

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Riverside City Council Meeting

Held on Thursday, October 12, 2023

Riverside, OH

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Williams called the Riverside, Ohio City Council Work Session to order at 6:06 p.m. at the Riverside Administrative Offices located at 5200 Springfield Street, Suite 100, Riverside, Ohio, 45431.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Williams led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Council attendance was as follows: Mr. Denning, absent; Mrs. Franklin, absent; Ms. Fry, present; Mr. Joseph, present; Ms. Lommatzsch, present; Mr. Maxfield, absent; and Mayor Williams, present.

Staff present were as follows: Josh Rauch, City Manager; Nia Holt, Zoning Administrator; and Katie Lewallen, Clerk of Council.

EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS: Mr. Joseph moved, seconded by Mr. Maxfield, to excuse Mr. Denning and Mrs. Franklin. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA: No changes were made to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Joseph moved, seconded by Mr. Maxfield, to approve the agenda as presented. All were in favor. **Motion carried.**

WORK SESSION ITEMS:

I. Downing Group Presentation – Mr. Rauch introduced the Downing Group that the City has been working with on a few different scopes such as looking at and evaluating the Community Improvement Corporation, its current status, and looking ahead on how to proceed with bringing it back and utilizing it. Mr. Phil Downing stated his firm has been engaged with the city under a contract with Jobs Ohio. The results of the contract are forthcoming shortly with regard to the buildings here will shed light on how the CIC can be useful and play a role in moving these facilities forward. His firm has been involved in housing for over 40 years. He has done development on his own and has stepped into the role of providing advice to nonprofits and communities with regard to building housing development organizations and strengthening the non-profit base and the delivery system that underlines an active real estate market, particularly on the residential side of communities. They are excited about the ability to use the CIC as a catalyst to reposition problem properties. He stated that CICs have a variety of powers that are provided under the ORC Chapter 1724. He reviewed the history of the CIC beginning in Riverside in 1982 with Articles of Incorporation. The Articles of Incorporation allow the city to have a program that is a public/private partnership outside the auspices of the city – how it can transact properties, acquire properties, and move them back into productive use. He provided several examples of how they have worked using Chapter 1724 in other communities. One of them is in the form of land banks and has been an effective tool. Utilizing that tool, properties could be acquired

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that were vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent. Land Banks also could provide an opportunity for looking at properties that have become problem properties that have to have actions taken. 1724 corporations can step in and use the powers and realign those properties.

Mr. Chad Downing discussed how he has taken the 1724 corporation and effectively utilized the property that it owned and invigorated it into a self-sustaining type of activity. He stated that CICs are a great way for communities to take charge of their properties and surplus assets and put them into a model they want to see happen. The great thing about CIC's is they can transact those properties and utilize the revenues from that for additional property development helping to promote development or additional community programming whether they be for small businesses or other activities. In the city of Trotwood, they have been engaged for the past ten years and he is the executive director of their CIC. They've been able to make that organization self-sustainable. There was a little bit of funding that went into it but through work of real estate development, through sales and transactions to qualified developers, they've been able to stand up that organization. It's now beginning to do its own development work and they believe that Riverside has the same possibilities with the availability of land and the structure. They believe that the CIC needs to be built in accordance with the ecosystem that's going on within the community and recognize how the city works and how the county land bank works. They've seen with the county land bank that they're stepping into some important roles now with regard to brownfield funding, remediation, and demolition, but there's oftentimes still the need for that focus around rehabilitation and some more special projects that maybe they can't serve a specific community one because they are serving multiple communities at once.

He stated that they have been able to collaborate with the county land banks and leverage their resources, and their capacity, but localize the CIC to help effect that change and development. He stated that some of the sites in Riverside if the CIC were to work with those and get those transacted, would receive resources and in certain situations, there have been opportunities for some of this funding to go back to the city depending on the origination of that property. The city can also serve as a place for those distressed properties in many cases as there may be property owners that are seeking to donate assets that the city maybe isn't prepared to take under its ownership, but the CIC especially when formulated with a 501C3 nonprofit status can really help get those properties out of a questionable disposition or one that's struggling to be additive to the community and actually brought into the CIC to be redeveloped.

