

MINUTES

COUNCIL-MANAGER BRIEFING

February 8, 2010

Mayor D'Epifanio called the Council-Manager Briefing to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Fairfield Municipal Building, 5350 Pleasant Avenue. The following Councilmembers were present: Mike Oler, Tim Meyers, Tim Abbott, Marty Judd, Mitch Rhodus, Terry Senger and Mike Snyder. Staff present: Dave Crouch, Tim Bachman, Dave Butsch, Angie Johns, Art Pizzano, Greg Kathman, Dennis Stuckey, Mike Dickey, Erin Donovan and John Clemmons.

Economic and Community Development

Development Services Director Tim Bachman stated his understanding of the Economic and Community Development goal set by Council to *"Launch a comprehensive residential retention plan, which incorporates changing demographics (age, economics, crime) property maintenance, property redevelopment and quality of life. Establish core baseline measures to monitor results of the plan"*. Mr. Bachman discussed the age demographic of Fairfield in comparison with Butler County. He commented what is interesting is the age cohort of 25-34, which is actually greater than the County by 2.4%. He explained the 2.4% goes back to the inhabitants of our many apartments and condos. He discussed the home values noting the City peaked in the spring of 2007 and discussed the trend line for the recession, which bottomed out in the spring of 2009. He explained comparing the third quarter year over year the median sales price went up 13%. Mr. Bachman discussed the sales volume, which is very cyclical in nature and the large impact by the recession. He stated we are maintaining a very healthy occupancy with regard to the community. He discussed the goal to retain citizens who have a choice. He explained the plan to retain residents is made up of a host of things, some we have control over and some we do not. He further explained there are five elements to retaining citizens including quality of life, private property maintenance, education, job opportunities, quality and value. Mr. Bachman discussed various projects that have improved the physical environment including the Village Green and the Route 4 Stanchion Project. He briefly discussed local government services and recreation venues. Mr. Bachman also discussed the community pride fostered by festivals. He briefly explained the maintenance of public buildings, thoroughfares and golf courses. City Manager Pizzano stated the goal is to raise the stature of the community particularly with quality of life so we become a place that despite the fact that we are aging is still relevant in the marketplace. Mr. Bachman discussed that the maintenance of private property maintains properties to a community standard with use of the property maintenance code, provides a better quality of life and sustains/increases property values and instills community pride. Mr. Bachman stated Zoning Inspector Janette Matala is retiring March 31st and he will report back to Council on how this position will be handled. Mr. Bachman displayed a map of the zoning and property violations for 2009 and discussed the Neighborhood Enhancement Action Team (NEAT) Program inspections completed in 2009 and targeted areas for 2010. He explained that the dots for violation do not specify for the degree of violations some are handled with just a letter. Mr. Bachman discussed the increase in property maintenance inspections from 4613 in 2008 to 9611 in 2009. He discussed the increase in violations due in part to some tough locations that are in the court process. He stated 2939 actual addresses were touched by NEAT inspections. Mr. Bachman discussed the NEAT survey that is filled out and returned by residents. He commented of the responses received 82% of those have been in the community 5+ years. He discussed the greatest concerns were: neighbors (28%), police/safety (15%) and property maintenance & location issues (14.5% each). Mr. Bachman stated there was only a ten percent response rate. He further discussed redevelopments of private property including the Hicks Manor Re-branding, Cornerstone Plaza, Jungle Jim's campus, and Fair Plaza. He further discussed the plans for removing Fair Plaza and creating the neighborhood of Patterson Place. Mr. Bachman explained how education is important for residential retention. He briefly discussed the schools report card in which Fairfield is currently "Excellent". He discussed the cost for educating a student and compared it to other area districts. He further discussed the percent change from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009. Mr. Bachman discussed job opportunities, which is the human side of economic development, which includes a source of income to support self and family. He discussed the unemployment statistics for 2008 and 2009 comparing Fairfield to Ohio and the United States. He commented Fairfield was never greater than the US average. He discussed the current industrial market noting the Greater Cincinnati market has 10.3% vacancy at the end of 2009 and the Northwest is 11.2%, which has not been this high since 2003. He further discussed there was 4.2 million square feet negative absorption by the end of 2009 with the Northwest had 1.7 Million square feet absorption. He commented this is the last time there was negative absorption was in 2003 and that was only at about 500 thousand. He explained as far as trends there will be no speculative construction. He commented the credit and inventories will lead to immense competition. He discussed some positive take aways including the West Chester JEDD which has completed all board start up activities and to date revenues are greater than projections. He further stated all start-up expenses should be paid by the end of January with money starting to come back to the communities. Mr. Bachman discussed first quarter activity which includes a manufacturer looking to purchase a vacant industrial building, the properties at the Port Union Commerce Park and is receiving some interest, and finally an uptick in January from lead generation from the State of Ohio, Cincinnati USA Partnership and the real estate community. Mr. Bachman discussed examples of quality for the value including water and sewer rates, amount/quality of recreational programming, cost of educating a student and

housing cost. He discussed moving forward in terms of strategic decisions with regard to capital project that will enhance the Quality of Life. Mr. Bachman further discussed the great opportunities for former gravel mining operations and the Great Miami Corridor is a great future recreation corridor. He discussed the Gilmore I-275 improvements, bike trail expansions and the Black Bottom – canoe livery. He commented the future needs of our citizens include housing for our baby boomers that no longer choose to maintain their four bedroom two story detached single family home. He discussed the future needs of our businesses include the continued designation for uses on Route 4, retention of existing businesses and community partnerships. He explained quality of life, Property maintenance, education, job opportunities and local government services meet changing demographics. Councilmember Oler suggested someone look at creating a group of young professionals. Mr. Pizzano stated this might be something our local chamber can work on. Councilmember Rhodus briefly discussed comments he received from Corky Combs and Gary Cates about the many positive comments they hear about Fairfield at the State house. Mr. Bachman responded to Councilmember Abbott's question that no comments were received from the Railroad regarding the Stanchion project. Councilmember Meyers stated the challenge is to continually put a new product out there and adapt that product to the changing demographics.

Adjournment

The Council/Manager Briefing adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Johns
Clerk of Council