



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Council Chambers

4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

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, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman

Absent: Member: None

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

Parks & Recreation Board Members Present: None

Visitor: Catherine Colgen, Assistant Solicitor

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

Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan presented draft legislation on temporary stores and food trucks. The first part Section 759 of the City of Ashtabula Codified Ordinances applies to temporary stores. The proposed legislation will add Mobile Food Vending. Section 759.07 adds definitions pertaining to Mobile Food Vending to the section. The basic idea under Section 759.08 is that there would be a registration list. Anyone wishing to operate a Mobile Food Vending service in the City would have to complete the registration process and submit the required information. The idea is to provide a responsible party, so there is a point of contact if there were to be any complaints. Section 759.09 defines the expiration and renewal of the registration. Each registration will expire on March 31 of the year following the date of issue. Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan stated she chose that date because the Health Department Mobile Food License deadline is March 1. The legislation would also not allow the registration to be transferred. Section 759.11 outlines suggested general operational requirements for Mobile Food Vendors to follow. Section 759.12 details locations where Mobile Food Vendors will not be permitted. For example, the proposed legislation will not permit food trucks within 1000 feet of a special event or within 100 feet of a restaurant not affiliated with the food truck. Section 759.13 provides exemptions for ice cream trucks and children's lemonade stands.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked if the legislation includes language regarding insurance. Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan stated providing proof of insurance is part of the registration process. Food truck operators will be required to submit the following during registration: a copy of a current/valid State of Ohio mobile food vendor license; a mobile food vending health license/permit provided by the State of Ohio; proof of registration with the City of Ashtabula Income Tax Division; proof of liability insurance of at least \$100,000; a physical description of the mobile food vending unit; the name, permanent address, phone number and email address of the owner of the mobile food vending unit; a non-refundable \$80 registration fee; and, approval/proof that the mobile food vending unit passed a fire safety code inspection conducted by the Ashtabula City Division of Fire. An applicant with an existing permanent place of business in the City is exempted from proof of registration with the City's Income Tax Division.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked if there were any restrictions regarding temporary signage. City Manager James Timonere stated technically it is prohibited under the City's sign ordinance. Food truck operators will be required to follow all other City ordinances. Additional discussion took place regarding referencing specific ordinances, such as sign ordinances and sound ordinances, within the food truck legislation.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked how public parks would be handled regarding food trucks. City Manager James Timonere stated there have been discussions regarding allowing food trucks in public parks on certain days of the week or when special events are going on. The idea behind the legislation was to make it as simple as possible. Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan stated that Section 759.12 of the draft legislation states that food trucks will not be permitted on City property without the approval of the City Manager, so that section will cover public parks.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked if there were any restrictions on the hours food trucks can operate. Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan stated she was told officials did not want to get involved in food truck hours.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked if implementing the new process of registering food trucks would be a costly venture for the City. City Manager James Timonere stated he does not think there will be any extra expenses.

Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan suggested issuing some kind of sticker or placard that food trucks will have to display as proof of registration.

City Manager James Timonere stated he is not concerned about the work his staff will have to do to administer the program. The goal is to make the process as simple as possible for everyone involved and to have some regulations without being burdensome. Food trucks are a trend, and they bring flair and ethnicity to the City. City Manager James Timonere stated discussions have also begun regarding establishing Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas (DORA) for Main Avenue and Bridge Street. Officials hope to have that up and running by the summer.

Salvador Lopez, owner of Wepa Smoked, stated that food truck operators are already required to submit all the paperwork outlined in the draft legislation. The Health Department requires most of the same documentation before it issues the mobile food vending health license. Mr. Lopez stated that food truck vendors are required to pass numerous inspections. The food truck vendors operating in the area follow the laws. They love what they do and they love the community.

City Manager James Timonere stated when officials first discussed creating legislation for food trucks, it had nothing to do with the requirements they already have to follow for the health

department. It was more location based and creating some general regulations. This is an opportunity to give food trucks more opportunities, such as creating a food truck day at Smith Field.

Eric Smith, co-owner of Bomb Dogs food truck, stated all food truck operators are required to have a health license, so if city officials are looking for a point of contact, the information can be obtained from the health department. Regarding the proposed regulation prohibiting food trucks from operating within 100 feet from an established restaurant, Mr. Smith stated that there are restaurants on Bridge Street that are right next to each other, serving different types of food, so if food trucks are serving a different type of food than the restaurants, they should be allowed to operate near them. Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan suggested including the language "without permission" in the legislation, so food trucks can operate near restaurants as long as they have the restaurant's permission. He stated the \$80 annual registration fee gives him more incentive to operate in the City.

Michael (Miko) Hodges, owner of Evie's Luau, thanked city officials for trying to make the process simple. He stated that people drive from all over for the different types of food offered by food trucks. In terms of a possible food truck park, he suggested having a gray water disposal area for food truck operators to properly drain their water, as well as providing adequate power.

Julie Wayman asked for clarification on the process of obtaining permission from the City Manager to operate in a public park. City Manager James Timonere stated they have not worked out all the logistics yet, but it would be a very simple process of just providing information such as dates and times, etc. to his office.

Nikki Richards, owner of The Dough-Jo food truck, suggested including a "move" clause in the legislation which requires food trucks to move a certain distance in order to be identified as a food truck.

Michael Hodges asked if food trucks would be allowed to operate in their driveways. City Manager James Timonere stated that, personally, that is not something he wants to see, but officials will have to look into that a little more.

Catherine Colgan, Assistant Solicitor and Mary Church, Assistant Director Planning and Community Development

Temporary Stores and Food Trucks draft legislation

City Manager's Report

Parks & Recreation Committee Report

Unfinished Business

New Business

Next Meeting

March 5, 2025

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. by Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo.