the Street Improvement Program and authorized the request for proposals for it. It has been bid out and the bids are back.

Mr. Whited described how the bids were very successful with three bidders that came in well within the estimate. Two were within \$420 of each other. We are recommending that we utilize Strawser Paving for this project. He acknowledged when we go through these programs now, consistent with the Complete Streets policy, we evaluate the ability to do some of that work. The Street Improvement Program is largely a street maintenance program and most of those projects do not lend themselves well to Complete Streets or the projects are not consistent with what is in our policy. But they will continue to evaluate what we can do.

Mr. Greeson explained how as we do arterial projects, we will evaluate plans in advance on how we could accommodate more significant bike and pedestrian improvements when we do those. Both the dollars in the Street Improvement Program, which have been flat for about a decade and the maintenance aspect of it, make it difficult to include large-scale Complete Streets initiatives. There is a portion of it that is ensuring that we maintain our existing sidewalks, so it includes some element of ensuring adequate maintenance of pedestrian improvements, but not necessarily large-scale Complete Street retrofits.

Ms. Dorothy brought up how Complete Streets do not have to be large scale. They are shared space, shared space of our public right-of-way. It does not have to be exclusively for cars as we have been seeing in these new times. A lot of it is sharing public rights-of-way, walking, and biking in the streets, so they are shared spaces for cars and people. Complete Streets can be just that. They do not need to be monstrosities. A lot of what some people think, and what it seems like Mr. Greeson thinks, is that Complete Streets have to be this gigantic space for swaths of cars to go as fast as they want, which is the antithesis of what we need. We need people to slow down and be happy they are here and be able to move around in various forms of transportation in a safe manner. Complete Streets are shared spaces where people can get around safely. They do not have to be big, crazy patches of land. We have Tucker that is a great Complete Streets example. She would like to try to get more streets to be that way without grabbing great swaths of land for astronomical sums of money.

We had a resident contact us about whether there were any improvements we could do this year for bike and ped. If there were some low-cost, low-hanging ways we can do more such as leading pedestrian intervals that had just the cost of people's time to reprogram our streetlights. Pedestrian crossings if we get rid of the beg button, we have a lot of times pedestrians are not allowed to cross unless they push a button. If we can modify that to get an automatic way to go forward without pushing the button. There are low-cost methods we could move forward. She is frustrated we are not putting forth any money into other forms of transportation. We did not spend the money from 2019 and we are not spending money for 2020. She does not think that is right. She would love to see more pedestrian features throughout Worthington and have it been a high priority.

Mr. Greeson described how we probably focused too much on what he would describe as larger-scale Complete Streets retrofits. In a community like Worthington, some of the biggest impacts we have made on bicycle and pedestrian issues have been small things like restriping, sharrows, and leading pedestrian intervals. We did evaluate all of those types of things and will distribute the documents that evaluated each of the streets being included in the Street Improvement Program, so you can see how we evaluated the applicability of your Complete Streets Policy and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Program to this particular year of maintenance projects. There is not in our estimation a lot of those low-hanging opportunities in this particular set of projects, but he thinks that every year we should look at them and see if there are ways that we can improve particular street, large or small. He shares the feeling that we need to be investing in bike and ped, but he asked to recognize that we are pretty challenged this year on all kinds of fronts.

Ms. Kowalczyk piggybacked on what Ms. Dorothy said, describing how she wholeheartedly agrees with her comments in terms of looking at these items. As Mr. Greeson mentioned, we are challenged right now with how we focus on City services, but there are cities that are looking at the current situation and how they can be creative and experiment on making their cities more walkable. Her brother lives in Seattle and he has told her about residential streets that have been shut down because there are so many walking and biking, and that is a way to accommodate them. It is an experiment to see how that promotes walkability and perhaps does not disrupt traffic in a way that impedes people's ability to get around. She encourages staff to think about that, particularly now while we are in this situation, and for the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board to think about these ideas in addition to infrastructure and traffic signals. Mr. Greeson expressed that we would be glad to engage in that conversation and have been monitoring the creative things that people have been doing. He added that staff has been looking at how we can add more leading pedestrian intervals across the City with one of our consultants. That is a low-cost way to add time for pedestrians when they are crossing at a crosswalk. We will keep looking as time allows with the hope that we can implement more because it has made an impact at the couple of crossings where it has been added.

