

**Richmond Heights
City Council of the Whole
December 10, 2019**

Council President Henry opened the meeting at 7:32pm

Roll Call: Alexander, Henry, Hurst, Kumin, Lentine, Lewis, Ursu

Approval of COW Minutes from 11-26-19. Motion by Lewis, seconded by Lentine; passed 7-0.

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the City Council Meeting from November 26, 2019.
Motion to accept the Consent agenda by Kumin, seconded by Lewis; passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

**RESOLUTION NO.: 107-2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR & COUNCIL, 3RD READING
(AS REVISED 12/10/19)**

A RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NOS. 145-86 AND 108-2018 BY EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY'S EXISTING COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #1 AND INCLUDING PARCELS BEING DEVELOPED FOR MIXED USE WITH MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING THEREIN AS ELIGIBLE FOR TAX ABATEMENT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Todd Hunt said that this is a CRA area established in 1986 in airport area. It was amended in fall 2018 to increase amount of abatement years from 5-15, and this is the 2nd amendment to retain the grandfather status of legislation. It will extend the area north and south to Hilltop Plaza area. This is to redevelop those areas, as commercial areas.
- Brian Gleisser said this is an economic development tool for the city to keep us competitive with other cities around us. The tax abatement is for 15 yrs. on the improvements. Under state law, city is required to share income tax with the schools.
- Superintendent Willis commented on this resolution. She read a statement and made a request for Council to table this legislation. She wants a dialog on this with the Mayor and Council and had questions on the financing of Belle Oakes and tax abatements. The tax abatement is to encourage development. She said there were loose guidelines prior to 1984, and no requirement to notify school district on payments, with taxes being lost. Property taxes are the bloodlines of schools. She had concerns on the possible taxes lost for the schools. She asked why there have not been any conversations with the schools on this subject. She said school could be out over \$70 million over the next few years.
- Henry said this was an oversight on not reaching out to the schools, but that there were plenty of public meetings on this subject and Community Conversations forums as well.
- Kumin said it is not 100% tax abatement, only on the increased value of property once investment has been made. Businesses are deteriorating in the city. This will stabilize the taxes. If we do nothing, taxes will decrease, as businesses are moving out. This will invite investment into the city and fill the gaps lost. It is for a definite, finite period of time. We've been waiting for 5 years with no interest in mall property. Our goal is to get

businesses and more development into the city. This is a win for all. Schools will not lose anything.

- Alexander said this has been talked about now for over a year and a half (Belle Oaks) and a number of school personnel have been around. The financing will go away if we don't pass this legislation and we don't want to run the risk of financing going away. There are not a lot of developers wanting to redo the mall. We don't want mall just sitting there empty. The schools have no risk in this. The city is on the hook, as we need to reimburse the school.
- Kenneth Fischer, attorney for Belle Oaks said the mall is under contract through Dealpoint. Without this legislation the transaction does not close. Phase 1 would be jeopardized. There will be additional meetings for the public on this. The CRA is just part of the equation and will require School Board approval. This has been going on for a long time. This is just part of the process. Going forward, we will be in discussion with the school, and the project can't go forward without this legislation. He asked Council to please proceed with the legislation, as there are deadlines that must be met.
- Dr. Pat Ackerman—she said she hears there is unreadiness here on the part of the school board. Taxes support both school and the city, so we need to wait. She said she does not want to sacrifice the children and education over the rich and famous. There is nothing that is coming to Richmond Mall that we can't get 10 min away. We need clarity and support before moving forward. She asked for better communication between City Council and School Board. She said that deadlines can be changed and moved. She asked why this was not discussed with school.
- Henry said this has been discussed for 6 weeks (on 3rd reading). We did not have joint meetings but had public meetings. Financing is important, and yes, education is important in the city.
- Alexander said the school has no risk in this at all. David Frank talked about this with Dr. Willis. The city is a third party in this deal. If this goes through, the school gets a windfall.
- Dr. Willis asked why we are recreating boundaries instead of just making a new CRA. She wants to have a conversation on this. She has questions and wants a dialog. She did not see a finalized map.
- Kumin said these issues were all brought up in public meetings, and in the minutes. Why come in the last hour to discuss this? The map was just finalized.
- Henry said we are willing to have discussions with school and have joint meetings. This has been public for over 6 weeks. We talked about the boundaries in all the meetings.
- Linda Pliodzinskas, School Board President commented on the new school going up, and how all were invited to events on that and wants to encourage inclusiveness. We, as residents and board members, don't understand what is happening. Would appreciate if city can hold off a bit on vote to speak to us how this will affect the school and what to expect in the future. We don't want to hold up anything, but to hold for a short time so we can communicate together on this.
- Brian Gleisser said this is a 2-step process. This is a generic amendment to the CRA and does not attach to a specific project tonight. In future, you will see the specific agreement and that is the point to notify schools on the project. This will only set up the ability to sit down with schools and set up appointment with schools and Dealpoint Merrill. The passing of this allows us the ability to do so. We are not talking about Belle Oaks in this legislation. After passing this, we meet and share financial info, and income tax discussion on the specific project.
- Nikita Slay Jackson, School Board said we've been going through a communication crisis with school and city. There is trepidation with moving forward. We've been here before with the gas pumps, Selman Co., and now this. If this is not held, what do we do? We are going to further burden the residents and are not comfortable with that.

