

CUYAHOGA FALLS CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting

March 22, 2021

Call to Order: Mr. Brillhart at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Mr. Balthis, present; Mr. Brillhart, present; Mr. Gorbach, present; Mr. Iula, present; Mr. James, present; Ms. Loza, present; Mr. Miller, present; Ms. Nichols-Rhodes, present; Mrs. Penta, present; Mrs. Spinner, present; Mr. Stams, present.

Invocation: Mrs. Spinner

Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Brillhart

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 8, 2021 Council Meeting were approved as written.

Reports and Communications: A Notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control regarding New Permit Number 0042875 to Acharya USA LLC, dba Niveeka Convenience Store, 1205 Northmoreland Boulevard, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 44221.

A Notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control regarding New Permit Number 0005457 to A Plus Crab, Inc., 738-744 Howe Avenue, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 44221.

New Legislation

(First Reading)

No New Legislation

Reports of Council's Standing Committees

(Third Reading)

Planning & Zoning

No Report.

Finance & Appropriations:

Temp. Ord. B-11

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for the Summit DD Front Street parking expansion, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Gorbach stated that all of Council is extremely excited about the promise and the synergy that this project is going to allow downtown, and he is definitely in favor of it.

Mr. Gorbach moved to adopt Temp. Ord. B-11, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed, voice vote (11-0).

Public Improvements:

No Report.

Public Affairs:

Temp. Res. B-12

A resolution supporting West Creek Conservancy's Clean Ohio Greenspace Round 15 Grant Application for the Merriman Valley by the City of Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Balthis moved to adopt Temp. Res. B-12, second by Mr. Miller. Motion passed, voice vote (11-0).

Community Development:

Temp. Ord. B-13

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Farr Associates for the preparation of a study and master plan for the Merriman Valley and Schumacher Planning Areas, in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00; authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Akron for the reimbursement of costs pertaining thereto; making necessary appropriations for the same; and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Penta stated that it is wonderful that both cities are coming together and the residents, as evidenced at last week's committee meeting, are on board with it. She stated that this is the last Council meeting for the City Planning Director, Mr. Fred Guerra, who has been with the City for many years. His knowledge, his patience, and his clarification on any questions she has had concerning the Historic Design and Review Board or Community Development has been an open door. He will be missed for his wisdom.

Mr. Stams congratulated Mr. Guerra on his service to the City of Cuyahoga Falls and stated that he has done a wonderful job being an advocate for the City. Mr. Balthis stated that he would like to make it clear to Mr. Guerra that they expect him to be involved as a resident in the planning process going into the future. He hopes to see him at the meetings, and appreciates his service to the City over the years. Mr. James stated that, over the last decade that they have been together, it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Guerra. He is dependable and always got back to him when there has been anything on his mind. Mr. Guerra has been a stellar representative for the

City. The Planning and Zoning Committee and the Planning Commission are going to sorely miss him, along with the rest of them. He wishes him Godspeed and everything good for his retirement. Mr. Iula thanked Mr. Guerra for his service. During the time he served on the Board of Zoning Appeals, he got to know him well.

Mr. Brillhart stated that he appreciates everything that Mr. Guerra has done. There have been many times, first thing in the morning, he called him, and would say that his day could only get better when his first call is from him. Mr. Guerra's heart is with the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the residents, and it has been magnificent getting to know him. His service to the City has been magnificent and he will be sorely missed. Mr. Gorbach stated that there is a lot of history walking out with Mr. Guerra, and it is going to be tough. Whenever Mr. Guerra talks about something or goes over a plan, it is astounding when he would go back 12 years and say they have done this or that. He does not see Mr. Guerra letting the grass grow under His feet. He will be busy doing something, and he wishes him the best of luck.

Mrs. Penta moved to adopt Temp. Ord. B-13, second by Ms. Loza. Motion passed, voice vote (11-0).

Schedule of Committee Meetings

Planning & Zoning:	Subject to Call.
Finance:	Subject to Call.
Public Improvements:	Subject to Call.
Public Affairs:	Subject to Call.
Community Development:	Subject to Call.

