



City Council Agenda

Minutes

Monday, June 14, 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, June 14, 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, 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. Power a Clean Future Ohio

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson explained how we are pleased to have Joe Flarida here from Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO) after Council expressed interest in having him come speak to learn more about this initiative.

Mr. Flarida described how the vision statement for Power a Clean Future Ohio is building momentum now for a clean, prosperous future by equipping local leaders for equitable, community-driven carbon reductions in Ohio. They launched in February 2020 and are focused on being a resource and partner for local governments interested in pursuing local clean energy and transportation, and sustainability initiatives, programs, or policies. It is completely free for local governments to participate and to join, local elected officials need to pass a resolution or have the executive make an official commitment. This coalition is made up of a diverse group of companies, advocacy groups, and other organizations coming at this issue from a variety of perspectives. It is a diverse group that has put its name behind this group. Their goals are focused on four things: Reducing emissions through local policy action, growing the clean energy economy in Ohio, implementing equitable clean energy policy with community input, and reducing costs to local government, businesses, and residents. Local leaders are provided with technical assistance, tools, and new resources to implement plans that are achievable, measurable, equitable, and economical. They strive to be a value add for city staff, providing technical assistance, and helping local communities make this type of work happen in their cities. Since 2020 they have added 15 cities with diverse profiles. They are not going into communities and telling what they should do, rather asking what residents want to see in their community and how to make it happen. In Worthington, this has been a priority and the community has been a leader in these types of issues.

Power a Clean Future Ohio has multiple resources available if a community is looking into clean energy. First is the Ohio Clean Energy and Sustainable Communities Toolkit, which contains ideas and is a great starting place. They also offer a multitude of webinars and dialogues that connect community leaders around sustainability goals. Recently launched is a program that focuses on providing an equity coach to cities to facilitate conversations such as racial equity and economic disparities. There is also access to greenhouse gas inventory, helping to set emission reduction targets that can be done in measurable ways. There are some things that cities can control directly, and others that they can influence by convening stakeholders. They want to empower cities to do that and grow a network of communities doing this work.

Mr. Bucher explained how he is familiar with this effort because of his day job. He explained how we are poised with the Biden administration to see a surge in funding for sustainability projects and he asked if that was an accurate assessment. Mr. Flarida replied that there is no doubt that climate and sustainability will be an integral piece, and PCFO wants to help communities and do some of the legwork for that work ahead of time to be competitive. For example, cities have fleets and need to make sure they are well funded and maintained, but more and more cars are going electric. Clean Fuels Ohio provides any city that is a PCFO member a free fleet assessment that they would typically charge a fee for. When grant opportunities come up at the

federal level, you need a plan on how you would spend those dollars, and this resource provides tools when opportunities come up.

Mr. Robinson expressed that he finds the prospect of resources to complement staff and Council time is appealing. He asked at what point or ways does it cost the City money. Mr. Flarida replied that none of the opportunities he described cost money, they are focused on making sure that all their services are complementary and cost nothing. Perhaps down the line, there may be some additional costs, for example, training staff to do some work. Mr. Robinson asked if there is any obligation or non-monetary cost or commitment that is required, on the surface, it sounds like a no-brainer by providing resources at no cost. Mr. Flarida responded that the one commitment is that they ask cities to be at the table, providing a point of contact to communicate with, filling out an in-take survey, and then from there it depends on the city's engagement. Some cities are really engaged when they need assistance and then maybe step back.

Ms. Dorothy described how in terms of equitable and sustainable energy reduction, we have a lot of carbon use from heating and cooling our homes and transportation. Cities have a lot of power in controlling our zoning in how we build our streets and right of way and whether we build in ways that promote walking and biking as opposed to cars. When looking through an equity lens, a lot of low-income people do not have money for cars, so it makes sense to look at lower-cost bike and pedestrian and having access to smaller housing, closer together. She asked if solutions around different zoning and other transportation and housing options has been examined. Mr. Flarida expressed that is a good discussion and a hot button in many communities. Those are questions they are attempting to be helpful with, and one of the most important things that can be done is to engage citizen voices in this. One community partner program they have worked with is the Ohio Climate Justice Fund, providing grants to BIPOC led or founded organizations to host listening conversations about what our clean energy future looks like and the answers to the questions posed by Ms. Dorothy.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked how PCFO will work with other programs such as the Sierra Club and MORPC that might intersect and support each other. Mr. Flarida detailed how they have brought together a variety of organizations that work well with one another even when they sit on different ends of issues. They are working with the Sierra Club already and hope to work more closely with MORPC in the future. If a community is wanting to make a commitment, they want to be supportive and collaborative all the way. Ms. Kowalczyk asked how PCFO has funded and the work they do. Mr. Flarida responded that their sponsor is the Ohio Environmental Council, which is also an integral member of the team. They have also raised funds from private companies, and partner organizations have fundraised their own dollars.

