

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, March 21, 2022 – 5:00 p.m.
5555 Perimeter Drive
Council Chamber**

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Reiner called the March 21, 2022 Community Development Committee meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Reiner (Chair), Mr. Keeler, and Ms. Amorose Groomes

Staff present: Mr. McDaniel, Ms. Wolf, Ms. Rauch, Ms. Noble, Mr. Stiffler, Ms. Golliver, Mr. Dearth, Ms. Blake,

Also present: Matthew Starr, Executive Vice President of Commercial Real Estate, Crawford Hoying, Frances Jo Hamilton, Director of Revitalization, Heritage Ohio; Russ Balthis, Senior Attorney, Squire Patton Boggs.

Minutes of the February 22, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Reiner moved to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2022 CDC meeting. Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Reiner, yes; Ms. Amorose Groomes, yes; Mr. Keeler, yes

Crawford Hoying – Bridge Park Development Update

Mr. Starr provided an overview of development in Bridge Park. He shared that residential occupancy is full and they are raising rents 6-10% depending on the unit size to keep up with labor rates and expense increases across the board. On the commercial side, another lease was just signed at the end of the week for office space leaving approximately 4,000 square feet available in the building at the roundabout. In retail/restaurant space, there is about 4,200 square feet available but they are currently in discussions with two potential tenants. The North Market is 100% leased including a pop-up space designated for weekends. There has been discussion about adding pop-up spaces in the middle of the North Market. The 2022 farmers' market will begin soon. There were \$60 million in food and beverage sales in Bridge Park in 2021 and that is expected to increase this year. Mr. Starr shared two new openings: Weenie Wonder and Kona Craft Kitchen. He provided an update on Construction. A lease is going out this week for the entire top floor of the new building where the steel has not even come out of the ground. This is a new company coming to central Ohio from northwestern Ohio, with anticipated occupancy in summer 2023. Negotiations are underway on the ground

floor units with restaurants. The concrete pouring for the garage is completed. The condominiums behind the garage are framed up to a couple of levels. Almost half of the units are already reserved. These are smaller units and lower price points than already exist. The Bailey is the independent living facility, built in partnership with Friendship Village. They will break ground within 30-60 days and be complete in late 2023 or 2024 depending on the winter.

Mr. Reiner stated that it is interesting to see senior living included; that is great. Mr. Starr stated that there are many seniors in the existing housing. They are trying to provide a diversity of housing. The benefits of this new development (transportation, access to common amenities) are being worked out through the partnership with Friendship Village. This is not a buy-in. Mr. Reiner stated that he spoke to someone who has been in Europe 150 times and he bought one of these units because the area is diversified and walkable. It is a great complement to what is offered here. Mr. Starr stated that it is a complement to what the City has to offer. This will be the first year we see all the amenities within the District. Mr. Starr thanked Council for their support. Mr. Reiner stated that Crawford Hoying has been a great partner.

Historic District Task Force Recommendations Follow-Up

Ms. Noble introduced the Historic District Task Force (HDTF) recommendations follow up. She noted that most conversations have been about the implementation of the Task Force. The remaining topic to discuss is the management options for the Historic District. This discussion is complicated due to the number of options. Ms. Noble stated that they have guests in attendance to help finalize these discussions. The first discussion item is focused on the Main Street program through Heritage Ohio. They have already completed a Downtown Assessment Resource Team (DART) visit. This was a two-and-a-half-day process that included meeting with members of the HDTF, doing a tour of the district, and giving a final presentation for the general public. Frances Jo Hamilton from Heritage Ohio is here to give information to the Committee about the program. Ms. Noble pointed out that they have talked to other jurisdictions that have implemented this. Delaware is long-standing member. Wooster, Millersburg, and Kent Ohio are others. There is a range of communities and purposes behind utilizing Heritage Ohio. The second speaker is Russ Balthis from Cleveland, Ohio from Squire, Patton, Boggs and he will speak about Community Improvement Corporations (CICs).

