

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
5555 PERIMETER DRIVE
DUBLIN, OH 43017**

**JUNE 16, 2025
6:00 PM**

MINUTES

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Monday, June 16, 2025 work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council members present: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Mr. Reiner.

Staff present: Mr. Hounshell, Mr. Bitar, Mr. Gracia, Mr. Barker, Ms. Babbit, Mr. Hartmann, Chief Paez, Ms. Willis, Ms. Hunt, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hammersmith, Mr. Earman and Mr. Ament.

Also present were: Tim Schmalenberger, MKSK (in-person); and William Creed, Merrick joined virtually.

Mr. Reiner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Scioto River Corridor Study – Riverside Crossing Park Kayak Launch and Livery

Mr. Earman stated that this topic is a follow-up to a previous discussion where staff presented the original ideas and concepts for the Riverside Crossing Park Master Plan. One of the key elements of the plan was the location of a permanent canoe launch and livery. When the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved, there were recommendations that involved the Riverside Crossing Park Master Plan and revisiting some of the elements of that plan based on the community feedback. In May of 2024, staff updated the recommendations and presented them to City Council for further study of the Scioto River Corridor for an optimal location of the kayak livery and launch site. Mr. Earman explained the on-water exploration that was conducted with staff and Sunrise Kayaking (operator). Staff engaged McLaughlin Whitewater, who does consulting work involving rivers with navigation challenges, river modifications, etc. for recreational activities. They did a comprehensive study from the O'Shaughnessy Dam all the way south of the Bridge Street bridge. In January 2025, staff met with the City of Columbus as requested by City Council to pursue potential partnerships for a kayak launch site at O'Shaughnessy Dam. There are some conflicts with the electro-hydraulic systems they have in place at that location and they were not interested in putting any kind of additional impact on those systems. Staff met with Rapid 5 (Rivers and Parks Imagination Design) organization leadership who were very supportive of the work that has been done exploring options and the recommendation that will be given for consideration.

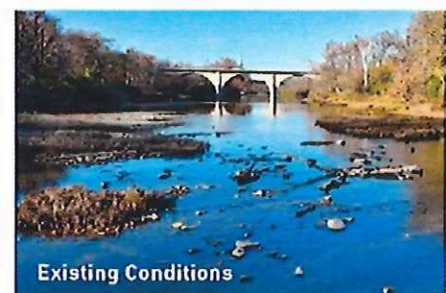
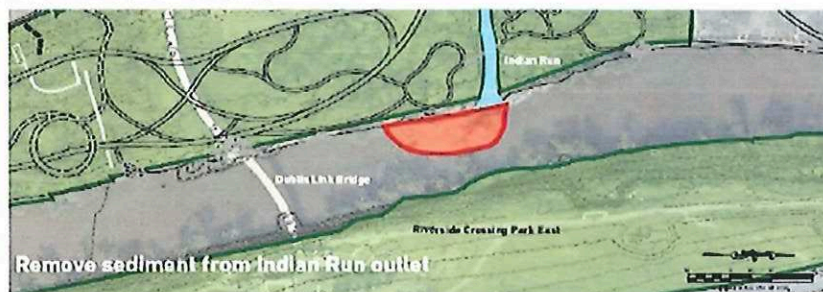
Mr. Earman described the public input opportunities for the master plan for the park. The two elements that were most mentioned by the community were the kayak launch and the activation of the west side of the park. Feedback received from City Council included:

- Consider moving the kayak livery to a different location;
- Provide access to the river and activate the shoreline;
- Move active recreation amenities away from residential areas;
- Be cognizant of natural features and tree preservation; and
- The parking lot size was deficient.

The study consisted of a four or five mile stretch of the river to identify areas in the river that would require some modifications such as dredging, relocation of boulders, etc. Several areas were considered for the launch relocation throughout the study process. Four potential locations were identified as the best options for the launch site and livery.



The site referenced as "B" in the map above was the originally proposed site, but there was concern that this area was too close to the residential area and too close to the pedestrian bridge. The site marked as "A" is a new location that was identified through this process. The east side "C" site presented challenges due to the limited parking and modifications that would be required. Finally, site "D" is the site close to Scioto Park which is heavily programmed. Accommodating a launch site at this location would require modifications to Scioto Park. The area indicated by the circle with the line through it would need modifications to the river to get access south of the 270 Bridge in this location. Taking into consideration cost effectiveness, location and proximity to the downtown area, site A is the recommended site. This site offers three different potential loops for kayaking. There are some areas where the City would need to mitigate challenges of the river where there is debris and boulders that would have to be removed. Mr. Earman provided visuals of the type of modifications needed.



