

Economic Development Committee MTG Minutes for 4/21/22  
7:30 AM Lancaster City Hall – Room 1897 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Members Present- Don McDaniel (At-Large), Tom Stoughton (4<sup>th</sup> Ward), Corey Schoonover (At-Large) Others Present – Tom James (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward), Jack Matlin (3<sup>rd</sup> Ward), Presten Ahlers (1<sup>st</sup> Ward), Mayor Scheffler, SSD Paul Martin, Stephanie Hall (Law Director), Mike Petit – LPA Director, Stephanie Bosco – Asst LPA Director, CDBG Director- Lynda Berge Disser, Kelly Scott, Bob Sullick, Tami Gunther, Pete Vail (Building Dept), Travis Markwood (Chamber), Amanda Everitt (DDL), Jonett Haberfield (Visit Fairfield County), Holly Mattei (Crossroads Community Planning)

**Meeting called to order at 7:30 am**

**Prestation:**

**Planning Technical Assistance Program Proposal/ Zoning Code Update Proposal**

Mayor Scheffler began our discussion by outlining two proposals one to explore the creation of the position of City Planner and one to update the city Zoning Code. Pete Vail then spoke about the need to update the zoning code. Paul mentioned that our zoning is inconsistent and is not currently functioning as the city and the public would expect. He said areas of the city are not being developed because the current zoning does not permit uses that a developer may want to pursue. Mike Petit spoke briefly and said economic development has been hindered by our current zoning code. Mayor Scheffler stated that with Google coming to town and Intel moving into Licking County, we should plan now for opportunities that are likely headed our way. Mayor Scheffler introduced Holly Mattei of Crossroads Community Development.

Holly Mattei provided us with her experience and background in planning, as well as her knowledge and familiarity with the City of Lancaster. Holly then discussed her proposal to assist the city in initiating the process to hire a City Planner. Holly has extensive experience in both planning and zoning.

Holly mentioned that our zoning code should be updated to make it current, predictable, and easier to follow. She also mentioned we should have adequate staff to help people navigate the process and work with people as they go through the planning process.

Holly advised that she would work with the city to develop on onboard a planner, as well as advise and guide that person through the process of becoming City Planner.

We had several questions.

Mayor Scheffler asked Holly to explain her company's experience in these areas. Holly explained that her company has two planners on staff with significant experience, specifically with municipal planning. She addressed other areas of expertise for her company.

Mayor Scheffler asked how the zoning code process would work. Holly explained that a committee would be formed involving planning commission, city council, local business owners, Realtor, Chamber of Commerce, and other stakeholders. They would work through a couple of drafts. Public Hearings would take place through the City Planning Commission and Lancaster City Council.

Stephanie Hall mentioned that the Law Directors office is not equipped or do not they have time or expertise to rewrite the zoning code. They will certainly assist where needed but having a subject matter expert guiding us through this process is appreciated and recommended.

Don McDaniel added that planning and zoning are very closely related and updating the zoning code and establishing a City Planner position will enhance opportunities for economic development throughout the city. The last update to the zoning code was sometime in the 1990's. He also mentioned that city council, following citizen and stakeholder input, will ultimately vote on any changes.

Paul Martin mentioned that these two proposals are long overdue. He asked, "how can we afford not to move forward". He stated that zoning is long overdue for an update. He then asked Holly how an updated zoning code would benefit annexation and development. Holly stated that we should look at zoning to allow for those areas of potential growth along the city boundaries and assure they are properly zoned for that growth.

Tom Stoughton asked Holly to explain any legal challenges we might encounter. Holly explained that our zoning code should reflect the community as it exists. She also explained how a transitional district, instead of spot zoning, can better serve the community. Stephanie Hall explained that there are likely to be legal challenges, but that with this process, it makes it easier to deal with. She also explained that due process will be provided when there is a concern or issue.

Tom Stoughton asked how long process will take. Holly said it would take about 14 months. First three most would be public engagement, code diagnostics, next several months are building the code and writing the draft(s). And the last 3-4 months would be the adoption process.

Tom James stated that our zoning has been a piecemeal process with some controversy. He asked Holly if 14 months would be enough time. Holly stated that she has gone through the same process recently with the City of Circleville and that she believes that the timeframe will work.

Lynda Berge Disser asked Holly about our Development Plan, which was adopted in 1999, where does that plan fit into this process. Holly said that it would be another and more detailed process to adopt a new Comprehensive Community Plan.

Tom Stoughton asked about the City Planner proposal. He asked who is currently doing those tasks today. Mayor Scheffler stated Pete Vail, Mike Petit, Mitch Noland, Stephanie Hall, and others are involved. The mayor stated that the process is currently reactive instead of proactive. Tom asked how the new process would benefit the city. The mayor also addressed the desire to

get one planner onboard that it would help coordinate planning for the city, making it easier for developers to understand and comply with city planning/zoning requirements.

