

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 23, 2009

7:20 pm

Council Committee Rooms

Finance Committee

*Shane Ewald, Chair
Beryl D. Anderson
Thomas C. Evers
Thomas R. Kneeland
John R. McAlister
Nancy R. McGregor
David L. Samuel*

Members Present: Thomas C. Evers, Shane W. Ewald, Thomas R. Kneeland, John McAlister, Nancy R. McGregor, Beryl D. Anderson and David L. Samuel

Additional Attendees:

Karl Wetherholt, Mike Andrako, Jerry Isler, Grant Reveal, Chief Murphy, Terry Emery, Dottie Franey, Brandi Braun, Sadicka White, Tom Weber, Angel Mumma, Isobel Sherwood, Karen Eylon, Dwight McCabe.

ISSUES - From Council:

CVB's 2008 Annual Report & 2009 Business Plan

Ewald called the meeting to order; first item is the CVB Annual Report and Business Plan. Eylon passed out a document titled 2008 A YEAR IN REVIEW (a copy is available in the Council Office) and said it is the 2008 annual report; wanted to thank you for your support through the years and especially for the 4% rate for the new entity; a lot of my peers are struggling financially at work and I am proud to say you understand the benefit of tourism; tourism is big business in Gahanna and we will continue to reap the benefits of visitors with our reorganization with Gahanna Events; we allocated resources for their events as we worked toward the merger; that was accomplished in December of 2008; next page shows some highlights of our marketing including our web sites and the state-of-the-art meeting facility; most initiatives were launched last year for benefit this year; we hired a PR strategist and increased coverage in many publications; that also helped with sales and marketing and coordination of E-Tools; worked to increase and improve group tour experiences; next we outline Creekside Successes; shows the Blues and Jazz Festival as one of the most important events and how it is supported by cash donations and has the highest revenue generated; there is some information from the visitor survey; we devote a page to the Holiday Lights and community partnerships with initiatives we support; welcome any questions now or after you have read more; the 2009 document is our proposed business plan (a copy is available in the Council Office) since we have a transition team working to build a strong group, the full board has not approved this document yet; hence it says proposed; our next meeting is on April 16 and it will go to them for their review; we worked to develop a scope of service with what we deliver as an annual content; we took it a step further under scope of services to show a road map of how to get there; then our attempts to deliver what we said we would; it is a working document; new opportunities and needs will be added with goals, objectives and tactics to get us there; we still have work to do but it is great way to understand where we are going and to have some accountability; any questions?

Evers said in looking at the Blues and Jazz Festival information, what is the total budget. Eylon said it was about \$130,000; in 2009 it is \$165,000; allows the CVB to supplement some functions like Holiday Lights where revenue is not being created. Evers asked how many tours and the number of buses coming in. Eylon said for 2009 it is a good news story as we are going back into that; we had backed off that market; now with Parks we are encouraging visits to the Ohio Herb Education Center through trade shows and our partner Experience Columbus; we just had 2 buses come from Cleveland and we know with this marketing, 2009 will be better.

Anderson asked if the CVB knows which of its marketing tools are the most successful overall from 2008 or the from the past; since you hired a new PR person, what has

drawn people to Gahanna? Eylon said it is a mix; I can do some additional research to provide a better answer; we have more advertising now and we are getting PR coverage in the marketplace; PR is critical since it reaches a large audience; our web site is key along with the social media. Anderson said the numbers or analysis would be helpful to us to know about getting the word out for the City. Eylon said word of mouth is critical; we have our resident ambassadors directing a variety of meetings to us.

Samuel asked Eylon to share both positive and negative tour group comments. Eylon said most of the group tour comments are positive; the reality is we have to sell it as a mystery tour; folks don't know where they are going when they get on a bus to come here; they would not come if they knew it was Gahanna; then after being here they are completely surprised at what we have; the most challenging issue is the Herb Center's limited capacity; now that Creekside is open and we have restaurants that can serve a large group that are open, it will make a difference. Samuel asked if evaluation sheets are provided. Eylon said no, we work with the tour operator. Samuel said they must have liked it as the group I saw hung around for awhile.

Council Representative - CVB Board

Evers said a couple of weeks ago I asked if anyone on Council was interested in being the CVB representative; let me know right away if you are; I do have a couple of residents if no Council member is available. Kneeland said it is for a rolling one year.