Mr. Earman shared the concept of the recommended location which includes a restroom facility, parking lot and a cobble beach that provides significant access to the river's edge.

Concept for Recommended Location



He also shared illustrations of what 100 cubic feet per second looks like, which is the minimum flow for recreational use versus 400 cubic feet per second, which is the optimal use of the river. The maximum base flow for recreational use is 1000 cubic feet per second. This proposed location and concept provides protection and continued operations whether the river is at low or high levels of flow.

Ms. Fox asked about the materials that would be used for the cobblestone beach as the illustration looks to vary in material. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that it would be rock, definitely not sand. He stated it tends to be a kind of natural angular river gravel. He added that at first glance, it looks like a beach, but it is a compacted surface that is very consolidated so it will not erode. He stated that the rendering also shows the intention of weaving large slabs of stone into the design to reinforce the shoreline. He explained that this site is advantageous because it drops down from Dublin Road into this property and is fairly level with the river, so when it floods, it floods slowly.

Mr. Reiner stated that there is a parking lot at O'Shaughnessy and an asphalt road going down by the dam. Mr. Earman stated that the City of Columbus has been good to work with, but the situation at the dam is an engineering issue. The City of Columbus has been very willing to work with Dublin on offering kayaking down at Griggs Reservoir and they issued the required permits to the operator. He added that Columbus and Rapid 5 have been very supportive of this operation. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that Columbus's main concern was they did not want anyone interfacing with the dam or the outlet structure. Mr. Reiner asked if there were plans for Columbus to modify the area just south of the dam to make a launch site. Mr. Earman stated he is unaware of any plans that Columbus may have but added that he believes they would be willing to look at areas south of the dam area that is an issue. He stated such a plan could be in the future. Currently staff is concentrating on the Riverside Crossing Park aspects and amenities.

Ms. De Rosa asked about putting a climbing wall or something else in addition to this given the size of the space. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that there is certainly room for a climbing wall in the

launch site space. Ms. De Rosa asked if any other amenities were considered. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that they are focused primarily on the kayaking aspects.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that the property lines vary up and down the river and in fact, property lines actually go into the middle of the river. She stated this could create some difficulty in trying to make adjustments in the riverbed itself if it is on private property. Secondly, she stated in 2023 she shared some images of the City Manager of Golden, Colorado where they actually put concrete out into the river for the launch pad. She stated that she would not be supportive of any material short of concrete on this beach because she has sat on docks down there and watched 36" trees racing down the river at times. She stated no matter how compacted the material, her concern is that it would not hold up. She stated that she would like to explore concrete and see what that looks like relative to the property owners along the river and engaging with them earlier rather than later. She would not be supportive of materials that would not stay in place. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that in this initial concept, they were showing more natural materials and incorporating the large slabs of stone that could be set into this location.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that the images shared by Mayor Amorose Groomes were provided to the design team and are being used for the inspiration for those respite locations a little further south. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that if a lesser hard surface is implemented and the location is heavily used by kayakers, then it could be upgraded to a stamped concrete in the future to accommodate the heavier use. Mayor Amorose Groomes suggested planning for heavy use because she stated that when people have an opportunity to engage in that space, they do.

Staff sought the following feedback from Council:

Does City Council support the proposed location south of the I-270 Bridge as the preferred site for the permanent kayak livery and public launch?

