

COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

July 17, 2023

Mayor Ed McCord called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. The following roll call was taken for council:

Council Members Present:

- Jesse Reynolds
- Amy Welborn
- Julie Blumenstock
- Dawn Duff
- Derrick Canan

Council Members Absent and Excused:

- Keith Warner

Non-member Staff participating:

- Frank Patrizio – Legal Counsel
- Rhonda Gill - Fiscal Officer
- Kyle Hinkelman - Village Administrator
- Tim Cline – Police Sergeant

Consent Agenda:

The consent agenda included:

- Approval of Council Minutes (July 10, 2023)

There being no questions or comments, Mayor McCord stated they stand approved as read.

Visitors – Public Comment

Responding to a letter read regarding street closings, Mr. Hinkelman explained Wall Street and Maple Street had been temporarily closed to allow equipment to enter the work site safely. College Street is intended for residential traffic only and will be accessible throughout the Schoolhouse Park project.

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Ms. Phyllis Rapp, 116 N. Grant Street, inquired about placing utility lines underground. Mr. Hinkelman explained the decision not to put the transmission lines underground was based on the cost associated with burying the lines. He noted that it was discussed originally, but the costs were too high for it to be seriously considered. He continued that the lines would be moved outside of the project boundaries to meet all the funding requirements, but those lines would be above ground still.

Ms. Rapp asked about sidewalks within the project and Mr. Hinkelman shared that the plan shows a sidewalk from Ludlow Street to Wall Street, giving the kids a safe option to walk to school.

Ms. Rapp asked about if the parking lot would be paved or not. Mr. Hinkelman stated that the parking lot will be gravel at this time. He noted that the Village will pave the parking lot when funds become available.

Mayor's Report

None

Administrator's Report

Mr. Hinkelman indicated the county is in the process of selecting a contractor for the High Street demos and the project will continue in August. He explained that he would provide additional information and timelines when they are made available from the County.

He discussed the Schoolhouse Park project timelines for the Rudy phase and the Site Work Phase. He continued to discuss the Village going out for bid for the Main Pavilion and splashpad for Schoolhouse Park. He noted that the bids will be due August 10 and he would share more at the second meeting in August.

Mr. Hinkelman updated Council on the Wastewater Treatment Plant project which now has concrete and steel going up. He noted that currently the project is ahead of schedule and under budget.

Mr. Hinkelman has been working with the Public Works supervisor to address the trash collection question presented by Mr. Garman. He detailed the pickup schedule, rationale, and recommendation from Staff to keep the route the same. He noted the safety concerns and aesthetic issues with pickup along High Street and confirmed that the Village will look to make improvements to the alleyway, if funds are available.

There was a discussion about the ownership of the alley, and Mr. Patrizio noted that although there isn't clear title or dedicated right-of-way, that since it has been utilized as an alley for as long as it has, the Village can consider it theirs. Mr. Hinkelman noted

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that the Village will move forward with looking at ways to fund alley maintenance or vacation of alleys that are no longer needed by the Village.

Mr. Hinkelman reiterated that trash collection locations are policy decisions made by Council, but that it is the Staff's recommendation is that they stay the same.

He noted that the upcoming August meetings will be held August 7th and August 22nd at 7:00 PM.

Discussion Items

High Street Decorations

Mr. Hinkelman indicated there are a variety of options for the High Street Light Pole Decorations for the holidays. A lighted wreath runs about \$500 each and lighted garland is roughly \$175 each. Approximately 35 of each would be needed to cover the 28 poles plus have extra if something broke. He suggested that low maintenance would be the best option.

Mr. Derrick Canan suggested reviewing the estimated replacement life of the items considered prior to final purchase decision.

Mr. Terry Garman, 101 S. Pearl Street, questioned if Christmas decorations would be purchased and put up by Village employees or community members. Mr. Hinkelman responded the Village would always consider donations and volunteers to help the Village. He noted that liability issues would need to be considered, and that it would likely be staff that put up the wreaths or lights on the poles, as they are owned by the Village. Mr. Hinkelman expressed his support of the concept of having residents be more involved in volunteering their time at events and efforts in the Village.

Ms. Dawn Duff agreed with review of the replacement life of the item and to consider alternating wreath and garland on poles instead of the same thing on each pole.

Mr. Hinkelman stated he is looking at various organizations who might donate towards the purchase of the items. There is money in the budget for the remaining purchases for the poles for 2023. Mayor McCord suggested buying a couple to be able to look at the quality and size.

Schoolhouse Park New Roadway Name

Mr. Hinkelman noted that a survey will be put on Facebook for the community to vote on the name of the road for Schoolhouse Park. Council will be presented the information at the August 7th meeting and vote on the final decision shortly after.

Name suggestions were made by those in attendance that would be added to the initial list.

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Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none.

Old Business

Resolution R22-23 – Authorizing the Village Administrator to Enter into an Agreement with AES – Schoolhouse Park Pole Movement

Mr. Hinkelman explained that additional discussions with AES proved to be useless in adjusting any charges to move the electric poles. There are no anticipated changes.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R22-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Welborn. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Resolution R22-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

New Business

Ordinance 13-23 – Amending the Employee Manual (Section 4.08 and 4.09)

This item was a discussion item at the last meeting and Mr. Hinkelman again described each section and the changes proposed.

Mr. Hinkelman explained these changes impact salaried employee and their ability to flex their time over two weeks and update the cell phone reimbursement policy.

Mr. Canan said that he felt the policies appeared to be very clear and hopefully would show employees how much the Village supported them.

Mr. Hinkelman noted that the Village pay scales are not in line with Miami County communities, but the Village continues to attempt to make benefits more appealing to employees so the Village is more competitive and can keep the great employees we have.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none. He noted that this was the first reading, and the second reading would be held on August 2.

Resolution R24-23 – Updating and Replacing the Village of Covington Records Retention Policy and Schedules

This item was a discussion item at the last meeting and Mr. Hinkelman explained the need to update the policy and schedules as they were last updated in 2012.

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Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none. He noted that this was the first reading, and the second reading would be held on August 2.

Ordinance 14-23 – Updating the Village of Covington Fee Schedule

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 14-23 which documents all existing fees and updates specific fees related to Zoning and Subdivision applications. He noted the specific existing Ordinances that would remain in effect and noted the Zoning and Subdivision fee changes proposed.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none. He noted that this was the first reading, and the second reading would be held on August 2.

Ordinance 15-23 – DRD Map Modifications

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 15-23 which finalizes the updated map for the Covington Downtown Redevelopment District. He noted the history of the DRD and his efforts to put the DRD in place after initial issues with the way the district was created and filed. He noted that he has been working with the Montrose Group and the State of Ohio Tax Commissioner's Office to get this DRD modified and put in place for funds to be available in 2024.

Mr. Hinkelman asked that if there were no questions, the three-reading rule be waived to allow the Village to provide the approved language to the State by their imposed deadline of July 29th.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance 15-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve Ordinance 15-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCord emphasized this has been years in the making with the Tax Department. Mr. Hinkelman added that the DRD is a unique creation of funds people pay that will go towards funding programs to start businesses and improve businesses in our downtown area. Once the Village has been advised of the dollar amounts, programs will be created and explained to those who qualify. He noted that funds can be directed to the Historical Society, businesses, and others within the designated area. He noted that no residents or businesses will pay additional money on their taxes, only the money they are already spending will be diverted to a different place.

Resolution R25-23 – Declaring Surplus Property – Police

Sergeant Tim Cline explained the Speed trailer had been vandalized and has been out of service for months. He continued that the Village insurance has reimbursed the cost

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of a new one, which has been purchased. He noted that although they considered keeping two and refurbishing it, due to the upkeep costs and maintenance, the Chief has decided to dispose of the old one.

There being no questions, a motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R25-23 was made by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Ms. Blumenstock. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve Resolution R25-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Welborn. All ayes. Motion passed.

Resolution R23-23 – Replat of 722 E. Spring Street

Mr. Hinkelman reported the Planning Commission heard the replat request earlier this month and was recommended for approval in a 4-0 vote. Mr. Hinkelman explained the replat request to the Council, and there were no questions.

Mr. Hinkelman noted that replats were traditionally approved the first reading and asked Council to waive the three-reading rule to allow the homeowner to begin work on their project.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R26-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve Resolution R26-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

Police Chief and Elected Official's Comments

Ms. Welborn inquired about the work being completed at Schoolhouse Park and was concerned about the progress. She stated she was informed by a source that a contractor or subcontractor had not been paid and questioned why the Village was not responding to these types of issues. She continued to ask why the Council had not been informed of the issues at the site regarding the timeline and costs. Mr. Hinkelman stated the Village had not been made aware of anyone not being paid, and such concerns were very serious. He continued that Council is made aware of how projects are going once a week, unless there are problems that do not have solutions yet.

Ms. Welborn noted that she was aware of the additional stone necessary for the parking lot and questioned why the contractor was not adding that additional gravel at their cost if more was needed to complete the project. Mr. Patrizio responded that the contractor is only obligated to do work that is in the contract, which that gravel was not reflected in the agreement, due to an engineering error. He further explained Council has an obligation to know what is going on, but not every detail. The administration and staff are hired to handle the projects and manage the day to day activities.

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Mayor McCord noted that Mr. Hinkelman was not aware of the issues until earlier in the day, and that he would be working to get answers, but it is important that staff is given time to work through projects.

Additional discussion between the Council and Staff on the process, procedures, and timeline for project management occurred. Mr. Hinkelman noted that he would work with the Council to assure they receive the necessary information as soon as they are able to share information but would focus on getting projects completed and within the confines of the agreements that are authorized by Council.

Executive Session

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Canan, seconded by Ms. Duff. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11PM.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shonda Hill", is written over a horizontal line.

Fiscal Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward L. McCord", is written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

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