

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee**

July 19, 2021

Members: Russ Balthis, Chair
Rachel Loza
Jeff Iula

Mr. Balthis called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the June 21, 2021, Public Affairs Committee were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed:

Temp. Res. B-60

Discussion:

Temp. Res. B-60

A resolution supporting the Veterans Trail Project within the City of Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Austin Rau, of TASCforce, presented Temporary Resolution B-60 to Council. The Veterans Trail Project is an effort led by Trail Advocates of Summit County, and joined by Summit Metro Parks and Metropolitan Regional Transit Authority to construct a multi-purpose trail, known as Veterans Trail, running through the cities of Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Silver Lake, Stow, and Hudson. The Veterans Trail was built in 1851 and used as a railway, which has been abandoned since 1996. It has long been recognized as an ideal multi-purpose trail opportunity and has been studied for more than 16 years, The Veterans Trail will provide recreational enjoyment for the residents of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The Trail Advocates of Summit County have determined that a trail constructed on a railway is safer because it is level, generally straight and has far less interaction with vehicular traffic.

Council will express its support for the construction of a recreational multi-purpose trail, known as the Veterans Trail Project, to be partially located within the City of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. It will be found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements including Chapter 107 of the Codified Ordinances.

Ms. Nichol-Rhodes thanked Mr. Rau for being a citizen who is just trying to make things better in Cuyahoga Falls. She also stated that if any other Council members would like to add their names to the resolution, to please do so before the next Council meeting.

Mr. Brillhart stated that it is a great name and way to honor those who have served. He stated that he appreciates Mr. Rau's leadership on stepping up and bringing it to our attention.

Public Affairs Committee
July 19, 2021 – Page 2

Mr. Iula asked if that is where the old Doodlebug train line was. Mr. Rau stated that is correct. It runs through Cuyahoga Falls from just south of Howe Avenue east of Route 8 and the river. It follows Route 8 north, goes alongside the river north of Portage Trail which is a very beautiful section and probably the most scenic section of that trail. It crosses over to Riverfront Park by the Doodlebug Memorial and then west towards Silver Lake. From there, it would extend north through Stow into Hudson.

Mr. Stams thanked Mr. Rau for enriching the city and making it better. Being a walker and a hiker, he is grateful and looks forward to traveling that trail.

Mr. Gorbach stated that he would like to add his support and thank Mr. Rau for getting involved and coming to the meeting. He also stated that he appreciates Councilwoman Nichols-Rhodes for bringing this to Council's attention. He asked Mr. Rau if he knows who ultimately will oversee the construction and if he anticipates the various cities being involved in any aspect of that. Mr. Rau stated that he believes Metro RTA and Summit Metro Parks have reached a land use and maintenance agreement. In terms of construction, he is not sure how involved the cities would be, but there is a section of that trail that has already been funded through an AMATS Transportation Set-Aside Grant. That's the section from the pedestrian bridge crossing Route 8 from Cuyahoga Falls to Silver Lake and heading north up to Springdale Road where the bike lines end and it takes you directly into the Summit Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail. Eleven point seven miles of the trail have been included in the AMATS Transportation Outlook 2045 Plan, so that's basically the entire trail, so there could be opportunity for additional funding from AMATS.

Mr. Balthis stated that it is great that Summit County Metro Parks will be responsible for maintaining it. The Metro Parks have a lot of experience with maintaining trails, so that's good.

Ms. Loza moved to bring out Temp. Res. B-60 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.