



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7:30 pm

6550 N. High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085

Virtual Meeting Information

Link through: worthington.org

Our Government - Live Stream

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

Worthington City Council met remotely in Regular Session on Monday, February 8, 2021, via Microsoft Teams videoconference. President Michael called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Minutes:

Members Present: Peter Bucher, Rachael Dorothy, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, David Robinson, Doug Smith and Bonnie Michael

Member(s) Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Assistant City Manager Economic Development Director David McCorkle, 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, IT Director Gene Oliver, Chief of Police Robert Ware, Chief of Fire & EMS Mark Zambito, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

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

Special Presentation(s)

4. McCord Park Phase I Overview - POD Design

Minutes:

Mr. Hurley explained how he is excited to be talking about McCord Park tonight. In his years with the City, this park has been planned and talked about at different levels and it is exciting that we are nearing having some construction underway. City Council approved the conceptual master plan for McCord Park back in 2018, and subsequently we brought on POD Design to help work through the detailed design. In early 2020, POD gave an update on where we were at that point, specifically focused on the playground. Tonight, we are back to share more details with Council, before coming back next week to ask for permission to go out for bid for Phase One. We have also had a great team working together on the train observation area, and the rehabbing of the donated caboose.

Mr. Kolwicz with POD Design expressed how pleased they are to be back before Council to overview the design for McCord Park. The park is set up now for phasing, with Phase One including the caboose area. Future phasing includes baseball field renovations, restroom facilities, and parking enhancements. The first phase does include the modification of what is currently a driveway with a cul-de-sac, which will be shortened and ending at a parking lot closer to Wilson Bridge Road. The parking lot will utilize lower impact storm water solutions. By removing the portion of driveway, we will be able to put in a full-size soccer and field hockey field. He also overviewed the proposed playground area, along with the existing garden. There will be a new community greenspace outside the Community Center that provides a great staging location for programming at that building. What has changed since the last discussion are the central green space and the train observation area. With the train observation area, there will be improved pavement areas, including a sidewalk that builds off the edge of the existing asphalt in the parking lot. The caboose will sit several feet above grade, and we want visitors to be able to come up an ADA surface into the caboose itself, and still be able to see the undercarriage and the mechanical portions of the caboose. There will be an outdoor classroom area incorporated, allowing small groups to gather. He displayed renderings of what the train observation area will look like. The landscaping will utilize native plants to filter storm water. The other update is the central green space that will be about the same size as the greenspace at Pingree Park or Wilson Hill Park, with about half an acre of lawn space. Working with the steering group for this project, they arrived at two proposed shelters that are the same size and general appearance as the shelter at the Wilson Hill Park. There will also be a seat-wall at each shelter to provide additional seating. The product being specified will use colors that will blend well with the Community Center. Mr. Hurley added that the Parks and Recreation Commissions helped with arriving to the shelter design being suggested. Initially bricks were recommended around each of the posts, but as it was discussed, a seat wall was selected instead for the additional space and use of bricking.

Mr. Kolwicz overviewed the budget for Phase One, showing a grand total of \$1,352,121 with a 10% contingency, broken down into site demolition, site utilities, landscaping and hardscaping, the playground, and the train depot. There are also add alternates for \$179,976 for the park shelters and multi-purpose field barrier net

systems.

Mr. Myers clarified that the park shelters at the green space would be add-on costs. Mr. Kolwicz said that is correct. Mr. Hurley explained the only reason they are being presented as alternates is because we tried to identify something that might not have to go into Phase One due to uncertainty around funding. But we wanted to have some flexibility with the funding for the full park project. Mr. Myers expressed it would be a shame if we could not get those shelters, which activates that greenspace.

Ms. Dorothy asked about the design, expressing she was impressed with the ADA access to the caboose, wondering if there would be any lighting in that area. Mr. Kolwicz answered that they did not have any extra lighting in the area to make it a nighttime attraction. However, there will be some power access, and any lighting would only be something associated with the caboose itself from a security standpoint, not for illuminating the whole area for nighttime use. Mr. Hurley expressed how the initial plans for the caboose are to only have it open for folks to get inside when it is staffed. Otherwise you could only get up and see in through the windows.

