

**MINUTES OF RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
December 10, 2018**

The Meeting of the Ravenna City Community & Economic Development Committee was called to order at 5:35 P.M. by Chairman Bruce Ribelin. Present were Scott Rainone, Andrew Kluge, Rob Kairis, Matt Harper, Amy Michael, Paul Moskun and Joseph Bica. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Frank Seman; Finance Director, Kimble Cecora; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Police Chief Jeff Wallis; Fire Chief, Geoff Cleveland; Parks & Recreation Director, Judy Watkins and Larry Silenius of 123 North Walnut Street, Ravenna, Ohio.

Mr. Ribelin said there were three items on the agenda for this evening, the JEDD, 1034 West Main Street and Portage County Land Bank.

Mr. Cecora said there has been some conversation regarding the JEDD. They found someone who might be able to help.

Mayor Seman said they were setting up the meeting for January 22, which worked out well being the day after Martin Luther King Day and they'd be meeting with committee of the whole. Unfortunately, the gentleman cannot come on that day. He would now like to do this on January 15. There has been a flurry of emails and he doesn't think it's resolved at this point.

Mr. Cecora said Jim DiPaola was concerned because there is a township trustee meeting that evening. They are trying to coordinate around it. It appears they are going to have this presentation on January 15 at 5:00.

The clerk said that cuts it pretty close for people who are working and wish to attend. She asked if they could move it back a half hour.

Mayor Seman said he will ask for the time to be moved back one-half hour. Nothing else would be scheduled that night. This is really an important presentation for them. He would encourage everyone to try to attend. He apologized for the problems with it.

Mr. Cecora said the JEDD startup money is still in the budget and the funds can roll over into next year. The cost of the presentation is being split with the Township. He will just go ahead and pay that out of JEDD startup and put some appropriation into the permanent budget.

Mr. Ribelin said the next item on the agenda is 1034 West Main Street.

Mr. Cecora said this was to request some accounting entries. The property and building have been sold. They need to bring some revenue in. The City is then going to send it back to the Community Improvement Corporation. They were authorized the broker the sale. They need some accounting entries, bringing the money in, recognizing revenue and then appropriating the money back to the CIC.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for further action.

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Mr. Ribelin stated the next item for discussion the Portage County Land Bank.

Mayor Seman said this involves properties on Lake Avenue that are badly abused and eyesores to the community. This has been going on for a long time. They've been to court numerous times with the one property. It's just not going to get cleaned up. Mr. Finney has worked with the owner's attorney. Mr. Finney thinks it would be best for the City to buy this property and clean it up. Originally the owner wasn't interested and his attorney told him that was a pretty good deal, just to get \$5,000.00 for the property. If the City takes ownership of it and provide for the cleanup. Every square foot of ground is covered with something. Then there is something on top of the something.

Ms. Michael said there is a worker who comes and goes from the property. The neighbors have no idea what goes on in there and it's really very scary.

Mr. Ribelin noted they would be using UDAG funds and then turn it over to the Portage County Land Bank for cleanup and then the land bank will turn it back over to the CIC.

Ms. Michael said right now it's not a buildable lot. Farther down, is where there are people who are living in tents. There are three right in the area.

Mayor Seman said in this particular case, what they need to do is authorize the appropriation of \$5,000.00 and get possession of the property. The UDAG is an RLF that is no longer monitored. They have latitude with the spending of that money that they don't have with some of the other accounts.

Mr. Cecora asked if the land being acquired would be subject to an environmental review.

Mayor Seman said there is another house where there are heirs and the owner passed away. At the very best, Mr. Finney thinks the land is value-less, given its size and is going to go after the children to demolish the house or just turn it over to the City.

Mayor Seman said the third property there is no address and just a parcel number. This is just informational. The owner lives in Kent.

Mr. Cecora said there is over \$190,000.00 in UDAG, just to keep that in mind.

Mayor Seman said that if they aren't going to be able to build on the lot; it's too small. The chance of recovering the \$5,000.00 would be slim. If it were to be recovered, it should probably be replenished to the UDAG account.

Ms. Michael said there are so many nice houses in that area and this whole parcel is gross and disgusting. It is scary.

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Mr. Ribelin said he would like to quickly talk about the contract for the economic development director in that the lawyers are working on it and as soon as they are done with it, it will be coming forward. This is a contract between the City and the Township and the other entities. He's anxious to get this done.

Mr. Kairis asked if this is a contract position, with no benefits.

Mr. Ribelin responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Kairis asked if this is a trend. How do they hire people without benefits?

Mayor Seman said that in some cases they have coverage in other places.

Mr. Kairis noted that it does limit the pool.

Mayor Seman concurred.

Mr. Finney entered the meeting who, upon being asked about environmental concerns on Lake Avenue said over the years there have been multiple loads of dirt, concrete and bricks on the site. The garage shows up in photos in the early 1970s. There was a fire there. A train was driving by and saw the owner burning stuff. The Fire Department was called and the fire put out. They started with this person in 2012. They've been to court multiple times. It's not a residence so the land bank won't take it. However, if the City were to purchase the land, he could then turn it over to the land bank if they were willing to clean the site up or remove all the stuff. His thought was to then turn it over to the CIC.

Mr. Finney said at the time dealing with the first property, he started dealing with the neighboring property. There was no estate. There are eight children. All of the children would have to sign over the property. That one actually does have a residence and the land bank could take ownership. Neither of the lots has sanitary sewer so they are not buildable and are not large enough to be built on. His thought was to get those two properties, put them into the hands of the CIC. If it stays in the name of the land bank, they are going to want to sell them. The last thing he wants is for them to go to the neighbors west of the property, whom they are also currently in court with. This was just an avenue and if it doesn't work out they can take him to court and he can be fined. The City will eventually end up cleaning up the site. The City will either leave it the way it is or eventually have to clean it up. Nobody else wants to do it. There is a gas station on West Main Street that has sat the way it is for years because there is no avenue or nobody wants to take the risk of what could be underground. He understands if council says no and not to do it but the next step is, what do they do with it?

Mr. Ribelin said it definitely needs to be cleaned up.

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Mr. Finney said he was really hoping the land bank would agree to clean it up. They were meeting this morning to discuss it. The land bank was using an IP fund which expires December 18. They can't transfer properties into the names by then, the IP goes away. They are now going to operate on the reclaimed monies from selling properties.

Mr. Ribelin asked if the City buys this property for \$5,000.00 with UDAG funds, but then they have to get the land bank to clean it up. If they find contamination, is the City then responsible for cleanup?

Mr. Finney responded that he didn't get to speak with land bank today. The court date with the owner is January 4. They were hoping to have a plan to present to the magistrate that the city is willing to pay this man then he would be required to accept it or not. Or, they could simply tell the magistrate there is no plan in place and he would be ordered to clean the property up.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for further action.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:08 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Bruce Ribelin, Chairman
Community & Economic Development Committee