



Council Minutes – Regular Meeting

September 15, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Spalding called to order the New Albany City Council Meeting of September 15, 2020 at 6:38 pm at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 West Main Street, New Albany, Ohio. Staff attending were City Manager Joseph Stefanov, Finance Director Bethany Staats, Administrative Services Director Adrienne Joly, and Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason. Staff tele-present were, Law Director Mitch Banchefsky, Police Chief Greg Jones, Community Development Director Jennifer Chryler, Deputy Development Director Mike Barker, Engineer Ed Ferris, Planning Manager Stephen Mayer, and Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Scott McAfee.

Mayor Spalding led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

The following Mayor/Council Members answered Roll Call:

Mayor Sloan Spalding	P
CM Colleen Briscoe	P
CM Marlene Brisk	P
CM Michael Durik	A
CM Chip Fellows	P
CM Kasey Kist	P
CM Matt Shull	P

Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason told council that Council Member Durik had requested to be excused due to travel along with having an unreliable internet connection. Mayor Spalding moved to excuse Council Member Durik from the council meeting. Council Member Kist seconded and council voted with six yes votes to excuse Council Member Durik from the meeting.

ACTION ON MINUTES:

Mayor Spalding asked if council had reviewed the proposed September 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes and asked if there were any additions or corrections. Hearing no changes, Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the September 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes. Council Member Briscoe seconded and council voted with six yes votes to approve the September 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

NONE.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

Proclamation Recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month – Mayor Spalding read the proclamation. Kat Fulton told the mayor that they were working hard to bring awareness and to let everyone know that their children needed funding for, and more research on, pediatric cancer. Mayor Spalding appreciated the Fultons and members of the community who were willing to step and personalize these important issues.

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Proclamation Celebrating Vicki McKinney on her Retirement from the City of New Albany – Mayor Spalding briefly summarized Fiscal Manager Vicki McKinney’s 30 year career in the city’s Finance Department and read the proclamation. Ms. McKinney appreciated working with talented people and watching the changes over the years. She thanked City Manager Stefanov for his support and praised Director Staats. She looked forward to spending more time with her children and grandchildren. Council Member Briscoe and Ms. McKinney reminisced working together when Council Member Briscoe was mayor. Mayor Spalding and Council thanked her for her contributions as the city grew tremendously.

Resident Dwayne Stradford addressing council, described how the speed limit on State Route 62 heading south towards downtown started at 45 and dropped to 25 mph, and how there was no crosswalk to Soulshine Tavern. He suggested a sign warning about the speed changes and a flashing pedestrian crossing like those around Market & Main.

City Manager Stefanov responded that the city could install a sign warning about the speed limit reduction, however, the bigger news was the extensive upgrades planned for the intersection of State Route 62 and the State Route 161 interchange. The limits of that project were Smith’s Mill Road to the north and Thurston Hall Road to the south. The city had been working with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to get the speed limit reduced to 35 all the way through that area, but ODOT had strict limitations on speed limit changes. The city had been successful in getting ODOT to agree to changes traveling south of the interchange as part of the upcoming project. There would be a traffic light at Theissen and State Route 62. The city had plans for bike lanes and leisure trail on both sides of the road. These would connect the Windsor subdivision to the rest of the trail system. The city was currently working through engineering with ODOT. After that, construction could begin in early 2021. The area would be completely transformed over the course of the 12-18 month project.

Mr. Stradford asked and City Manager Stefanov answered that it was that the city’s to maintain the Historic Village Center aesthetic along State Route 62. There were space limitations to be considered relative to adding a designated left turn lane. He would defer further questions to the city’s engineer. The city’s goal was not to make the State Route 62 any wider than it had to. As development in the Historic Village Center occurred, City Manager Stefanov anticipated improvements to those road sections, with the possibility of a turn lane.

City Manager Stefanov, addressing Mr. Stradford’s questions, stated that the parcel at the corner of Miller and Johnstown Road was privately owned. Different developments had been proposed for that site and he anticipated more in the future. Redevelopment of the Historic Village Center was ongoing and there would be a lot of different options on the table. Mr. Stradford observed the opportunity to open up more lanes heading into downtown, but agreed that it would be good for the engineers to study.

City Manager Stefanov added that the city was looking to create a bypass road to help alleviate traffic at Johnstown Road and Reynoldsburg-New Albany Road. He agreed that traffic back-up was a problem at peak travel times. The city’s goal was to expand the city’s road network and disperse the traffic instead of widening the roads. City staff would be working on that in the coming months and was hoping to present that to council late this year or early next year.



