

**MINUTES OF A MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF FORT THOMAS,  
CAMPBELL COUNTY, KENTUCKY, ON  
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022**

Mayor Eric Haas called the meeting of council to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2022. Melissa Beckett, City Clerk, called the roll and the following council members were present: Lisa Kelly, Ben Pendery, Ken Bowman, Jeff Bezold, Adam Blau and Roger Peterman. Staff members in attendance included: City Administrative Officer Ron Dill, City Clerk Melissa Beckett, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director Joe Ewald, Fire Chief Chris Amon, Police Chief Casey Kilgore, and City Attorney Tim Schneider.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the February 22, 2022 meeting of council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Pendery to approve the minutes as written. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

**Visitors and Communications:**

**General Services Department Annual Report:** Kevin Barbian, General Services Director presented his annual report to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to receive and file the Annual Report for the General Services Department. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Suzanne Cetrulo introduced herself to the mayor and council. Judge Cetrulo is running this fall for the 6<sup>th</sup> Appellate District, Division 2, Kentucky Court of Appeals. Mayor Haas thanked Judge Cetrulo for attending.

Joan Ferris of 66 Burney Lane was present and addressed council. Ms. Ferris thanked the mayor and council for the installation of the stop sign at the 4-way intersection at S. Ft. Thomas Avenue and the entrance to Tower Park. She also asked about the zoning code update. She is asking that the city get this topic out to the public via a survey and offered to help put the survey together and help with the data compilation and review. Mayor Haas noted that the zoning ordinance update was a part of the community plan and it is still in the investigative stages. There will still be plenty of time for public input as they are still in the beginning stages. It was also noted that the public is welcome to attend the Planning Commission meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Ron Dill indicated that the process is in front of planning and zoning and they are looking at the entire text of the ordinance and are targeting certain topic areas. Once they are completed their study, they will have a public forum where they take public comment. The proposed zoning ordinance will have to be approved by council once it is completed. Ms. Ferris went on to discuss how residents of Fort Thomas feel about their community and are concerned about changes that would be a detriment to this well-loved town. Ron Dill said that this is a very interactive process, nothing has been decided yet, and being a part of the process is the best way for people to have influence on the project. He encouraged people to be interactive in the meetings. Mr. Bowman mentioned that he has advocated in the past to have an interactive email list for people to be notified of meetings and other happenings around the city. Mayor Haas encouraged Ms. Ferris to attend the meetings and we appreciate the public involvement in the process.

Peggy Maggio of 37 S. Shaw Lane addressed council. Ms. Maggio mentioned that she was shocked to hear about the zoning code update and the potential for row houses in the Central Business District and other changes proposed. She is asking that everyone on the city council look closely at the consultant's report and what would the city look like if this change is put into effect. Ms. Maggio is concerned about the west side of N. Ft. Thomas Ave. losing all of its greenspace and having large properties built close sidewalk. She indicated that she had issues maneuvering the website to find information on the zoning code update. She asked that the city have some sort of print copy that will go out to residents with this information.

Brian Allesandro the cross country coach with Highlands Middle School and board member of the Swim Club addressed council. Mr. Allesandro raised his concerns about the installation of a splash pad in Highland Park. He noted that he uses the park June through September for his cross country training and also hosts meets at the park. Altering this area of the greenspace with a spray ground, would greatly affect kids of many age groups that use the course. Mr. Allesandro also indicated that there are no other options in the city that has enough space for a starting line. He is asking that council table this project until more information is available on financials. Mr. Bezold indicated that this item has been discussed for approx. 7 years, and last week was the first time that drawings were seen. There was extensive research on this topic over the past years, and there are still more steps in the process.

Katie Beck of 264 Sergeant Avenue addressed council. Ms. Beck was present on behalf of her husband to discuss the invasive perennial, Lesser Celandine in Tower Park. It will eventually take over and kill out the wildflowers and other plants that the community loves. It can be eradicated and is best managed if caught early. She is asking the city to take this issue seriously.

