

MINUTES OF RAVENNA CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
February 11, 2019

The Meeting of the Ravenna City Planning Committee was called to order by Chairperson Rob Kairis at 5:57 P.M. Present were: Amy Michael, Scott Rainone, Bruce Ribelin, Paul Moskun, Andrew Kluge, Matt Harper and Joe Bica. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Frank Seman; Finance Director, Kim Cecora; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Police Chief Jeff Wallis; Human Resources Director, Heather Richkowski and Larry Silenius of 123 North Walnut Street, Ravenna, Ohio.

Mr. Kairis said the first item on the agenda is a request to trade equipment with Cuyahoga Falls.

Mr. Kluge explained that Ms. Watkins would like to trade equipment with Cuyahoga Falls. Apparently there are a number of bicycles that are not being used.

Mr. Finney said a few years back, they tried to sell these bikes on E-Bay. These are the bikes that didn't sell. They've been in the garage behind the RAC for a number of years.

The clerk noted that they've traded equipment with Cuyahoga Falls previously and she was never aware of any problem.

It was decided by those present that the issue would remain on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

Mr. Kairis said the next item on the agenda is the Tower Lodge renovation project. He and Mr. Kluge met with Ms. Watkins at Tower Lodge a few weeks ago. The problem is that the bathrooms are not ADA compliant. They have been restricted from holding events there for a very long time. Ms. Watkins got a proposal from Ted Manfred Architects and it was about \$50,000.00 for the construction, including the architectural fees.

The clerk noted that the request being made is to employ the architect and pay the architectural fees of \$4,500.00 plus an additional \$200.00-\$300.00 contingency.

Mr. Kairis said that he did have a ballpark figure but not a fully flushed out proposal. He estimated it at about \$50,000.00.

Mr. Cecora asked what they are thinking about in terms of shelf life for Tower Lodge in terms of how far into the future will it take them. The reason he is asking is because one of the budget items in the Capital Improvement Fund is the replacement of Tower Lodge. They have been putting away about \$23,000.00 a year over about the last five years. That means the goal of hitting \$350,000.00 was targeted for the year 2030. Right now they are sitting on about \$116,000.00. That's a long way to go but the goal is to have at least \$350,000.00 worth of seed money to replace Tower Lodge. The question is, do they use that money to improve the building now or do they continue to leave it as a separately funded line for the future.

Mr. Kairis noted that he doesn't think they were aware there was a plan in place to actually replace Tower Lodge.

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Mr. Cecora said he doesn't think anyone expected that \$350,000.00 to cover the cost of a new building, but it would be a sizeable down payment . Right now with 2019 funding, there is a total cumulative reserve funding of \$116,600.00.

Mr. Bica said years ago, they thought the best solution for the Tower Lodge situation was to plan a complete replacement, something bigger and more versatile; maybe closer to the road with more parking. There was some thought put into it at the time with the Parks & Recreation director and they started to accrue money knowing they could build some time in the future. The decision was made at that time, at least, they were not going to spend any more money on Tower Lodge. They were not going to rent it and only use it for very limited programs because of the restrooms and limitations.

Ms. Michael said that it's not ADA compliant. If they have someone come in for summer camp who would need to get into a restroom who has special needs, the City could be sued.

Mr. Bica said there are brand new ADA compliant restrooms up on the hill.

Mr. Finney noted they are not open during the winter.

Ms. Michael said that if there is a rain storm and the kids are all indoors, they are in Tower Lodge and that child has to use the restroom, they are going to have to get them up the hill in a rain storm.

Mr. Finney said the building code would require them to be inside the building. There is a little more work that was going to be done with the kitchen. It hasn't been really utilized. It was going to be made a little smaller with a counter for crockpots, etc. Then there would be a certain height for that countertop so ADA people can self-serve and would be in compliance.

The clerk said the request is for two ADA compliant restrooms, a mop closet and kitchen area.

Mr. Kluge said there was some question as to what was behind the pegboard; if there was a window and if those needed to be fixed.

Mr. Kairis asked where the \$50,000.00 would come from.