- Ms. Kramb is supportive of the launch site. She suggested a broader name for the project and removing the word "livery" from the title. She stated she sees this less as a livery and more as a public launch site. It should be a launch site for any manual watercraft and the City should not be operating a permanent livery. She is also not in favor of a vendor/operator storing their items permanently at this location either. She suggested exploring a permit process for users who are members of the general public. She would like to make the use of this launch site open to any vendor/operator (paddleboards, canoes, etc.) Ms. O'Callaghan stated that prior to Sunrise Kayaking taking over operations, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued for an operator and she anticipates that the same process would be used for future opportunities. Mr. Earman added that Sunrise Kayaking was the only response to the RFP and it was viewed as a pilot program to see how it goes.
Ms. Kramb also stated that she agrees that the material should be more permanent along the river's edge. She stated that while she is in favor of removing debris, she is not supportive of modifying the river channel or artificially manipulating it.
In response to Ms. O'Callaghan's question regarding whether Ms. Kramb was supportive of having the infrastructure there necessary for a livery that would be operated by others, Ms. Kramb stated that she was not supportive of a permanent livery or facility to store items.
- Ms. Fox is supportive of the location. She liked the fact that it is broad and she sees an opportunity to activate the area. She would like to see it be not just a kayak launch, but have opportunities for other things as well. She would like to see chairs or picnic tables in the shady areas for the people who do not wish to kayak to wait on their friends or family who do. She does not mind having infrastructure in place to store the kayaks and an operator for the season. She suggested Council consider owning the property along the river between I-

270 and the bridge because building houses there does not make the best use the property for the community.

Ms. Fox asked about the impact of the budget for this project on getting other amenities on the east side. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that the budget discussion would be part of the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. There is currently \$1 million in the 2025 budget for a kayaking launch or livery. It was viewed as a placeholder when it was included in the budget last year. She stated that depending upon the outcome of these discussions, staff can start incorporating features into the discussion when it is understood how Council would like to prioritize implementation.

- Mr. Reiner stated that with a \$4 million dollar budget, this should be a central outdoor activity focal point and for the people who do not wish to kayak, there should be areas to enjoy the space. He agreed with Mayor Amorose Groomes' comments regarding a concrete ramp that is stamped. He added that using the large stones as suggested by Mr. Schmalenberger and having a safe launch area is a critical component. He would like to see natural material used where possible. He would like this space to have the reputation of a really cool place in Dublin that is more than just kayaks.
- Mr. Keeler stated he is supportive of the location, and he likes the vision for this space. He agrees with trying to keep it as natural as possible. He stated that in the past he has not been supportive of allocating millions of dollars to the east side of Riverside Crossing Park. It is time to program what we have. He is in favor of moving funding to this purpose to execute this vision.
- Ms. De Rosa is supportive of the vision and the location of the launch. She likes that permanent parking and restrooms. She would like to see more permanent infrastructure at Riverside Crossing Park and Coffman Park and would be supportive of adding funding for that purpose. She reiterated a desire to see a climbing wall or some other additional amenities to maximize the opportunity in this space without overprogramming it. She agrees with Ms. Fox's point that these are physical activity spaces, but they need to be balanced for those who want to just go enjoy the space. Regarding materials, Ms. De Rosa deferred to her colleagues and added that it needs to be durable and safe.
- Vice Mayor Alutto thanked staff and consultants for the work and the details included. She shared that she is supportive of the location. She would prefer to keep the materials as natural as possible but will defer to the experts on what would work best. She stated that she liked the inspirational pictures shared by Mayor Amorose Groomes of Golden, Colorado and she likes the idea of having additional uses. She is also supportive of using opportunities to make sure that as many people can enjoy the space as possible. She asked if the space would have ADA accommodations. Mr. Earman responded affirmatively. Regarding any permanent structures for storage, Vice Mayor Alutto stated she would have to see what they would look like and mentioned that she does not care for the structures at Griggs Reservoir.
- Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she believes this will be an active, well-used space from day one. She would like to see materials be very durable and something that can be cleaned of debris after a storm. She noted that concrete depth should be the highway standard and made to look nice. She suggested having a clear delineation of a play area versus where to launch a kayak. She stated that she can envision boulders in succession that would act as a step down and protective area in the event of heavy water activities. It could have far more than just a kayak launch but provide river engagement access to people.
She stated that she is supportive of having one provider and that whoever the provider is for the kayaks will have significant liability, so she stated she wanted to be certain that there was great liability coverage and the City was protected. Having a provider would not preclude anyone from taking their own kayak or canoe into the water. She is supportive of having a

permanent structure, but it needs to be designed to Planning and Zoning Commission standards for outdoor furniture and it needs to stay neat and clean in the offseason.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she would like to see a wash station by the river because this is bacteria infested water, so she would like to offer an opportunity to those exiting the river to rinse off as a safety measure.