- **Heritage Ohio Main Street Program**

Ms. Hamilton provided background on the concept of the Main Street Program and her involvement with the program. She shared that she started with the program in Delaware, OH in 1999. At that time, the district was close to 50% vacant with deteriorating buildings. Local building owners became involved with Heritage Ohio at the state level. She started working with the program as a volunteer. After several years, she was promoted to the part-time Executive Director position. After six months,

her position became full-time and she was the Executive Director there for 10 years before accepting the Executive Director position at the State level. The focus of the office is on Revitalization, Preservation, and Advocacy. Ms. Hamilton noted that they have won awards nationally for saving and supporting the historic tax preservation tax credit. The Main Street Program is a nationwide effort overseen by the National Main Street Center. The Main Street Approach works in 4 areas: Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Vitality. Implementation of a Main Street program requires a plan. Communities begin by applying to be a downtown affiliate. That comes with benefits like the DART, which Dublin has done. Dublin did not assemble a stakeholder group because it already has a Historic District Task Force. Typically, they ask stakeholders to dedicate one year to this project. Stakeholders are expected to attend 80% of meetings and participate at the level of 6-10 volunteer hours/month. Those stakeholders will be the first to be considered as part of the board of directors. While, ideally, this is how programs work, each community is different. Ms. Hamilton stated that she helps communities build the organization that will support the downtown. It is more than hiring an executive director. It is a grass-roots effort. A strong core is made up of the board of directors or stakeholder group that is a reflection of the entire community. Because it is the responsibility of the community to uplift and uphold the downtown, they look for a group of people around the table from different disciplines such as the municipality, school, library, etc. The group should be culturally and age diverse and resemble that community. Committees and members are overseen by the board, and one paid staff member oversees the volunteers. Ms. Hamilton explained that the Main Street approach is based on 8 principles. It is a comprehensive approach. It relies on quality. The Main Street approach requires meaningful public/private partnerships and input from the City is very important. A city staff person or elected official should serve on the board of directors. The Main Street program is a self-help program that requires many volunteers and a lot of time and effort. To endear their downtown to people, they need to be the ones working to preserve it. The Main Street approach is incremental in nature. Ms. Hamilton gave the example of Wooster as the longest-standing community in the program (over 30 years) and their program is constantly evolving and changing. The Main Street program is implementation-oriented. Ms. Hamilton detailed the structure of the Main Street program. The Main Street structure is a typical Non-Profit structure with a board of directors, executive director and four standing committees. She shared the organizational chart. They take care of existing businesses first. They find ways to form relationships with building owners so that they have a sense of trust with this organization. The Design Committee focuses on a sense of place which can include intentional and meaningful infill. The Design Committee works on everything from preservation to how clean the sidewalks are and street furniture placement. The Promotion Committee focuses on achieving a sense of community, and the Organization Committee focuses on a sense of ownership. The Board of Directors is responsible for overarching leadership such as planning, funding, and personnel. Recruitment to the Board is always intentional, involving applications and serious consideration. Leadership development is important and those in leadership

should not serve longer than 3 years. The Board sets the mission and overarching goals for the organization which are then implemented by committees. The Board is responsible for the health of the organization. Ms. Hamilton explained that funding sources should three-fold, with one-third coming from each of the following: the municipality, fundraising, and partnerships/memberships. Reinvestment statistics show that the return on investment in any community is from \$27-33 for every \$1 invested in the program. Programs are required to submit monthly statistics including volunteer hours, new businesses openings, jobs created, etc. She outlined the requirements as follows: a paid Executive Director, active work plans, on-going training, annual review, and grass-roots commitment.

Mr. Keeler asked how long it takes from the time her office is engaged to implement some of these items. Ms. Hamilton stated that it depends on the community. She expects stakeholders to sign agreements committing to attend 80% of meetings, to be present for visits and trainings. She has found that volunteers are more apt to volunteer when they know what will be involved. She has seen communities implement the program quickly; Lorain, Ohio is a great example. Rapid implementation is possible with five dedicated people. Mr. Keeler asked if someone from her staff attends stakeholder meetings at first. Ms. Hamilton stated that they are a staff of 4 and oversee 50 communities. If Dublin wants that level of involvement, Heritage Ohio does offer "fee for service." Program leaders have unlimited access to her, however, via phone, text, email, and zoom. Several communities have asked her to attend initially to make sure they are on track, and they provide in-person training with each of the committees.

Ms. Amorose Groomes asked about stumbling blocks for communities. Ms. Hamilton stated that there are always issues with those who cannot fulfill their volunteer expectations, and there will be opposition. Typically, as momentum is gained, people will become involved.

Ms. O'Callaghan introduced Mr. Balthis and shared that he is a City Council Member with Cuyahoga Falls and has experience with the Main Street program.