Mr. Downing stated that CICs and land banks are geared toward holding property as they are tax-exempt when holding property that has gone through tax foreclosure, and they can apply for tax exemption. In the long term, it is a great place for a community to hold assets. He added if an immediate opportunity is seen, the benefit is it can work at the speed of business. Given the opportunities of real estate sometimes speed to

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market is really important and being able to work hand-in-hand with the developers is a key benefit of the CIC. He explained how the Trotwood CIC is composed and working along with the projects they currently have. One such project is seeing the need for more health care and medical access as they have a strong senior community. They have been able to bring in a healthcare organization to establish a doctor's office and pharmacy in an underserved area. This could not have worked with some of the private property owners because they were either unresponsive or they were unwilling to do the work needed to make a pharmacy work because of the additional code requirements. With the CIC, they are seeking a return on investment to be sustainable, but they are also seeking an outcome. They can do more and can leverage funding, resources, and bonding if it is established as a 501C3. It opens up a world of opportunity on how a community can conduct development.

He stated they need to review a city's ecosystem as far as organization, but also how the city wants to move forward with distressed properties or different types of initiatives. The CIC can be tailored to the needs of the community. He discussed the Danis property which is a distressed property in Riverside. He added that using a capacity tool like a CIC is perfect right after having a land use plan updated as Riverside has done. The CIC would work to complement the work of other area development agencies and not overlap or duplicate services. They have worked with JobsOhio to help establish CICs and bring this tool to communities that have a need for this. JobsOhio has additional resources that could benefit the community such as the planning grant, and the vibrant communities grant. Riverside is in a great position for that funding. The funding is being underutilized right now.

Ms. Holt stated that a lot of the work Mr. Downing has talked about aligns with the comprehensive plan. Many residents indicated that they want to be able to buy homes in Riverside, they don't want to move out but are having difficulty finding homes that fit as they are aging, or their family is growing and getting bigger. The city has property or vacant lots; having this model will allow them to build infill and serve the needs of the community. Mr. Downing added that there are many places where aggregation of sites could change the disposition of the immediate area and CICs are positioned to do this as well as they can hold and acquire properties. He shared a project he did in Trotwood like this. He added that it is another tool in the incentive toolbox. Since the CIC isn't seeking top dollar or return on investment, the city can use the land value as part of an incentive to encourage someone to come in for that aggregated site.

Ms. Fry stated it looks like they have a CIC, so what is the ask? Mr. Downing stated that the CIC is dormant, it is not unincorporated by the state, yet, but they have an entity on the shelf that they could turn on and begin work right away. Their recommendation is to take the tool off the shelf and put it back to work for the community. She asked what the relationship is between his business and the CIC. He stated they serve as a consultant and that can vary in scope. He stated they would use their expertise to stand up the CIC,

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get it reestablished, go through any of the paperwork, and get the board familiar and the policies back in place so that they have a ready working CIC. He stated that most CICs don't need a full-time employee so they can utilize a consultant to fulfill the role. It is much more flexible.

Mayor Williams asked what seed money the City of Trotwood used for their CIC start-up. Mr. Downing stated they gave about \$30,000 - \$40,000 and that was enough to hire an executive director who was focused on economic development work. Through that, they portioned a piece for his company to be able to come in and do that work. That was a slow point in the CICs existence, but they were able to get a list of properties as there were a number of vacant properties. Throughout time, the CIC was able to sell those properties to qualified developers, and before long they had double the amount of money and then the CIC was able to further engage them. They have been brought back in to be the dedicated housing consultant and through that, they sold 45 properties. Through those resources, it gave Trotwood the money to buy the vacant Sears building. Their engagement continued to evolve until 2019 when the executive director retired; the city asked them to be the executive director. He added they are working on getting the CIC back in Sidney, OH, where their focus is solely on housing. Mayor Williams asked if he was the sole employee of the Trotwood CIC. Mr. Downing stated his firm has a consulting agreement and his team is contracted with Trotwood, so they have a team, but he is their front-facing representative.

Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch asked how much of an effect the tornado cash had to do with the development. Mr. Downing stated that none of the money dedicated to disaster recovery outside of individual recovery and demo work has been used. She asked about the library and courthouse in Trotwood. Mr. Downing stated the library opened in the middle of Covid, but at that time discussion was held on the courthouse. He explained the process of the land being obtained and how the CIC was involved. Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch asked who paid for all the new streets in Trotwood. Mr. Downing replied that was the new income tax levy they passed.