Mr. Myers asked whether Phase One would impact the community garden space. Mr. Hurley replied that it will not. Mr. Myers asked how much of the walking path will be included in Phase One. Mr. Kolwicz detailed how there will be a path that will come from Wilson Bridge down and around the baseball fields, connecting to the train depot, and around the community green space, back to the playground behind the Community Center. About two-thirds of the walking path will be put in place in Phase One. Mr. Myers asked how many new parking spaces will be in the new lot at the soccer field. Mr. Kowlicz replied there would be about sixty parking spaces. Mr. Myers conveyed that he really likes the seat wall idea. He asked if we have approached the high school about playing some games at the new field that can be used for field hockey. Mr. Hurley replied that when engaging stakeholders, the schools and youth boosters were involved, and the field should be of a quality that school teams could use. Mr. Myers stated that it would be a good draw for people from out of town to see the park when coming to see a game. He asked if we thought about any interpretive signage for the caboose, explaining what it is. Mr. Hurley responded that the plan is to tell the history of the caboose, include train schedules, and all information possible to provide.

President Michael commented on how the design work presented is very well done and will expand a lot of opportunities in our park. She asked about the use of capital dollars for this project, and whether that will allow us to do the add-ons. Mr. Hurley explained how we set aside \$1.8 million in the CIP in 2020 for this project, which would then be bonded. We did get \$400,000 in state capital bill funding, and the idea is that money would go towards Phase One. We have not fully identified funding for Phase Two which will take us to \$3 million total. We want to be as conservative as we can be for Phase One, without knowing the numbers yet for Phase Two. Ms. Stewart clarified that we have \$1.8 million set aside within the CIP for the entire McCord Park project and anticipating \$1 million from external sources. If we can find some cost

savings, that will help us with Phase Two. Mr. Myers explained he understands the financial constraints, but he hates to be pennywise, but pound foolish. This is a huge asset as part of the Wilson Bridge Road redevelopment, and the park will be able to draw people from the offices. It is an opportunity to be a marquee park for us. Ms. Dorothy asked how quickly we would be able to start work on this. Mr. Hurley described how staff will be back for permission to bid at next week's meeting, and then that will get us out to bid. Mr. Kolwicz expressed that if the bidding goes smoothly, we could get someone under contract within a month of being able to accept the bids. As soon as weather is breaking, that contractor would be able to break ground. Everything we have identified should be accomplished by the end of this year, however that depends on when we sign that contract.

Mr. Myers commented on the former Worthington Classic held at McCord, and how it was a way to bring in people who are not typically in the Worthington community. That is why he brought up the field hockey team, because we have the premiere team in the state. He would think we could get people from all over to come and watch them play.

Mr. Hurley provided an update on Selby Park and how there are three designs on our website that folks can view regarding the playground replacement. This Wednesday on the 10th from 3-6pm, we will have staff at the Selby Shelter with those designs on display, for a socially distanced opportunity for people to view the boards with the designs on them. We will be able to take the feedback received both online and in person to narrow down a final design.

Reports of City Officials

5. Policy Item(s)

a. General Fund Balance Discussion

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson explained how it is our custom when closing out the fiscal year to provide a more robust financial report, in order to comply with the provisions of the amended 2018 General Fund Carryover Balance policy that was adopted as part of our prudent fiscal management strategies.

Mr. Bartter detailed how the 2018 General Fund Carryover Balance policy includes a targeted unencumbered fund balance of 35-50% of prior year General Fund expenditures and established that a "Financial Action Plan" is to be implemented if the fund balance falls within certain thresholds. If the unencumbered balance exceeds 50% of prior year expenditures, the City Manager is to schedule a discussion with the City Council to review the current financial landscape, and to discuss whether the City should use a portion of the balance for one-time expenditures to benefit the community. On December 31, 2020, the General Fund Unencumbered Balance was at \$16,490,918, which is 57.5% of 2019 General Fund expenditures. There are about \$1.9 million in encumbrances carried from 2020 to 2021, including December health insurance,

December utilities, and COVID-19 contingency funds.

He described how the General Fund Balance reached its current level because of income tax dollars, Bureau of Workers Compensations refunds, and unexpended appropriations. Income taxes in 2020 were roughly flat compared to 2019. In April of last year, we anticipated a larger drop of 10-20% in income taxes, however they did not drop as much as initially thought. We received a total of \$2,370,423 in BWC refunds, and this one-time money helped to offset revenue losses in other areas, predominately Parks and Recreation. Including these refunds, 2020 General Fund Revenues finished above estimates by 1.88%. Unexpended appropriations are money that has been budgeted to be spent, but then not spent. In 2020, unexpended appropriations in the General Fund were over \$6.9 million, or approximately 20% of the total budget. With the CARES Act Funds, they were directed to cover some personnel expenses related to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, removing them from the General Fund and moving them into the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Secondly, multiple full-time positions were held open along with a furlough of many part-time employees, for a savings of \$1.5 million. There were other unexpended appropriations, including where we were over-budgeted on the 911-call answering transition, and utility savings from energy savings and buildings being closed. It is important to note that with unexpended appropriations, they can become a prior-year encumbrance and carried in 2021, or the appropriation lapses and is no longer available.

