

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

Special Meeting

Monday, July 25, 2016

Council met in a **SPECIAL MEETING**. The President of Council called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., the Ward 4 Councilor offered the opening prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Member(s) Present:	Mrs. Josephine Misener	(Ward 4 Councilor)
	Mr. Kris E. Hamrick	(Ward 5 Councilor)
	Mr. John S. Roskovics	(Ward 1 Councilor)
	Mr. August A. Pugliese	(Ward 2 Councilor)
	Mrs. Alice T. Cook	(Ward 3 Councilor)
	Mr. J. P. Ducro IV	(President)

Member(s) Absent:	Mr. Christopher J. McClure	(Vice President)
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Officer(s) Present:	Mr. James M. Timonere	(City Manager)
	Mrs. Dana D. Pinkert	(Finance Director)
	Mrs. LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC	(Clerk of Council)

Officer(s) Absent:	Michael Franklin	(City Solicitor)
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SUNSHINE LAW CERTIFICATION: The Clerk of Council certified conformity to the Sunshine Law.

PURPOSE: The President announced the purpose of this Special Meeting was to permit City Council to consider legislation pertaining to the proposed Parks & Recreation Levy and a to Vacate the Right-of-Way of Humphrey Avenue from West 26th Street to West 27th Street.

WELCOME: The President welcomed visitors.

DISCUSSION

- The Clerk of Council read a letter dated July 25, 2016, from the City Manager, as a member of the Ashtabula City Planning Commission, to the Council President, announcing that at the Planning Commission's July 21 meeting, the Commission approved "the language presented to them with regards to the vacation of Humphrey Avenue".
- The President, also a member of the Planning Commission, announced he attended the meeting where the request to vacate Humphrey Avenue was discussed. He said there was no controversial, that all property owners who surround the parcel have written letters of no concern or releases regarding the request.

LEGISLATION READING

The Clerk presented the following legislation for Council's consideration:

ORDINANCE

2016-106

AN ORDINANCE TO VACATE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF HUMPHREY AVENUE FROM WEST 26TH STREET TO WEST 27TH STREET was presented for its second reading. (City Manager)

Mr. Roskovics moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the reading of the ordinance; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the ordinance: Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Roskovics, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED.

RESOLUTION

2016-108

A RESOLUTION TO PROCEED WITH THE SUBMISSION TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF ASHTABULA AT AN ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 8, 2016, THE QUESTION OF AN ADDITIONAL TAX LEVY AT A RATE OF ONE AND ONE-HALF (1.5) MILLS PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION AL PURPOSES. (Parks & Recreation Board)

Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Misener seconded to waive the reading of the resolution; motion CARRIED. Mr. Pugliese moved, Mrs. Cook seconded to waive the Charter requirement of two readings. On the roll call to waive the Charter requirement of two readings: Mrs. Misener, Mr. Hamrick, Mr. Roskovics, Mr. Pugliese, Mrs. Cook, Mr. Ducro IV voted yea; motion CARRIED. On the roll call to adopt the resolution: Mrs. Misener (yea), Mr. Hamrick (yea), Mr. Roskovics (nay), Mr. Pugliese (yea), Mrs. Cook (yea), Mr. Ducro IV (yea). The motion CARRIED by a 5 to 1 vote.

Comments

President: Will there be an on-going evaluation of exactly how the breakdown will be used and allocated should the levy passed.

Manager: I provided a suggestion, which is not set in stone. He reported mentioning his suggestion to Local 1197, but that he has not gotten into much detail. "Because we'll be hiring two full-time people, which will be able to go back to Public Works in the winter time, I think that's a big step in the right direction. One thing to clarify, though... I know there was some discussion on when we move those guys back it's still paid out of the levy funds. It's not. The only time that they will ever be paid out of levy funds is when they are working on parks. Let's say we had a really early ice storm and we had to do 'all hands on deck', like we did years and years ago, and cleaned up street, and do things like that. We would not be using levy funds for that."

Ward 2: That would mean in the winter time we would have two more employees in Public Works.

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Manager: Correct. What I intend on doing is posting a Foreman position and a Light [equipment operator] and a Laborer. The Foreman would come out of Public Works in the summer time, but the two other ones would be quote/unquote – new hires that would work. And, so those three employees would work strictly in parks for – I think I based it on a nine month period. And then for the other 3 to 4 months they would go back to Public Works.