Mr. Bucher commented that this is a very intriguing approach that is supportive of local governments, allowing them to take their own path forwards. When looking at the vision statements, which include sustainability, this effort fits really well and allows us to take our own path. This would provide us a tremendous amount of

resources when listening to the community about what should be done. He is very supportive of the effort, especially since all that is asked for is a resolution that may include a carbon reduction goal. It is an awful lot for a very small commitment on our end.

Mr. Robinson conveyed that from what he has seen and heard, he would support joining and engaging the organization. He would be interested in getting some basic information from the organization to review prior to considering a resolution.

Mr. Myers asked if it would be possible to refer this to Mr. Greeson to compile information, determine who the point person should be on staff, and the time commitment. He would like to see the inventory that we would need to fill out. He suggested doing this and putting together background information for further discussion in July.

Ms. Kowalczyk supported getting more information but she wondered if passing a resolution now is the right move, or having it under consideration by the committee as they discuss what it is the City should be doing. It could be one of the items that the visioning steering committee suggests the City should do. Mr. Myers said that could be discussed in July and a resolution could suggest sending this to the visioning steering committee.

Ms. Stewart brought up how she communicated with Mr. Florida in advance of this conversation, and he provided a number of sample materials including the inventory and a sample resolution to work through and bring back to Council.

Council determined that they would like staff to compile information for discussion and to determine the role of the visioning steering committee in this effort.

Reports of City Officials

5. Policy Item(s)

a. Solid Waste Contract

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson detailed how when talking about sustainability, our solid waste collection program is an important component of that, which touches our residents every week. We have included information compiled by our staff, specifically by Mr. Chandler, who works to make sure we have a successful solid waste program.

Mr. Chandler updated Council on where the City has been in the past with their solid waste collection contracts. We wrapped up our last Rumpke contract in 2010-2011 that cost approximately \$16.25 per household per month at a cost of \$1.014 million per year, compared to a \$15.53 per household cost for Consortium I communities. We had a 24% recycling diversion rate, which did not include yard waste, e-waste, or leaf collection. In 2012-2016, our first contract with Local Waste Services was \$14.85 per household, per month with all services status-quo at a cost of \$926,640 with a \$20 per ton recycling processing cost. Our recycling diversion rate was 30%. For our current contract

from 2016-2021, we are at \$15.24 per household for a cost of \$950,976 annually. 65-gallon recycling totes were included for all households and expanding the acceptable recyclables list. 96% of Worthington households actively participate in recycling, yard waste, or both. We have a 30% diversion rate. Consortium I communities have a \$19.31 cost which does not include a recycling cart.

Currently, all recyclables go to Rumpke's Materials Recycling Facility, which is the only EPA licensed processor in Central Ohio. Markets are down and operating costs are way up, resulting in a cost for disposal and processing, currently \$35 per ton. A market-based formula is proposed, capping cost at \$35 per ton. If markets become favorable, there could be an opportunity for profit sharing. A signed agreement ensures our recyclables can always be processed and marketed. This would have around a \$60,000 annual cost for recycling processing.

Other services we offer as our solid waste program include recycling drop-off dumpsters with SWACO that are available in the Central Business District and Community Center for facilities that do not have access to recycling. We also offer yard waste drop-off for residents with a large amount of yard waste, which can be brought to the service center with no restrictions on sizing or amount. Our e-waste drop-off continues to grow and we see at least a ton of e-waste being recycled instead of going into the landfill. Finally, we have the food scraps drop-off, but due to budget constraints, we can only allow 400 households to participate at no cost. In addition, we have about 200 households continuing with the compost pilot program started by the Partnership at a cost of about \$9 per month. Our solid waste programming and collection get extremely high resident satisfaction scores and we have favorable pricing from the haulers due to our payment and physical qualities.

In Central Ohio, we only have two residential haulers, Rumpke, and Local Waste Services. There are three separate consortium contracts in the area that communities can join. Worthington is not a fit for the Consortiums and our pricing going independent remains competitive and predictable. Price-wise, we are \$15.24 per month with Local Waste, and by comparison, all the other Consortiums are higher than the costs that we enjoy. 65-gallon curbside carts have become the norm, and some cities have bought them outright, and others lease them as we do. E-waste drop-off and food scrap drop-offs are growing in other communities. Residential trash and recycling increased 30% during COVID, and commercial trash decreased during that time. The net tonnage remains the same. Most of the fleets maintained by the haulers are now compressed natural gas. going forward, recycling processing fees continue to rise along with labor and equipment costs. The labor shortage has affected Rumpke communities significantly and they have put a lot of money into recruitment.

We have been with the same sort of program for a few decades now with

unlimited trash, recycling, and yard waste to encourage reuse or recycling. We have a motivated community in Worthington where many people are going above and beyond, evidenced by e-waste and food waste gaining ground. 50% of what is put at the curb is diverted from the landfill. Some communities such as Columbus, have looked at container-only collections with one can for trash, one for recycling, and one for yard waste. Only what fits in the can is collected and anything outside the can is left at the curb. There is one bulk day each quarter. The concerns with this approach are overloaded containers, storing the containers, penalty charges, and illegal dumping. Another idea that has been floated is Pay As You Throw (PAYT) where residents pay per bag of trash, utilizing specialized bags or stickered bags. The idea is that people will reduce the amount of trash they are producing. Typically, these programs are administered by a third party. Concerns include contaminated recyclables, the cost of program administration, hoarding and stockpiling garbage, trash exporting, illegal dumping, open burning, and flushing/sewer issues.

