



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 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

Catherine Colgan, Assistant Solicitor - Food Truck Legislation discussion

Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan presented updates to draft legislation on food trucks. The updates include various suggestions from local food truck vendors and committee members received during previous discussions. Mrs. Colgan stated she made a few small changes to address an issue concerning a food truck vendor who occasionally operates his business as a backyard barbecue by exempting food trailers from the requirement that food trucks be parked on an improved driveway. This way, the trailers can be taken into the backyard if the operator so chooses. City Manager James Timonere confirmed with the Ashtabula City Health Department that much of what was initially required for a permit/registration is already being submitted when food truck vendors get their Health Department permit. Things the Health Department does not collect that would be required for a permit/registration include registration with the City's Income Tax Division if required under the codified ordinances, proof of liability insurance, the nonrefundable \$80 registration fee, and proof that the mobile food unit passed the fire safety inspection. Mrs. Colgan stated that there was some discussion regarding external signage and referencing the City's zoning ordinance, so that was added to Section 759.11. The legislation has also been modified to prohibit food trucks from operating within 1,000 feet of a special event unless as an authorized participant of the event, or with

the written permission of the event organizer. The legislation also provides an exemption for ice cream trucks, home delivery of pre-packaged and pre-made food, non-incorporated children's stands (lemonade stands), and food trucks conducting business on a particular property at the request of the property owner. The legislation also includes a section on food truck parks as there has been discussion about having a food truck park in the City.

Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo asked for clarification on the regulations regarding special events. Mrs. Colgan stated food trucks would not be allowed to operate within 1,000 feet of a special event unless the event organizer permits it.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked why ice cream trucks are exempted. Committee Chair DiGiacomo stated ice cream trucks should be able to freely move around the City without restrictions because they are not parked anywhere. Rebecca Quirke, Ward 2, also questioned why ice cream trucks are exempt from registration. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked if ice cream trucks are required to get a permit from the Health Department. Mrs. Colgan stated they are still required to get a license from the Health Department but at a different level than food trucks because they sell pre-packaged items. Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked that the committee reconsider exempting ice cream trucks.

Nate Rockwell, owner of Briquettes Smokehouse, asked for clarification on the distance from restaurants food trucks can operate during special events. Mrs. Colgan stated that the idea is that once a special event is approved, the event coordinator can decide what works best for them. Mr. Rockwell stated that even during a special event, he would not want a food truck parked right in front of his restaurant. City Manager James Timonere stated he agrees that if a food truck gets a permit and wants to operate on any given day, it should not be permitted to set up in front of a restaurant. If it was during a festival, he would hope the event organizer would not allow a food truck to set up in front of a restaurant or at least get permission. Mr. Rockwell stated he is very much in support of food trucks as long as they don't present a risk of pedestrian accidents or obstructed views.

Discussion took place regarding whether food trucks should be allowed to take up parking spaces, specifically on lower Bridge Street where parking is limited.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman suggested including a food truck's website or social media account, if they have one, on the application. Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman also suggested including language that would eliminate any kind of discrimination regarding food trucks at special events.

Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo asked committee members if they feel they should keep the distance a food truck can operate in relation to a restaurant at 100 feet. The consensus was that 100 feet was a reasonable distance. Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo asked for the committee's recommendation on whether it should be a registration process or a permit process. Mrs. Colgan stated that it's a matter of violations becoming a criminal enforcement matter or an administrative enforcement matter. Violation of a registration would constitute criminal enforcement, whereas violation of a permit would allow the City to revoke a permit and therefore no longer allow that food truck to operate in the City. City Manager James Timonere agreed it would be beneficial to be able to revoke a permit.

Rebecca Quirke stated she attended a meeting last week with a lot of food truck vendors to share ideas about parking and accessibility. She stated that the majority of food truck vendors are interested in having a separate area, so they are not pulling business away from restaurants. Ms. Quirke suggested allowing food trucks to set up at Walnut Beach on certain days of the week.

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere stated his staff is beginning to get everything ready in the parks for Spring. Several part-time employment opportunities will be posted soon for the upcoming summer season. Some of the work being done includes repairing the pavilion roof at Smith Field that was damaged during the snow storm this winter. The pavilion will also be painted. The Walnut Beach tennis court will be converted to two pickleball courts since the tennis courts were moved to Smith Field. Some touch-up work will be completed at the new inclusion park at Walnut Beach and landscaping will be added as well as four ADA-accessible parking spaces. The City will attempt to have life rings at Walnut Beach this summer and the staff are working on finalizing the Bands on the Beach schedule. A preliminary contract was sent to the YMCA for lifeguards. As soon as it comes back, the contract will be presented to City Council.

Parks & Recreation Committee Report

No report

Unfinished Business

City Clean-Up

City Clean Up will be May 17, 2025 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. A pizza lunch will be provided at the Ashtabula District Library for all volunteers, courtesy of Signature Health.

New Business

The kick-off meeting for the Appalachian Community Grant Program for the Main Avenue streetscape and facade program is March 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Ashtabula District Library. Representatives from Eastgate and LDA will be on hand to provide information on the program and answer questions.

A community meeting will be held on March 13 at 3:30 p.m. at the Ashtabula Chamber of Commerce to discuss plans for the former Shea's Theater building. The meeting is a requirement for the grant the owners received for the project.

Next Meeting

April 2, 2025

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m. by Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo.