

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

March 15, 2021

Members: Meika Penta, Chair
Rachel Loza
Adam Miller

Mrs. Penta called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of February 1, 2021 Community Development Committee were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed:

Temp. Ord. B-13

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. B-13

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Farr Associates for the preparation of a study and master plan for the Merriman Valley and Schumacher Planning Areas, in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00; authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Akron for the reimbursement of costs pertaining thereto; making necessary appropriations for the same; and declaring an emergency.

Mayor Walters, Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Service Director, and Mr. Fred Guerra, Planning Director, made introductory statements about Temporary Ordinance B-13 to Council.

Mr. Doug Farr, Founder/Principal, and Ms. Vita Khosti, Urban Planner and Designer, representing Farr Associates, gave a presentation of Temporary Ordinance B-13 to Council. The Mayor will be authorized to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Farr Associates in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00 for the study and creation of the Merriman Valley and Schumacher Area Master Plan that will be utilized by the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the City of Akron for all future land use and development in the aforementioned area. The Mayor will be authorized to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Akron for the reimbursement of costs associated with the Professional Services Agreement with Farr Associates. The Finance Director will be authorized to increase appropriations in the General Fund, Community/Economic Development Department, Line Item Other Operations by \$100,000. Furthermore, the Finance Director will be authorized to make payment from the General Fund, Community/Economic Development Department, Line Item Other Operations in the amount of \$100,000 and the CDBG Fund, Line Item Other Operations in the amount of \$100,000. The CDBG Fund portion is already appropriated. The Mayor, Director of Finance, Director of Community Development, Director of Law, and any other public officials, individually and/or collectively as may be appropriate, will be authorized to prepare and execute such other documents and do all other things as are necessary or incidental to carrying out the intent and/or requirements of this legislation.

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Mr. Jason Segedy, Community Development Director for the City of Akron, stated that the City of Akron is very much looking forward to working with the City of Cuyahoga Falls. Any time the two largest cities in Summit County get together and work on something, it is a thing to celebrate. He stated that it was a pleasure working with Cuyahoga Falls to select this great team and to come together as two communities to talk about the needs of the Valley. He is excited the zoning part of this. In Akron, they have some zoning that is outdated and does not reflect the realities of the Valley today. He stated that Mayor Horrigan sends his greetings and looks forward to this process with Cuyahoga Falls.

Mrs. Penta stated that, as Chair of Community Development Committee, she was extremely excited to see it. She loves that it is going to have, many times over, an opportunity to get the input from the residents for this Master Plan.

Mr. Brillhart stated that this is a wonderful idea, and he applauds everyone that has worked so hard to bring this to this point. He is very encouraged by what Mr. Farr said and is looking forward to it. Mr. Balthis stated that this process takes time and when they put the work in and have solid community engagement and involvement, it can lead to great outcomes. There are a lot of people in the community, a lot of people at City Hall, a lot of people in Akron and Cuyahoga Falls that have been working extremely hard on the issues surrounding the Valley. He is incredibly optimistic about the project. It is going to go every bit as well as the planning for the downtown. He looks forward to being involved and encourages everyone to be involved.

Mr. Gorbach stated that he had the pleasure with meeting with a number of the folks early on in the process and learned a lot and appreciated the time he had with them. He looks forward to Mr. Farr and Ms. Khosti coming down to visit in person and being a part of this moving forward. The Valley has tremendous potential. He is sure they will encourage residents to join in and get their feedback. Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that this is an example of good government, with the Administration, from the get-go, listening to the residents, wanting to know how to move forward and have an environmentally-responsible development, listening to the residents, listening to the Council members, listening to everyone and putting together a plan to move forward in great ways. She thanked the Mayor and the Administration. Councilman Balthis and Councilman Stams and Councilman Gorbach have been involved with trying to make things right, and this is a great step in that direction.

Mrs. Spinner stated that, as someone who grew up in Akron and has now spent more of her life in Cuyahoga Falls than she had in Akron, the Valley was always a special place and was the gateway to Cuyahoga Falls. She has a lot of memories of going through the Valley to enjoy what Cuyahoga Falls had to offer. She is glad both her worlds are coming together, and that this extremely exciting and thoughtful planning is including residents from both areas and with Farr Associates in what sounds like an amazing plan. Mr. Iula stated that he has been on Council for almost 12 years. Back when he first served on Council, Akron and Cuyahoga Falls were not the best of friends, but he is happy to see the two largest cities in the county are working together. It is great that Mayor Walters and Mayor Horrigan began getting together and making this the best county in the state.

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Mr. Andrew Holland, 2079 Sourek Trail, Mr. Brett Safran, 1104 West Bath Road, Mr. Scott Myers and Ms. Gina Burk, 1701 Akron Peninsula Road, Dr. William Shaheen, 2189 Sourek Trail and Mr. Dallas Aleman, 303 Timber Ridge Drive, made statements on behalf of Preserve the Valley and individually supporting Temporary Ordinance B-13, stating that they are encouraged by the collaboration between the City of Akron and City of Cuyahoga Falls and Farr Associates.

Mr. Stams stated that there has been engagement from the Ward 8 community and the Merriman Valley community and Akron and Cuyahoga Falls. He is truly humbled to be their representative. They should be proud of the statements that they made tonight. He wants to congratulate everybody on both sides, Mayor Walters and his administration and Mayor Horrigan and his administration. He stated that he would like to ask his colleagues on City Council to please join him in the engagement of the Master Plan, and to come down and experience it and spend some time going through the Merriman Valley and spending some time in Ward 8 to get a feel for it. He looks forward to engaging with his fellow Council members going forward on this Master Plan.

Mrs. Penta stated that, as everyone has said before, it is going to take everyone's input to make sure that it is a successful Master Plan. Having this for eight to nine months to gather information on multiple platforms and working together, this can be a successful Master Plan for the future. Everyone enjoys the parks, but this is a way to help envision it correctly for everyone and making sure that everyone's concerns and input are accepted and brought to the table.

Ms. Loza moved to bring out Temp. Ordinance B-13 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Miller. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.