Mr. Earman thanked Council for their feedback and sought clarification on the rock-climbing wall idea. He added that there are opportunities as the other parcels of property are explored to make this contiguous to add to that northern location at a future date. He stated that due to the popularity that this site will have, he does not want to oversaturate or overcrowd this area with parking. He suggested looking at an alternative site for the climbing wall that would not interfere with the natural beauty. Ms. De Rosa stated that her comment was to maximize the opportunity for activation of at all seasons, how much it would cost, where it would be implemented etc. Mr. Earman stated that when staff brings the full Master Plan back to Council, they will include those opportunities, thought processes, options and line-item expenses.

Ms. Fox added that this is a serene place, and she would like to see a swing from a tree or a hammock or things used for just relaxing and viewing the river. Mr. Earman stated that when staff brings the Master Plan update back to Council, there are seven respite areas along the riverbank. Ms. Krumb stated that this area will flood, so it does not make sense to spend money on amenities that will not hold well.

In response to Ms. Fox's question regarding the grading from the parking lot to the river edge, Mr. Schmalenberger stated that it is approximately 5 feet. He added that if there are too many improvements then it would make a lot of work to go back and clean up after every heavy rain. Mayor Amorose Groomes noted that many of the amenities are available at other parks. She stated that this park does not have to be everything to everyone. Mr. Schmalenberger stated that people being able to get to the water's edge is key. Mayor Amorose Groomes agreed and stated that there is passive engagement with the water and there is active engagement with the water.

Mr. Earman thanked Council for the feedback and stated that the Master Plan Update will come to Council amidst the CIP process.

Economic Development Strategic Plan Implementation Update

Mr. Gracia introduced Economic Development team members Luke Fleming and Abby Falcone. He started his presentation with Council by reviewing the Strategic Framework that guides the decision-making within the City. He then referenced City Council's 2025 goals which are:

- Become the Most Connected Community in the U.S.;
- Revitalize Metro Center;
- Create a Premier Athletic Complex;
- Reimagine and Launch Dublin's Community Events Program; and
- Accelerate Economic Development in the West Innovation District.

In addition to the Strategic Framework and Council goals, Mr. Gracia stated that their work is grounded in the Economic Development Strategic Plan that was adopted by Council in October of 2023. In addition to the adopted Strategic Plan, another study was discussed by Council which was Newmark's Semiconductor Supply Chain Positioning Study. This study was tied directly to the Intel announcement in the region. Mr. Gracia shared that what is important about the Newmark study was that it was very pointed and direct with respect to site readiness and community readiness. He stated that the groundwork and foundations of the recommendations in the strategic plan and study are both applicable across the City, not just the semiconductor industry. He stated that he would be highlighting the work that is being done to position the City, not only in the West Innovation District, but in every business district for site readiness. Mr. Gracia reviewed the following graphic:



Sustainable | Connected | Resilient



Mr. Gracia highlighted the strategies and action steps that are being implemented as recommended in the Strategic Plan and Newmark Study, such as:

- Envision Dublin (Adopted July 2024);
- Metro Center Revitalization Plan (Adopted December 2024);
- Site capacity studies and environmental site assessments;
- Identified top sites for marketing purposes;
- Established weekly development office hours; and
- Economic Development Agreement (EDA) approvals.

Mr. Gracia stated that the Economic Development team stays committed to the plan, they trust the process and execute according to the process. He stated that the following are a part of the ongoing strategic plan implementation:

- **Envision Dublin Implementation:** The implementation of Envision Dublin allowed an opportunity to make important policy and development decisions long-term while keeping in mind some key elements that were part of the Strategic Plan.
- **Accelerate Economic Development in the West Innovation District:** There are special area plans in the Envision Dublin plan that set conditions through infrastructure and quality of place to accept the business interests. There is significant public sector investment through infrastructure that will be necessary to achieve the goal of accelerating development in the West Innovation District. The City is part of other activities in this area, such as realizing and helping complete the Ohio University Framework Plan, OSU Wexner Medical Center and their long-term plans, the recent purchase of SportsOhio and accepting some of the flex tech innovation. Working together as a region helps to guide decision making so there are infrastructure connections in leveraging assets and resources in a truly holistic development pattern.
- **Bridge Street District momentum:** There are transformative blocks that are currently underway for development agreements, specifically Block J and Block Y. These development

agreements have been adopted, and they are now being implemented to accept new office demand. The office vacancy rate in the Bridge Street District is essentially zero. The Block J office building is already 50% leased. The Indus/Daimler mixed-use project is the last remaining vacant parcel on Riverside Drive. This project will continue east toward Sawmill Road. COhatch Riverview Village is a development agreement where staff has been working through significant capital investments in infrastructure to support that type of development.