PENDING LEGISLATION:

ORD-0069-2009

TO REZONE 190.3+/- ACRES AS L-M1, LIMITED OVERLAY, MANUFACTURING; FOR PROPERTY BOUNDED BY TAYLOR ROAD, MORRISON ROAD, CLAYCRAFT ROAD AND SCIENCE BLVD.; KNOWN AS CENTRAL PARK; VALUE RECOVERY GROUP II, LLC; DWIGHT MCCABE APPLICANT.

White said we had a public hearing and a recommendation from Planning Commission to rezone the area known as Central Park; currently zoned M-1 Manufacturing but we are promoting the change to L-M1, Limited Overlay Manufacturing, which takes the underlying zoning and heightens it with special usage; McCabe is here representing Value Recovery Group for Central Park. McCabe said he has a copy of the zoning and toured the area for overlay requirements; the reason for the overlay is to make the area fundamentally the same as Office, Commerce and Technology (OCT) Zoning; this required a piggy back approach and gives us a step up; our prospects wanted some assurances on who the neighbors will be consistent with an OCT development of high end offices; needed to make it known that it is not suitable for a heavy industrial application; we are including energy efficient design; also aim for elements of a park with our exterior finish standards and we tightened up the landscaping to be consistent with Class A office parks; exit conserves space to work with the natural surroundings; tightened up the lighting standards due to the airport approach zone as well as we did want the light sources to come through the trees; we have 100 acres of set aside green space and have clarified the parking set backs abutting the golf course to get the biggest use and highest density for job creation; this is a lengthy text but it is on par with the City's objectives; Planning Commission had no negative comments; glad to answer any questions. Samuel said he wanted to commend Value Recovery Group for the great job; asked how the golf course is doing. McCabe said the grass is growing and the course will open in June; the clubhouse is delayed; still the aim is to open but they are questioning if they want to open without the clubhouse. White said she would be attending a meeting this Friday where it will be discussed; hope they don't delay; even if it is a little less than perfect that can be expected initially so go ahead and open.

Recommended for Adoption, Consent**ORD-0055-2009**

TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH FAHLGREN MORTINE FOR THE PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY OF DOWNTOWN GAHANNA

Samuel said he requested the Fahlgren Mortine Contract be returned to committee; felt he needed some answers and it was being rushed through; needed to understand all the loose ends because this represents 16.8 million dollars of tax money; to begin with why can't we do this ourselves? Braun said she sent out an email response to Samuel's concerns; the email questions and answers were repeated in order to have them become part of the minutes and are as follows:

Q: Why can't the City of Gahanna conduct the audit and plan internally?

A: Although the City staff consists of several people with marketing knowledge, a professional firm brings more depth, experience and contacts to the process. Moreover, no staff member currently has the time and resources necessary to conduct such an audit and plan. By having this work done professionally up front, we believe it will give the new Public Information Manager an approved, coordinated marketing platform from which to move forward. The city and appropriate departments, along with all the audited non-profit and civic groups will all have a role in crafting the plan before it is completed.

Q: Why were key players not consulted (CVB, Chamber, OGCP)?

A: The marketing aspect of our strategy for a successful downtown changed as we met with marketing firms and further developed the concept. The initial Downtown Action Team had three primary recommendations: 1. Programming & Events, 2. Aesthetic and Functional Improvements to the site, 3. Market Downtown and Gahanna to visitors, residents and businesses. As we started to examine the marketing component, we realized it would be in the best interest of the City and all of the nonprofit and private organizations to perform an audit up front and ensure this plan included all the resources and work so that it was aligned for effectiveness.

We did not want to involve the organizations to be audited until we had Council's approval for the concept via the contract. The administration's choice to not include the nonprofit organizations was deliberate as we did not want to unnecessarily heighten their expectations of such a potential plan without Council approval. A meeting has been scheduled to discuss the proposal from Fahlgren and our strategy for moving forward. I can assure you that the groups and organizations that per the audit will be included from the beginning to the end of this process once the contract is approved by Council.

Q: Why was the ordinance entitled "...enter into contract with Fahlgren Mortine for the promotion and publicity of downtown Gahanna" and not for "all of Gahanna"?