Mr. Robinson asked if Upper Arlington had ended their Pay As You Throw program. Mr. Chandler replied that they did around 5-6 years ago. 6-8 months in their program, the contractor walked off the job and went bankrupt. Upper Arlington had to go out to bid and Local Waste Service received the bid with the stipulation it would go to a more traditional collection. In talking with the solid waste coordinator there, they have not seen a negative impact on their diversion rates, and they have continued to rise the same as other Central Ohio communities.

Mr. Chandler overviewed whether or not these ideas for reduction would work for Worthington. Explained that there is no current economic incentive to the resident unless the cost is shift onto the resident. We already have a 96% rate of recycling already with a high diversion rate. Usually, PAYT programs are utilized to see an increase in recycling participation, but we already have a high level of recycling. These ideas could be very expensive for larger households which would be penalized for paying more for their trash. There would also be an increased time for the labor and administration costs to the hauler. Worthington currently diverts more than 50% of all residential waste from the landfill, and there is not much room for improvement. Finally, there would be a significant staff time and resource requirement to administer a program for what would amount to a very small reward.

Current ideas for reduction, which are outside of our hauler contract, include Save More Than Food which SWACO is leading to increase food waste education, more food donation opportunities, composting food scraps at home, and curbside or drop off composting. There is also Recycling Reduction Education called "Recycling Right" working with area businesses for right-sizing packaging and discouraging the use of one-time-use items and packaging. Finally, encouraging businesses and apartment complexes to adopt recycling programs, which could be the opportunity for the greatest impact on diversion rates and

keeping things out of the landfill, and keeping carbon emissions in check. We are nearing the end of our current five-year contract and will need a new one in place by January 1, 2022. We could opt to keep our current service (status quo) collection with all three services occurring on Friday with no limit to how much is collected. It would keep the current recycling totes as leased from the hauler. Bids are forecast to come in around \$20 per household per month, which is an increased cost of approximately \$300,000 per year bringing the cost to \$1.25 million annually. We could look at the possibility of offering recycling costs by purchasing carts with SWACO which would cost about \$120,000. We would then own, replace, and repair the carts. Knowing we pay \$.25 per household per month, it would be an estimated savings of \$80,000 over five years. The carts would have a 5 to 10-year life cycle for replacement, but there would be an increased staffing need for managing inventory, assembly, delivery, maintenance, and repair of the carts which may offset the other monetary savings. Another thing we could consider is a billing transition to the resident, which could be done with the same contract terms. Residents would be billed directly by the hauler and non-payment would result in non-service. Price per household per month would be a \$1.00 increase to cover administration, debt collection, and reporting. It would be estimated to be \$10.00 per month for "walk-up" service and a discount for seniors.

If Council wanted to entertain something like PAYT or container only, there would be a loss of hauler efficiencies which are reflected in the overall cost. It would incentivize resident interest in waste reduction only if the resident pays. There would also need to be additional staffing for program implementation and administration. There may also be public relations and resident satisfaction concerns.

We are recommending permission to advertise a status quo base bid with the same contract terms, Friday collection, leasing of recycling carts, and pricing bid as per household per month. We are also asking for a Bid Alternative 1 with an additional per household charge for direct to resident billing and separate pricing for dumpster service at City Buildings. Additionally, a Bid Alternate 2 is if Council wants to consider a "can only" service where we would ask for a per household per month pricing for container only collection, bulk item pricing, and delinquent bill collection escrow account payment by the City. We are looking at a timeline of asking for authorization to advertise for bids on June 14th with an ordinance introduced on July 6th followed by a public hearing and award of the contract on July 19th. There would also need to be consideration of whether to utilize Alternative 1 during the budget development and to explore waste reduction opportunities through public/private partnership, grants, and economic development possibilities.

President Michael expressed her concerns about when we went to the voters to increase our income tax, one of the things we committed to was that we would not go to the resident-paid trash collection.

Ms. Dorothy asked if it was correct that the vast majority of our costs are for residential pickup. Mr. Chandler said that was correct. Ms. Dorothy asked how much the e-waste and other services comprise. Mr. Chandler responded that currently, e-waste is free as long as we provide secured space for drop-off, there are increasing things that they cannot take recently. Those are for residents, if businesses have e-waste they can contact one of the local recyclers directly. We pay about \$10,000 annually for our food-scrap drop-off. Otherwise, the other services are at no cost to us. Those who opt for food scrap collection, they pay for that service. Ms. Dorothy summarized that residents get their trash, recycling, and yard waste picked up, and it is a substantial cost. Approximately half of the millage a \$300,000 house would pay in property taxes, is paid towards the solid waste collection. Obviously, people appreciate it, but she wondered how we really make people appreciate this essential service. People do not always understand that. Mr. Chandler explained how trash collection is paid through the General Fund, which is also income tax dollars as well. Ms. Dorothy made the point that many residents think they pay a lot of property tax to live in Worthington, which they do, but that property tax does not come to the City.

