

MINUTES

COUNCIL-MANAGER BRIEFING

June 13, 2011

Mayor D'Epifanio called the Council-Manager Briefing to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Fairfield Municipal Building, 5350 Pleasant Avenue. The following Councilmembers were present: Tim Meyers, Terry Senger, Mike Snyder, Marty Judd, and Mike Oler. Staff present: Jim Bell, Brad Williams, Angie Johns, John Clemmons, Dave Butsch, Mark Wendling, Art Pizzano, Tim Bachman, Dave Crouch. Parks Board members present: Bob Breen and Don Hassler.

Goal Update: Parks and Recreation

City Manager Pizzano explained they will try to relate the asset of the parks facilities and programming. He briefly discussed the City's partnership with ArtsWave in which the Community Arts Center was selected. Jim Bell introduced Senior Recreation Programmer Brad Williams, who is responsible for the 55 plus programs, is the city's representative and Chairman of the Butler County Regional Transit Authority, is BCRTA's representative for OKI and is the accreditation team leader. Mr. Bell discussed how Parks and Recreation can be a conduit to help accomplish Council's goals. He read and discussed the Vision and Mission statement for the Parks and Recreation Department. He stated Council's first goal is positive programs that elevate Fairfield and he discussed how the Memorial Day Parade & Celebration helps meet the goal by bringing the community together. Mr. Pizzano explained our facility, Veteran's Park, is by design is very intimate, well-kept. He explained most of our facilities are on scale, which promote a closeness of community. Mr. Bell highlighted Red, White & Kaboom, which provides a patriotic gathering for the community. He further explained it is safe, family friendly event held on Sunday, July 3rd. Mr. Bell discussed the natural & historical programs where they reach out to the community and nurture the relationships with these different community groups. He briefly mentioned the various programs including Sunbonnet Days, Four Seasons Garden Club Heritage Garden Program, Izaak Walton League that introduces students to a conservation stewardship program. Mr. Williams commented Sunbonnet Days third annual event will be held on August 6 and 7 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM by the Fairfield Historical Society, Friends of Elisha Morgan Mansion and Four Seasons Garden Club. Mr. Bell explained the city facilitates youth sports in the area by providing facilities for the programs. He discussed the Reds Rookie League, which serves an underserved population in Butler County and is held at Waterworks Park. Mr. Bell explained within the youth sports there are over 16 groups and there will be a new youth sports program with the Field of Dreams program, which will serve an underserved population. Mr. Bell discussed the youth program in which they partner with the schools and the library and provide a safe and nurturing environment. He briefly discussed the programs including the SMART club which is a latchkey program for after school; the in-house and in-school theater program – Theater A to Z and Kids in Spotlight; birthday parties at the Community Arts Center; and advanced science camp. He explained the 55 plus program is how they maintain the connection with the older population in the city. He further explained our census data was shared earlier in the year and we are an aging population and our community is the oldest median age group of cities in the region. Mr. Williams commented they want to be entertained. He stated the two areas of highest growth in the department are youth and 55 plus adult programming and a large contributor to that is the Community Arts Center because of its size and diversity and space to break out into more groups. Mr. Bell discussed a graph showing how they have grown in programs not including any YMCA partnerships, youth sports, or any in school activities that are outside the building. He explained the first spike is with the opening of the aquatic center, the second is when they moved into the old library building and the next spike was when they moved to the Community Arts Center. He explained they are up to almost 1200 programs during the calendar year. He explained the next couple spikes in the future include when the Huffman Property, outdoor learning facility comes online and when Field of Dreams is finished. Councilmember Meyers asked from 1980 to present the number of fulltime employees added to support those programs. Mr. Bell stated for programming they added three. Councilmember Meyers asked if productivity rose from 275 programs up to 1140 programs and only three full time employees were added. Mr. Bell explained if golf is dropped from the number of programs it would be 1100 programs instead of 1140.

Mr. Bell stated Council's second goal is a unique and desirable quality of life. He discussed how parks is using their assets to enhance the city's stature in the region including the parks and facilities, summer concert series, and cultural and performing arts. He commented we are second only to Blue Ash for our free summer entertainment. He further commented we offer this season 28 different options for summer entertainment; Blue Ash has 32 and the next one down is City of Mason with 15. Mr. Bell stated we were chosen by ArtsWave to be the outreach program for the Fine Arts Fund. Mr. Williams stated for the 2010-2011 which is coming to a close they held over 100 performances, which includes both internal and external rentals. He further commented since opening the doors, they have averaged 90 performances per year. City Manager Pizzano commented we draw from a much larger part of the metropolitan area. Mr. Williams explained the positive buzz, how active the Community Arts Center is and the amount of traffic at the Community Arts Center is what led ArtsWave to us. Mr. Bell explained ArtsWave will be bringing the big eight: Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Arts Museum, Cincinnati Ballet, Pops Symphony, Taft Museum, Playhouse in the Park, Cincinnati Museum Center, May Festival, out and we were chosen to be the pilot program. He explained for 2011 to 2012 there will be a lot in the program and website with the moniker "Cincinnati ArtsWave Presents", which will show that we have been chosen by ArtsWave and the big eight to be that conduit to throw the arts into suburbia. Mr. Pizzano explained it is more than the prestige of being in this group; it is about getting connected and using their system to help focus our marketing in a more effective way. Mr. Williams explained ArtsWave is the largest arts association in the region and are helping us with the regional approach. Parks Board Member