A: The Downtown Action item recommendations were made toward creating a sustainable downtown Gahanna. A successful downtown will aid in ensuring the economic success of our entire City. Many of the materials and messages crafted as part of this audit and plan will be used for marketing all of Gahanna. The focus is on downtown, but the fundamentals will be used for the entire City.

Q: Once Fahlgren completes the audit and plan, what are the next steps?

A: Once the audit and plan are complete, we envision all involved organizations implementing their respective components of the plan. Much of this work is already being done, but we hope we can move forward with a newly-branded, truly coordinated approach. The plan will ensure we are sending a unified message in a manner that best promotes the City. The plan will provide a comprehensive unified approach that will allow all parties to work together for the common good of the community while leveraging individual resources for the greatest effectiveness and community impact.

Q: What if the recommendations require more money?

A: Fahlgren will be tasked to create a plan based on resources that are already being used, which is why they are performing an audit. However, if Fahlgren comes back and makes "above and beyond" recommendations they feel would augment the marketing efforts, the decision to allocate additional funds would have to be made by each organization. In the case of potential additional City promotional needs, Council would have to approve any additional funding.

Q: What if Fahlgren recommends a new position for the City?

A: Fahlgren's plan and recommendations will only include marketing strategies to be implemented by current organizations.

Samuel said he had an additional comment; he has observed that at Creekside the Wine Guy and the jewelry store have had good results with their marketing. Are we looking at some of these as best business practices to reuse? Braun said we did the PR for the grand opening and they became familiar to us; we can share information as we go forward. Mayor said the newspaper coverage provided publicity; remember publicity and advertising are different terms; they are not the same thing; we are not talking about advertising; we are talking about public relations; want to make sure we don't misunderstand terms. Anderson asked Samuel if, when you asked if we could do the marketing, did you mean the Administration. Samuel said yes, he meant the Administration.

Recommended for Adoption

ISSUES - From Director of Finance:

Letter of Engagement - Julian & Grube

Isler said this request is to authorize the Mayor to enter into an Engagement Letter with Julian & Grube, Inc. to authorize them to conduct an audit; they use the term Letter of Engagement rather than contract; the ordinance will authorize the funding set aside in appropriations.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, Consent, no need to come back, 2nd Reading, Consent

Transfer of OPWC Funds

Isler said we received 2 grants from OPWC (Ohio Public Works Commission); these are loans and when they were done we put the pots of money in the General Fund; then we found out we have to account for each project in a separate fund for revenues and expenses; so we are transferring the money to the Capital Improvement Fund where we will use individual project codes to track the Stygler/Agler widening and US 62 widening; an ordinance is required. Mumma said we are finding that grant requirements are changing and that is happening over time; what we are going for in the budget in the appropriate fund could change.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, Consent, no need to come back, 2nd Reading, Consent

ISSUES - From Director of Technology:

Panic Buttons City Hall - Purchase and Installation

Reveal said this issue is a continuation of a project from a safety and security audit done a while ago; now about 4 to 6 months ago; we would like to install panic buttons here

and at the Senior Center to buzz the Gahanna Police Department directly for an immediate response; it is for the safety and security of our staff here and this is similar to what bank tellers have; the Senior Center project also includes a card reader to limit the door access when staff is alone there; the panic button locations are in the Mayor's office, and in water billing; up in the lobby by the Mayor's office; in HR and the Council office; we feel that will cover it; we have a quote from Security Corporation for 3 phases of the project; we have worked with them before and this is an add-on to our existing system; we are asking for \$8,950 as an additional appropriation to cover this.

Samuel asked why this arrangement is better than portable signals. Reveal said the portable ones get lost and get covered up so folks have to look for it; this is a permanent set up so that can't happen; they are there when needed.

Anderson said while at the National League of Cities Conference, I attended Emergency Management training; heard agency heads and the US Attorney General speak on this issue; they pointed out dollars are available from the stimulus package for emergency management projects; turn around can be as little as 2 weeks; since we are 4 to 6 months behind anyway, we should look into the option of obtaining some of this stimulus money; it is under Police management; and not just this request; since there are short application time frames and quick turn arounds, we should get on the band wagon for our citizens and research some other grants; before we approve this out of our budget, let's see if we can get this. McAlister asked if they mentioned where they are getting this money; remember it is coming from huge deficit spending.