Ms. Dorothy encouraged when we are talking with our consultant to make sure we are not just looking at level service for cars. Where we as a community have a level of service is for people patronizing the local community, walking around into the local businesses. It is not the best level of service to have cars just blow through Worthington. We want the level of service in today's traffic, which all the way through federal and local government, they are changing what their design standards are. We are moving forward in the future. We need to stop living in the past. We want people to come into Worthington and to stay and interact. So, when we are looking at consultants, we do not want a level of service for cars in Worthington, that is not where we want to be. Mr. Greeson explained how we are looking at it for the purposes of improving the walkability of Worthington or we would not be doing it.

Mr. Robinson brought up how Ms. Dorothy said that Tucker is a good example of a Complete Street, and he asked that she explain that statement. Ms. Dorothy explained that it is a shared public right-of-way that people can feel comfortable walking, biking, or

driving their car down. She has gone there all times of the day in a car, walking, or biking, and have always felt comfortable in that public right-of-way. Mr. Robinson asked how is that different. He does not understand, Tucker is a unique neighborhood that is a dead end with low density housing. Ms. Dorothy said her point is that not every Complete Street has to have a shared use path or a dedicated sidewalk on either side. To slow down cars, there are other things that can be put into streets to slow down cars and they could also just be parked cars. Speed is what really is upsetting to people outside of their cars for being comfortable when using a public right-of-way. There are chicanes, bump outs, and all sorts of different engineering methods in the National Association of City Transportation and other guidelines.

Mr. Robinson expressed that he would recommend that next time we have a project to present two distinctive options or more to Council with related budgets so we could have a discussion around specific policies. That would be very helpful to all of Council understanding what each of us thinks and to allow Council to make a choice rather than a yes or no on one presentation. Mr. Greeson said that is what we will do. We have written up our staff thinking on the Complete Streets analysis and we will share that with you more proactively in the future before we bid it. The time to have this debate is not after you have already authorized bidding it and the bids are before you. The time is to have it well before that. He asked for Council to bear with staff, we had more than one thing to focus on and challenges in trying to do all this. We will ensure that happens in the future.

MOTION

Ms. Dorothy made a motion to amend the ordinance in Section 1. to include an amount not to exceed Nine hundred twenty-nine thousand, three hundred fifty-five dollars and thirteen cents (\$929,355.13) and Section 2. the firm of Strawser Paving Company. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

President Michael explained that we will all be aware as this comes forward in the future, staff is going to bring back more options before getting into the bidding process so that Council can make the decisions that Mr. Robinson and Ms. Dorothy both brought up that were very important.

There being no additional comments, the clerk called the roll on Ordinance No. 18-2020 (As Amended). The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Bucher, Robinson, Kowalczyk, Michael

No 0

Ordinance No. 18-2020 (As Amended) was thereupon declared duly passed and is recorded in full in the appropriate record book.

NEW LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED

Ordinance No. 19-2020

Amending Ordinance No. 45-2019 (As Amended) to Adjust the Annual Budget by Providing for Appropriations from the General Fund Unappropriated Balance and Declaring an Emergency.

Introduced by Mr. Bucher.

MOTION

Ms. Kowalczyk made a motion to pass Ordinance No. 19-2020 as an emergency. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith.

Mr. Bartter presented that this is an appropriation of \$200,000 to refund already paid for summer camp registrations. This needs to be passed as an emergency to expedite the refund process back to the customers.

Mr. Hurley expressed how nothing makes a parks and recreation guy sadder than to talk about the cancellation of summer camps. Running summer camps was the first step in his parks and recreation career, so they are near and dear to him. Even before the Governor’s announcements last week, it became apparent we would not be able to offer the summer camps we had advertised. About 480 families registered prior to March 17th and 18th when all of this started. So, we felt like it was best to not keep them in the lurch and go ahead and make those cancellations and refunds. We will continue to evaluate and plan for the potential or offering modified summer programming, but at this point we did not want to hold up these refunds.