Mr. Cecora said it would come from Park C.I. It's just an FYI, they are reserving in Parks Capital only two items that, and money for a splash park someday. That is sitting cumulatively after five years at about \$65,000.00. He knows it can go either way depending on what the Parks Board and Council wishes to do with it.

Ms. Michael asked if they could take half out of the savings and another half out of the CI.

Mr. Cecora responded in the affirmative. It's all one fund, it's just how they wish to illustrate it. They could just stop the reserve for a year or two.

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Ms. Michael said she does understand not wanting to put money into something that is eventually going to come down. But at the same time, they are not going to be putting anything up for quite some time. In the meantime, she thinks they have to have every person's needs met.

Mr. Cecora said that in addition to that reserve for this year, there is \$30,000.00 in something called ADA upgrades and renovation, Tower Lodge. There is a placeholder in the current budget that is in the 2019 tax budget. So there is something in there.

Mr. Finney said that the \$50,000.00 is just an estimate. Once it goes out to bid, the price could come down significantly. The building itself is structurally sound; siding down spouts, roof; there is absolutely no reason why this building wouldn't last another 15+ years. In 2030, a building will probably be about a half million dollars. They've also talked about building something at Chestnut Hills Park rather than at City Park.

Mr. Cecora noted with the \$30,000.00 in there, they may want to appropriate additional money when it is needed. They may just want to leave that continuous reserve funding in there because they know \$350,000.00 isn't going to put up a new building in 2030 but at least it's a jump start.

Mr. Bica said they need to continue to think 10-15-25 years out. He thinks that is why those reserves were put in there. They want a splash park someday but they know they can't get a splash park until 2020 or 2025. They need to plan for that. He has such a problem with changing any of those reserves. Let them continue to accrue; put it away. So if it's \$500,000.00 at that time, they'll have \$350,000.00 to work with.

Mr. Kluge said at that point in time, they could possibly looking at adding on to the building or just upgrading what they have.

Mr. Bica said that would make more sense, to incorporate what they are doing now to something they would add to in the future.

Mr. Cecora said they asked at that time if it was structurally sound, any environmental hazards and if it was safe.

Mr. Bica said the thought process was thinking about moving the building to make more parking around it. At that time, they did make the decision to limit the access to that building as much as possible. It sounds like it's being utilized more and more and more.

Mr. Finney said that the building is under-utilized. It's not being utilized, rented out, etc.

Mr. Cecora said they can put the additional \$25,000.00 needed to upgrade in the 2019 budget which will cover the \$50,000.00 plus the architect fees.

Mr. Kairis noted he would like to see them keep building that reserve but also thinks he would like to see them make whatever changes are necessary in order for the building to be used more frequently and rented out when available.

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Mr. Ribelin concurred stating if they are going to be using the building for another 15 years, he doesn't think the amount of money they are putting into it right now for the ADA accessible restrooms is too much. He thinks they need to do it, get it done so it can be used and revenue raised from the building.

Mr. Finney said he and Ms. Watkins discussed with Bob Dennison the possibility of opening up the windows, wood siding on the inside. The wood siding is there so people can put their feet on it, if they put up drywall, it will be all scuffed up. When it rains, the playground camp goes into the inside of the building.

Mr. Kairis asked about the floor noting it seems old.

Mr. Finney said there isn't anything wrong with it. It is solid. If there were going to be gymnastics or some kind of dance class, they could put some floors in that would be conducive to those activities; something they could pick up when they are done for the day. Again, the playground camp utilizes that primarily, all summer long. Bob Dennison likes it because it's an easy to clean floor. The kitchen itself is probably not utilized in its capacity so it can be shortened up a little bit and obviously the new bathroom. There were a couple of other issues that were noted; someone asked about the furnace being stuffed with block. They are in the process of opening that up. Some of the items can be bid as an alternate. If they like the prices, they can choose to do those.

There being no further discussion, it was decided by those present the contract with the architect would be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Kairis said the next item on the agenda is a donation of land.