Mr. Greeson explained how there is a strong value proposition in terms of this service and the fact that a fair amount of people who pay for it through income taxes do not receive the benefit of it. He agreed that we did talk about maintaining this as a service that did not require payment eleven years ago. What is being asked tonight is not a debate between how to bill, but to provide the flexibility to do that should during one of our budget cycles over the next five years to consider that. We are not at the juncture to recommend direct billing. However, the service is projected to go up in cost significantly and how to cope with that will be an ongoing budget issue. Charging may be a way to address that in the future.

Ms. Dorothy explained how it is good to have these options so people can understand what a great service they are getting. Back to education, we need to reduce, then reuse, and then recycle. Anything we can do to reduce would be beneficial.

Mr. Myers asked to squeeze in here sideways and to make sure he understands the ask staff is making and whether it is a status quo bid with two alternatives and that we would exercise either one of those two alternatives at any time during the five-year contract. Mr. Greeson replied that staff would ask for the first alternate, but not the second. We are mentioning the second because we are hearing it in the market, but we are not recommending the second alternate, only the first. Mr. Chandler added that we have traditionally always included that first alternate in the bid since he has been doing this starting in 2005. Mr. Myers asked if we have the ability as the City to directly bill ourselves, like an assessment, essentially subsidizing if it came to that. Mr. Bartter responded that we do not have any infrastructure set up to do so. Mr. Greeson said we do not

household bill anything at this point. Mr. Myers expressed he does not have a problem paying more because he sees how hard the workers at Local Waste Services work. Ms. Stewart brought up the idea of the City writing a check for a portion and then billing for the remainder, smaller portion. Mr. Chandler said that was done in other communities, it would be a simple enough structure to change, but the surcharge to the bill to the resident would remain.

Mr. Smith asked what would prompt the City to have us recommend that we bill residents for solid waste collection. Mr. Greeson replied that we would look at it as a total budget issue, not a single issue. We have not operated solid waste as a policy-driven percentage, billing to the resident regardless of the change in cost. He would approach this in a way looking at our total financial situation and what we are trying to accomplish overall in our fiscal priorities. When analyzing Worthington, you will find we one of a few communities that do not bill, but the effect of that is that we rely more on our income tax to fund City services, which has greater volatility. Communities that have more diverse revenue streams, can sometimes weather the ups and downs from income taxes. We are not that diverse with our revenue.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about the Alternative and the service fee for processing payments and whether there were any other administrative costs. Mr. Chandler replied that depending on how we want to structure, there are no specific costs to the City. However, we could break out individual City costs, rather than putting that on the residents collectively. Ms. Kowalczyk brought up PreCycle Day, but it would seem like another thing people should participate in. Mr. Chandler explained that the trend he has seen over time is using social media to share when something is available rather than holding on to it and storing it until PreCycle Day comes around.

Mr. Robinson expressed he supports the status quo bid and alternate, it makes sense to incorporate in whatever contract we enter into, the ability to switch to direct billing if needed. However, he wanted to be on the record that the status quo arrangement is good policy. Trash pickup seems like a natural monopoly, achieving the greatest good, we provide convenience, avoid problems, and it enables us to maintain high recycling rates. It would take an extreme financial crisis to change to direct billing. Given our relatively positive financial position, to entertain changing that would be a mistake.

MOTION: Mr. Bucher moved, seconded by Ms. Kowalczyk to grant permission for staff to advertise for bid.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

b. East Wilson Bridge Road

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson explained how Wilson Bridge Road is a continuing priority for the City and the corridor is our most significant center of employment and for income taxes that support City services. Given the significance of the corridor,

we adopted a corridor plan in 2011, and in each year since we have expressed that investment in the corridor is a priority. Many changes have occurred since 2011, such as the 23/270 interchange, improvement at the mall, a trail extension, the Heights apartments, renovation of buildings, and expansions of important businesses such as MedVet. In 2021, there is physical progress that continues to be made in the corridor with the NE Gateway Intersection, the Worthington Gateway project, streetscape improvements, and Phase I of McCord Park improvements. Improvement is incremental and our goal is to have it be continuous, keeping the corridor competitive. Staff has undertaken some efforts in 2021, such as working with traffic consultants for managing traffic flow, which will come to Council in the future. Tonight we are bringing forward a discussion about a particular segment of the corridor on East Wilson Bridge Road. This particular segment is being focused on because the area is a priority and because the Community Improvement Corporation has made recommendations on four properties it has acquired with our assistance. Specifically, we want to discuss and get direction on the CIC's recommendation and additionally, it is an appropriate time to talk about the corridor plan and the remaining parcels on that stretch, prompting conversation on what may be future actions related to that.