Mr. Rauch stated they have the advantage of having a CIC ready to be restarted and it aligns with the land use plan. This will give them the tools they need with a lot of the properties and parcels the city owns and how to make them more productive. He will be back to council in the next few months with next steps. Mr. Rauch added that they could seed fund the CIC by just giving some of the vacant properties to the CIC in order to use as collateral in a transaction. There are a lot of options to get this restarted. Mr. Downing stated that the CIC effectively becomes the city's land reutilization corporation. Any surplus land not being used for a public purpose is wholly eligible to be transferred to the CIC.

Discussion was held on the CIC in 1982 being part of the village before the city.

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Revize Website Presentation – Ms. Lewallen introduced Shawn Stewart of Revize as the recommended municipal website provider the city is looking to contract with. Mr. Stewart presented the website focus for the city: in-house management and control, responsive mobile design, ADA compliance, push information to website and social media, citizen request center, online bill pay, FAQs, SEO optimization, and a modern look and feel for government websites. He stated they work with many entities in Ohio. The proposal is for a custom design, and he provided a number of options that other sites use so it can be customized. He presented calendar features, form features, and FAQ features.

Ms. Fry asked if they can handle taking park reservations and taking payments. Mr. Stewart stated they are able to do that, it is an add-in module. He presented how it would work online. Ms. Lewallen stated this is something that may be added in later after a review of the funding that comes in for park shelter reservations.

Mr. Joseph asked to see how it would look responsively on a mobile device. Mr. Stewart showed site views of a desktop computer, tablet, and phone. He stated as pages get added, it is automatically made responsive and does not fall on the staff to do this. He presented how to make changes online on the backend. Mr. Joseph asked how easy is it to embed into the site such as html code. Mr. Stewart showed how to insert videos and html code. Mr. Joseph stated when they go with ClearGov, they may need to know how this interacts with the new website as there would be elements from their application that may need to be embedded. Mr. Rauch stated they are comfortable with how the CMS looks and it is much friendlier. It has more flexibility and Revize actively maintains the CMS all the time and manages the product.

Mr. Stewart showed the notifications program for community alerts that citizens can sign up to receive either email or text notifications. Mr. Joseph asked if they have traffic counts for the site and analytics. Mr. Stewart stated they do have analytics for what pages are being visited more often. Discussion continued on having the website tailored to where most people would go and best practices for the creation of the site.

Mr. Rauch asked if the onboarding or collaboration will be with the city determining pages that will be brought over and then the information that they have that could be added to the site. Mr. Stewart presented how Ray, ND went through this process for selectiveness and how they want their site to be laid out.

Mr. Rauch stated they have the proposal, and they will line up the funding source. They will bring the contract back to council at the first meeting in November.

Ms. Fry asked about the views of the calendar and if users can subscribe to subcategories. Mr. Stewart asked if she was asking about email or text notifications. Ms. Fry stated she could subscribe to the Riverside calendar and get meetings on her Google

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calendar. Mr. Stewart explained that this calendar is by design and the CMS handles listings as a separate element. If a person wants to be notified of particular events and information, then full pages can be created on the site and create a notification for it. She stated that for an event she sees the ICS to download to your calendar, but asked if she was interested in a series of events. Mr. Rauch asked if he wanted to be informed of the category of 'Live Entertainment' could he subscribe to that tag for his calendar. Mr. Stewart stated for the calendar, the CMS doesn't work in that way. He stated that some municipalities, rather than using a calendar use the multi-use listing directory to list all activities that happen at locations and notification can be handled that way. The site does allow residents to sign up for notifications on pages where information can be changed and then sent out to those who selected to be notified.