- Metro Center Revitalization Plan Implementation: Mr. Gracia stated that this project is an example of trying to balance multiple stakeholders with multiple legal teams. Staff is committed to moving that forward because the ponds must be transferred to set conditions for public infrastructure investment.
- Business Retention Visits: Mr. Gracia stated that the success of their work comes from the existing businesses. The Economic Development team is constantly meeting with our companies and building relationships. They are committed to assisting businesses with any challenges and connecting them to resources.

Mr. Gracia stated that bringing relevant departments together to streamline the development process and participate in office hours has been well received by the development community. The goal is to have a streamlined, predictable and transparent process. Mr. Gracia noted some things that have been learned as staff implemented this plan. He stated that changes in leadership can sometimes be a challenge as people move positions, change partners, etc. The heavy lift of long-term projects can be a challenge when considering budgets, implementation of infrastructure, etc. Staff from engineering, transportation, planning, and economic development coming together to be proactive in planning what is needed so the infrastructure matches the development requests has been helpful. The cost of development is always changing and the Economic Development team makes it a priority to understand those changes.

Mr. Gracia shared some results that they have been tracking since implementing the strategy:



Mr. Gracia noted that there was one big project that accounted for the larger EDA totals in 2024 versus 2025. That project was OhioHealth who was building a new tower in our community. He added that while incentives are important there are many companies that recommit to Dublin without incentives. Mr. Gracia provided some examples of businesses and why they chose Dublin.

Mr. Gracia concluded his presentation by sharing how the Economic Development team will continue to implement the strategy. They will:

- Intentionally focus on execution of Economic Development Strategic Plan through sustainable and effective public-private partnerships;
- Continue setting conditions for transparent and predictable development review processes;
- Continue implementing the Metro Center Revitalization Plan;
- Move the West Innovation District forward by setting conditions for development through rezoning and infrastructure investments in alignments with Envision Dublin; and

- Continue interdepartmental coordination to execute the plan every day, week, month, year.

Mr. Keeler asked about rankings in terms of economic development reward by industry. Mr. Gracia stated that he just received an update from One Columbus regarding the current project pipeline. He shared that less than 10% of the projects are for office space. Over 60% are in the flex industrial space.

Mr. Keeler asked if the focus could be narrowed by industry. Mr. Gracia stated that bioscience and biopharma have experienced huge growth in the last five years. Automotive research and development have been in strong demand as well. There are data center projects, but they understand the constraints that they have in terms of utility capacity.

Mr. Keeler asked what industries have expressed interest in the West Innovation District. Mr. Gracia stated that there has been some interest, but it is largely about noticing that the City is setting conditions for the area, so they are looking to see what will be accepted in the area. He stated that some interest has been received from the medical bioscience industry and some from the true flex innovation. Medical bioscience is probably the highest concentration.

Mr. Keeler asked about the commercial improvements previously referenced and whether that included tenant improvements. Mr. Gracia responded affirmatively.

Ms. De Rosa commented on the synergies up and down the US33 corridor and the amount of growth in housing units. She asked Mr. Gracia's thoughts on the amount of investment that is coming into the US33 corridor and whether that is positive or negative in attracting businesses. Mr. Gracia stated that this type of development impacts the ability to attract workforce. He stated that it is often considered together when businesses are considering where they want their business to be located in relation to where they want to live.

Ms. De Roda asked if he would propose any modifications to the strategic plan in light of current conditions. Mr. Gracia stated that it is all still relevant to condition-setting for future development, so there are no modifications he would make at this time.

Vice Mayor Alutto commended the team and the City Manager on the development review process predictability and streamlining. She asked what Mr. Gracia is hearing from businesses about workforce availability and workforce readiness. Mr. Gracia thanked Vice Mayor Alutto for the kudos and noted that Jenny Rauch, Brad Fagrell and the management analysts have been integral in making the office hours a success. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that industry partners were involved in the early stages of considering development process improvements and they suggested having office hours.