Mr. Brown overviewed the proposed zoning from the 2011 corridor study, narrowing the categories down to four districts that considered height, density, and land uses. The recommendations in the 2011 plan recommended a portion for office use in the future and the eastern side would be an opportunity for multi-family residential. He showed a map of the four parcels that the CIC has acquired, alongside two parcels with new houses and multifamily that have been built. The owner of one of the new houses was on record at the BZA stating they knew about the future plans and they could possibly be surrounded by multi-family in the future, a multi-use path, and a parking lot for McCord park. As people have been able to pick up parcels at a decent price, it has eaten away at the ability for future development. The two parcels where Granby Place is located, Council proactively rezoned those parcels ahead of time instead of waiting on the possibility they would be picked up for new single-family. When going east towards McCord Park, any future multi-family will be difficult to do. There are four parcels near Westview that we are looking to move that acquisition further east.

In 2016, we looked at possible zoning options, holding a public open house with the chair of the MPC, discussing future plans for the corridor with residents. We invited all 18 property owners, going over the future recommendations and the options for the streetscape improvements that will happen through the corridor. One takeaway was that at the time, residents did not want the City to rezone their property and making them a non-conforming use. Since then, things have changed with the CIC acquiring four properties and Granby Place apartments being built. We are starting to see some interest in those existing lots. There are

four possible next-step zoning options including maintaining the status quo with properties remaining low density residential and only rezoning as needed, or City/CIC/Landowner partnership with the properties remaining low density for now but moving to explore incentive strategies and move forward with proactively marketing the properties. Additionally, we could proactively rezone all the parcels now, or rezone the vacant, for sale, or ready parcels.

Mr. McCorkle overviewed how the CIC owns four parcels on East Wilson Bridge Road, making up approximately 3.2 acres of land. At the November 2020 meeting, the CIC recommended moving forward with rezoning the four properties to WBC-2 zoning. They also recommended demolishing the four homes to make a marketable, pad-ready development site. The estimated cost for demolishing the properties with fill dirt is \$150,000. The CIC does not have the money to do that and is part of the request tonight. In February 2021, the CIC also approved moving forward with a contract with POD Design to create two site plans and renderings that the CIC could use to go to the market to solicit prospective developers and employers. Part of the request tonight is to request solicit support for an appropriation for \$150,000 to demolish the four properties and to refer the properties to MPC to being the rezoning process for the four CIC-owned properties.

Mr. Greeson recommended taking this discussion into two pieces, first handling the recommendations of the CIC on the four parcels we helped facilitate the acquisition of, and then talking about the further redevelopment strategy.

Mr. Robinson asked for a description of what the CIC is and its relationship to the City. Mr. Greeson replied that CIC is short for Community Improvement Corporation and it is a not-for-profit organization created under state statute.

Mr. Lindsey explained that a CIC can be an agent of a government entity for purposes of economic development activities. If they are an agent of a government entity, 40% of the board must consist of public officials. Mr. Robinson said he understands the desire to demo and prepare the pad, but he does not understand the request to rezone at this point in time. It brings back his recollections of when the zoning overlays were created that it was agreed in concept, that rezoning would not be sought until there was a specific project proposal. The reason being the ability for members of the public to weigh in and potentially object to a project. The only time they have any leverage is at the time of rezoning. By rezoning now with nothing specific, we are removing that important right of the public to assess the zoning request. President Michael responded that if we do not rezone now, you are not going to have a builder or developer even want to bring forward a project. There would still be public input on any project that comes forward as it goes through the MPC. Mr. Robinson disagreed, he is recalling the discussions where at that time we discussed the overlays, it was agreed that rezoning would not be sought until specific projects were proposed. The public cannot address rezoning if there is no project. As a matter of process and principle, he thinks it goes against what was discussed a

few years ago when the overlays were created. Mr. Greeson said that it is a fair strategic debate. Much of Worthington was rezoned in 1970 to help lay the groundwork for the commercial and residential land use strategies that we enjoy today. There were non-conforming uses to gradually convert over time. They took a proactive zoning approach in order to help steer the use direction of the community, which is the debate we have been having about this particular stretch since the inception of this plan, whether we are reactive to individual development proposals, or try to proactively steer it by creating permitted activities on these land areas. What differs between now and the previous zoning in the rest of Worthington, we have worked hard to make sure these Wilson Bridge Road categories have higher standards for development rather than the straight zoning on Huntley Road. If you proactively rezone, whether it is these parcels that have an added layer of control because the CIC has an agency relationship with the City and gets its funding from the City and we staff it, he doubts that it would pick a development outcome that Council would be uncomfortable with. He would say that level of control and influence affords the type of control that may be desirable. Mr. Robinson asked if the zoning overlays provide clarity as to what the outcome would be, he thought that they provided for use, height, and relative massing. Mr. Brown responded that what was adopted in 2016, the original goal was to rezone the corridor to ensure it was in compliance with the Wilson Bridge Road study from 2011. One concession was to look parcel by parcel, but one thing built in the guidelines in 2016 is that the properties are subject to a development plan that ultimately City Council has to approve. With the guidelines, someone can see what is recommended, but until the property is zoned they do not have the heights and setbacks or controls over signage. Mr. Greeson explained how there are layers of control, especially with the CIC properties. We have these standards in place and have only rezoned a couple of parcels, and as a result, we have seen some single-family construction that is not consistent with and makes it more difficult to realize the long-term vision outlined in the corridor plan. We are vulnerable to the continued redevelopment of some of those parcels that are inconsistent with our plan unless we proactively rezone to lay the groundwork for future development. Mr. Smith explained how the historical context is what Mr. Greeson presented, putting the philosophy into action with the rezoning, he thinks what has been in question more recently do we go back to the 2016 overlays to see what they look like. He believes with the four CIC parcels he agrees with the presented recommendation.