There is a 2020 Comprehensive Financial Report that will be distributed to Council this week, which offers financial trend data for 2011-2020. Trends include revenue per capita, expenditures per capita, General Fund balance, long-term debt, and fringe benefit costs. In 2021, we need to watch for the General Fund revenue estimate versus the actual due to issues related to income tax collections and working from home, and Parks and Recreation revenues. There are also questions about whether there will be additional federal dollars distributed to local and state governments. He showed a chart illustrating the General Fund balance five-year forecast, and how by 2025 the balance is projected to remain above 35%. In 2020 there were several large one-time expenses including the transition of 911 Call Answering, ReBoot and non-profit grants, and Community Center piping.

The 2021 budget considerations include the process of returning to fully authorized full-time staffing levels and filling positions that were held vacant in 2020 due to COVID. We have already awarded SwimInc a grant of over \$85,000. \$325,000 was transferred to the CIC for land acquisition on East Wilson Bridge Road. There is a recommendation upcoming to transfer \$285,000 into the CIP to fund Huntley Bowl improvements and reduce debt. Adding a total of \$370,260 in General Fund expenditures for SwimInc and the CIP transfer would reduce the estimated fund balance from 55.6% to 54.3%. Our 2021 fiscal strategy recommendation is to implement a transfer to the CIP, which will require a

transfer ordinance to authorize. We also want to continue to monitor income tax levels and expenditures throughout the rest of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further down the line we can re-evaluate and see if there are additional funds to pursue Council priorities including Phase Two of McCord Park and continued economic development on East Wilson Bridge Road. He noted that all four budget videos are now posted on the City's website for educational purposes and the Balancing Act tool has been updated with final budget numbers.

Ms. Kowalczyk described how we are in a good financial position, and she is happy we will be able to fill vacant positions. She wondered if there has been any consideration given to the positions that were identified in the budget discussion for an EMS position and communications support. She believes those are both important to consider. Mr. Bartter replied that one of the primary tenants of financial management is that you do not want to utilize one-time money for recurring expenses. When discussing the addition of staff, you need matching recurring revenue to fund those positions. At this point he would not recommend expanding current staffing levels until you see the income taxes increasing to fund those positions. Mr. Greeson explained how we do need to revisit the one-time strategy after the second quarter so we can decide whether we feel comfortable spending one-time dollars on one-time expenses that have been identified. He is hopeful as we move later into the fiscal year, we may be able to consider some of the things that Ms. Kowalczyk identified. Ms. Kowalczyk acknowledged that we are in the position that we are because we have been cautious about expenditures. She just wants to make sure those positions continue to be part of the discussion.

Mr. Myers asked if the General Assembly is going to take up the tax issue and if we have polled any of our major businesses to see how many people have been brought back to headquarters. He is concerned that the Governor's order is either going to be struck down or lapse, and we will see an outward migration of tax revenue from people working from home. Last he heard the General Assembly did not really want to deal with the issue. Mr. Bartter explained that the legal challenge will be interesting to see, but he does not anticipate a ruling until the summer. RITA has done some preliminary calculations where we would lose \$2 for every \$1 gained. It will not be a one to one split. Mr. Myers expressed that until the General Assembly gets involved in this issue, it will be a problem for every municipality that relies on income tax because it is hard to project what taxes will be until they are collected. President Michael brought up how the Central Ohio Mayors and Manager Association brought this topic up at their meeting on Friday, and they have an attorney who will be checking into the details and getting back to us. All the communities are feeling the same and are afraid, not knowing how to budget. Mr. Myers asked if the Ohio Municipal League is going to be taking a position. Mr. Greeson explained that they have taken the position of maintaining collections as-is. Mr. Lindsey updated that the lawsuit is still pending, and nothing is moving at this point.

Mr. Robinson asked if staff is seeking a resolution on the transfer of fund to the CIP as identified in the staff memo. Mr. Greeson replied that will be brought back to Council at an upcoming meeting. He does not believe we need to adopt our one-time money strategy, but it would be helpful if Council would share any feedback on the priorities outlined. The rationale for McCord and East Wilson Bridge Road were identified in previous retreats as the high capital improvement investments and are well suited for one-time expenses. Mr. Robinson asked about the slide indicating \$7 million that was not spent out of the General Fund, and then the next slide identified only roughly \$3 million, where did the other \$4 million come from. Mr. Bartter replied that in a normal year we have \$3 million or so in unexpended, so this was in addition to the \$3 million base, on top of the other \$3 million, and then the remainder was from the utilities, 911 Call Answering, and a myriad of other smaller lines. Mr. Robinson asked about the General Fund memo where the unencumbered balance was indicated to be 57.5% of the prior year, and what was the dollar amount. Mr. Bartter replied \$16,490,918.