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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

PLANNING COMMISSION: Mayor Spalding reported that the PC tabled a variance application to build a detached garage of almost 2,000 square feet off of Bevelhymer Road after it was clear that it would be denied as submitted. The applicant would be working with staff to resubmit at a later date.

PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD: No meeting.

ACHITECHTURAL REVIEW BOARD: Council Member Shull reported that a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new Berkshire Hathaway sign at 97 E. Main Street was approved. Council Member Fellows asked and Council Member Shull replied that the applicant did not bring up potential improvements to that building.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS: No meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION: No meeting.

PUBLIC RECORDS COMMISSION: No meeting

CEMETERY RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD: Mayor Spalding suggested giving the Vet’s Memorial project presentation to the CRAB.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATION:

NONE

SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCES:

NONE.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE O-14-2020

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT THE EXPEDITED TYPE 1 ANNEXATION OF 2.9+/- ACRES FROM JERSEY TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY TO THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

City Manager Stefanov described the location of the property which was now surrounded by the Beauty Park. It was the only remaining unincorporated parcel on the east side of Beech Road. The Annexation Agreement had been signed and there was already a Road Maintenance Agreement in place for Beech Road.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the October 6th council meeting.

ORDINANCE O-15-2020

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY BY AMENDING THE ZONING MAP TO REZONE 2.9 +/-

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ACRES OF LAND LOCATED AT 2278 BEECH ROAD FOR AN AREA TO BE KNOWN AS THE “BEECH ROAD EAST ZONING DISTRICT” FROM ITS CURRENT ZONING OF AGRICULTURAL (AG) TO LIMITED GENERAL EMPLOYMENT (L-GE) AS REQUESTED BY JOHN & MARCIA LASSEL C/O WESLEY W. GILLILAND, ESQ.

Planning Manager Stephen Mayer said this rezoning was for the same parcel as O-14-2020. The applicant was requesting to rezone so it had the same uses and development standards as the surrounding land. Permitted uses included general office, warehousing and distribution, data center, and research and production. The proposal included the same requirements as the surrounding business park including four-sided screening of rooftop equipment, lot coverage, and lighting. Since there was still residentially-zoned property across the street, the zoning text required screening and landscaping consistent with other similarly-situated properties. The zoning text matched the recommendation of the city’s 2014 Strategic Plan. The Planning Commission recommended approval at their August 2020 meeting. Wesley Gilliland, attorney for applicant, and Real Estate Broker Douglas Wilson, SVN Commercial Group, were present to answer any questions.

Council Member Briscoe asked and Mr. Wilson answered that the property owners had been trying to sell the property for years. Getting the property zoned and annexed to the city was beneficial. Informal surveys suggested a small commercial development or office park would be good for this site. There weren’t many comparable properties in New Albany for that use. A flex-type use, mixture of office and light assembly, would also be consistent with the area. It would depend on that the market brought forth.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the October 6, 2020 council meeting.

READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION R-31-2020

Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR.

Finance Director Bethany Staats stated this legislation came up annually. The legislation accept the amounts and rates from Franklin County. The city had been granted the 1.94 mils, which was the excess of .74 mils.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Shull seconded and council voted with six yes votes to approve Resolution R-31-2020.

RESOLUTION R-32-2020

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Mayor Spalding read by title A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE LICKING COUNTY AUDITOR.

Director Staats stated, similar to R-31-2020, this was the required annual legislation to accept the amounts and rates set by Licking County. For Licking County, the city was at 1.7 mils.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the resolution. Council Member Fellows seconded and council voted with six yes votes to approve Resolution R-32-2020.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Finance Committee: No report
- B. Safety Committee: No report.
- C. Public Utilities: No report.
- D. Service and Public Facilities Committee: No report.
- E. Planning and Economic Development Committee: No report.
- F. Administration Committee: No report.
- G. Grants and Non-Profit Funding: No report.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