Mr. Reiner stated that he likes the idea of stakeholders working together and the volunteer hours component. He asked how they handle building owners treating the buildings like rentals. Ms. Hamilton stated that ideally the economic vitality committee's responsibility is to form one-on-one relationships with all business owners. Forming personal relationships with building owners enables them to have discussions about their goals. A vacant property ordinance can address the rentals. Mr. Reiner stated that Bridge Street helped with competition with the Historic District. He asked about the cost and responsibility for the Executive Director salary. Ms. Hamilton stated that the cost is \$1,000 for an affiliate membership. The Executive Director position is needed when the City applies to be a Main Street District; membership dues then increase to \$4,000. Mr. Reiner asked for her opinion of the City's Historic District. Ms. Hamilton stated that the

Main Street program can work for every community, if there is buy-in. Mr. Reiner asked about the relationship between a historic district and a developer-owned district. Ms. Hamilton stated that it would be great if they worked together, but she is not sure how that would work logistically. Historic districts have a special draw, and Bridge Park is a new district. She is not sure Bridge Street needs the Main Street program.

Mr. Reiner thanked Ms. Hamilton for her informative presentation.

Mr. Balthis stated that he recognized a lot of similarities with Cuyahoga Falls. The quickest way to sum up his experience is the need for patience from those involved. People expect results, but that takes time. People rotated out because of the time commitment and not seeing results fast enough. He also noted that their community struggled with competing organizations. There were some concerns from their Chamber of Commerce. They did do a lot of listening and it worked out very well. The public/private partnership is critical. The program is very volunteer driven. This structure brings people together. It has been amazing to see how many businesses have come together and created new partnerships. Synergies were created and companies can see better growth by working together. They have had two executive directors. The support of Heritage Ohio has been very valuable to them.

Ms. Amorose Groomes asked how many historic building Cuyahoga Falls has. Mr. Balthis stated that they have a theater and six other historic buildings. There are several buildings where historic buildings once stood, some of which were painted to look more historic. He noted that there are many historic homes in that area. Ms. Amorose Groomes asked about the critical mass for a Main Street program. Ms. Hamilton stated that they have had programs in very small towns. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that in the area they are trying to revitalize, there are less than 20 buildings, some less than 2,000 square feet. She asked how the program is scaled to some place that is quite small. Ms. Hamilton stated that it is programmatic and not about the footprint. The infill is included. She believes there is more than enough critical mass here. She is less concerned with critical mass than with whether or not there would be 5 dedicated people.

Mr. Balthis stated that the Cuyahoga Falls' area is about a 2-block area. Ms. Hamilton clarified that by stakeholders, she means representatives from the library, schools, etc. They do not have to be property or business owners. They intentionally choose stakeholders that will reflect the community. Building the stakeholder group means getting representation from around the community. She stated that they will have long-range programs, but she wants to see something that is press-releasable in 30 days. Mr. Reiner asked who drives this. Ms. Hamilton stated that it is the stakeholders. They intentionally build this with people that will advance the efforts.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that the objective this evening was to continue a comprehensive look into solutions for the area. Staff would appreciate any feedback or they can review a list of options at the next meeting.

Mr. Reiner stated that this was a very positive presentation and could have potential for problem-solving for that area. The best form of government is always the smallest one.

Mr. Balthis stated that Heritage Ohio definitely added value.

- Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

Ms. O'Callaghan stated this is following up on discussions regarding the potential to bring back the façade improvement program initiated in 2018. She noted that the Committee expressed desire to do so. It was determined that the most efficient process to reinstate the program would be to work with the existing CIC to develop and operate the program. In anticipation of this, Staff has continued funding at the level of \$100,000 in the Economic Development budget. As outlined in the memo, when the City's CIC was created in 2015, it was created with a narrow purpose that was limited to reviewing and certifying non tax revenue bonds. She explained that, typically, CICs that exist in other municipalities have a broader purpose as allowed under Ohio Revised Code. The scope of Dublin's existing CIC's purpose would need to be expanded to allow for management of the façade enhancement program. The steps required are outlined in the CIC's code of regulations. Staff is recommending that the process be initiated to amend the CIC's powers pursuant to their regulations to allow reinstatement of the façade enhancement program.

Mr. Keeler stated that that he believes the façade grant program is essential. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that the CIC exists now but if we were to create a different entity, we could always change the program. Ms. Amorose Groomes asked if we will have a talent gap on CIC. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that the City still plans to have someone on the Economic Development team to support that effort. Ms. Amorose Groomes asked if the number of CIC membership is fixed. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that seats could be added by amending the regulations. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that it might be interesting to add seats in order to get an architect or someone with different perspective to review the applications. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that is consistent with the original thought.

Ms. Amorose Groomes moved to recommend to City Council approval of Staff's recommendation to continue the process of reinstating the Façade Enhancement Grant Program by working with the Dublin CIC and expanding the Dublin CIC's powers pursuant to their regulations to allow reinstatement of the Façade Enhancement Grant Program.

Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote: Ms. Amorose Groomes, yes; Mr. Keeler, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.


Deputy Clerk of Council