Economic development means relief from residents. She feels this could potentially hold off levies, and school funding. How do we make this better?

- Henry said Council will meet and determine on joint meetings in future. Will take time to repair the relationship with school. Will be working on this, with quarterly or monthly meetings. We can't solve everything tonight.

RESOLUTION NO.: 115-2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR ROCHE, 2ND READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FROM THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEIGHTS FOR A PROJECT TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF MATCHING FUNDS AND/OR IN-KIND SERVICES FROM THE CITY.

- Giving mayor authority to enter in supplemental grant. He asked to hold this.
- Kumin agreed it should be on hold until Greenwood Farm mission statement has been discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO.: 124- 2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR ROCHE, FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT AND THE CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAM INVOLVING EDUCATION, STEWARDSHIP AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

- Mayor said this is a renewal of the agreement with NEORS.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Alexander, seconded by Kumin; passed 7-0.

RESOLUTION NO.: 125- 2019, INTRODUCED BY ALL OF COUNCIL, FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEIGHTS TO ENTER INTO A MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ON AGING FOR OLDER ADULT SERVICES.

- Henry said this will be a good addition for the seniors in the city. It was mentioned in the Master Plan and the city survey wanted this too.
- Mayor recommended to hold it. Legislation needs to be corrected and updated.
- Kumin said he received a call from the senior resident who got a resource/help and she thanked him. She was able to get her roof fixed and is pleased.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Alexander, seconded by Kumin; passed 7-0.

RESOLUTION NO.: 126-2019, INTRODUCED BY ALEXANDER, FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION DENYING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR AN ADULT DAYCARE CENTER AT 26391 CURTIS WRIGHT PARKWAY.

- Todd Hunt said there was a resolution at PZ Committee to approve the conditional use. Committee decided not to approve it. Council needs to state reasons in writing, so this legislation and reasons have been drafted for them.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Alexander, seconded by Lewis; passed 6-1 (Kumin-NAY)

RESOLUTION NO.: 127-2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR ROCHE, FIRST READING
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH DELTA DENTAL FOR A DENTAL PLAN FOR 2020.

- Mayor said this is for renewing health care and dental plans. Rates are the same as last year.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Kumin, seconded by Lentine; passed 7-0.

RESOLUTION NO.: 128-2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR ROCHE, FIRST READING
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH LINCOLN NATIONAL CORPORATION FOR VISION INSURANCE, LIFE INSURANCE, AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT BENEFIT PLANS FOR 2020; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Mayor said this is to establish new rates with plans. Rates same as last year.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Kumin, seconded by Lewis; passed 7-0.

RESOLUTION NO.: 129-2019, INTRODUCED BY MAYOR ROCHE, FIRST READING
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH ANTHEM BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD FOR HEALTH INSURANCE FOR 2020; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Mayor said this is a contract with Blue Cross. The rates are substantially higher for city this year. The primary deductibles have increased but maintained \$5,000 deductible.
- Motion to recommend to Council by Alexander, seconded by Kumin; passed 7-0.

AUDIENCE: -none-

OLD BUSINESS:

City Council Videos: Henry asked Kumin for help on this process and to write it down.

Apartment Updates: Chief Neumann said the Fire Inspector was out there today at Loganberry and said there have been payments for contractors for improvements happening.

Lentine said there is an uprising at 444 Richmond Park with the residents there as the elevators are in constant repair. We need to put our foot down and really get their attention. Chief said there have been elevator issues and we are actively working to correct this.

Kumin said this is exactly some of the reasons why we are expanding CRA beyond mall, to bring money into these areas with apartments. Our hope is that CRA brings investments into apartments.

City Hall flooring: Kerniskey wants to upgrade it to Lodge flooring. He has samples with him. Would be an additional \$6,000 cost for this flooring. There is a 10-yr. commercial warranty on this. Kumin said this is the first thing people see when they walk in City Hall, so he is in favor. Henry agreed and is also in favor. Hurst said he is for anything to improve the city, within reason. Kumin asked Todd Hunt to appropriate legislation for this.

MOTION to draft amendment of \$6,000 for upgrade in flooring by Kumin, seconded by Lewis; passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Joint School Board/Council meetings: Henry proposed to have this on a more frequent basis. Kumin asked if School Board could have representation on one of the committees, so charter would not need to be changed.

Proposed 2020 Committee assignments: Henry proposed new assignments, and chairmen. Clerk will write them up and email to Council.

Auxiliary officer: We are recognizing officer, Eddy Wong, and swearing him in tonight.

Council President, Eloise Henry, adjourned the meeting at 8:32pm

Minutes taken by Clerk of Council, Betsy Traben