



# City Council Agenda

## Minutes

**Monday, September 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm**

**6550 N. High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085**

### 1. Call to Order

**Minutes:**

Worthington City Council met in-person in Regular Session on Monday, September 12, 2022. President Robinson called the meeting to order at or about 7:00 p.m.

### 2. Roll Call

**Minutes:**

**Members Present:** Katherine Brewer, Peter Bucher, Rebecca Hermann, Beth Kowalczyk, Bonnie Michael, Doug Smith, and David Robinson

**Member(s) Absent:**

**Also Present:** City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Economic Development Director David McCorkle, Law Director Tom Lindsey, Director of Finance Scott Bartter, Planning & Building Director Lee Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Chief of Fire & EMS Mark Zambito, Chief of Police Robert Ware, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt

There were ten members of the public in attendance.

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

**Minutes:**

President Robinson invited those in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Special Presentation(s)

### 4. Presentation on City of Columbus Affordable Housing Strategies

**Minutes:**

Ms. Shawna LaRue Moraille of 385 Riley Avenue expressed her excitement that affordable housing is on the agenda tonight and is thankful for the City for being a co-sponsor of the Building Inclusive Communities work. Recently there was a call to action at the Columbus Housing Strategy where Erin Prosser who is here to speak tonight, shared ideas about how to create inclusive communities by removing barriers. It is important that suburban communities join Columbus to solve the

housing need in our region. MORPC conducted a housing strategy in 2019, and unfortunately, Worthington was not included in this study. She asked why we were not included. We have a huge opportunity here with regional funding and we should not let this pass us by. We should join this call to action.

Mr. Aaron Shearer of 6875 Bowerman Street East agreed that this is an exciting agenda and he has been up at this podium discussing housing and affordability for months. There are great opportunities ahead of us and our problems are converging at a point where we can address these things comprehensively for the City where we set our future, not developers. It is sad that the Ohio Legislature removed the ability for the City to mandate stability, however, we do have subsidization left to stabilize housing costs. Solving the housing problem is nuanced and achievable if we work with experts to get it done.

Mr. Robinson explained how he first heard of Erin Prosser with the City of Columbus and their efforts with an affordable housing bond program, and he wondered if something like this could be applicable to Worthington. Ms. Prosser has been generous with her time in helping to explain their program. He is excited to learn more tonight and he is interested in not only regional issues, but what is possible and appropriate in Worthington as a first step.

Ms. Prosser introduced herself and described her role as the Assistant Director of Housing Strategies with the City of Columbus. She provided a background on how the Columbus Housing Strategy was developed and how it addresses our housing shortage and its impacts on the community. The goal is that housing is affordable in Central Ohio with options available throughout the region with housing stability that meets families' needs and that families have opportunities to build wealth. In 2020 alone we lost 11% of the housing stock that was for sale below \$180,000. She overviewed how affordability is defined in Central Ohio, for various professions, where a household pays less than 30% of its income on housing. Historically, Central Ohio has been an affordable market, however, we have a housing shortage because we are not building the housing infrastructure needed to support our growing community. We have a ratio of jobs created compared to housing built between 2009 and 2019 of 2.5 to 1. That ratio is not sustainable and we are at risk of losing our affordability. We have the opportunity to make changes now or else ten years from now we are creating more units, but we are not affordable. We also need to avoid building housing too far out, which leads to traffic congestion that decreases our livability. Having a housing shortage drives up rents and home prices and exacerbates racial and economic disparities, and the negative impacts are acutely felt by our most vulnerable.

The impact of these housing imbalances can include greater evictions and displacement, and residents, disproportionately of color are forced into shelters. This leads to poor education, health, and workforce outcomes. There are also increased cost burdens where people cannot afford other essentials such as food, transportation, childcare, and savings. It also affects small businesses because people do not have discretionary income to support them. The middle class is losing

opportunities for homeownership and the rate of overall homeownership is 53.6%. In Central Ohio, housing for up to 80% of the area median income is a relatively basic construction with parking lots, however, over that, you begin increasing costs such as in the Short North with underground or parking garages. The ability to deliver new products under 80% is increasingly becoming impossible due to the increasing costs from materials to land prices. Anything from 30-80% requires some sort of subsidization to buy down the cost of construction to reduce the debt and enable it to be affordable. By using public dollars, you can also income restrict properties so that they go to families that make specific wages.