Mr. Finney said the City owns two parcels, one next to the Advance Auto, 455 West Main and the former Red Cross, 609 West Main Street. They purchased those parcels through a Neighborhood Stabilization Program grant. This parcel, the Land Bank would like to donate the parcel to the City. If the homes on Main Street would be purchased by a developer, then the parcels would be an egress route to Spruce. There is no cost associated with the acceptance of the property.

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

Mr. Kairis said the next item on the agenda is the agreement with Heritage Ohio.

Mayor Seman said this is for Main Street Ravenna. It is the agreement the City makes with Main Street Ravenna so they can function. Authorization is needed for him to sign the contract. The City's obligation is \$500.00 a year and agreeing to attend some of the educational things provided.

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Mr. Kairis said up until last month, Main Street Ravenna was actually an affiliate of Heritage Ohio. Main Street filed its official application and has tentatively approved. The expectation is that the City will pay \$500.00 a year and that somebody on City Council will try to participate in some of the training. He's on Main Street Ravenna so that takes care of that portion of the responsibility. This is just formalizing the agreement and outlines what the City's responsibilities are with regards to Main Street Ravenna. Main Street Ravenna is now a full member of Heritage Ohio, no longer an affiliate.

Mayor Seman said the second portion of the contract basically outlines how Main Street will be structured. They are monitored every year for progress. They have a rather stringent formula, goals that need to be met. They get so many points and they have to maintain a certain level. They expect good things to come out of this. They set the bar kind of high.

Mr. Kairis said he thinks Main Street Ravenna will meet that obligation. If they are not aware, Main Street is sponsoring a writing festival on Saturday, February 23. Various venues downtown, Library, movie theatre, etc., will be hosting events. There will be speakers, workshops and several writing contests. Prizes will be provided to the students.

Mayor Seman said the information is online at the Chamber of Commerce website as well as the Main Street Ravenna website.

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

Mr. Kairis asked if there is a management update. Mayor Seman responded he met with David Shay and Amy Adams last week from the Community Action Council to see if they could work something out in terms of parking. Their business has picked up dramatically. They are cramped there and is going to try to work out something with the new owner of the former Center of Hope for some parking. Mr. Shay was interested in possibly having employees park across the street at the empty gas station. He told Mr. Shay in terms of ownership, he doesn't know what right the City would have to give to do that.

Mr. Finney said no one wants to move forward with it and do the environmental phases. It's been to auction a couple of different times and it wasn't sold. The reserved price they were asking was ridiculous. It's been discussed at the Land Bank and they want a Phase II completed and no one wants to pay for that Phase II. It's just stuck in limbo. The City did its investigation. From the investigation, he doesn't see it to be bad but for them to roll the dice and pay for a Phase II and take ownership, they'd still have to pull the tanks. He thinks it's still owned by Millennium Holdings which is in Saudi Arabia. He got authorization to demolish the building through the court system. They have taken the surface down but won't go under the surface without knowing what's in there.

Mr. Bica said he thought they could get permission from the bank at one time to do a Phase I.

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He believes the Land Bank can take ownership of that property as long as there is a plan in place. There are back taxes owed of probably \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00. The perimeter of the property was tested and came back okay. The gas station was in compliance when the doors were locked and the owners left town; he thinks in 2006. The tanks were empty back at that time. It's very difficult to get BUSTR funding. They might be able to get funding if the City would take ownership of it. There was some quirky thing that if they didn't do one thing, they couldn't get the money.

Mr. Bica asked why the Community Action Council doesn't take ownership of the property.

Mayor Seman said they talked about it.

Mr. Finney said if they would talk to the Portage County Land Bank to remove the taxes, they can probably use it for a period of time before the EPA would step in. It could be as simple as removing the tanks but the unknown is what is below the tanks. Those tanks were old enough there was a gravel bed around them. It wasn't uncommon for a gravel bad around the tanks. Today, they don't put tanks into the ground that way. They know the fuel hasn't migrated to the sidewalk because they tested there.

Mayor Seman said he is not asking for anything specific. He just wanted them to be aware that the CAC had an interest and if they can nail down who really owns the property and work from there.

There being no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 6:44 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Robert Kairis, Chairman
Planning Committee