

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
September 28, 2020 – 7:50 p.m.

Members present:

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| Sean Dunne | 1 st Ward |
| Charlotte Gordon | 2 nd Ward |
| Kevin E. Johnson | 3 rd Ward |
| Andrew McManus | 4 th Ward |
| Edwin Martell | 5 th Ward |
| Thomas K. Lowe | 6 th Ward (Absent) |

Also present was City Manager Sam Sutherland, Solicitor John Haas, City Clerk Diana Ratliff and Auditor M. Trent Williams.

1. **Arts District Resolution**

CM-20-59

Manager Sutherland asked Councilwoman Gordon to speak regarding this matter. Councilwoman Gordon stated that she had received a lot of feedback and support to create an Arts, Cultural and Innovation District which was what she would like it to be named because it encompasses those three areas. She would like to make a motion to modify the north border instead of stopping at Gallia Street because there were people north of Gallia Street that would like to be included in the north boundary. Vice President Dunne stated that it was a great idea, combining the public and private sector and bringing the University’s Innovation Hub would be great. Mrs. Gordon stated that there were also some privately owned computer stores on Gallia Street and she said in time (when we can all meet publicly) she would like to move toward having everything open one Saturday each month and possibly some street musicians. Clerk Ratliff asked about the Children’s Museum on Market Street and if that could be included? Mrs. Gordon stated that they had spoken about that, but Boneyfiddle already had a lot of things going on and had a distinct feel to it. She said starting at Washington Street had a different feel and instead of encompassing an area that was already established, they were thinking to focus the growth and energy on these other areas which was why they picked up on that border to build on.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #2 to move the north border from Gallia Street to 7th Street

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **Vacation of Sinton Street**

CM-20-60

Manager Sutherland stated this was for the vacation of part of Sinton Street from Gallia Street south to the border of Green Alley for the Scioto Ribber to build an outdoor facility on the side of the building. He stated that the City Planning Commission had voted unanimously in support of this and they had strong support from Shawnee State University and the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation which was situated in that area. He felt that the City needed to be working with the restaurants as much as possible because the rumor was that the half capacity customers would be extending into 2022 because of COVID-19. Councilman Martell stated that he had been to other cities and outdoor dining was almost a must have feature during this time of crisis and outdoor dining brought a certain amount of energy to the area when you see people outside enjoying a meal. Mayor Johnson stated that he does a lot of work in the Tri-State and the three biggest things that he always heard people mention was 1. Portsmouth Murals 2. Scioto Ribber because everybody loved their great steaks 3. Wonderful City Council (laughter). Vice President Dunne asked Manager Sutherland about the outdoor white tents, Manager Sutherland stated that it would depend on how much money remained, but he had also heard that there was another round of funding that would be handed out soon. Councilwoman Gordon asked if the Planning Commission vetted all of the neighbors, Manager Sutherland stated that everyone in that surrounding area was sent a letter and the meeting was somewhat open to the public and there was one gentleman that was in opposition. He reiterated that they had received letters of support from Shawnee State University and Ohio Bureau of

Workers Compensation. Mrs. Gordon asked about the building to the east “A Children Place”, Solicitor Haas stated that they would receive half because when the city vacated a street, half would go to the Scioto Ribber and the other half to the other business. He said that maybe the businesses would come to some kind of agreement. Manager Sutherland stated that the south alley would remain open.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **Zoning Change to 1871 Bonser Avenue** **CM 20-61**

Manager Sutherland stated this was a zoning change at 1871 Bonser Avenue. He added that Erin & Matthew Conley had purchased this property and wanted to have the balance of the property they purchased changed from Residence B to Agricultural. He said that it doesn't affect anyone and that it was right on the county line. The City Planning Commission voted unanimously as there was no opposition.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

4. **Spartan Stadium Press Box Roof Replacement** **CM-20-62**

Manager Sutherland stated that on his daily walks around the stadium, he noticed that there was deterioration around the fascia and soffit of the press box. He said there were a lot of birds flying in and out of it.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

5. **Main Street Portsmouth renewal agreement** **CM-20-63**

Manager Sutherland stated that this was a renewal of the agreement with Main Street Portsmouth, he said this would be a commitment \$55,000 for three-years.

Vice President Dunne motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Discussion

1. **Master Plan and Zoning Evaluation** – Manager Sutherland stated that there was a lot of discussion about zoning at one time and during the interviewing process, the two firms both said not to even think about doing zoning until the master plan was complete. He said the master plan was almost done and the final draft was being tweaked and should be issued in the not too distance future and would like to start interviewing firms to do the zoning. He said they would take a look at the city and make sure what's in place now worked or if it doesn't work come up with a plan for a new zone. Vice President Dunne stated that the zoning had not been updated since World War II and there would be a lot of questions and changes regarding the residential use of the downtown and new types of medical facilities etc. and added that during the upgrade in the zoning that a housing study could possibly be done. Councilman Martell asked if the housing study could be paired up with this and Manager Sutherland stated that everyone was aware that housing needed to be looked at and there had already been talk regarding a housing study, but they need to determine what firm they would be using. He said personally he felt the firm that did the master plan did a very nice job and were very attentive to the folks that had input. VP Dunne stated that if a property developer were looking into developing, they would need an updated housing study to apply for certain tax credits. Councilwoman Gordon asked if there was a way to take some of these empty houses which aren't so far gone but could be renovated, and sell them to someone who wanted to live in them and not rent them

out. Manager Sutherland felt that the Land Reutilization Program could be utilized, if someone was willing to put up the coin.

2. **Buckeye Elite Basketball** – Mayor Johnson stated that every Councilmember received a letter from the Buckeye Elite Basketball group that the City had helped over the past several years. Miles Ferguson usually addresses Council but was not able to do that this year due to COVID-19 and Mayor Johnson advised him that he would address Council on his behalf. He said the basketball program would be as it had been in the past, the venue had moved to Shawnee State University because of capacity, and they could still social-distance. SSU’s facility was much larger than Portsmouth High School where it had been held previously. He advised that this group brought in athletes from High Schools all over the United States as well as from other countries. College coaches and scouts attend to watch the potential recruits and they eat at our local restaurants, stay at our local hotels and spend money here in our area. The City has helped them in the past and Mr. Ferguson had asked if he would give the letter to each Councilmember. Manager Sutherland stated that he believed the amount had already been budgeted but would double check.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk