



**Ravenna City Council
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
November 16th, 2020**

The public meeting was held via Zoom and live streamed via YouTube. A video recording of the meeting can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhIG4RCRG_Y&t=1s

Council present via Zoom: Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael, Rob Kairis, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Tim Calfee, Christina West, and Matt Harper.

Also attending the meeting via Zoom: Mayor Frank Seman; Law Director, Frank Cimino; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Fire Chief, Geoffrey Cleveland; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; and Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor

Planning Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:37 P.M. by Chairperson, Rob Kairis

Mr. Kairis stated that the agenda as presented has been altered and the Meridian St. parking discussion has been postponed.

Mr. Kairis stated that the first item was the annual codified ordinance update approval. The Clerk stated that there are codified updates done every year that have to be approved. She suggested only printing the codified ordinance updates once a year instead of twice a year but keeping the online updates to twice a year. Mr. Kairis stated that the item is a housekeeping item.

- The item was moved forward

The second item on the agenda was a MOU for the Jack Schafer endowment.

Mr. Kairis stated that Council received the MOU and the list of projects to be done with the endowment funds. He had a question about the cost of the items on the list and Mayor Seman explained that the plan is to raise money to fund all the projects, which exceeds the \$100,000 endowment. The Mayor also explained that the list of items were submitted by various entities, adding that the items with double check marks mean that it is both the City and the Township. He stated that digitizing newspapers is a very expensive proposition, which was one of the larger ticket items on the project list.

Mr. Kairis was concerned that since the City is going to oversee paying invoices, and if items come in at over the \$100,000 bequest, then it would have to pay the difference. He suggested to edit the MOU whereas section to not to exceed the \$100,000 for invoice payments.

The Mayor stated that the \$100,000 limit can be added to the MOU.

- The item was moved forward

The third item on the agenda was to discuss the cemetery union.

Mr. Kairis stated that the City and the Township had met to discuss the cemetery union and the Townships desire to dissolve the union. He explained what had led to that decision which was the mandatory acquisition of Grandview Cemetery causing the Township to have concerns about their ability to financially support Maple Grove Cemetery. Mr. Kairis explained that their split cost towards the cemetery is based upon property values within the Township and the City. In June they sent a letter requesting to remove themselves from the cemetery union over a proposed

three-year plan, which they then suggested a five-year plan. Mr. Kairis stated that their ultimate goal is to remove themselves from the union, but they may be open to a set cemetery payment each year.

Mr. Kairis stated that he quickly came up with four different options for the City to respond or consider in response to the Township request which included letting them out of the union immediately, a three to five year phase out, allowing them a fixed amount to pay each year, or not allowing them out of the cemetery union.

Mr. Kairis stated that there are parameters that are established in the Ohio Revised Code for union cemeteries and a fixed cost per year to pay may not allow it to be a union cemetery anymore.

Mr. Kairis stated that the last option is to initiate a tax levy. He said that it does not have to go to a vote as long as it is below 10 mil and then it just needs to be agreed upon by a majority vote in May and will be put into effect the following January. He stated that a 1mil tax levy will pay 110% of the cemetery budget as presented last January, adding that the taxpayers already pay for the cemetery, but they would just be paying for it in a different way.

Mr. Kluge stated that the Law Director said that there may be potential legal issues and asked if Council would like to go into executive session to discuss them or to discuss them in the open.

Ms. Michael said that she did not see an issue discussing them in public and Ms. Wood disagreed and said that legal issues should be discussed in executive session.

Ms. Wood reiterated the history of the cemetery with the Township and stated that even if the City lets out the Township from their responsibility, there is a possibility that they will want back in years down the road as they have done in the past.

Mr. Moskun stated that if the Township gets out of the union it will increase the burial costs for the Township residents.

Mr. Cimino stated that the Township attorney had indicated that the Township would be looking into the courts depending on the City's response, and therefore an executive session would be permissible.

Mr. Kairis opened the floor to a motion to go into executive session.

Mr. Cimino stated that there is another legal item that he would like to discuss in executive session.

There was no motion for an executive session.

Mr. Calfee stated that he has not heard an additional reason to the Townships request to leave the union aside from being short of money, which he doesn't believe is a good reason, adding that the cost would then be transferred over to the City's residents. Mr. Calfee referred to the potential tax levy and stated that although the money could be collected to replace what is currently spent out of each entities budget, that he believes more money is needed to update and fix up the cemetery.

Mr. Moskun stated that the cost of items that need to be fix is exuberant and more funds are necessary.

Mr. Kairis asked if anyone would like to push forward letting the Township out of the union cemetery and the only response was from Mr. Moskun who stated that he did not want to let them out of the agreement.

Mr. Calfee asked about the procedure for implementing a cemetery tax levy and Mr. Kairis read from the Ohio Revised Code which explained it.

Mr. Kluge thanked Mr. Kairis and stated that Council is committed to the cemetery, its future and discussing all ways to continue to fund the cemetery.

Currently there are 2 Council members and 1 Township Trustee on the Union Cemetery Board. The topic of the ratio of Council versus Trustees was discussed with no resolution of how or if that could be changed.

Mr. Kluge stated that the longest discussion at the joint cemetery meeting was about a possible tax levy with the main point being that the Township wanted out of the cemetery union.

- The item was for discussion only

Management update

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:22 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Rob Kairis, Chairperson
Planning Committee**