Kneeland said he wanted to ask Isler and Mumma what is the break even on grant costs when we have to apply and manage it. Mumma said it depends on the grant; FEMA recently came back and asked for duplicate documentation which was very time consuming so it is not just our department involved. Reveal said they tie these together; usually have to be in partnerships with other programs; we may not have the partner needed and then we have to prove who we are, which is another round of paper work; to award the grant you have to prove XYZ. Kneeland said I don't disagree with finding money; but sometimes the cost isn't worth the value of the grant requested; especially true on the low dollar ones; we need to know what is the average grant that makes the cost worth while. Mayor said we have salaried employees here that look at these opportunities and their costs; we evaluate grants if we find them and have the time and capacity; then we come to Council with it and take it into consideration; some we don't even bring here because it doesn't fit. Mumma said grants are constantly changing; we need to evaluate because if we are kicked up to \$500,000 at any given point we have to spend for audit expenses. Kneeland said in the current environment we would get in line for federal dollars; if it is an upside down cost should we do that. Anderson said she could appreciate that thinking; but we should do our due diligence; wanted to let you know in our committee setting what I heard so you would know that this money is there and this is what I experienced; I know that there are many more of these grants and we should do the cost/benefit analysis each time; not just back off them because of paper work. Emery said that General Williams is not here tonight to share his views; he has seen what is available and should have the opportunity to evaluate the request and decide if he wants to pursue additional money. Reveal said I will check with him on this. Anderson said continuing the mantra of a cooperative spirit within the location, we would have to be prudent and diligent in using and accounting for any of this money; we are the front line. Mayor said General Williams did not feel any money was available.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, return to Committee of the Whole.

Network Infrastructure Equipment

Reveal said this request is for a supplemental appropriation needed to purchase the network infrastructure equipment for our project upgrade; this is hardware equipment; staff came up with a fair recommendation for the budget but they did not have any idea of the real scope; since I came, we developed a more realistic expectation; this would last for 5 to 10 years moving forward; this Cisco pricing ends in April; I am trying to get the best deal and may still be able to get it for \$130,000; but to be sure, I wanted to have the supplemental for \$30,000 to have \$160,000 if needed; I am hoping to get an additional discount and maybe some additional product; we could amend these additional options for 2nd reading but I wanted to get the process started since this is the lynch pin for the fiber/wireless project. Ewald said it could be introduced, but he would like to go over this more as he has a concern with the vendor; they have ongoing maintenance contracts.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, return to Committee of the Whole.

ISSUES - From Clerk of Council:

Senior Center Advisory Board Appointment

Sherwood said wanted to let you know the Senior Center Advisory Board appointment is up this year; Hall is getting names and we should have them for the next committee; if you know of anyone to consider, let us know; remember they have to be a member of the center.

Invitations - Luncheons, Annual Meetings:

Sherwood said she had sent emails about several lunch meetings like MORPC, SWACO OML and student government day. McAlister asked what is the date and time for SWACO. Sherwood said 11:30 on May 12. Evers asked if Sherwood would type all the specifics in one email to all Council members and then would they please all respond.

Prescription Drug Card:

Sherwood passed out a handout from Anderson. Anderson said this is information about a prescription drug card; it is sponsored by the National League of Cities; it is a free program providing the discount but it would have our City logo on the card; we could provide it to citizens who have no insurance and help them save money on retail prescriptions at CVS or another national chain; I wanted to bring it to the attention of Council. McGregor asked why do it when the county has a program already. Anderson said to show the City cares about the challenges of our residents; I sent for more information and feel it is a great idea; my intent is to have you consider the program. Evers said we understand your request; and if we choose to participate we would send in our logo and name and have cards sent to us free. Ewald said so there are no strings attached. Anderson said none. Kneeland said this is the same program offered when the Mayor and he went; it does allow the City logo to be displayed and offer a retail discount; the county's is a different company. Mayor said her staff would do some research and advise.

ISSUES-From the Director of Development

Environmental Consultant Contract-Hull & Associates

McAlister said this is coming out of Development & Parks Committee for all of Council to review.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, back to Committee of the Whole

Meeting adjourned to Special City Council Meeting-Executive Session.

Sherwood reminded everyone that next week is a 5th Monday so there will be no meeting.

Della Brandenberger, Reporting