



Ravenna City Council
Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2021

The public meeting was held in person and live streamed via YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-jh3KzvF8k>

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

Also in attendance: Mayor Frank Seman; Finance Director, Brian Huff; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Brenda Fargo; Jeff Heinrich; Todd Peetz; Larry Silenius; Cliff Soudil; Lou Dudek; Diane Smith and Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor

The Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairperson, Cheryl Wood.

The first item was a presentation by NOPEC.

Ms. Wood introduced Brenda Fargo and Jeff Heinrich from NOPEC, and they explained the NOPEC program to Council. NOPEC is a Council of Governments that is comprised of 225 communities in 19 Counties in Ohio. They serve communities by providing gas and electric programs, opportunities for the community, the PACE Loan Program, provide seed money, low interest loans for energy efficiency type programs and provide instant payback. NOPEC also offers preferred pricing for City facilities at no margin, and they provide gas and electric grants which help with upgrades such as LED lighting. Mr. Heinrich explained that a representative will keep in contact with the City after a contract is signed. In response to Ms. Michaels question, Mr. Heinrich stated that every City is entitled to grants but the amount is different depending on the municipality. There is no cancelation fee for leaving the program, but they do prefer for the City to stay through the aggregation period due to agreements with participating parties. They stated that Kent saved approximately \$47,000 the previous year.

Mr. Kairis informed the representatives that the City just signed a two-year gas aggregation program. Ms. Fargo stated that they will put a reminder in to contact the City in January 2023 so that there is enough time to consider their program and draw up the paperwork.

- The item was for discussion only.

The second item was a discussion about a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA).

Mr. Kairis stated that there is some preparation that needs to be done to designate an area downtown, the days, and the hours, along with who would provide the DORA beverage cups and wrist bands to the bars. The DORA would be designed to fit the downtown area. It was stated that it could help some of the local downtown businesses if used properly, but that there are drug and alcohol rehab facilities in town that would not be in favor of a DORA.

Main Street Ravenna provided information explaining that a DORA is a mapped out designated outdoor refreshment area where participants can drink alcoholic beverages within the confines of the area while drinking from a DORA marked cup and wearing an identifying wrist band. In order to implement a DORA, there must be four participating liquor establishments within the confines of the DORA. The President of Main Street Ravenna (MSR), Todd Peetz, had to leave prior to being able to talk to Council regarding MSR's endorsement of a downtown DORA.

Discussion took place regarding the logistics of DORA implementation, cups, and signage. Ms. Wood explained that the information from MSR stated that they would facilitate the implementation of the DORA. Mr. Kairis was concerned who would pay for the DORA cups and about the collection of discarded DORA cups, stating that there should be a sanitation plan in effect.

Council discussed the cultural advantage of having events with the DORA in place and then later the DORA can be reformatted as desired to have set days and times. They acknowledged that the DORA in Kent has been successful but that they also have a different design and designated sitting areas than Ravenna. Ms. Michael suggested that a DORA could potentially help a business that does not sell alcohol, such as Guido's, to host DORA participants on their patio while they eat at the restaurant. Council stated that the future civic space at 218 W. Main St. could be a nice place to seat DORA participants and would be more fitting of a social space to implement the DORA.

Council members still had unanswered questions and uncertainty regarding the implementation of the DORA and what it would mean for downtown Ravenna. They stated that they will ask downtown businesses to get their feedback on the concept.

Council decided to keep the item in Committee for further review.

- The item was for discussion only.

The third item was an addendum to the 2019 CHIP grant.

Ms. Wood stated that the Mayor is asking for permission to sign the addendum to extend the 2019 CHIP Grant. It will be extended until July 2022. There are still four more private rehabilitations that need to get done.

Mayor Seman stated that they had to schedule contractors separately that were going into remodel the properties because of the pandemic.

Ms. Wood stated that it is a common occurrence across the state because of the pandemic.

- The item was moved forward

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:31 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Cheryl Wood, Chairperson
Community & Economic Development**