

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Community Development Committee**

July 6, 2020

Members: Meika Penta, Chair
Russ Balthis
Jeff Iula

Ms. Penta called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the April 20, 2020 and June 1, 2020 Community Development Committee were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed:

Temp. Ord. A-42

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. A-42

An ordinance approving and authorizing the Mayor to execute a Community Development Block Grant economic development agreement with the Farmer's Rail, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 and appropriating the aforementioned funds for the Community Development Block Grant fund, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, and Ms. Peggy Szalay, C.D.B.G. Entitlement Administrator, presented Temporary Ordinance A-42 to Council. The Farmer's Rail, LLC, is an Artisanal Butcher Shop currently operating in Bath, Ohio, and now desires to open an additional location in Cuyahoga Falls, which result in the creation of 12 permanent full-time jobs for low-to-moderate income individuals, with an estimated annual payroll of \$500,000.00. The Farmer's Rail, LLC, has requested assistance in the form of a C.D.B.G. matching economic development grant in order to purchase necessary equipment to open its additional location in Cuyahoga Falls. The City desires to enter into a C.D.B.G. economic development agreement with the Farmer's Rail, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 to assist with the purchase of its necessary equipment and to appropriate said funds from the C.D.B.G.

Ms. Colavecchio thanked Abby Poeske, Executive Director of the Downtown Partnership, who was the first one to approach the Farmer's Rail, LLC. What is being proposed is a new store in the Levenson Building. The Farmer's Rail will begin with 12 permanent, full-time jobs at the Cuyahoga Falls location and then will add more positions with growth. The Cuyahoga Falls location will be twice the size of the shop in Bath and could feature a café with outside seating. This would be a matching grant. The Farmer's Rail will have to come up with \$100,000, themselves, in order for the City to assist them with C.D.B.G. funding of \$100,000. They are fortunate to be able to do this, especially considering the massive costs involved with putting this together. This business did not get COVID relief, and this is a way for the City to show them appreciation.

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Jeff and Melanie Brunty and Dave McIlvane, Farmer's Rail, LLC, gave a brief background of the business and stated that they hope to open in early winter. They thanked the Community Development Board and City for reaching out to them.

Ms. Penta stated that this will provide another option for the people that work and live in that area. Mr. Iula thanked the Farmer's Rail for bringing it downtown. There was always a lot of talk about Trader Joe's, but this is going to be better yet.

Mr. Balthis stated that he is excited about them coming to downtown. He will be able to walk to their new store from his home. He thanked them for their economic investment downtown and job opportunities that will be created. He also thanked Abby Poeske.

Mr. Gorbach stated that although he was not on Council when they voted for opening up the downtown, he would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Mayor, the Administration and those Council members that are able the vote on it, because whatever they were told, it is clearly happening. The Summit DD that is moving at the end of Portage is going to provide them some walk-in clients that are going to need lunch. With The Workz opening across the street, there will be good lunchtime and dinner opportunities. It is a unique situation to have downtown. There will be a lot of synergy with Cuyahoga Falls, the surrounding communities and other individuals downtown.

Mr. Balthis moved to bring out Temp. Ordinance A-42 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.