The clerk called the roll on the motion to pass Ordinance N. 19-2020. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Smith, Myers, Bucher, Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Michael
No 0

The motion carried unanimously by a roll call vote.

There being no additional comments, the clerk called the roll on Ordinance No. 19-2020 as an Emergency. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Myers, Bucher, Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Michael
No 0

Ordinance No. 19-2020 was thereupon declared duly passed as an emergency and is recorded in full in the appropriate record book.

Resolution No. 25-2020

Authorizing the Award of Façade Assistance and Corridor Enhancement Funds to Help Improve Facility Exterior Façade and Streetscape Along Certain of the City’s Commercial Corridors (535 Lakeview Plaza).

Introduced by Mr. Myers.

MOTION

Ms. Dorothy made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson.

Mr. McCorkle provided a brief summary of the FACE façade program, which is capped at \$25,000 per award and is half grant and half loan. It is done as a one to one match and we require the applicant to have at least \$25,000 in matching funds. We will give the loan dollars up front to the applicant, and those dollars are repaid at 0% interest over a three year period on a quarterly basis. Once the project is fully complete, the applicant will send us the invoices and proof of payment showing the work is completed, and we will then reimburse the grant portion.

This application is for Play CBUS which will be located at 535 Lakeview Plaza at the former Roadrunner space. They are an indoor adventure park recreational business which they are marketing as the largest, indoor ropes course in America gear towards both children and adults. They will have a restaurant and bar on site. The project before you is for \$75,000, just for the exterior improvements. They anticipate over \$3 million worth of internal renovations and plan to employ over 100 fulltime and part time employees.

Mr. McCorkle overviewed the different improvements Play CBUS intends to make. He explained that using the scoring rubric, they needed a minimum of 65 to receive funding. The Community Improvement Corporation met the Friday before last and recommended the project for funding with a score of 80.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-2020 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Resolution No. 26-2020

Re-appointing and Appointing Members to the Worthington Community Relations Commission and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.

Introduced by Mr. Bucher.

MOTION

Ms. Kowalczyk made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith.

There being no additional comments, the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-2020 passed unanimously by a voice vote.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

Mr. Greeson conveyed that staff wanted to touch base tonight on reopening issues in light of the State of Ohio authorizing the reopening of a variety of parks and recreation facilities. They issued a number of recommendations and best practices on how to do it appropriately and consistent with best public health practices. Much of the guidance came out on Friday and since then, we have been reviewing it and comparing it to some of the plans that staff had already been developing. He sent a memorandum to Councilmembers today that reflects staff's evolving thinking regarding our fitness facilities, ballfields, pool, and courts. In some areas we have developed detailed plans and preparations for reopening, in other areas we still have some work to do.

This evaluation is multi-faceted, first we are looking at these things through the lens of public health and if we can meet the recommendations and the best practices from the state. We are looking at whether we can meet our employee's and our customer's expectations for social distancing and the level of cleaning for facilities. After applying the recommendations and best practices, we ask whether the experience that we are creating is something that our customers want and if we are fulfilling a need. We are trying to ascertain if there is a community need to fill or a demand during this unique time period in our community's history. Finally, we are having to add to this evaluation whether things are cost effective and make sense. When evaluating an enhanced staffing and reduced customers, is it worth it to the customer in their experience and us financially. Assuming we feel comfortable, we can meet the public health standards, but we are wrestling with how we balance community needs with the cost of providing service.

Mr. Hurley explained that tonight he wanted to share staff's current thinking on reopening recreation facilities and get Council's input about what you may feel and what we may or may not be on the right track in terms of your thinking. The Community Center is where we feel like we have the most details and planning because it was fairly apparent that gyms and fitness centers were coming online soon and there is good information about best practices for doing that. It was announced that gym, dance instruction studios, and other personal fitness could open on May 26th, however if you look at the website it does not specifically say recreation centers. But, it was mentioned by the Lieutenant Governor when he made the announcement, and we are trying to get a verification that we can open the fitness component.