Tom Stoughton asked what type of person we are looking for as a Planner and who would they report to. The mayor stated that at least initially the Planner would report to Pete Vail and Jeff Davis in the Building Department. Tom thinks the role is complex and extensive and that the work is currently done by a committee. Holly mentioned that she would guide someone through the process of becoming a city planner. Holly also said that she envisions that likely route to find a city planner is looking at recent college graduates. Tom feels we should try to find a more experienced person and try to get “more bang out of city buck”. Tom also suggested that the mayor present these proposals to the entire council. Mayor Scheffler advised that it certainly is appropriate to bring legislation to council. The mayor noted that six council members are present at this meeting.

Presten Ahlers asked when the mayor planned to bring this to council. The mayor stated that he would likely bring to council in May. Don McDaniel mentioned that we were currently in a public meeting and that our agenda, outlining these topics, was posted. He also mentioned that we would discuss the proposals in detail at council.

That concluded discussion on the two proposals before the committee and Holly Matei left the meeting.

### **CORPO Grant – South Broad Street improvements**

Mayor mentioned that the project is moving forward. Citizen concerns have been addressed and the hope is that we can move forward this year on the project.

### **Destination Downtown Lancaster – Amanda Everitt**

1. SID Property owners being reimbursed for property improvements.
2. Employee retention tax credit for businesses. DDL is assisting
3. Bob and Maggie Bennett have purchased Tiberios Pizza, looking to move it downtown.
4. FCHC has moved to the South School location, previous location is open.
5. Downtown Bistro (restaurant only) has sold.
6. 211-219 Brad Hutchinson is still renovating. 2 of 3 bottom spaces are rented.
1. 137 W. Main St. Gay Fad Studio is moving in.
2. Santino’s closed – Barcade is coming to location.
3. 137 N. Columbus St – Sparkle and Rust has expanded to that location
4. Wells Fargo building may come on the market,
5. Essex Building – possible urban restoration, grant applied for.
6. Mill Annex Building 356 S. Columbus St. being renovated, old Bunny Bicycle Shop.
7. Gateway Site – Gorsuch looking to break ground in spring. Possible site updates may include hotel. Plan in June for mixed use.
8. Recycling bins coming to downtown. Also adding new trashcans.
9. Annual Event was sold out.
10. Love Local, Shop Hop, Chocolate Walk have all been very successful.
11. Downtown Cleanup Day upcoming.

12. 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday DDL will have Movie Nights starting in May.
13. Labor Day weekend downtown will host Food Truck Festival, Saturday / Sunday event.
14. Ohio Magazine advised that we are in the running for a cover story in the Fall, we are a finalist and will find out soon.

#### **Chamber of Commerce Updates – Travis Markwood**

1. Commend the city for looking to update the zoning code and city planning.
2. Met with Google and they have joined the Chamber
3. Event Planning – Fairfield Leadership graduates 39 people and is in 36<sup>th</sup> years. 600 people have gone through the program
4. Small Business University continues
5. Annual Meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup> at Fisher Catholic
6. Legislative Action Committee - Heart Safe program looking to work with Senator Shaffer to pass legislation for reimbursement for AED purchase
7. Young Professional Program is growing and serving all of Fairfield County.
8. Workforce Development Center – Programs are growing.
9. Startup Symposium will possibly begin next fall to help businesses get started.

#### **Visit Fairfield County - Jonett Haberfield**

1. New Destination Guide is available.
2. Open Hose at Visitors center.
3. Ambassadors program for Lancaster and Fairfield County.
4. Ohio Magazine – Best hometown in Ohio.
5. Friday Night Bandstand, looking to possibly add some Saturday's
6. Hotel's will be full over summer, and she is working to possibly study lodging.
7. Working with Hocking Hills Lodging Association.
8. Updating website and App to better explain benefits of visiting Fairfield Co.
9. Sports tourism advisory council, encourage cooperation and coordination.

#### **Economic Development Updates – Stephanie Bosco**

1. Blue Label – Expansion complete, planning ribbon cutting soon.
2. CFM Global – 100 jobs, adding new line
3. GlassFloss adding additional facilities and jobs.
4. Project Mustang – Construction update, road improvements coming soon and footers going in, dirt is being moved.
5. Anchor Hocking – third tank being added and they are adding jobs.
6. Loves Truck Stop - beginning construction in May
7. Zebco writing an inclusion grant, \$50,000 for hiring
8. Timbertop – Work is ongoing. Assisted living facility starting in spring. Developer looking at condo and single-family housing for site.
9. East Side Connector discussion is ongoing.
10. Mike Petit is retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

NOTE: Economic Development Committee added on May 19 at 7:30 am in 1897 Room.

Motion (Corey Schoonover) and 2nd (McDaniel) made to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:54 AM