



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 5:00 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 5:00 p.m. by Committee Chair DiGiacomo.

Roll Call

Members Present: **Chair:** Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo, **Vice Chair:** Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills

Absent: Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman

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

Parks & Recreation Board Members Present: None.

Visitors: Mary Church, Assistant Director Planning and Community Development

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

Mary Church provided the following update: From January 1, 2024, to September 24, 2024, the housing department has notified property owners of over one thousand violations. Often, one property has multiple violations. Currently, there are over 400 open activities of violation notices. The open activities include scheduled drive-bys or re-inspections. All the activities are handled by Steve Nelson, the city's Housing Inspector. This year nine properties have been vacated. This means the occupants were removed from the property. After the property is vacated, the owner is given the opportunity to rectify the violations. The city provides several resources that offer assistance. Approximately 20 houses are in the process of being painted. Their department has received complaints regarding home-less "camps". The concerns are being addressed by the Fire Department and Police Department. The city does not have any funds for the demolition of blighted houses. The Land-Bank has applied for a grant for demolition of houses. If the property owner of a home does not have insurance and the house catches fire, the Fire Department requires the first floor to be boarded. Next, the housing department proceeds with a vacant property registration. The city's legislation requires rental properties to have insurance.

Mary Church, Assistant Director Planning and Community Development
Update regarding housing

City Manager's Report

The City Manager stated his department is looking at expanding the revitalization district in the Harbor. The maximum for liquor permits is 15. Only 4 are in use. The current goal is for current liquor license holders to sell them to other businesses in the city and obtain a D-5 License; the business must have 75% food sales and 25% alcohol sales. If the district is expanded, this could help other businesses in need of liquor licenses. Next year, the city will explore the option of a D.O.R. A. (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas) liquor license. The initial call regarding the Appalachian Community Grant took place. A second meeting will happen soon. The excavation work needed for the Inclusion Park at Walnut Beach is being donated to the city. In addition to the Inclusion Park, city officials would like to add four handicap parking spaces at Walnut Beach. The next phase in the updates to Smith Field is resurfacing work.

Parks & Recreation Committee Report

Chairperson Ken Vanyo provided updates about the committee. The committee will be reviewing and revising Park's rules.

August 6, 2024 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2024 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

Unfinished Business

New Business

City Solicitor Cooper spoke out Mentor Ordinance 24-0-058. The Solicitor's Office spoke to the city's Law Director. The ordinance was passed because of one person. Homeless camps are not an issue in their city. The Mentor Ordinance has similar verbiage to the city of Ashtabula's current ordinances per the City Manager. The majority of the homeless camps are within Ashtabula Township; city ordinances cannot be enforced in the Township. The City Manager stated "tent ordinances" have been discussed. City officials have found that some property owners are charging people to live in tents on their property. Committee Chair DiGiacomo stated the homeless issue in the city appears to continue to grow. Her goal is to deescalate the matter. The city parks are open from dawn until dusk. If people are in the park after dusk, the police may cite them. Habitual violators can be banned from city parks for up to five years.

Motion: Committee Chair DiGiacomo moved to adopt Mentor Ordinance 24-0-058; Vice Chair Mills seconded.

Discussion:

VOICE VOTE

Motion passed.

Discussing an ordinance regarding the homeless population.

The City of Mentor's ordinance is used as a reference.

Next Meeting

October 15, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m. by Committee Chair DiGiacomo.