Staff is looking at a phased reopening starting on June 1st. We think it is the easiest to implement by spacing out fitness equipment and moving some equipment into other spaces such as the gym. We will obviously be increasing cleaning and limiting the number of patrons in the facility to about 40. We are looking at utilizing a preregistration system for people to sign up for designated time slots that would be for approximately an hour and fifteen minutes and having a designated time slot for high-risk populations. Currently, we have suspended all of the current memberships. During this phased reopening, we would make it an option to continue the suspension because people would not be getting the full value of their membership. In order to provide the significant number of hours we think

would be in demand, we would recall some of the part-time staff. We believe we will need six staff at a time for this level of reopening.

Mr. Bucher asked about what course of action we have to scale back to where we are currently if there is a second wave. Mr. Hurley explained how our intent would be to do something we feel pretty good about. Fitness is the easiest with adults, we can space equipment and limit the numbers. If we are not seeing bad numbers in our area and people are working well with us, we can probably start to increase both the hours we are available and perhaps increase the numbers coming into the building. If it were to go the other way, we could further restrict and keep offering some level of service or go back to a closed status. One of the reasons we want to have some flexibility with how we treat memberships is because if you are a member in this scenario, you are not getting what you paid for originally, and by having people pay as they come, it gives you flexibility where you are committed to the day they are coming. Mr. Greenson added that with all of these scenarios we must have flexibility to monitor our success and our ability to manage and keep up with the standards. We are going to have to ask for some patience with our community as we move into uncharted territories and provide modified services.

President Michael brought up that it is her understanding we will open the bathrooms but not the showers. We need to make sure we let people know you can come in for your workout, but understand the showers are closed. Mr. Hurley said that we will be clear about that. He explained that we are planning to have family changing rooms available for people who need to change to get to work or whatever the case might be. Cleaning of the locker rooms and spacing is one of the really big challenges of opening with the recommendations that are out there.

Ms. Kowalczyk commented that she appreciates the approach and being cautious, flexible, and willing to make changes if things are not working the way we hoped in terms of protocols. We should be clear nothing has changed with regard to the virus. There is no vaccine, treatment, or cure. The point of these openings is to spur on the economy because our economic conditions are currently not so good. The other thing that needs to be made clear is that the Governor's recommendations are just that. We do not have to open anything if we do not think we are ready or do not think it is appropriate. She expressed that in her opinion perhaps we should not be opening things quite so soon. We saw in the press this weekend that people could not adhere to protocols, so she is a little concerned about opening facilities too quickly and being able to control what people are doing.

Mr. Hurley described how the next big category is the swimming pools and a lot of the discussion had to do with our outdoor pools. In our initial review of the guidelines, we believe there are a lot more challenges with opening the swimming pools. When looking at spacing, our pool deck does not lend itself to a lot of room for people to pass and so forth. We would be opening locker rooms in that scenario and have to deal with the challenges with that. So, what we are looking at is a phased approach that would not occur when we first open in early June. It would occur a little later after we have more time to evaluate and understand the standards. We expect our local health departments to weigh in, and he knows there are concerns at both Columbus Public Health and Franklin County

Public Health. We expect if we get to the point of feeling good about opening the pool, it would be phased with things like lap swimming and water exercise programs being easier to implement and space appropriately. Opening up to family and kids' groups would create more challenges. We have been able to take advantage of what we thought would be an extended closure to fix a leaking pipe, and it is not going to be ready at the beginning of June regardless. But the real timing will be decided on the comfort level and our ability to safely reopen.

President Michael noted that she has spent time on the phone with the county health department and the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association. They could not come up with conclusions and have ask that the parks and recreation departments come up with what the right standards and protocols are. It is also encouraged that we are all coordinating because if only one pool opens up, people will jam the place. She thanked staff for all their work on this reopening plan. She explained that where she is, people have followed social distancing in the gym scenarios and have done distancing in swimming pools.