Mr. Myers asked about the unencumbered balance lapsing and no longer being available, he wanted a further explanation about that. Mr. Bartter replied that it means that those dollars are no longer available to be spent, however they can be re-appropriated.

Mr. Robinson noted that at the end of January the unencumbered balance went down by over \$5.8 million. Mr. Bartter said that happens every year, this is the cycle of finances. We load the new budget, and then departments go in and encumber their funds for the year. We do encumber significant portions of the budget, so they are available to be spent and not creating multiple encumbrances. Mr. Robinson clarified that the \$5.8 million was not extraordinary. Mr. Bartter affirmed that is correct.

Mr. Bucher asked if we want to consider more ReBoot or Community Grants if we are looking at one-time funds in addition to these recommendations. Mr. Greeson responded that it is really at Council's discretion. What staff is recommending other than the reduction in debt by paying cash for the Huntley Bowl, is that we wait a quarter or so to reassess where we are. There could be other priorities dependent on our fiscal condition that Council may want to consider. We will have another round of community surveying that is being led by the libraries that may inform some of that conversation. Mr. Bartter noted that in the past couple weeks we have cut significant checks to the Worthington Partnership, the Worthington Historical Society, and to the McConnell Arts Center. We also have the \$37,000 in normal grant funding that needs to be allocated and distributed. Mr. Bucher asked when the survey by the libraries would be completed. Mr. Greeson explained that they are working on it now. Mr. McCorkle stated that they plan to launch it by late February and want it to be open for at least a month and would anticipate results in April. As part of the ReBoot program we are doing a closeout report where we are asking for updated

revenue loss numbers, so we can have some trend information to report back on our ReBoot recipients now versus nine months ago which may be helpful in the discussion.

Mr. Myers asked when there would be a discussion about a decision or guidance from Council, specifically referencing the Huntley Bowl which would be an appropriate one-time expenditure for monies. Mr. Greeson explained how staff would want to bring a transfer resolution on that sooner rather than later and clear that from our debt issuance considerations. Mr. Bartter explained that in the July pre-budget presentation, we would do a full evaluation at that point. Ms. Dorothy commented that previously we moved our 20/80 split more into General Funds and took away from the capital side. She would like to see more one-time capital improvement funds, maybe moving up our waterline replacement, or doing some more bike and pedestrian improvements. We still owe \$6 million to our Capital Improvements Program and she would love to see more projects moving forward.

b. Financial Report - January

Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Bucher moved, Ms. Kowalczyk seconded a motion to approve the January 2021 Financial Report.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote

c. Request to Bid - Rush Run Bank Stabilization Project

Minutes:

Mr. Whited described how this is a relatively non-complex project to do some stabilization of the Rush Run Stream to mediate erosivity, complementing the Huntley Bowl project. It is an approximately \$76,000 project that we would like to bid with the hopes of starting construction in the next 6-8 weeks.

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved, seconded Mr. Myers to authorize staff to solicit bids for this project.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

6. Discussion Item(s)

a. Retreat Follow-Up

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson explained how it is good to follow-up on the Council retreat that was held last month and tonight he would like to discuss the summary and report that was distributed to make sure it reflects Council's recollection of the retreat. Most importantly, this is to seek next steps and to gain clarification on issues and priorities. In a memorandum included in the agenda package, there is a series of seven questions posed to provide a framework for discussing follow-up on the retreat. He believes that the retreat was a great opportunity for discussion, but often we walk away with more things on the plate than are possible to accomplish, necessitating some follow-up conversations.

Ms. Dorothy commented that when we were discussing issues to consider for 2021 policies, we had our numbered items and then bulleted items under the numbered items. She noticed that under sustainability, the meeting memo did not include smaller housing options and more transit options. Also in number 14, these strategies do not include mental health services. Though we tried to prioritize what we are going to handle, there is still too much on the plate. Mr. Greeson pulled up the slide referenced by Ms. Dorothy on the day of the retreat. More transit and smaller housing options show in both sustainability and land-use strategies for housing and economic development. Mr. Jenkins, the facilitator, lumped that under land use strategy, and it did not show up under sustainability. However, Council may have voted in a certain way and it is about what they believe reflects that day. The second issue of mental health services under policing strategies, that may have gotten deleted, and gotten taken out and subsumed into the conversation discussing follow-up services to EMS calls. That probably should stay since those can be considered different issues.