Miscellaneous Business

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, stated that the City is continuing similarly to last month. Under the Property Tax Revenues, they are anticipating a slight increase. They received a revised estimate from the Fiscal Office that shows at least a 10-percent increase to that number this year. There are still a couple of questions regarding admissions tax this summer. He has not heard much about shows at Blossom. They did budget for a full season there. In Local Government Funds, the County and State of Ohio is trending. They hit the same mark or close to what they had in 2020. They are continuing to see interest come in at what was anticipated. They anticipated approximately \$370,000 this year, which is far below what they saw in 2019. There have been signs of life on the income tax numbers so far through 2021. It has not come back completely, but withholding tax has been strong. In 2021, as they continue and things begin to open up, they anticipate and hopefully will see even better numbers this year.

Mr. Hoffman stated that, in the General Fund, it is exactly as anticipated at this point in time. It is hard to find a lot of trend this early in the year, but they are spending at the same rate as anticipated. In the Enterprise funds, they have not seen a huge reduction in income coming in from billed amounts. One of the things that they do worry about when there are economic issues going on is

individuals not able to pay or becoming delinquent. They still have not seen that happen to any great extent. The other area reported on in the past and the biggest concern is the Leisure Time Fund. The Natatorium still continues to see yearly memberships decrease, but some of the daily activity has started to increase. He anticipates the numbers will be down for 2021. They are going to continue to do what they can to open up programming and try to get people to use the Natatorium. Hopefully, as the vaccine rollout continues to expand and people get vaccinated, they will feel safe in the Natatorium and these numbers will improve over the year. The other facilities in the Parks and Recreation Department are, at this point in time, hard to gauge as to how they are going to do, being they are weather-dependent. There have been some yearly passes purchased, but not much activity. They continue to closely monitor the Leisure Time Fund and try to do what they can on the expense side. Being the Natatorium is a large, fixed asset that has a lot of fixed expenses, it has been difficult, but, on the personal services side, they have decreased, as they can, any part-time labor working at the Natatorium to try to keep those expenses in line. They continue to see reductions in expenses in the Self-Insurance Fund. In January and February, especially with Covid cases becoming pretty high during the past Christmas season, elective surgeries still did not happen. Those expenses are still trending, or at least stabilizing, but stabilizing far below what they have been in recent years. They will continue to monitor that throughout the year and, hopefully, if there continues to be less expense, they will give premium holidays this year.

Mr. Miller asked if Mr. Hoffman has received any indication how the American Rescue Plan is going to affect the budget.

Mr. Hoffman stated that the City has received the estimated allocation of \$16.7 million. They have received some bullet points on how they can spend those, but not detailed guidance. In that detailed guidance is when they start to put together better plans on how they are going to spend that. They keep in touch with their counterparts in other communities and other city organizations and the County to make sure that the information is flowing from the Department of Treasury, or whatever department is distributing these funds, or any other grants may be coming through that large bill. One of the bright spots is direct payments, in 2020, especially helped the City's Enterprise funds, because residents of the City had money to pay for their utility bills. That is one reason why they did not see the delinquencies they anticipated in 2020. Directly and indirectly, this bill will help the City's finances overall.

Mayor Walters stated that he works with Mr. Guerra pretty much every day. Once the downtown started taking shape, it was almost magical around here. There was a lot of interest and momentum, and it has really grown. Mr. Guerra put in a lot of long hours, as they all do, and he would like to thank him. Downtown has been remarkably successful, and a lot of it is because of Mr. Guerra.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, stated that she appreciated working with Mr. Guerra as his colleague and when she served on City Council. The level and depth of his experience will be hard to replace.

Mr. Guerra stated that he has enjoyed his work, and the most important thing is enjoying what you do, looking at projects, starting them at the ground level and seeing them actually come about, like the downtown or the historic preservation. He is going to take a little bit of time off and figure what he would like to do. He stated that he appreciates everyone's congratulations and has enjoyed

his time here. He got to know a lot of the Council people. He stated that redoing the City code was a big accomplishment for all of them. The City had code that was 50 years old from two different communities, and that project helped the City grow.

Ms. Colavecchio stated that everyone was invited to Mr. Guerra's retirement party in the Community Development office on the March 31.

Mr. James moved to adjourn, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed, voice vote (11-0). Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Michael Brillhart, Council President

Dana M. Capriulo, Clerk of Council