The primary focus of the Columbus Housing Strategy is to build with a goal of doubling the number of units built over the next fifteen years. This is only possible by making residential construction easier, diversifying the types of housing available, and supporting small and medium-sized developers and new, innovative building products. Columbus will be looking to do a revamp of the City's zoning code which may take 3-6 years to complete. The strategy also includes preservation to ensure that residents are stably housed. This means supporting renters and low-income homeowners to stay housed by preventing evictions, preserving existing affordable units, and minimizing displacement in changing neighborhoods. They also want to ensure that all of Columbus's neighborhoods are economically diverse and everyone has access to opportunities. This means encouraging regional solutions, implementing inclusive housing policies, investing in Black homeownership, and aligning housing investments with other public investments. Finally, Columbus will be investing by investing in households that make less than \$50,000 per year through funding new affordable housing, and affordable homeownership. They will also be funding human services and the shelter system. Also, advocating for increased state and federal funding for affordable housing.

In 2019, Mayor Ginther asked voters to approve a \$50 million affordable housing bond, which was overwhelmingly approved. She showed the breakdown of how the proceeds of the housing bond have been allocated between 2020 and 2022 to go towards development costs. Looking forward to 2022, Columbus will be asking voters for a \$200 million affordable housing bond to help provide new affordable rental housing and homeownership to help preserve existing affordability and supportive housing. She detailed how this is a "Come Together Problem" where we need to have a variety of stakeholders come together to solve this issue.

Ms. Kowalczyk asked about the strategy on where buildings are placed and what geographic areas were targeted and what type of housing was considered appropriate. Ms. Prosser described projects where they had the City in Franklinton and could cooperate on the land and the bond dollars, as well as sharing amenities with other nearby properties. It is important to make sure partners understand the need for economically diverse neighborhoods can help with site selections. Columbus is looking to also begin leveraging other dollars as well, and making sure that they are not adding extra layers of requirements to make the project too burdensome. Ms. Kowalczyk expressed how homelessness has increased with older adults and whether

there has been a focus on older adults in this process. Ms. Prosser noted some of the work they have done in homeowner repair grants and there is advocacy around the state relating to property taxes. We need to have more housing products for people to be able to downsize and stay within their community, supporting everyone at every stage. Ms. Kowalczyk asked how Worthington can be a part of this discussion so we are working together. Ms. Prosser explained that the problems cannot just be solved in Columbus and there need to be partnerships.

Mr. Bucher asked about other metro areas and their use of affordable housing bonds. Ms. Prosser replied that other big cities use the bonds, and that other cities have used them later than we are today. \$200 million is in line with what other metros are asking their voters to approve.

Ms. Hermann asked about the short timelines to increase housing or face the ratio being unsustainable, and what we can discuss to have our community better understand how to mitigate these issues. Ms. Prosser said that having conversations like this is a great first step. We need to think about our infrastructure along with housing, and it needs to be the way we do business so people can be housed without being cost-burdened.

Mr. Smith asked if there were any communities that have actually shifted the market to where the buyers have control. Ms. Prosser said that there are two models where communities do not keep up with production and lose their affordability, but then also some communities maintain affordability but lose their livability through congestion and pollution.

## **5. Presentation by Power a Clean Future Ohio - Municipal Costs of Climate Change**

### **Minutes:**

Mr. Florida introduced his presentation, noting that he recently went to Washington DC to present to Senate Banking Committee at the invitation of Chairman Sherrod Brown, Senator of Ohio. This presentation was completed in conjunction with Power a Clean Future Ohio, the Ohio Environmental Council, and Scioto Analysis. This report, *The Bill is Coming Due: Calculating the Financial Cost of Climate Change to Ohio's Local Governments*, is a first-of-its-kind report that accounts for the costs of impacts from climate change on municipal budgets in Ohio. It introduced the concept of the municipal cost of climate statewide and provided resources on these costs in Ohio. It also provides an introduction to the looming financial burdens on Ohio's local governments and helps them begin planning and preparation. The report conducts deep dives on ten future costs of climate change to local government by 2050, covering a variety of different communities from all regions of the state. By the year 2050, it is projected that local governments in Ohio are estimated to spend between \$1.8 and \$5.9 billion per year to keep up with current spending levels, depending on the severity of climate impacts. Costs include public health, infrastructure, planning, public education, and natural system protection costs.