Don Hassler discussed comments he has received from people out of the area who cannot believe the shows we have here, but they say we need a good restaurant. Mr. Bell discussed the second annual Community Arts Center Day, which is part of our ArtsWave sponsorship and is being sponsored at twelve area community arts centers region wide. He discussed ours will be on a Sunday afternoon and will feature an arts component for kids to decorate their bikes and dogs and other arts projects then there is a community parade around the peripheral of Village Green followed by some presentations and an ice cream social to get some buzz going with ArtsWave and the Community Arts Center and our 2011-2012 programming. Mr. Bell explained for the Economic Development goal, they are focusing on the Development Services initiative using quality of life as the economic development tool. He explained they are working closely with Development Services and the Chamber to be that tool in their tool belt for economic development. He discussed the following economic benefits of Parks and Recreation as cited by the American Planning Association: property values are positively affected, municipal revenues are increased, affluent retirees are attracted and retained, young professionals are attracted to live and work, and homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes. Mr. Bell explained the MASC tournament is a two weekend event with 4,000 players, 9,000 spectators and an impact of almost two million dollars into the community. He explained the BioWheels weekend event is one race in Harbin Park with 400 riders and 600 people watch and an impact of \$200,000 into the community. Mr. Bell discussed the partnership with the Chamber and Development Services for marketing partnerships in which there is reciprocity. He discussed the enhanced marketing initiatives with the Chamber in which they are trying to push traffic out to Route 4. He explained as you purchase tickets through the Community Arts Center, there are three opportunities to be pushed towards restaurants in Fairfield, one is an online hyperlink to Fairfield Chamber's restaurant guide, receipt by email has the same hyperlink and tickets are now in envelopes with a guide of restaurants that are Chamber members printed on them. He discussed Council's next goal is to attract and retain which parlays into Parks and Recreation to promoting Development Services mission to attract and retain businesses and residential units in the city. He discussed what Fortune 500 companies look for when relocating including quality of life, recreation, universities, strong local government, and cost of living. He discussed what smaller businesses are looking to relocate or develop within an existing facility according to Dr. Compton from Texas A & M; they look at recreation, living cost, education, safety, culture and health care. He discussed the branding City of Opportunity Live, Work and Play used in our print and online materials. Mr. Bell stated within a half mile radius you can get to a green space or a park within the City of Fairfield. He explained some of the spots that are lacking are spots that they do have property including Blackbottom, Huffman Farm, Wildwood, Metroparks and the Miami Erie Canal Bike Path. He discussed how Fairfield benchmarks against Blue Ash, Dublin, Kettering, Mason, Miamisburg, Montgomery, Springdale, West Chester and Westerville. He stated our community along with these communities has good value, nice housing, strong schools, stable neighborhoods, and quality of life. He briefly discussed how we stack up against these other best practice communities. Mr. Bell explained social media is being explored to enhance marketing and the Community Arts Center will be a pilot program. He discussed for prioritization of Capital Improvement Projects when reviewing CIP they are looking at financial and economic growth indicators, maintaining current levels of service and adding value to the community. Mr. Bell discussed the Aquatic Center and addition of spray grounds and noted that Fairfield and Florence Aquatic Center are the only two aquatic centers in the region that show profit. He briefly outlined alternative funding sources including concession revenue, grants, sponsorships, scholarships, and purchasing efficiencies. Mr. Bell explained how the Field of Dreams, Huffman Farm, Black Bottom Park and the Great Miami River Trail all fit into the sixth Council goal of innovative projects. He discussed moving forward all of the projects and programs sustainable, operational efficiencies, return on investments, succession planning and retention of knowledge. Mr. Williams discussed the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) which sets standards that provide an effective and credible means of evaluation; it is a quality assurance and quality improvement process, a means of comparison for national standards of practice not just locally, but nationally. In response to Councilmember Meyers' question, Mr. Bell explained the Convention and Visitors Bureau discussed bundling activities and hotel from a county wide standpoint. Councilmember Meyers commented he thought there was enough for a Fairfield bundle. Councilmember Meyers commented what has been done from a productivity standpoint is significant for the Community Arts Center.

Mayor D'Epifanio commented he would like to have efforts stepped up for property maintenance violations and have Chief Dickey enforce ordinances like the one for pit bulls and pit bull look alike.

Adjournment

Council/Manager Briefing adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Johns
Clerk of Council