Mr. Robinson asked what is being asked to be done right now and if there needs to be further discussion and clarification about which items Councilmembers believe are high priorities. Mr. Greeson replied that we are looking to see if there is agreement on the report, because this report essentially becomes the minutes for the retreat. The process step we need to take is making sure Council is comfortable with the content of the report as accurately reflecting the process, so it can be accepted at a future meeting as the record for the retreat. Mr. Robinson asked if there would be further discussion about the contents of the report. Mr. Greeson replied that the most important thing being done tonight is to get into the substance of the issues. Mr. Robinson commented that for this to be what he considers a useful planning document, we need to establish some categories for the different topics and identify which ones require significant staff time and which do not, which require additional financial resources, and which do not, because lumping all these topics into one big basket is not very useful in actual planning.

President Michael noted that we are seeing this list of sixteen items and yet there is nothing in the report that indicates how Council voted, and the order of priorities. If this is going to be useful, this retreat report needs a summary of the issues considered and what the final vote was. That needs to be very clear.

Mr. Myers brought up that when we get into the retreat, we are talking about these big broad concepts, such as how we want to make sustainability in Worthington a priority. However, we struggle with looking at the small items under the categories to determine what we want to focus on. For example, the question of whether joining Ohio Clean Power under sustainability is worth committing staff resources at this point or is it more important that we address the issue of something such as adding solar panels on residential buildings. We have done an awful lot of work on something like sustainability, and in every project we do, it is integrated and front of mind. The question is what are the

individual items under the larger category that we believe we can pick off this year. Looking at land use, one of the biggest issues will be resolved without us doing anything other than working the UMCH process, but that will open up the next level of either going forward with development there or what will be Plan B. He looks at some of the other land use issues, and some of them are zoning issues such as empty nester housing or solar panels. He wondered if maybe it could be time to put together another Code Review Commission. Some of these topics we are already devoting time and resources, such as UMCH, diversity and inclusion, and police strategies. At the retreat, we are assuming certain things are already being done, so we did not make them a priority, such as Wilson Bridge Road, but when we come to allocate time and priorities, we have to acknowledge that there are some things underway that we cannot stop. President Michael expressed that East Wilson Bridge Road should be added to the land use strategies. We have to decide whether we want to put on an overlay to avoid having the little houses and everything else be put in there. To her that is a land use strategy.

Ms. Kowalczyk agreed with Mr. Myers and believes we should look at what we are working on now and everything else should be in the context of the visioning process. A lot of these things will fit under those visioning concepts and we can have a longer term plan for them. We have plenty going on right now, and to add anything to our plates, unless it is something that absolutely has to get done, we should be taking inventory on what we are working on and then making sure the other items are part of that visioning discussion.

Mr. Myers told Mr. Greeson that it would be helpful to have an inventory of what staff priorities are right now, and some idea of what kind of bandwidth is left. Mr. Greeson explained that is what was attempted with the "On the plate" presentation at the retreat. What we have envisioned as part of the visioning process, many of these broad categories will have workshops or workgroups around them that will discuss and generate ideas. Staff has already anticipated that if a steering committee is created, they will ask staff to inventory all that is being done in the vision categories. There is a lot of overlap between the expressed priorities of Council and the visioning statements. The key question is what is critical to do in 2021, and then what is important to do but could be referred to the vision process and wait. Ms. Kowalczyk conveyed that implementing the visioning plan is the number one priority.

Mr. Smith stated that he is struggling on how to approach things that he would consider Council's prerogative and philosophy. Specifically for something like land use strategy, a lot of philosophical conversation needs to be had before any sort of action. The question is what is needed from staff to be able to have that conversation. Ms. Dorothy replied that she would love to have people from MORPC come in to talk about the regional land use strategy. Mr. Myers said that in reality, the philosophical question may be decided by the steering committee. Philosophically, there are questions about the types of housing to have in

Worthington and would be a great discussion for the steering committee and answering the question of how we preserve the unique character of our town. It might be an issue that we can involve MPC in since they are our land use experts. Some of these issues we can farm out to a couple of groups. The philosophical discussion of what we want Worthington to look like is all tied up in that. Mr. Smith said that it sounds like staff does not need to prioritize that at all because it is being woven into visioning and conversations we are having at a natural level. For example, a discussion over body cameras, we already had a discussion and an ordinance introduced over a year ago, so what real time will staff need to put into that to bring it up again.

