



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Thursday, August 22, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Council Chambers

4230 Lake Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Community Development/ Economic Development/ Parks & Recreation Committee was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Committee Chair DiGiacomo.

Roll Call

Members Present: **Chair:** Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo, **Vice Chair:** Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, **Member:** Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman

Absent: None.

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Ashley Bell

Parks & Recreation Board Members Present: None.

Visitors: Zach Schiller, Research Director Policy Matters Ohio

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by the Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Special Guest Presentation

Zach Schiller provided perspective on Tax Abatement policy. He stated Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan research institute. Their offices are in Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. Before tax abatements are given, are they necessary? To make tax abatement more accountable adopt the "But for policy". Would this development tax take place but for a tax abatement incentive? Who ever is seeking the incentive should provide some backing as to why the incentive should be granted. Resources may be scarce in the community. Make sure each abatement is analyzed. The city is not dependent on the property tax, yet the city grants the abatement. Cities are dependent on income taxes. City schools typically receive 60% of property taxes. Another concern may be fairness to other taxpayers who are not receiving a tax abatement. Tax abatements originated at the state level, aimed at promoting development in distressed areas. Consider the size and length of the abatement. Develop abatement standards for different areas of the city. Take note of the demographics receiving tax abatements.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman stated the presentation provided different aspects of how tax abatement may be examined. The presentation also provided aspects of social justice issues and equity issues.

Addison Goodell, member of the Planning Commission, agrees that there should be requirements to receive tax abatements.

The City Manager stated the tax abatement is for the property. The asset goes onto the property, and it will eventually be taxed with property taxes. Developers do not make money on tax abatements, the incentive is given to the owner of the property. The City has not experienced development in quite some time. The city needs houses at every level.

Micahel Charney, a city resident, asked if representatives from Ashtabula Area City Schools were made aware of tax abatements. The City Manager stated that anytime there is a commercial tax abatement, the School District is notified. The School District receives a vote if the abatement is over 50%.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman stated tax abatement percentages should be negotiated.

The City Manager stated his office will continue to make sure development within the city limits continues.

Zach Schiller, Research Director Policy Matters Ohio

City Manager's Report

The City Manager stated the All Inclusion Playground at Walnut Beach Park is on schedule. Several contractors are willing to donate groundwork. The city is responsible for the walkway. The grant for the playground will fund the surface and the playground equipment. The asphalt has been laid for the two courts at Smith Field. After the asphalt is finished, fencing will go around the courts. The walkways have been paved at Smith Field. The remediation cleanup of the Carlisle Building is complete. The City's meeting with East Gate regarding the Aplachian Grant will be after Labor Day.

Parks & Recreation Committee Report

Unfinished Business

New Business

Next Meeting

September 24, 2024 at 5 p.m.

Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m by Committee Chair DiGiacomo.