Elizabeth Allegrini of 45 Lockwood Place addressed council. Ms. Allegrini noted that she likes the idea of the op-in emails for community members. She also asked if the community can interact with commission members at the meetings. Mayor Haas noted that a public hearing and a public meeting are two different things. At a public meeting it is mainly listening but if you have a question, the boards and commissions are more than happy to address it at the meeting if it pertains to the current discussion.

Katie Spicer of 229 Sergeant addressed council. She indicated that she volunteers with the Diocese of Covington who also use Highland Park for their cross country meets. They are a very small group. Mr. Bezold asked Katie's opinion on an option that would work for everyone. She said that it could be possible, but should be collaboratively done. Brian's group is very large and parking is extremely packed. There is a lot going on in a small space. Ron Dill indicated that the park is adaptive, NKU uses Tower Park to run their cross country meets and training. Katie went on to say that she will always be an advocate for keeping the greenspace.

Mike Clines of 5 Harvard Court, Alexandria, KY addressed council. Mr. Clines is running for Ky. State Senate in Joe Fischer's current seat. The primary is May 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reports of Boards, Committees and Commissions**

**Finance Committee** – The Finance Committee of Council met on March 14, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. Chairman Ben Pendery reported the following:

The committee continued its discussion on the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. The Department of the Treasury's final rule on ARPA funds, issued earlier this year, eased the restrictions on the expenditure of those funds. While the original six categories discussed

earlier remain in place, their scope has been widened in such a way that most expenses incurred by the City in the normal course of business are now eligible uses for the ARPA funds.

City staff prepared a preliminary spreadsheet of potential expenditures and projects, ranging from infrastructure projects to business grant programs to premium pay for employees. This initial list served as a guide for the committee's discussion. Each item on the spreadsheet was discussed in detail, with the Mayor, Council members, staff and public safety employees weighing the positives and negatives of each possible expenditure.

Specifically, Economic Development Director / Renaissance Manager Chanda Calentine outlined three grant programs, each of which benefits a different group of local businesses. First, the original Grow Grant façade program would be expanded by increasing the funding to \$120,000 for the next program year. Second, an additional \$120,000 would be allocated to an "Interior Upfit" program, with an eye towards interior renovations and projects that the façade program does not cover. Finally, the City will create a "Rent Subsidy" program that offers rent assistance to businesses which are opening in or relocating to Fort Thomas. This grant would also be in the amount of \$120,000. After much discussion, and in light of that fact that these expenditure falls under the original six allowable ARPA uses, the Committee recommends that staff finalize the programs and that \$360,000 be allocated for implementation.

The group also discussed the replacement of the main playground structures at Tower Park, including the addition of a splashpark / sprayground element, and the reworking of the site to meet ADA accessibility requirements. It was agreed that this use of funds would allow for a much-needed upgrade of an area that has seen significant use since the beginning of the pandemic for both Fort Thomas families and families from surrounding communities, as well as creating a more accessible space for those with special needs. This expenditure also falls within the scope of the original APRA guidelines. As such, the Committee recommends that staff continue with this project and that a total of \$809,000 be allocated for implementation.

Also discussed was the resurfacing and redeveloping of the recently-acquired parking lot behind the Hiland Building at 18 North Fort Thomas. As this area is crucial to the continued development and success of the Cultural Arts District, the Committee recommends that funds in the amount of \$235,000 be allocated for to resurface and upgrade these parking facilities.

Finally, the group discussed the subject of premium pay for City employees. Representatives from the City's public safety departments were on hand to answer questions from Committee members and City staff. After much discussion, the decision was made to table this item, pending further discussion and research.

In closing the meeting, the Committee directed staff to continue researching additional projects and potential expenditures. It was agreed that the group should reconvene prior to the April meeting of Council for further discussion on the subject.

Mr. Bowman indicated that he is on board with everything contained in the report but to table the portion regarding the grants so that there is more time for council to review them.

Discussion ensued with city council regarding the Finance Committee report. Mr. Blau questioned several portions of the report. Mr. Pendery said that we had the finance committee meeting last week and all of this was discussed, it was a very comprehensive and lengthy meeting to make the best use for the ARPA funds and how it benefits the whole community and have the biggest impact.