Ms. Dorothy said that she would love to move forward with our 2011 plan for Wilson Bridge Road. We have lost some opportunity with having more multifamily by not rezoning earlier. That was a strategic decision that did not pan out. She pointed out that in the 1970s there was a proactive rezoning that has excluded some multi-family units in Worthington right now. It is pretty exclusionary. Hopefully, we look at accessory dwelling units that are excluded

now. She is all for revising our zoning code. She thinks we need to rezone these four properties.

Mr. Myers brought up the 2016 Wilson Bridge zoning, which calls for these parcels to be WBC-2, professional office. That has been our stated intention to the public. There was a great deal of public input to this and concessions were made on both sides. This is a consensus document, it has been out for the public who have known that it would be rezoned one day, but we have sat on our hands and not done it. We have lost some opportunities as a result. He supports not only rezoning these four parcels but appropriating the funds to clear the property for development.

MOTION: Mr. Myers motioned, seconded by Ms. Dorothy to refer the matter to Municipal Planning Commission to contemplate a recommendation to rezone.

The motion carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Greeson explained how we have felt an obligation to move forward with the CIC's recommendations as they have been working hard to help shape a strategy for years. He also expressed how he is cognizant of Mr. Robinson's concerns that we will be working to produce a good outcome for the community. Everyone wants to do so on the land that we have helped the CIC acquire. Another conversation we wanted to prompt is about the remainder of the corridor and does not require action tonight. We have lost some opportunities and we have had some development in the corridor that is not office or multi-family, which are the uses that are called for in the plan. The City's long-term plan has been eroded and made more difficult. The conversation as we think about what we will do on the four parcels, an extension is a conversation about the land-use strategy for the remainder of the corridor. The best practice to steer the gradual transformation of the corridor would be proactively rezoning to the uses that we desire. However, that is not always easy since it would create non-conforming uses which affect current landowners. There are a couple of approaches to this and the first is to have a good debate with Council and staff or to refer it to the MPC for them to make recommendations to Council. President Michael summarized that the decision tonight is whether to send this to the MPC to discuss and make recommendations, or set a date for a Council discussion.

Mr. Myers brought up how we have had this discussion multiple times. We don't reach a consensus, so six months or a year later we discuss it again. He realizes that circumstances change, so we may be under more pressure. Personally, he is talked-out on this topic and still supports the 2016 proposal. He is ready to rezone this now so we do not have any more outlying homes. He is ready to refer to MPC and move forward with rezoning.

Mr. Robinson asked for clarification, looking at the agenda, and it looks like there are two different blocks are parcels that could be considered for proactive rezoning. He wondered if that was correct, one would be rezoned for office and the other for multi-family. Mr. Greeson overviewed which properties have been

proposed to be rezoned and to what categories. Mr. Brown described how Granby Place Apartments to the east were recommended for the medium density with 14 units to the acre. West of Granby was recommended for office. President Michael asked if we do a change in zoning for the parcels, those two new houses would be non-conforming uses. Mr. Brown replied that if those properties were destroyed by more than 50% for some reason, it would have to meet current zoning or go to the BZA for non-conforming use. That was one of the things we heard in the original 2016 meet and greet, some of them were concerned about if something happened to their how and they had to rebuild that they would be unable to.

Mr. Robinson said since he was not on Council when this was passed when he read the formal plan and the market analysis informing the plan, the rationale for the apartments realized that Worthington needed to attract millennials to avoid an aging death spiral and declining property values. The facts of the past ten years disproved the assessment in the market analysis as to why we wanted apartments in Worthington. He asked if it is a current city policy that we want apartments in Worthington, or is it specific to this plan. His immediate thoughts about the proposals are that he would support the proactive rezoning for the commercial which serves the City in multiple ways, but not the multi-family. Mr. Greeson added information that in addition to the market analysis, he recalled that the residents backing up to the medium density residential section preferred that over office space, which was what staff originally advocated for. Ms. Dorothy commented on providing more options for housing in Worthington and how we have a very high proportion of single-family homes. There are a lot more people who need different options for housing and we have proactively zoned them out. The apartments and condos on Selby are nonconforming use and would need a variance from zoning to be rebuilt if they were more than 50% destroyed. There are limited multi-family home options in Worthington. We need to have more and different sustainable options for people to live in Worthington. She is totally for having more multi-family and would like this moved to MPC and moved forward.

