



**Ravenna City Council
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2023**

The public meeting was held in person in City Council Chambers.

Council present: Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael, Rob Kairis, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Christina West, Matt Harper

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Seman; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Cliff Soudil, Larry Silenius, Darlenee Young, Melissa Morris, Melynda Rhodes, Claire Moore, Dave McIntire, Robert Rhodes, Sherri Kotouc, Ralph Morehead, Destiney Hayes-Knife, Mike Bogo, Jason and Mrs. Bates, Amber Stepic, Diane Smith

Planning Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:44 P.M. by Chairperson, Rob Kairis

The first item was to accept the CLG grant award.

Mr. Kairis stated that changes to the Design Review Guidelines have been years in the making and that plans to hire a consultant were put on hold to apply for a grant to help pay for the consultant. He stated that the City received quotes from different companies and decided to move forward with Perspectus after receiving the recommendation from the Design Review Commission (DRC). Mr. Kairis stated that the DRC will verify the grant contract and that it must be spent by December 31, 2024.

Ms. Michael asked if anything had changed with the decision to go with Perspectus and wanted to check with the DRC to make sure that they are the desired contractor.

Ms. Wood stated that she felt that CT Consultants were more qualified.

Mr. Kairis stated that Perspectus provided a clear proposal and CT Consultants did not. He added that the contract with Perspectus was contingent on receiving the grant.

- The item was moved forward.

Mr. Kairis stated that there were some guests that would like to address Council regarding the Parks and Recreation Department and invited them to approach the podium.

Melissa Morris addressed Council to discuss some concerns she's had regarding the Parks and Recreation Department and provided her backstory as a Ravenna resident, a former Parks and Recreation employee and volunteer coach. She stated that she had tried to go up the chain of command with her issues and did not receive any resolution to her concerns. Ms. Morris addressed concerns regarding background checks of coaches, refunds on programs, confusing program set ups, lack of coaching packets, inability to contact people during or after hours as a coach, and an overwhelming number of kids per team to coach. She expressed frustrations with staff and was concerned with missing opportunities to incorporate more programs to serve the youth community. Ms. Morris stated that she has helped with coaching soccer for the past 9-10 seasons and said that she gets requested to coach from families. She noted a list of various issues and concerns with the Parks and Recreation Department and stated that she had come to Council only because her concerns were repeatedly dismissed. Ms. Morris referred to the Park Board and

questioned how they measure success and stated that the sport programs are losing out on coaches and players due to frustrations within the programs and are going off to participate in other communities.

Mr. Kairis stated that he appreciated her passion and thanked her for sharing her concerns, adding that the City can look into funding for the department.

Ms. Michael stated that all of the administration reports to the Mayor and that he is available to talk anytime.

Ms. Morris asked about the checks and balances of the department and questioned why some staff members resigned.

Ms. Wood thanked Ms. Morris for speaking and stated that she would like to hear suggestions regarding the issues.

Ms. Morris stated that she wants to be part of the solution and not just call attention to issues. Clair Moore addressed Council to address similar concerns and stated that she called City Hall to talk about the issues but there was no response back. She stated that she ended up taking her grandchildren to play sports in Streetsboro and encountered multiple Ravenna families there, adding that there aren't enough programs in Ravenna.

Jason Bates addressed Council to explain his history of coaching and his frustration with the Parks and Recreation Department's lack of budget for equipment, uniforms, coach support and other issues. He stated that he was given donated uniforms from 1982 to utilize, a budget of \$22 per uniform and received pushback when he found a private sponsor for uniforms. Mr. Bates stated that the City paid \$15,000 to replace the lights at the softball field and when his team requested to play under the lights they were denied due to the cost of turning on the lights. He stated that he personally pays out of pocket to buy ice cream and hoodies for his team to make up for frustrations they encounter and said that he is trying to keep his teams interested in sports or else they may never get back into the sport. Mr. Bates stated that he wants to build bridges and not burn them, but said that there will be the same struggles next year if they are not addressed. Mayor Seman stated that his children played in the Parks and Recreation programs and asked everyone to make an appointment to come see him to discuss the matter further.

Darlenee Young addressed Council to discuss nuisance mowing issues and how they are handled by staff within the City. She stated that the property adjacent to hers had been vacant and overgrown for 4 years and that despite her efforts to inform the City, nuisance mowing did not take place. Ms. Young questioned the methods used to determine if grass was 8" inches, the manner in which notifications of high grass were issued and then subsequently mowed, and charged by an outside landscaping company.

Ms. Wood stated that high grass has become more of a priority due to more staffing.

Ms. Young inquired about the step process leading up to a nuisance mowing violation.

Mr. Kairis stated that there should be more clarification on the process and that the intent is to encourage residents to cut their grass.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Rob Kairis, Chairperson
Planning Committee**