



**Ravenna City Council
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
August 14, 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, Tim Calfee, Matt Harper

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Frank Seman; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Cliff Soudil, Larry Silenius, Diane Smith, John Sferra

Planning Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:52 P.M. by Chairperson, Rob Kairis

The first item was Guido's patio expansion.

Mr. Kairis stated that the item was discussed and there was a tracking sheet. He explained that there has been an issue with water going into the basement because of the recently exposed wall. Mr. Kairis stated that Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) currently owns the property adjacent to Guido's wall and that the brick repair depends on factors such as a future mural and an outdoor awning and doorway.

Mr. Finney asked if Council wanted to accept Guido's request of utilizing an area of 30' feet by 7' feet for a patio expansion.

Mr. Kairis explained that the City doesn't own the property therefore it cannot enter into a lease agreement with Guido's and stated that any agreement with Guido's should have a monetary compensation. He stated that Guido's would like to cut a doorway into the wall to have another access point for the patio extension and said that Guido's would pay for the renovation. Mr. Kairis stated that the details will have to be finalized, along with a compensation amount.

Mr. Kluge stated that there could be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drawn up to create an agreement while NDS still maintains the property before handing it over to the City. He said that the City will have to sit down with the stakeholders to get a clear understanding of the agreement details and a price for a lease.

Ms. Wood agreed and stated that the materials used for the wall would be different depending on how it is utilized. She said that the agreement for the civic space should be the same or similar agreement as Guido's has for their front sidewalk patio.

Mr. Kairis noted that there was no agreement found for the front patio space.

Ms. Michael stated that the City wants to help businesses thrive and that the agreement for a patio extension is a way of helping small business.

Mr. Kairis stated that he represents the taxpayers and that the civic space will become city property eventually.

Ms. Michael stated that the patio extension will help Guido's business which will then help the city tax base and create more jobs.

Ms. Kluge stated that the City will have to meet with the stakeholder to determine the next steps.

Mr. Kairis reiterated that the City needs to have adequate compensation for utilization of part of the civic space.

Ms. Wood stated that the approval or denial of a patio extension lease, will determine how the wall is fixed. She shared that she was able to acquire a grant in the sum of \$7,500 from the Akron-Cleveland Association of Realtors towards items in the civic space.

Mr. Kairis stated that NDS could just repair the wall and then Guido's could renovate the wall at a later date as an option.

- The item was moved forward.

The second item was a conceptual long-term plan for Osborn Park.

Mr. Finney explained that the railroad is amenable to relinquishing the parcel that they own next to the proposed Osborn Park which will allow the City to utilize the 5 acres and turn it into a park. He stated that the City has been planning the park for years and that he would like to hire a landscape architect to conceptualize the space. Mr. Finney stated that some design details could include a sand volleyball court, an amphitheater, an ice-skating rink and a parking lot.

Ms. Michael referred to the amphitheater suggestion and cautioned about too much noise in the area and said that there have been complaints from the neighborhood in the past.

Mr. Finney noted that the area is zoned industrial.

Mr. Kluge asked if the project could have a phased approach to the plan and Mr. Finney responded, yes.

Mr. Finney stated that his suggestion is to appropriate \$10,000 to have Implement Studios start the dialogue and create a design for the park space.

Ms. Wood stated that the City is starting a comprehensive plan which will address land usage within the city.

Mr. Kairis agreed, but stated that the area had been acquired with the intention of it being a park.

Mr. Finney stated that there are Kent State students that may be able to take on the project.

Mr. Moskun agreed and stated that they have done projects for the city in the past.

Mr. Finney asked if the funds would come out of the General Fund or the Park CI Fund, and the Finance Director stated that the cost could be split between funds.

Mr. Kairis asked if Council would like to move forward with Implement Studios.

Mr. Finney stated that money has been earmarked for requests for proposals (RFP's) for different landscape architects.

Mr. Moskun stated that Charles Fredrick from Kent State University worked on the cemetery and said that it is a great way to instruct students and that it is a great thing to consider.

Mr. Kairis stated that the item is on the table for consideration with Implement Studios.

Mr. Finney stated that it depends on what services are desired.

Mayor Seman reminded Council that Kent State had worked on an initiative for downtown signage and presented different options, adding that money is still earmarked for it.

Mr. Kluge stated that he would like to see it as a phased approach and that he had brought forth a signage design for Council to consider. He said that he would like to add signage to next month's agenda and that he had initially misunderstood the process necessary to implement them. Mr.

Kluge stated that he would like to have a decision for either the conceptual plan or to get RFP's for a plan, adding that he would like to see improvements and would like for it to move forward.

Mayor Seman stated that the goal is to get people downtown.

Mr. Kairis asked how Council would like to proceed and Ms. Michael stated that she would like to see a new set of eyes on the project.

Mr. Calfee stated that the five-acre space looks amazing since it was cleaned up and that it would be a great space with potential, adding that he is for moving the item forward either way.

Mr. Finney stated that he would get RFP's for the project with architects who are familiar with parks, recreation and entertainment spaces. He asked if Council would like to solicit public input regarding the park space and Ms. Wood responded, yes.

Mr. Kairis pointed out that it would be an efficient process to work with a familiar person and that the project would take longer with having to acquire RFP's.

Ms. Michael stated that she wants to do what's best for the land.

Mr. Harper stated that he would like to see the project farmed out.

Ms. Wood agreed.

Ms. Michael stated that there is a Park Board meeting coming up and that she would like to get their viewpoint.

- The item was for discussion only.

The third item was a contract with Perspectus for historic district guidelines.

Mr. Kairis stated that the item is for a contract with Perspectus which was sent out to Council.

He explained that the base price for the contract is \$25,000 and there is an additional amount of \$2,500 for add on items, adding that the City wanted to keep the total below \$30,000.

Mr. Calfee stated that the CLG grant that the City received for the project will pay for 2/3 of the cost.

Mr. Silenius stated his opinion on picking the right company for the project. He was concerned that Perspectus would care more about the buildings than the people and that they would not address economic development problems.

Mr. Soudil reminded Council that in 1986 the City did a copy and paste approach to acquiring the Design Review Guidelines and implored Council to do their homework to compare both Perspectus and CT Consultants, adding that the downtown needs help with economic development.

Mr. Finney stated that nothing is set in stone and Council can decide which contractor they want.

Mr. Kairis stated that Council had previously approved Perspectus as the contractor.

- The item was moved forward.

Management Update

Mayor Seman stated that Dennis West, is doing a good job as the Economic Development Director and that they are working to get more people downtown. He said that a collection of things are coming together and that it will take time.

Mayor Seman stated that the CLG grant contract was lengthy and had a lot of boxes to check off.

Mayor Seman informed Council that the Portage County Regional Planning Commission Director, Todd Peetz, is anxious to move forward with the comprehensive plan and that other communities are also participating in getting their own plan together.

Ms. Michael stated that a resident reached out via email to suggest pickle ball as a sport in the city and Mr. Finney stated that City Park already has a pickle ball court.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Rob Kairis, Chairperson
Planning Committee**