Ms. Kowalczyk echoed Ms. Dorothy's comment and the conversations we have had previously about people aging in place and downsizing. This would support that initiative as well.

MOTION: Mr. Myers moved, seconded by Mr. Bucher to move we refer to MPC for recommendation as to whether we should or should not rezone the balance of East Wilson Bridge Road consistent with the 2016 Wilson Bridge Road Study.

The motion carried by a voice vote.

c. Financial Report - May 2021

Minutes:

Mr. Bartter noted that in May we had robust income tax collections of approximately \$3.8 million. He would anticipate we are over \$3 million again in

June.

Mr. Myers asked if RITA has looked at the impact of potentially issuing refunds would be. Mr. Bartter replied that is a complex question and will be dependent on who seeks refunds. If someone lives in a municipality with lower taxes and were working there through the pandemic it may make sense to seek a refund. If someone works in Columbus and requests a refund, they would then owe the same amount to Worthington because there is no credit.

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Robinson to accept the report.

The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

6. Discussion Item(s)

a. Age Friendly Update

Minutes:

Ms. Kowalczyk discussed how the Council passed a resolution to join the Age-Friendly network of communities back in December 2019. Due to COVID, we were really not able to get to work on this initiative until December 2020. A group of individuals consisting of staff and community stakeholders came together to talk about how we were going to get this done as a community. This group met every two weeks to really understand what age-friendly meant and what it would take to get done. We are now to the point where the planning committee has grown into a more active and formal steering committee that is looking at the specific things that we will need to do. We have added business interests, first responders, the faith community, and mental health and social services. We had the first meeting at the end of May, and are continuing to meet every two weeks. The first main initiative will be gathering data for the community assessment identifying the needs, gaps, and desires of older people in the community. The delay in getting this started has been advantageous and we have been able to use work done by other groups in the Central Ohio area. They will be conducting surveys and Worthington residents will be in that assessment and have offered to piggyback on a representative sample for Worthington at a minimal cost. We will also have access to data from the border survey. We are awaiting a specific proposal from the contractor that the organizations are using and the timeframe would be that the survey is conducted by the end of August and there would be a final report by January of 2022. We would get our own branded report with data specifically collected for us. Our committee is discussing how to get supplemental data through focus groups. Age-Friendly Columbus through their work with Ohio State is ramping up their ability to provide technical assistance and will train communities on how to conduct focus groups. She offered her thanks to Colleen Light for her work on this, she has really kept the group moving and been an energizing force in keeping things going.

Ms. Dorothy asked what the next steps are. Ms. Kowalczyk replied that the process is that once the assessment is finished and there is a report, the

committee will then work to develop an action plan identifying potential specific projects or initiatives to address gaps or needs in the community. She pointed out that the steering committee is cognizant of the work done with the visioning undertaking, and there is an overlap there. There is hope that is one sweet spot where everything meshes together. This is a community initiative and we hope to identify community partners to help carry out the plan. Some things hopefully the City will be interested in pursuing, and others will be on providers and non-profit organizations. This is a five-year process and we are right on target for progressing through all of the steps necessary.

Ms. Kowalczyk made a special note of the City's Public Management Intern, Ashley Reynolds, and acknowledged all of her work on this initiative so far.

b. Discussion Regarding the Return to In-Person Meetings

Minutes:

Mr. Greeson detailed how we talked as a staff after our last dialogue about the return to in-person meetings, and wanted to further discuss two strategies. One is for our final decision-making groups such as City Council, MPC/ARB, and the BZA, the other is for our other Advisory Boards and Commissions. For our advisory boards and commissions, staff recommends returning to the format utilized prior to the pandemic with members of the public attending in person or submitting comments in advance or after the meeting via email or mail. For our decision-making groups, we intend to continue live-streaming the meetings, including MPC/ARB and BZA. Seating in-person will be limited initially, increasing over time with overflow seating available in the lobby and upstairs in the training room. The public can submit comments in advance of or after a meeting via email or mail. Additionally, the public can submit comments via a form on the City's website during the meeting. This will require Council or the Boards the need to pause to allow time for the live stream to catch up to the in-person meeting. We are implementing the online form in response to some people who have previously submitted 5+ page documents, expecting it to be read into the record, which is not realistic. This form encourages people to write the position, comments, or thoughts in a realistic amount of words that the Clerk can read into the record.

We need some input from the Council regarding spacing, screens, masks, and potential telephone participation. We are prepared to return to the way things were before at the dais where the chairs are not spaced and there are no plexiglass screens. There is a question of whether or not to have anyone wear a mask. We will adapt to the preference of the Council or other boards and commissions. At the last meeting, he remembered that Council wished to remove the plexiglass and were comfortable with City Hall's current mask requirements.