Mr. Pendery also mentioned that the city does not have council committee meetings scheduled ahead of time on a regular basis and if any person has questions and cannot find information on the website, we encourage them to contact council or city staff and we will be happy to help.

Chanda Calentine addressed council. She indicated that there is an existing website/app that the city established in 2017 during the Sesquicentennial. The app will contain information on meetings, parks/rec, events and much more and should help addresses most of the questions being asked at this meeting. It will be put out to the public once it is completed. The Grow Grant has been very beneficial to the businesses in the city. We are asking for an additional \$60,000 to assist the businesses with upgrades to their buildings.

Mr. Peterman discussed that the city has to start somewhere with a plan to use the money for city projects. The report from the committee is saying that these are the projects that came forward and they have to go out for bid, construction drawings,

Mr. Bezold noted that this is Federal money that has to be earmarked by a certain date and spent by a certain date or the city will not receive the ARPA funds. Ron Dill added that the city has received the first half of the ARPA funds and the city will receive the second half of the funds in July. These funds must be earmarked by December 31, 2024 and spend on a project by December 31, 2025.

Mr. Bowman clarified his original motion to accept the report from the Finance committee with two line items to be deferred to the next meeting of council. These items being the “Interior Upfit” grant and the “Rent Subsidy” grant to allow council more time to review. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Ms. Kelly, Mr. Pendery, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Bezold, and Mr. Peterman. Voting “no”: Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 1.

**Recreation Committee** – The Recreation Committee of Council met on March 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. Chairman Jeff Bezold reported the following:

City staff updated on current city projects with visual presentation. Item discussed included the potential phasing of parking for the area around the south portion of Tower Park and the Soccer Sports Complex. The designs focused on input received at previous meetings including the need for parking, entry into the adjacent subdivision and pedestrian safety movements. Additionally, the concept of “temporary”/ moveable skate park amenities could be introduced at the lower level of the practice fields and alternately located in the lower portion of Highland Park and/or other suitable locations. A sample application of these amenities has been priced at about \$29,000.

The concepts for additional parking adjacent to the soccer field/Sergeant Ave. and the potential roundabout at Sergeant Ave entrance were also presented. A portion of this plan involves property owned by the Ft Thomas Independent School District. It was agreed to forward these concepts to the FTISD for their consideration, with follow-up to create a potential project that addresses these issues for consideration by council.

Discussion also centered on the concepts of a potential spray park in the lower Highland Park location. Staff is continuing with the development of conceptual designs and preliminary costing. The variations of types of systems were explained and concepts will incorporate multiple system options. These details should be available for consideration this spring.

Staff also shared preliminary concept for the property recently obtained off Memorial Parkway now known as Carlisle Park. A brief review of potential amenities included an open air pergola, walking paths, pickle-ball courts, dog-park, etc.

The Committee has reviewed the recent implementation plans and is presently forwarding for consideration of city council the purchase of moveable skate park structures. Staff is requesting authorization for purchase.

Mr. Bezold also mentioned the potential for a zip line in Tower Park. Mr. Bowman indicated that after speaking to CORA and the Conservancy, there is a conservation easement that runs through this area that would have to be considered.

A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Pendery to receive and file the report from the Recreation Committee. The Mayor called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Bezold and seconded by Mr. Bowman to move forward with the splash pad, start design, and get cost estimates. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Ms. Kelly, Mr. Pendery, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Bezold, and Mr. Peterman. Voting “no”: Mr. Blau. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 1.

## **Reports of Officers**

**Fire Department Monthly Report, Chief Chris Amon:** Fire Chief Chris Amon presented the fire monthly report to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Pendery to receive and file the monthly report for the Fire Department. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

**Police Department Monthly Report, Chief Casey Kilgore:** Chief Casey Kilgore presented the police monthly report to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to receive and file the monthly report for the Police Department. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

## **City Administrator’s Report: Ron Dill**

**Personnel:** City staff has received announcement of pending retirement from Michael Wright FF/P in the Fire Department scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup>. We have an active eligibility list that we will be utilizing for next hire. Troy Laytart resigned his position this week as Parks & Greenspace laborer, this position will be filled with the appointment of Eric Rixson. Eric has served in a part time position in General Services for several years.