Mr. Robinson asked about the large number of costs attributed to drinking water

treatment and what that entails. Mr. Flarida explained that relates to increased participation, Ohio being agricultural, and the associated runoff, there will be more harmful algal blooms which are exacerbated by climate change. Water treatment costs can be extremely high to deal with those issues.

Mr. Flarida discussed extreme precipitation and flood protection and how they can impact the removal, relocating, acquiring, or demolishing of structures from flood-prone areas. Also, installing, rerouting, increasing capacity, and implementing routine cleaning plans for storm drainage systems. Also for natural systems protection, it includes floodplain mitigation features to reduce flooding in other areas.

Ms. Brewer asked how long a study like this for a City like Worthington would take. Mr. Flarida said that if it is based on the ten impacts, it could be done pretty easily. However, it would take longer if it would be a more robust analysis with more climate impacts.

Ms. Kowalczyk brought up previous discussions on sustainability and how she asked about disaster planning. This discussion is about when these changes happen, not if they are going to happen, we have already gone past the point of making impactful decisions. Mr. Flarida said the hope is that this raises alarms for people at all levels of government because there is a considerable amount that we can do now to help. Worthington's aggregation program offsets a lot of emissions, and there are efforts that can be undertaken to reduce emissions. There is a lot that we can work on to prepare for now.

Mr. Robinson brought up the potential for grant opportunities, especially in light of recent federal legislation. Mr. Flarida said they announced an infrastructure grant assistance program, which provides assistance to any PCFO community to apply for grants. These grants will help implement green energy solutions in Ohio communities. If there are grants Worthington is interested in applying for, they can provide help.

Ms. Michael brought up how many grant programs are catered more towards larger communities than Worthington, so we are often not eligible to have an application seriously considered. She would appreciate some future guidance on how to work with over communities to get up to a size to be eligible for these grant opportunities. Mr. Flarida conveys that this is a common concern among communities. This is why they want to be a helpful partner in this effort and identify appropriate grants for Worthington. They have been trying to communicate to federal agencies to express these frustrations about the grant processes and application requirements.

## Reports of City Officials

### 6. Policy Item(s)

#### a. Age Friendly Worthington

##### Minutes:

Ms. Kowalczyk provided a background on the progress of the Age Friendly Worthington steering committee and the commitment to Worthington being a livable community for all ages. Part of this is ensuring the provision of quality

services that empower residents with resources and opportunities to live, work, and play in the community we call “Home” with the city, its organizations, and its citizens working together to strengthen Worthington’s inherent character as an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic community for all ages and abilities. An age-friendly community is one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life. Being age-friendly is beneficial for all ages, reducing inequities, and enhancing inter-generational solidarity. In 2017, Worthington was shown to have the largest cohort of older adults in Franklin County, and that has only increased since then. She overviewed the process of being age-friendly as laid out by the AARP age-friendly network, including resources and support. She overviewed the eight domains of livability as outlined by AARP which is part of the action-planning process, and then where Age-Friendly Worthington fits within the plans and governing documents for the City of Worthington. She views this plan as fitting along with other master plans like the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and the Parks Master Plan, which help direct the City's operations.

Ms. Light provided an update on all of the work that the Age-Friendly Worthington Community has done to date. The steering committee that has been put together represents a broad cross-section of the City's population, working along with City Council and City staff. They have conducted surveys and focus groups, as well as gathered data and launched their website.