Regarding workforce, Mr. Gracia stated that in central Ohio we have a growing population which puts Ohio and the Midwest in a small group of shortlisted markets for consideration. We are in a unique position and the regional investments that Dublin participates in tells businesses considering Ohio that we are already addressing any issues they may have.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she was in Seattle recently for the National Association of Regional Council's (NARC) meeting and the Executive Director of Dayton's Regional Council was there. She said that he spoke about Dayton trying to position themselves in the Columbus market and be associated with our region for the reasons Mr. Gracia was just mentioning. She added that it would make our region better and more compelling to include elements that Dayton has to offer. Mr. Gracia added that we have strong workforce partners, but those job numbers and skill sets are very competitive and difficult to satisfy.

Ms. Kramb asked if Mr. Gracia has noticed a trend in the typical square footage or type of buildings that are in demand. Mr. Gracia stated that the square footage may have been reduced, but the amount of dollar per square foot is substantially increased. They are spending more on high quality finishes and experiences so they have employee satisfaction coming to work every day. In response to Ms. Kramb's question regarding a trend in the size of the companies, Mr. Gracia stated that the current range in projects is the 40-to-70-employee range.

Ms. Fox asked about having larger comprehensive educational opportunities to help drive economic growth. Mr. Gracia responded affirmatively and added that bringing other offerings to the OU campus has been part of their framework plan. The right programs could help drive mixed use development.

Ms. Fox stated that quality of life brings success. She asked if economic development evaluates the amenities or what is needed in one of the development nodes as projects come in. Mr. Gracia stated that he looks at what amenities are available and what might be needed regionally. He added that much of that is captured in the Envision Dublin plan as the balance of commercial and residential was evaluated.

Ms. Fox asked, specifically to Metro Center, about the conversations with the property owners. Mr. Gracia shared that the property owners along Frantz Road and on the inner loop are all engaged in the process and are aware of how they will be impacted by Phase 1 of the project. They have been supportive of plans.

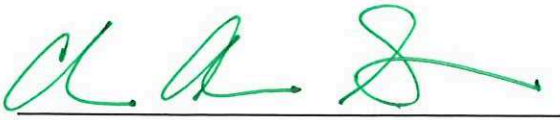
Mr. Reiner thanked Mr. Gracia and the Economic Development team for their efforts. He asked if the Economic Development team has received requests from developers interested in building \$2-\$3-million-dollar homes. Mr. Gracia stated that they have not received those requests. He reiterated that they use Envision Dublin as a guide to see where the areas are that could accept future growth while keeping the balance between commercial and residential and provide amenities. The City Manager stated that the most frequent inquiry her office receives is regarding higher density residential.

Mr. Reiner asked if Dublin's status as the Best City in America is being marketed through Economic Development. Mr. Gracia stated that it is, and they have a marketing program developed by the Communications and Marketing team.

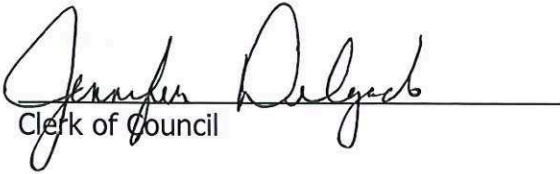
Mayor Amorose Groomes thanked Mr. Gracia for the presentation and update. She added that she had the opportunity to spend time with some of the leadership of Hexion and they are already talking about how they could influence programs that would help students prepare for jobs.

Mayor Amorose Groomes had one other item she brought forward. She stated that recently when she was going to the Farmer's Market there was a banner on the front of a table that said, "Eliminate Property Taxes." There were two people gathering signatures on a petition. She stated that through conversation with the two people, she learned that there is misinformation being communicated about how property taxes are spent and what the impacts of not having property taxes would be. She wanted to bring this up to encourage the City to start telling the story and educating people on this issue before they start signing petitions. She suggested developing a plan about how we can communicate with our residents to make sure they are making informed decisions and have the facts on this issue particularly if they are trying to get signatures on a petition.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

A handwritten signature in green ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters, positioned above a horizontal line.

Presiding Officer - Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Delgado', positioned above a horizontal line.

Clerk of Council