Ms. Kowalczyk commented on the online form and wondered if that was not something that could be suggested to be used any time so that it is clear they

are comments people want to be submitted for the record for Council meetings. We get a lot of emails that are not intended to be read into the record, so it may be helpful to be clear about that. Mr. Greeson replied that it will be clear these are to be read into the record with a given format. We are trying to avoid reading lengthy submissions into the record or being relied upon to summarize what was written. That way people need to be on-point, succinct and focused. Councilmembers expressed that they are comfortable with sitting close at the dais, next to each other, removing the plexiglass with no masks, unless unvaccinated or by personal preference.

Mr. Greeson discussed how when we return in person, we will be moving away from Teams as the backbone of the meeting. We will now be in a room with the cameras broadcasting to the live stream. There will be a delay of about 40-seconds between what is happening in the meeting and what is shown via the live stream. The City experienced limited virtual participation over the past year other than applicants and scheduled speakers. If we want to have a telephone participation option, we would need to look at having a parallel Teams meeting with a telephone-only connection. All callers will be muted in the same Teams audio meeting until time for public comment. We would encourage callers to pre-register online so we know which items callers wish to comment on and can call on them at the appropriate time. There is the risk that multiple callers may try to speak at once, which will be something that will need to be managed. The Council or Board will either need to pause 1.5 to 2 minutes to allow the live stream to catch up to the regular meeting, or callers will need to connect early and will only be able to hear the meeting, not seeing any visuals. We will need to wait until September to pilot this audio participation approach since our vendor is not able to do the work necessary to have high-quality participation, until August.

Mr. Bucher commented that he would be supportive of giving a telephone option a try in order to be more accessible for those who may not be able to participate in person for a variety of reasons. He does have some concerns about building in wait periods and would suggest utilizing the option to call in early.

Mr. Greeson detailed the possibility of screening callers and adding them to a queue, but we want to avoid doing that because it requires an additional staff member. Under what is proposed the Clerk will need to manage the speaker slips, online forms, pre-registered callers, and the additional callers who did not pre-register. We are going from one dimension to four. We have a person producing minutes and another person running the live stream, and we would prefer not to add a fourth staff person to every meeting.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about the pre-registration option versus showing up and calling in without registering, she wondered if there is no reason we could not limit it to just pre-registration call-ins. Mr. Greeson replied that you could do that, and you would only let people into the Teams room that pre-registered. You can think of the pre-registration as a version of the speak slip that we utilize

today. Ms. Kowalczyk asked if we have to legally allow impromptu participation. Mr. Lindsey replied that you do not have to allow that, the amount of public participation permitted is largely in the Council's control. Mr. Greeson brought up the legal analysis of how under our Home Rule Charter, we could adopt our own ordinances adjusting our standards for public meetings, allowing for virtual participation voting and participating in a public meeting.

Mr. Myers explained how the telephone call-in is a complicated process and in the MPC/ARB there hasn't been much engagement. For the vast majority of comments, people are keeping track of the agenda, and almost uniformly submit their comments in advance, becoming part of the packet to members before the deliberation. There are issues where people have called into the Teams meeting, just to listen, and they are not participating which has slowed down the meetings. He wondered if we put all this time into implementing a phone option, how long do we then keep it in place. Mr. Greeson replied that is up to Council.

President Michael suggested having a pilot project for the month of September and then reassessing. Councilmembers concurred.

Mr. Greeson described how Worthington's first annual commemoration of Juneteenth will be held at 8 pm on Saturday, June 19th at the St. John AME church. Juneteenth commemorates the date in 1865 when slaves in Texas received word of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. There is an extensive lineup of activities planned and we a sponsor of the event through the Community Relations Commission. You also received an invitation from Worthington Pools about an event on June 24th where they want to overview some of the investments they have made.

Reports of Council Members

7. Reports of Council Members

Minutes:

Ms. Kowalczyk thanked Leadership Worthington for Service Day which occurred on Saturday. It was a really great opportunity to assist Worthington residents. The Worthington Partnership had another Sunday Funday in support of Pride Month and people kept coming up to say thank you for having the event. She hopes that is something we can consider doing on an annual basis to show our support for Pride during the month of June. At the last Partnership board meeting, it was decided not to move forward with the Picnic with the Partnership. There are activities across Central Ohio for Juneteenth as well.

Ms. Dorothy mentioned there was a concert at the park that was well done by our City staff along with FC Bank and community members.

President Michael updated that she has been working to draft a letter regarding the income tax refunds. They almost have a final draft and she will distribute it for thoughts so we can get that out in a timely manner.

Other

Executive Session

Adjournment

8. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

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

President Michael declared the meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org (614) 436-3100) | Minutes published on 07/14/2021, adopted on 07/19/2021

/s/ Ethan C. Barnhardt
Management Assistant

Attest

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael
President of Council