President Michael conveyed in regard to East Wilson Bridge Road, that she is concerned about land use planning. We are talking about having long term discussions, but she is flustered that we have not put an overlay on there and it is one of those things that maybe needs to have a discussion sooner rather than later. While it makes sense to have a discussion with the others, East Wilson Bridge Road is something that we really need to act on sooner rather than later. Ms., Kowalczyk explained that is an example of something more immediate, rather than needing more discussion in terms of the visioning discussion. Mr. Greeson described how that is an example of something consistent with an adopted plan of Council as opposed to something such as missing middle housing or accessory dwelling units where there would need to be a whole policy discussion since there are not existing recommendations related to that. Mr. Myers explained that we have had the Wilson Bridge Road Plan in place for over five years, but he has not seen a real dedicated and consistent implementation yet. We have been very piecemeal with implementation. He is hearing President Michael convey that maybe we should set a priority for implementation of that plan, potentially through proactive zoning changes. Mr. Greeson noted that previous discussions have not shown a willingness to create non-conforming uses and do any significant zoning, and as a result we have had a couple projects happen that are inconsistent with our plan. The consistent efforts have occurred more around using the plan to guide development on West Wilson Bridge Road and through the CIC's efforts to acquire property on East Wilson Bridge Road. Mr. Smith expressed how there has been a good deal of turnover on East Wilson Bridge Road and that along with some of the priorities we have set, there is a confluence of events that allow this conversation to be more proactive. Mr. Myers asked if there is consensus to charge staff with bringing forward an implementation plan. Mr. Robinson expressed that he is happy to discuss it, but as he has spoken with Mr. Greeson over the years, his understanding is that proactive establishment of non-conforming use zoning was avoided due to prior discussions with residents on those parcels and in the surrounding areas. His question is what has changed now. Mr. Greeson explained how that plan has robust implementation recommendations. What staff will share is what is believed to be feasible in

2021 and what he would call near term implementation efforts as opposed to getting caught up in multimillion dollar treescape plans that are not feasible in 2021.

Mr. Myers expressed that he is asking staff to come forward with a recommendation. Land use encompasses a lot of things, and it is set as the top priority. For him, front of mind is UMCH, and it is on a current track to move towards some sort of resolution. We are probably going to see a resolution come forward on income for rental housing that we are working on. Mr. Greeson replied that is a question of whether that is something Council wants staff to undertake. In terms of this basket of priorities, that is another one that has gotten a lot of discussion that could go under land use, housing, or diversity, equity, and inclusion. We need to figure out where it falls in terms of the top priorities. Right now we have visioning, Joint Recreation District, and further implementation of Wilson Bridge Road as the top priorities that are all fairly good efforts.

Ms. Dorothy explained how when we just look at the issues on the plate, that seems a bit overwhelming then we are adding more to it. We need more feedback from staff on what can be accomplished. Mr. Greeson responded that it is helpful to hear what Council believes is important. There is discussion in here about whether some things can be taken off the plate, or if there is flexibility to hire consultants or interns. If we can hear more about what is important we can shape a strategy.

Mr. Robinson explained that he is not sure how information about priorities is to be gathered, whether that is through these discussions with Council. For instance on Source of Income, Mr. Myers brought it up, Ms. Dorothy brought it up, he has spoken with almost every councilperson about it, and there is a general appetite to move forward with it. It is not in the same category as a JRD or East Wilson Bridge Road, require less staff time, and no ongoing staff time. He asked what it would take to increase the capabilities of staff to enact certain key projects like Source of Income this year. Mr. Greeson responded that he would like to reserve judgement until he hears the whole list. He sent out a memorandum about Source of Income, which highlighted Westerville's process which is a good model for the type of work we should do if we are thoughtful about our approach to it. It is doable, but that is within the context of everything else we want to accomplish. There is work to be done, because Westerville's effort involved survey work, a couple outreach meetings, and outreach to landlords. It is hard to predict what level of engagement and participation we will have in that. Westerville had a relatively low response to their survey and no participation in their educational sessions offered to landlords, but that does not mean that we will not. Mr. Robinson explained that the CRC wrote a memo to City leadership back in August, this has been discussed by multiple Councilmembers, and there is a general appetite for it. He is not hearing Mr. Greeson describing how we can get it done. What would it actually take to move