Ward 2: “This is something that’s well needed in Ashtabula City, as everyone knows. All I hear is there’s nothing to do in Ashtabula, for the young people. And I know it’s another sacrifice for the residents. It is an area that’s been moving downward for the last few years. So, we have to do something to bring this City back – and bring recreation back to the youth. When I was young – when we were all young – we had so much to do in this town. We could go to any playground or do anything we wanted every night. But, there’s nothing. If you go around the City at night – at seven o’clock – at eight o’clock – there’s nobody out – no kids out, nowhere. And, I’m not saying that they should be out after dark. But, we have to give them something to do year-round – winter, summer, spring and fall. We have to give them something to do. And, this is something that the people of the area are going to have to put forth to help to get the youth back. Not have them say they’re bored in this town. We want to give them something to do. It’s going to be a big sacrifice for senior citizens - no doubt about it. But, this is something that we’ve needed and we haven’t had it from the early 60’s, if I remember right.”

Ward 4: Echoed her colleague’s sentiments. Everyone always tells us to look at Lakeshore Park or Saybrook Park, which are emasculate. But, they have levy funds that go directly to those parks – we don’t. We don’t get any of the Ashtabula or Saybrook Township Park levy funds even though our residents vote for them. We vote for both these levies, but we are the ‘black eye in the middle’. I would like all of our parks to look like lawns versus fields that are overgrown. The City Manager does his best to get Smith Field ready for games, but you don’t get to do those things that really make it stand out and look nice. Some of the funding will be set aside for capital improvements. I’m sure Mr. Timonere and the Planning & Community Development Department will look for grants to tie into the funding so the parks are viable for our youth. The citizens will get a lot in return. Citizens will hear from the campaign in the months leading up to the election. I’m sure Mr. Timonere will have some presentations ready, as well.

President: Concurred with both the above Councilor’s comments. He said one of the things I think is valuable in this is having some capital money available to find grants. Now we will have matching funds and be able to turn \$50,000 into \$100,000 or \$100,000 into \$200,000. This will give us leverage to do some significant improvements and maybe get a splash pad, or some of the things that can become a draw. I like Mr. Timonere’s proposal. My only concern is instead of getting three full-time people, maybe having two and have the ability to add some more seasonal people in the summer. I would love to see 1197 still be behind it if we could put on three or four part-time summer people as opposed to just one, year-round person.

I think that that would help with support of it, because it would be more specifically for the parks. I would like us to run the numbers and see what that looks like and maybe see if there's any reason they'll [1197] still be in agreement with that. If it doesn't work out and we don't get the quality of workers down there, and we're not able to do the things with seasonal-type employment, we can always then say we're going to drop the seasonal and go to a full-time person. But, if we go to a full-time person from the get-go, I don't think you're ever going to scale back to two part-time people. I think it's going to be a very, very hard sale to do that. If we could have an individual at every single park, dedicated to each park for three or four or five months of the summer, I think that would be a really, really big 'shot in the arm' to making sure that the parks got really taken care of. I agree, a hundred percent, we have to have at least one, and two full-time would be great, overseeing that program because the seasonal people will have to be supervised to handle the tasks.

Ward 2: I'm sure 1197 Labor Union would work with the City to get something done like this. If the levy were to pass, when would the funds begin to be collected?

Finance

Director: I believe next year with the first half property tax.

Ward 2: So, it's possible we could have a small ice skating rink this winter at Walnut Beach to get things started. We have to start somewhere. And, when is the best time to start but in the winter time when there is nothing to do. I think we should do that; I really do.

Clerk: Asked the Finance Director to provide the amount a homeowner of a property worth \$75,000 would pay per year.

Finance

Director: \$75,000 = \$39 per year.

Ward 3: \$39 additional funds to pay.

Finance

Director: Yes, additional on their property taxes per year.

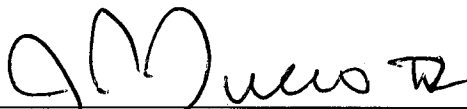
President: There's nothing there right now [*meaning no levy charge for parks and recreation*], so it would be \$39 for parks and recreation purposes.

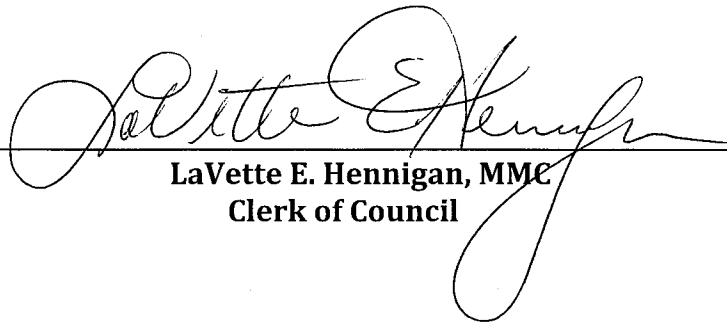
Ward 2: It would amount to thirty-nine soft drinks. I hope people get behind it.

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ADJOURN: Hearing no further business to come before this City Council, the President adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: August 1, 2016

ATTESTED BY: 
J.P. Ducro IV
President of Council

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