**City Building Update:** The city building is progressing well and we are targeting for a completion date. There are some critical items (mostly for electric) that are delayed in the supply chain and may dictate an actual finish date. Exterior is generally complete and awaiting warmer weather to do the exterior staining of the front façade. Interior work is a completion of drywall in the addition, primer paint is being finished in the original building and finishes may soon begin.

**2022 Street Program:** The scheduled bid opening for this project is next Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We do expect bids to have provisions for cost adjustments due to petroleum prices that effect asphalt production. Bids will be forwarded at the April council meeting.

**Landscape Bids – CBD Streetscape/City Building:** This project is also out for bid with the bid opening scheduled for Thursday April 7<sup>th</sup>. This project is to “re-fresh” the Central Business District landscape and bids will be forwarded at the April council meeting.

**Tower Park Swings/Mess Hall Walkway:** General Services crews will be constructing both of these projects in Tower Park as weather permits. The swings will be situated at the overlook on Alexander Circle under custom built pergolas and the walkway will be placed as depicted in plans shared at the last meeting.

**Shelter #3:** Fencing was installed this week and picnic tables shipped and are expected any day. This will be the finishing touches on the area of Shelter 3.

**City Re-Branding Process:** The committee is currently performing interviews of the applicants. Once interviews are completed, the committee will re-convene and bring a recommendation to council.

### **New Business**

None.

**Finance Committee Report of Disbursements:** The Finance Committee presented its Report of Disbursements and recommended the payment of warrants numbered 10752-10919 for the period of **February 11 to March 14, 2022.** A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to concur in the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Ms. Kelly, Mr. Pendery, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Blau, and Mr. Peterman. Voting “no” none. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

### **Ordinances and Orders**

**Ordinance O-01-2022:** Consideration of an ordinance establishing the city’s intent to proceed with the 2022 Street Resurfacing Program. The contents of the ordinance comply with the recommendations from the Public Works Committee and City Engineer. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Pendery to approve ordinance O-01-2022. Upon call of the roll, the following members voted “aye”: Ms. Kelly, Mr. Pendery, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Bezold, Mr. Blau, and Mr. Peterman. Voting “no” none. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

**Ordinance O-02-2022:** First reading of an ordinance apportioning the assessments for the improvements to N. Ft. Thomas Ave. (2019); Waterworks Road (2020); Beechwood Ave, Crowell Ave. Greenwood Ave, Holly Lane, Mayfield Ave., Military Parkway and Robson Ave, all in accordance with the 2021 Street Improvement Program. This ordinance will be laid over to the April 18th meeting of council for consideration.

**Municipal Order MO-02-2022:** An order appointing Casey Kilgore as the Police Chief was presented to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to approve municipal order MO-02-2022. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

**Municipal Order MO-03-2022:** An order reappointing Barb Manyet to the city’s Tree Commission was presented to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to approve municipal order MO-03-2022. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

**Municipal Order MO-04-2022:** An order reappointing Joey Hood to the city’s Tree Commission was presented to council. A motion was made by Mr. Bowman and seconded by Mr. Bezold to approve municipal order MO-04-2022. Mayor Haas called for a voice vote and the motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Order EO-07-2022:** An order reappointing Kim Rechten as a member of the Renaissance Board was presented to council with no action necessary.

**Executive Order EO-08-2022:** An order reappointing Heidi Neltner as a member of the Renaissance Board was presented to council with no action necessary.

**Executive Order EO-09-2022:** An order reappointing Holli Patterson as a member of the Renaissance Board was presented to council with no action necessary.

**Executive Order EO-10-2022:** An order appointing Eric Rixson to the position of Parks & Greenspace Laborer I was presented to council with no action necessary.

With no further business to come before council, the meeting was adjourned.

**APPROVED:**

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Eric Haas, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Melissa K. Beckett, City Clerk