Property Registration and Rental Code Update – Ms. Holt stated with the updated comprehensive plan, they would also like to update the rental registration language that was adopted in 2004. They heard from the community that vacant and neglected properties, especially those with out-of-town property owners who may not be taking care of their properties well, also needed to be addressed. She reviewed the total housing units in Riverside, 11,427. She stated there are 1,404 multi-family housing rental units. The estimated homeownership rate in Riverside is approximately 55.8 percent, and the estimated renter-occupied housing units are approximately 44.2 percent. She stated the renter-occupied is a large number for a community of this size. They need to look at how to address this. They want to make sure out-of-the-area property owners have the updated standards for property maintenance and the renters have good, safe housing. She reviewed the legal precedence for municipalities to be able to regulate and issue registrations for rental property. Riverside wishes to move forward with this. Other communities in Ohio have already made these changes to their code. She stated they want to create beautiful, vibrant spaces and make sure they strengthen their commercial and residential code enforcement. They want to modernize the code and standards, and this is a step toward that. She stated that rentals are a legitimate housing type. They have heard people don't want more rental housing in the area, but it is much needed as there is a shortage of housing. The city wants to make sure the housing is safe and up to codes and standards. She stated that 33 percent of the land in Riverside is zoned for R-3, which is single-family housing or duplex housing, and a lot of that is renter-occupied. Another 10 percent is zoned R-4 multi-family housing. This is something they need to monitor. She stated they are going to look at the code and make sure there are revised inspection standards. Currently, it allows for periodic inspections. They want property owners to do a self-inspection, which would include a detailed checklist such as working smoke detectors, ADA compliance, and other requirements. There are also external inspections. They will add a fee schedule. If standards aren't met, there will be a penalty. There will also be provisions for compliance like making sure they are registered with Montgomery County as that is a state law and giving a copy of the registration to the renter, so they are aware the proper inspections have been done.

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Ms. Fry stated that they have a vacant property registration and asked if they would also have a rental property registration. Ms. Holt stated they already have a rental property registration on the books, this would be an update to that. The vacant registration would stay the same. Ms. Fry asked if those who have a rental property already registered with the city. Ms. Holt replied it has not been enforced since 2008. Ms. Fry asked if going forward with the changes would they enforce it. Ms. Holt confirmed that was correct. They will look for a program contractor that will administer this program and the vacant property program. Ms. Fry asked if this would also cover the single-family rental properties. Ms. Holt confirmed that it would.

Mr. Joseph asked if short-term rentals like Air BNB would be included. Ms. Holt stated if council would like for them to look at that they could, but the update would be for the long term. Discussion was held on whether or not to investigate short-term rentals. Mr. Rauch stated that the short term is more of a complicated picture and worth the discussion. He stated they are already on a path with the long-term requirements. They could start a side discussion about whether or not and how to address short-term. They can continue with the long-term and if council decides to pass that then they will add it and can later add a short-term section if warranted. Ms. Holt stated in her previous position they did have separate sections for long-term and short-term. Mayor Williams stated he would wonder if the ability to enforce the long-term rentals on the books would come down to the ability to find a vendor who could do that both cost-effectively and time-effectively. On the short term, he does not think they have the staff now to track down, catalog, and enforce the long-term rental. He asked if there was a vendor they could find to assist them with the endeavor. He believes in the long-term they are on the right path. Mr. Rauch stated they are looking at contractors who can maybe help them tackle more than one of these issues at the same time. Assuming they start rental registration fees trying to index those to overhead costs to run the program, whether that is to bring somebody on board part-time to go and do inspections or other code enforcement or to pay or offset the cost of a contractor doing that.

CITY MANAGER UPDATES: Mr. Rauch stated that he and Ms. Baker have mostly wrapped up the personnel budget. He has a meeting with the bond council next week to talk about the situation with the buildings and other things that push and pull on the budget. They are on track for discussion in November. He stated that need to get the 4.95 mill levy police property tax levy back in front of the voters. It will be a replacement levy for the same amount and same term of five years; it will just help them to capture more value. With the election in March, they need to get this in front of council sooner rather than later.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS: Deputy Mayor Lommatzsch stated there is a blood drive on Monday, October 16, 2023. Ms. Fry thanked the community for their continued support of the blood drives. They are an asset to the community in their blood collection efforts. There is still time with opening on Monday in the evening. Walk-ins are accepted,

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but registration is preferred at donortime.com and search for the City of Riverside.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Maxfield moved, seconded by Ms. Joseph, to enter into executive session for the reason listed on the agenda, 103.01(1) Unless the City employee or official requests a public hearing; to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a city employee or official or the investigation of charges or complaints against a City employee or official. Roll call went as follows: Mr. Maxfield, yes; Mr. Joseph, yes; Ms. Fry, yes; Ms. Lommatzsch, yes; and Mayor Williams, yes. Council entered into an executive session at 7:25 p.m.

RECONVENE: Council reconvened at 8:11 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business, council adjourned at 8:12 p.m.



Peter J. Williams, Mayor



Clerk of Council