

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting

April 15, 2019

Members: Tim Gorbach, Chair
Jerry James
Mary Ellen Pyke

Mr. Gorbach called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the March 4, 2019 and March 18, 2019 Finance Committee meetings were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Ord. B-28

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. B-28

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Ohio History Connection for the Berkshire Park Subdivision Historic District National Registration, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, stated that the City is requesting a near-matching grant in this ordinance. The exact figures are \$11,462 for the grant they are receiving. The City's match is \$8,070. Assuming the ordinance passes, they would receive a total of \$19,532. With that, they would hire a consultant to prepare an inventory of a newly-created historic district, which is called the Berkshire. Essentially, it is the district that lies between Berk Street, Fourth Street, Whitelaw Street and Roosevelt Avenue. They have identified many historic residential structures in that area. Once the grant monies will be received, the newly-hired consultant would start an inventory process of that district. Once that is approved by the Secretary of Interior, that district is carved out and the Historic Board would be in charge of overseeing that entire process.

Mr. Gorbach asked what type of assistance they would need from the homeowners. Ms. Colavecchio stated none. Their consultant would not be going into the homes. They would be doing research from the County website and physical observation, walking through the neighborhood and piecing it together. Mr. Gorbach asked if there would be any impediment to the type of use a homeowner would have once their home was categorized as a historic home or structure. Ms. Colavecchio stated that there are always going to be strict stipulations in a historic district. The Historic Review Board has already populated a set of guidelines that residences have to comply with. Essentially what they do is apply for a certificate of appropriateness through the Design Historic Review Board. Any changes to the exteriors of their residences have to be approved through that mechanism. Not every structure in a district is going to have to conform, so they do not have to get a certificate of appropriateness if they want to renovate the exterior of their property. Those homeowners who do fit within the confines of what is considered to be

Finance and Appropriations
April 15, 2019 – Page 2

historic would be held to the guidelines. This is all part of a future public meeting for respective homeowners to explain that this process is being considered and make their thoughts known. Mr. Gorbach asked if there will be sufficient notice to each homeowner. Ms. Colavecchio stated that there would. The big value to having a historic structure is that, when making those renovations, the homeowner can apply to the State of Ohio for a tax credit. If that is granted, that's 20 percent of the renovation cost.

Mrs. Pyke asked if they have any knowledge of residents who have approached the Administration to move this forward. Ms. Colavecchio stated that they have not. Mrs. Pyke asked if there was any reason why they would do this without having the public meetings first. Ms. Colavecchio stated that they cannot move to carve out what this district would be unless a consultant is hired. At this time, the boundaries are tentative. Until an inventory of the homes is completed, they really can't define what the boundary would be. Once that is predetermined by the consultant, then the public hearing would be set and all of the people in that boundary would be notified. Mrs. Pyke stated that she would be reluctant to move forward if the residents in that area have not come forward asking for it.

Mr. Brillhart stated that he thinks it's a fabulous idea. Anything to help the homeowners and to improve the area is just an excellent tool. Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that, with the downtown development, she would like to see it reach into neighborhoods. Investing in the neighborhoods and putting an emphasis and focus on the neighborhoods is a plus, as far as beginning with downtown and then branching out into neighborhoods. Mr. James stated that there are a lot of beautiful homes in that area, and it would be a great place for a historic district to form. It is a great idea to expand this from downtown into the actual neighborhoods. He hopes that when the time comes, a lot of folks will come to these public meetings. He will be encouraging the residents in his ward to come to the meeting, also.

Mr. Iona asked if they have determined what the cost will be. Ms. Colavecchio stated that it is \$19,000. The \$11,000 figure is the grant amount. The City's match is the \$8,000, so it's not a 50-50 match. Mr. Iona asked how residents would be notified that they're going to be in a historic area besides the newspapers and legal news. Ms. Colavecchio stated that they will get a notice from the Community Development Department mailed to them. Mrs. Pyke stated that she wants to make sure of what they're voting on tonight. Mrs. Colavecchio stated that the City is asking for \$8,000. If this passes, they are going to receive \$11,000 in the form of a grant. With that \$19,000, they will hire the consultant who will inventory all the residences in this projected area. From the inventory of each home, they will carve out and decide the exact area that the district should be. They will then mail the notices to the residents and hold a public meeting.

Mrs. Pyke asked if it will come back to Council then to declare it a historic district. Ms. Colavecchio stated that she doesn't know the answer to that. As she recalls, when the downtown district was put together, it did come back to Council, because the board was created through the ordinance. Mrs. Pyke stated that she will be in favor of this, but will be watching very closely to see how many residents are in favor. Mr. Gorbach stated that he looks forward to the process. He

Finance and Appropriations
April 15, 2019 – Page 3

thinks the same individuals might buy a fixer-upper because it is in the historic district. If you're going for spend X amount of dollars and they have to spend a premium because of the design restrictions, then the tax credit is available. He is anxious to see it through and to hear what the residents thoughts are and to make sure that they're engaged.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that a historic district designation is a way to protect homes, instead of thinking that somebody is going to come and build something new. The beauty of Front Street is that it was protected in a historic district to have these buildings be there to incentivize people to improve them. So, instead of razing it and build new, they are going to protect that area. Mrs. Pyke stated that there are no restrictions on tearing down a building in a historic district. That was one of the things they found on Front Street. Mrs. Colavecchio stated that it still has to be approved by the Historic Review Board. Mrs. Pyke asked if Ms. Colavecchio would look into that and let her know.

Mr. James moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-28 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Pyke. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.