

ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF ASHTABULA, OHIO
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, March 2, 2015

Council met in a **PUBLIC HEARING**. The President of Council called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Member(s) Present: Mr. Richard F. Balog (Ward 1)
Mr. August A. Pugliese (Ward 2)
Mrs. Alice T. Cook (Ward 3 – arrived after roll call)
Mrs. Josephine Misener (Ward 4)
Mr. Kris E. Hamrick (Ward 5)
Mr. J. P. Ducro IV (Council President)

Member(s) Absent: Mr. Christopher J. McClure (Vice President)

Officer(s) Present: Mr. James M. Timonere (City Manager)
Mr. Michael Franklin (City Solicitor)
Mrs. Dana D. Pinkert (Finance Director)
Mrs. LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC (Clerk of Council)

Officer(s) Absent: None

SUNSHINE LAW: The Clerk of Council certified conformity to the Sunshine Law.

PURPOSE: The President announced the purpose of this Public Hearing was to allow for public comments and recommendations regarding the 2nd amendment to the Joint Economic Development District (J.E.D.D.) contract between the City of Ashtabula and Ashtabula Township as requested by Milton H. Tsetsos and Areti M. Tsetsos, Parcel Nos. 030300003000 & 030300003100.

WELCOME: The President welcomed visitors.

DISCUSSION

The City Manager reported the owners notified him they were unable to attend this evening.

COUNCIL & ADMINISTRATION QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS

The President asked the Manager if it was true that no changes to the J.E.D.D. agreement have been made other than the request to add the above parcels. The Manager confirmed this to be true.

The President asked if this is the location where the new strip plaza is scheduled to be built as reported in last weekend's Star Beacon newspaper. The Manager said there are actually two projects; this one and the one for which a J.E.D.D. application will be forthcoming. Once it arrives the J.E.D.D. contract will have to, again, be amended. The lots referenced today are near the Aldi's grocery store, which land was cleared last year or the year prior.

He said the architects he is working with told him a mattress firm and Kay Jewelers will be locating in the plaza. Construction will commence mid to late March, with mid to late July openings.

The Ward 4 Councilor reported reading in the Star Beacon newspaper that Ashtabula Township denied the request due to parking issues. The City Manager said he believes 'they' went before the township zoning board to get a variance, but does not if it was denied, and neither knows the particulars. He said, "From what I understand the project is moving forward. And, I believe Ashtabula Township's hearing on the J.E.D.D. is scheduled for the 11th of this month". The application we are waiting for is for a project that will be taking place near Wal-Mart. The Councilor asked if there are perspective retailers for the second location. The Manager said he does not know the particulars and has only been contacted about the process of entering a J.E.D.D.

The President said he thinks it is great people have confidence to build new structures. However, it is surprising to him that given there are so many vacant commercial structures, new structures are being constructed. He asked the Manager if there is any insight into the reason why the interest is in building versus occupying the vacant buildings. The Manager said he did not. He further stated that at one time he proposed a temporary moratorium be placed on the construction of multi-family units, at which time commercial properties were also discussed. He said there are communities that stipulate to persons who desire to construct new commercial buildings, that they much remove an old structure too. However, we have no control over what happens in the township. The Manager said the shift in retail is for companies to own their properties rather than lease them, in order to have control. He said the second strip plaza is being constructed by developers, and that he does not know if they have lease/buyback agreements.

The Clerk of Council confirmed that Ashtabula Township's public hearing on the 2nd amendment is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, as the Manager noted above. She said while seeking to confirm the date, she noticed pages 12 and 13 of this hearing's agenda packet has "Saybrook" J.E.D.D. noted. The Solicitor said those pages are part of the "Economic Development Plan" (EDP). He said Saybrook Township was the first J.E.D.D. the City of Ashtabula entered into. Therefore, when going through and replacing Saybrook Township with Ashtabula Township his office missed those references in the first paragraph, and that a corrected page will be provided. He said the EDP is not the contract itself, but rather an attachment thereto. The Clerk asked if the EDP's fire and EMS clause pertains to both townships. The Solicitor responded, yes.

The Finance Director reported that since the inception of the J.E.D.D.s, over \$16,000 has been distributed to our General Fund and over \$6,000 to our Waste Water Treatment (WWT) Fund, "that's the portion we keep".

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS - None

CLOSING REMARKS

The President announced that, by law, no formal action may be taken at a public hearing. The legislation enacting the J.E.D.D. amendment is scheduled for a vote at this evening's Regular council meeting.

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ADJOURN: Mr. Pugliese moved, Mr. Balog seconded to adjourn the Public Hearing at 5:40 p.m.;
motion CARRIED.

DATE APPROVED: March 16, 2015

ATTESTED BY: J. P. Ducro IV
J. P. Ducro IV

ATTESTED BY: LaVette E. Hennigan
President of Council
LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC
Clerk of Council