forward on Source of Income. Mr. Greeson replied that he wrote a very specific memo that outlines Westerville's process that he believes would be the logical approach that includes modeling legislation, amendments to our Non-Discrimination Ordinance, and they undertook a wise process with a couple of council briefings to hear information about what it was and the legal aspects of it, they conducted a survey, offered a couple of Zoom educational sessions, and then they had their normal legislative hearing process. It took them about 4-6 months to complete all those steps. Mr. Robinson asked what it would take for Source of Income to actually happen here in Worthington, what will pull the trigger to initiate action. Mr. Greeson responded it would take Council. Mr. Robinson explained that he has pressed the issue, sending multiple emails on this, the CRC spent a considerable amount of time reviewing it, he has spoken with virtually all Councilmembers who are supportive of it. Maybe it is not the highest priority, but he does not know what else to do other than make a motion in a Council meeting to say we are going to do this. Mr. Myers responded that the process to do that is what we are doing right now. Everything that Mr. Robinson described has been outside of Council chambers. Now it is up to Council as a group to determine where that fits in the priorities. As he sees what we have said tonight, implementation of visioning is the top priority right now, the JRD is the second priority and needs some certainty for the pools, and Wilson Bridge Road is the third priority. If we wanted to set Source of Income as the fourth priority, then let us decide if that is what we want to do. Then Mr. Greeson can come back and let us know what is possible to be accomplished. Mr. Greeson conveyed how he did not want to come across as resistant to moving Source of Income forward, he agrees with Mr. Myers that this is the type of feedback needed to help hone our priorities and focus on the work that Council as a whole want accomplished. The information provided in the memorandums was meant to inform this discussion and prioritization. Mr. Robinson asked if there are ways to increase City capacity to move on some of these issues, whether that is part-time workers or consultants. If the situation is that the plate is full, he wonders if there are ways to increase capacity for certain projects like Source of Income or missing middle housing. Mr. Greeson replied that is correct, depending on what the priorities are. For some projects having an intern would be helpful. Other projects we may need outside consultants for technical bandwidth. If he has a sense of the priority, he can begin to shape strategies around each of them.

Ms. Kowalczyk explained that if we can include Source of Income that would be great, but she is hesitant to declare a priority only for us to have to push something off to the side. She wants to make sure that the work that we are doing continues in support of these priorities, before adding something. That being said, she supports exploring Source of Income if we can, and does like the process laid out. She is hesitant to start laying out priorities while we have visioning which could also refine priorities, and then there are things within this

that we are already working on. She would like to push the mental health exploration up if there are ways that we could do that.

Mr. Greeson explained how staff will work with Marty Jenkins to refine the retreat report to reflect the amendments proposed, and then Council can adopt the amended report. The conversation that is going on now is refining the priorities from the retreat, which could be its own one page statement. In addition to the budget documents, this would be some additional policy initiatives to undertake. He has heard priorities including visioning, Joint Recreation District, Wilson Bridge Road, and Source of Income. President Michael mentioned that mental health has been brought up. Mr. Greeson stated that is a broad category that could mean multiple things and fit in multiple categories. Some clarity would be helpful on that topic.

Ms. Kowalczyk explained that when she thinks of mental health, it is about an alternative to police response. There are a significant number of incidents where it is a mental health situation and there are communities undertaking using mental health professionals to engage in that response rather than police. It is her understanding when it comes to funding staff, it is a long term investment, and does merit conversation. In the meantime, what can we do to address the situation until we can get to that point if people agree that is the desired end result. The immediate need would be exploring how we can better respond, and how to better equip people to make the response to minimize interactions we do not want.

Ms. Dorothy agreed with Ms. Kowalczyk, and we could engage our new consortium to learn how other people are dealing with all the 911 calls. She would also like to focus on some financial stability issues if we have the capacity and we need to review our revenues and fees.

Mr. Myers explained how it would be relatively easy to examine how the 911 call center is call screening, and how other communities are screening. The question is how the gatekeepers' function, and if we knew that it might help, because it is difficult in a lot of situations to know when it is a police situation or a mental health situation. The last thing you want to do is send the wrong person. He would maybe add this as a fifth priority. It would be just about getting some answers which would be helpful.

Mr. Greeson described how on the financial stability front we have some things on the way. The Parks Commission is still wrestling with our park fee evaluation that was completed. We still need to bring that to fruition. Mr. Bartter noted that we will be examining EMS fees in the next month or so. Mr. Greeson explained how the Motor Vehicle License tax was also discussed during the CIP discussion, which is a policy dialogue we need to consider at some point since the legislature has authorized that expansion. He explained how body cameras are already underway and has to come back. He heard Council want to see most of the land use strategy, except for Wilson Bridge Road, would be referred to the continued dialogue through the visioning process and planning commission.

Mr. Bucher added to sustainability that the Power Clean Future discussion would be low hanging fruit with low staff resources. Next steps would be getting them to present and answer questions, which would add more resources for sustainability down the road. Mr. Greeson summarized that would be a coalition we could join that bring us education and resources. The challenge for staff time would be the time we have to participate. Mr. Bucher agreed, noting that we can be as ambitious or simplistic as we would like, but it would unlock a lot of experts in just about any sustainability field. Mr. Smith stated that if there was any way to get a speaker in front of Council, or to provide more detail, without exhausting staff time, he is all ears to that.

b. Visioning Action Planning

Minutes:

Mr. Myers expressed that he would like feedback from staff next week on how many of the retreat items we want the visioning steering committee to follow-up on. Council needs to direct the steering committee on the issues to explore. He asked about how Council will communicate to the steering committee. He thinks there needs to be more detail and oversight for the steering committee than there was with the visioning committee, and it is going to take a lot of staff time and Council time. There may need to be an agenda item on every Council meeting to discuss what the steering committee works on. He wants to know how Council directs the committee and how much oversight there needs to be and how that is exercised.