Mr. Hurley brought up the summer camps and how the guidelines are restrictive, including group sizes and ratios, no field trips, separate check in and checkout, extensive cleaning, and checking symptoms at drop-off, among others. Staff is evaluating what we can do, because while summer camp provides a fun experience for kids, we know it can double as childcare for a lot of parents. Our evaluation is looking at the guidelines and determining what an all-day program looks like. The next step is to survey some of our families who signed up for our camps and try to understand where they are with the guideline and their desire to come to camp in a new format. We will be returning with more specific recommendations. There will be some cost implications because we would have to load up on staff.

He explained how there was a significant announcement about sports fields and leagues. We do not run youth sports much anymore, that is handled by the Worthington Youth Boosters (WYB) and the schools. We had closed our fields through to the end of May and are waiting to hear from the WYB about what they will be offering such as softball and baseball. We expect to hear from them soon. That would lead to decisions on reopening fields in general, and the level of staffing. Having fields available on the weekends will drive the need for seasonal workers and overtime. That would bring in some revenue and help offset a portion of that expense. That decision will need to be made in the next couple of weeks.

As you may recall, playgrounds were mandated to be closed by the Ohio Department of Health and are still closed through May. Other amenities we have closed include the tennis courts, pickleball courts, the skatepark, the dog park, the outdoor restrooms, and the Selby Shelter House. Some of those were closed from a push by the department of health, but others we closed because they were bringing gatherings of people. He believes that the end of May is a natural time to assess where we are on some of these closures. We are talking to the health department and looking at those.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about enforcement, specifically, if we open some of these different areas to people and have some protocols in place, how do we enforce that. Mr. Hurley said that is the challenge. Initially some of these facilities we did not close because tennis should be okay, but we had to send our police and staff. The worst case is the police get a call and have to dispatch someone. We have discussed whether we would want to have a recreation staff person, to go out during busier times of the day and be a presence. With all the daylight hours and things going on, it would be difficult to have consistent enforcement. It would be more education.

President Michael conveyed that if we do education, we need to let people know that if they do not follow the social distancing, amenities could be shut down again. You have to follow the rules, or we have to shut it down. Mr. Hurley said we have communications channels to get the word out about what the guidelines are. We do however have a lot of nonresidents from other communities that utilize some amenities, so it is difficult to broadly get the word out. They walk by signs all the time and do not see or do not want to see them.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked if there is the possibility of reserving the courts. Mr. Hurley said that we talked with neighboring communities about that. It would be free and registration occurs online for blocks of time. However, as soon as you unlock the tennis courts, there will be people on them whether they reserved them or not. To do that and enforce it, you will need a monitor down there.

Mr. Myers shared that he has had several neighbors talk to him, and their general attitude is that it has been appropriate to shut down and quarantine. They understand it, and they can handle it. But they do not want to have us come back again and do this all over. They recommend taking it slowly and only doing this one time. He conveyed that he does not think we can handle this if we must do it twice in one year. His attitude is that we should not rush it. Mr. Robinson concurred with Mr. Myers' feelings.

REPORT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Dorothy thanked everyone for being so flexible in every avenue we are working on. She gave a shout-out to all the graduates this coming weekend.

Mr. Robinson acknowledged the receipt of Mr. Bates' email regarding the creation of the citizen's budget advisory committee. He appreciates the email and supports it in concept. He hopes that other councilmembers will be willing and even eager to discuss this in future meetings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION Mr. Smith moved, Mr. Myers seconded a motion to meet in Executive Session to consider compensation of public employees.

The clerk called the roll on Executive Session. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Bucher, Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Michael

No 0

Council recessed at 9:36 p.m. from the Regular meeting session.

MOTION Ms. Dorothy moved, Mr. Robinson seconded a motion to return to open session at 9:45 p.m.

The clerk called the roll on returning to open session. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes 7 Robinson, Kowalczyk, Dorothy, Smith, Myers, Bucher, Michael

No 0

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Mr. Bucher moved, Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to adjourn.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt
Management Assistant

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
15th day of June, 2020.*

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
Council President