- A. Council Representative to MORPC: City Manager Stefanov reported that MORPC’s home weatherization program had restarted after being paused due to COVID-19. MORPC’s and its partner’s successful broadband access pilot program had helped up to 10,000 school-aged kids get computers and access hotspots for remote learning. The program was also accepting contributions of used hardware to be refurbished and distributed to the students. MORPC recapped the regional housing strategy. The Summit on Sustainability would take place virtually on October 15-16.
- B. Council Representative to Joint Parks and Recreation: Council Member Shull reported that the summer movie series would finish on September 26th with *The Proposal* only for adults. The JPD had formed the New Albany Parks and Recreation Foundation, including appointing board members and writing by-laws. One of the first projects being considered was a new

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basketball complex in the Blue Lot area near the city’s Public Service Department. Phase I would include two courts, bleachers, a canopy, and some trees. There were other ideas out there, all of which would depend on funding. The Columbus Symphony Orchestra played at Bevelhymer Park garnering positive feedback. An event at Thompson Park, to which police had been called, was being discussed. The board was looking at security options including gate closures. Council Member Fellows and Council Member Kist noted the increased usage this year and the amount of Columbus traffic that headed into that park.

- C. Council Representative to New Albany Plain Local Schools: Council Member Brisk reported that hybrid schooling was in full swing. The board’s goal was to revisit that structure at the next meeting, possibly opening up to full attendance. New Albany Schools Superintendent Michael Sawyers had been clear that that the status of attendees could change depending on circumstances. People seemed happy with the current hybrid situation.
- D. Council Representative to Plain Township: No report.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS:

- A. Mayor: No report.
- B. Clerk of Council: No report.
- C. Finance Director: Director Staats referenced the August financial report distributed to council. Franklin County had collected property taxes later this year, so those had not yet been fully accounted for. 66.67% of the year had passed and the city had only spent 52% of its budget. Director Staats expected less interest on invested funds due to market conditions. Council Member Shull asked and Director Staats responded she didn’t expect property tax to make up for a gap in revenue, however, the city was still receiving delayed individual income and net profit taxes.
- D. City Manager: City Manager Stefanov stated that the council nameplates for Rose Run Park were ready and solicited council’s feedback. Council preferred placement on the granite face. Council Member Fellows asked and City Manager Stefanov replied that the correct letters for Stefanov Circle should be delivered soon. The first set received and partially installed were the wrong font.
- E. City Attorney: No report.

POLL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

A member of the public identified as “Stefani” asked council what RITA taxes contributed to. What did the city do with those funds? Mayor Spalding stated that the funds collected by the Regional Income Tax Authority (RITA) constituted the main source of revenue for the city. Income tax represented about 80% of the city’s revenue. The city contracted with RITA to collect the income tax and ensure it was appropriate and accurate. When the tax wasn’t remitted, RITA communicated with tax payers about fulfilling their obligations.

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City Manager Stefanov stated that income tax revenue was used for the city’s basic services, including police, public works – like snow and leaf removal, street repair, and traffic and street lights. The revenue funded economic development efforts to bring new businesses to New Albany. It funded administrative functions including city personnel, internet technology – anything related to city operations was covered by the city’s income tax. It paid for capital equipment and maintenance of capital infrastructure – like road and sidewalk improvements, leisure trails, and playground equipment. In Ohio, income tax was typically collected where the employee worked. Some communities taxed residents in addition to employees, however New Albany gave a tax credit to residents, so the only tax paid was to the municipality where the resident worked. The majority of New Albany’s income revenue came from Business Park employees.

Mayor Spalding encouraged “Stefani” to visit the city’s website which linked to the State of Ohio’s open checkbook program. There was detailed information regarding the city’s income and where the money was spent. The city was proud of its AAA bond rating and had received the State Auditor’s Award of Distinction for ~9 straight years. New Albany took its financial responsibilities extremely seriously.

POLL FOR COUNCIL COMMENT:

NONE.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Spalding moved that council go into executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22 (G)(1) to consider appointment of a public official. Council Member Briscoe seconded and council voted with six yes votes to go into executive session at 7:32 pm, reserving the right to take action afterwards. *Clerk’s note: Council Member Kist exited the meeting just prior to the executive session discussion.*

Mayor Spalding moved that council come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council Member Brisk seconded and council voted with five yes votes come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council resumed the regular meeting at 8:01 pm.


OTHER BUSINESS:

NONE.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further comments and all scheduled matters attended to, Mayor Spalding moved and Council Member Briscoe seconded to adjourn the September 15, 2020 regular council meeting at 8:02 pm.

ATTEST:



Jennifer H. Mason, Clerk of Council



Sloan Spalding, Mayor



Date