Mr. Greeson explained how there are a myriad of ways to do this, and the model outlined in the memorandum has the purpose of bridging the visioning work, to all of the institutional partners including the staff, boards, and commissions, who would be responsible for helping to implement actions consistent with the visions. The goal is to create buy-in and have good organizational thinking about what can be accomplished and generating ideas. He agrees that it is critical for Council to have a role in all of this. Another approach would be for Council to serve as the committee, which may not be able to create as much buy-in. The model in the memo contemplates regular reporting. It could have an executive committee including Council leadership that meets regularly with the steering committee leadership to be comfortable with the process at the leadership level. Another approach would be to have members of Council on the steering committee. All of those things are worth talking about. Ms. Stewart explained how there is a continuum of Council involvement, it is just the question of where you want to be on the continuum. Mr. Myers stated that is where the discussion needs to begin next week, because who is on the committee and how often they report is the second step of the process. The first step is formulating the charge. Mr. Greeson explained we have contemplated workshops on each of the vision statements which could be creative exercises about what are the best ideas to realize these broad and ambiguous vision statements. He can see Council being

engaged in that process as well.

President Michael explained how the plan is for next week to think about how we want to look at this process and the memo Ms. Stewart wrote, and come back with thoughts and ideas to discuss.

Mr. Myers brought up the question about what are the deliverables. He is focused on what he wants out of this group in order for Council to make the hard decisions. Mr. Greeson responded that he would hope these retreat exercises are more reviews of our strategic plan rather than starting from scratch every year. We would benefit from being able to use this extensive effort that was done to get to feasible ideas that Council and many members of the community support that reflect our 3-5 year action plan in each vision area. Over time those will inform our budgets and our planning efforts.

President Michael said one question she has is whether we take the visions and ask the steering committee to determine the top items under the visions. Ms. Stewart said that there is the question of whether Council wants to give direction on things to pursue, or does Council want the steering committee to identify specific items within each vision statement. Ms. Kowalczyk explained that when talking about lists of action items, we should have a list of criteria we want the group to consider. It is not that we tell them to research ideas, what we have before us is the community's vision, and they came up with some ideas that need to be vetted along with Council's ideas. Mr. Greeson explained how there have not been ideas generated from our staff, boards, commissions, and institutional partners. There is an opportunity to add to this list before seeing it shrink.

Reports of Council Members

7. Reports of Council Members

Minutes:

Mr. Myers shared that the MPC/ARB will be considering a demolition permit for structures on the UMCH property, which has been filed by the Lifestyles LLC. Secondly, he described how over the last year we have heard a lot of negative news, but we had a success story come out over the weekend. There was a resident who reached out to us in a mental health crisis. We responded at the resident's request with the police department. They assessed the situation and determined their presence was probably escalating the situation, so they deescalated by backing off and bringing in resources from the county sheriff's department, and it became a positive outcome that did not require further police intervention. He wanted to compliment our police force who responded in an appropriate manner in a situation that could have gone differently.

Mr. Robinson asked about the demolition request and clarified whether they were separate from the proposal for the property. Mr. Myers said that is correct. Anytime you demolish a building in the review district you need to have ARB approval

regardless. He brought up how it does not look good that an LLC bought the property, but that is standard operating procedure with large developers that every development is a standalone run LLC for accounting, tax, and liability purposes. It does not look good on its face, but it is very normal and is something he would expect. It would have been nice to have known it was coming, but that is asking something from Lifestyles that they do not have the capacity to give.

Ms. Kowalczyk commented that in term's to Mr. Myers comments about the police, she commends the Division of Police for how they responded. It sounds like it was the right thing to do. She explained that Council should have received a copy of the Partnership's annual report, reviewing their activities in 2020.

President Michael mentioned that she did a quick briefing with Building Worthington's Future on Council's priorities and what is coming up. She also attended the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association meeting, and they brought up the question if any cities had policies for employees that refuse to get the COVID vaccine. She will share that information with Council. Additionally, the Governor's budget was discussed and it included a significant amount of money for infrastructure, increasing the Local Government Fund, and \$10 million for the state to pay for body cameras.

Other

Executive Session

Adjournment

8. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

MOTION: Ms. Dorothy moved, Mr. Robinson seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org (614) 436-3100) | Minutes published on 02/23/2021, adopted on 03/01/2021

_____/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt
Management Assistant

Attest:

_____/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
President of Council