Ms. Durfee shared how Worthington has been rated by AARP as having an overall livability index of 55/100, which is above average but short of some communities such as Aspen, Colorado, and Los Alamos, New Mexico. While it is too early to draw conclusions from preliminary data that has been gathered, some themes include that residents want to remain in their community, that outdoor spaces should be improved upon, that most feel there are negative stereotypes about age, and that a greater sense of community is needed with more opportunities for connecting with each other. In particular, satisfaction with our first responders and city services ranks highly. We will be gathering further information in the coming months.

Ms. Mirmelstein overviewed the next steps in this process, and how there is still a lot to be done. City staff will be working on a complete asset inventory to see what we are doing well, what could be done better, and what is missing. Also, we will be convening stakeholders to present data and obtain feedback to identify priorities. All of this information will be put in a draft action plan to receive community input before submitting a final plan to AARP. To finish this, a consultant will need to be hired and directed by the Steering Committee, with an estimated cost of \$20,000 and about six to ten months of work to complete.

Mr. Robinson asked about governance and if the primary purpose of the

consultant will be the generation of new information, or pulling everything together and formatting things. Ms. Mirmelstein replied that it would be both. Mr. Robinson asked about the action plan that is to be generated and how it may implicate Council to approve or fund certain things, and when will Council be engaged with the final action plan. Ms. Light replied that as there are updates needed, those would be brought to Council to review and provide comment. Mr. Robinson expressed that he hopes that Council will have a hand in the development of a plan, rather than being given a finished product to weigh in on. Ms. Kowalczyk noted that this will be a community plan where other groups will be able to take part in the implementation, rather than being internal to the City. There will be opportunities along the way to provide feedback. Mr. Robinson noted that he would be interested in seeing action plans from some of the cities that were listed.

Mr. Greeson explained that sufficient funds have been appropriated to accommodate this request and if Council authorizes moving forward, a consultant can be selected and the City Manager is authorized to sign a contract. It had not been anticipated to bring the scope of work and selection of a consultant back to Council for approval.

**MOTION:** Ms. Michael moved, seconded by Ms. Hermann to move forward to the next phase which will include hiring an experienced consultant to assist with the process and facilitation of a final action plan.

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

#### **b. Financial Report - July 2022 and August 2022**

**Minutes:**

Mr. Bartter stated that our financial condition remains good and income tax collections are above projections by 12%.

Mr. Robinson asked about previous concerns about state-level policy and how they have played out. Mr. Bartter replied that the biggest issue is working from home, which has been positive for Worthington so far.

**MOTION:** Ms. Brewer moved, seconded by Ms. Michael to accept the July 2022 and August 2022 Financial Reports as presented.

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

## **Reports of Council Members**

### **7. Reports of Council Members**

**Minutes:**

Ms. Kowalczyk gave an update on several upcoming events.

Ms. Michael provided a summary of the most recent Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Brewer gave a summary of the past MPC/ARB meeting.

Mr. Robinson asked Councilmembers if there was an appetite to continue discussing

the potential update to the Comprehensive Plan at the first meeting in October. Council members generally agreed. Mr. Robinson brought up the thought of the retreat process for next year, asking Councilmembers what format and schedule would make sense.

## Other Business

### Executive Session

#### 8. Executive Session

- a. **To conference with attorney(s) for the City concerning pending or imminent litigation.**

**Minutes:**

**MOTION:** Ms. Hermann moved, seconded by Ms. Brewer to meet in Executive Session to conference with an attorney(s) for the City concerning pending or imminent litigation, to consider the appointment of a public official, and to consider the purchase of property for public purposes.

**The clerk called the roll on Executive Session with the motion carrying unanimously by a roll call vote. Council recessed at 9:07 p.m. from the Regular meeting session.**

**Council returned to open session at 10:43 p.m.**

### Adjournment

#### 9. Motion to Adjourn

**Minutes:**

**MOTION:** Ms. Michael moved, Ms. Brewer seconded a motion to adjourn.

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

President Robinson declared the meeting adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

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Contact: D. Kay Thress, Clerk of Council (Kay.Thress@worthington.org (614) 436-3100) | Minutes published on 09/14/2022, adopted on 09/19/2022

/s/ Ethan C Barnhardt  
Management Assistant

Attest

/s/ David Robinson  
President of Council