

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**April 29, 2019**  
**Auditorium**

**Present:** Councilmembers Bullock, George, Litten, O’Leary, O’Malley & Rader

**Also Present:** Human Services Director Gelsomino, Finance Director Pae, Urban Designer Allison Hennie, Law Director Butler, Mayor Summers, Planning Director Sylvester, 2 members of the public, Clerk Bach taking minutes, Deputy Clerk Lascu

**Call to order:** 6:00 p.m.

**RESOLUTION 9069-19 A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, authorizing the Mayor and Director of Law to enter into a purchase agreement with Cove United Methodist Church *fka* Detroit Avenue Methodist Church Inc., an Ohio non-profit corporation, owner of the property located at 12525 Lake Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio (PPN 312-28-006), and to execute all documents necessary to effectuate the purchase and sale according to the terms of that agreement.**

Director Sylvester delivered a presentation regarding the potential purchase of the property outlining three key reasons for acquisition – the implementation of the integrated wet weather improvement plan (IWWIP), the potential to develop an intergenerational community center on the site and for land control reasons. He provided maps of the site to orient members to it. The site is comprised of 1.75 acres between Clifton and Lake at the corner of Cove and contains .7 acres of greenspace.

Mayor Summers remarked further on how purchase of the site will complement the IWWIP. Starting in 2029 it will become critical for the City to locate storm water storage capacity on the City’s east side and this property meets all of the technical specifications. It is appealing that the land is currently available and for sale at a fair price. Without available land, eminent domain could become necessary to carry out the IWWIP. The Committee discussed with the Mayor the technical aspects of how the storage tank would work. Mayor Summers concluded, stating that it makes sense to purchase the property for its storm water management potential alone. He recommended addressing questions about the church building separately. He reminded Council that the funds for the purchase will come from the Land Acquisition Fund, in which there is currently \$4.3 million.

In response to a question by Councilmember O’Malley, Mayor Summers discussed how the addition of an underground water storage facility at this location would reduce the combined sewer overflows. An underground tank at this location would stop the largest CSO – CSO 059. Between this and one other IWWIP project planned for 2029-2034, the City will go from collecting and treating 88% of its water to 94-96%.

In response to a question by Councilmember Rader, Mayor Summers explained that while the City is not yet legally obligated to create the storage tank that it seeks to include this obligation in its next NPDES permit to demonstrate its commitment to the EPAs and avoid a consent decree. He spoke about the next steps in the City's discussions with the EPA and emphasized that a water storage facility is very important to avoiding a consent decree. If the facility goes forward it would not interfere with the existing building and would be located in the current parking lot space.

The Committee and the Mayor discussed other aspects of the IWWIP as presented to the EPA.

In response to a question by Councilmember George, Mayor Summers explained that no other site that fits the needed parameter is currently for sale.

Human Services Director Gelsomino remarked on the potential of the church building on the property to serve as an intergenerational community center where all human services staff and programs can be housed. She expressed great excitement about the possibility, stating that the community will benefit and the staff will increase their potential for collaboration. She remarked that the Lawther Center is worn out and that the City needs to provide something better for seniors and all residents. One thousand seniors were served by the Department in 2018.

Director Sylvester explained that the Planning Department entered into an agreement with Cove Church to perform a fit analysis to evaluate whether it is a possibility for Human Services' programming to fit within the existing Cove Church space. The analysis included an assessment of:

- Environmental conditions
- Interviews with Human Services staff
- Development of preliminary floor plans
- Building Code, life safety and accessibility review
- Mechanical, electric, and plumbing review

The environmental analysis revealed that removal of all hazardous materials such as asbestos would cost \$110,000.

Director Sylvester stated that upon completion of the analysis that he is confident that the space can meet the goals of the Human Services Department. He remarked that the open floor plans lend themselves well to many creative options. Currently, the space consists of two 8,000 square foot spaces. He reviewed the existing floor plans and presented newly proposed ones suitable for Human Services. He presented draft renderings of the current space renovated. Moving forward he recommended taking a design-build approach to realize such renovations and discussed additional next steps that would be required.

Councilmember Bullock expressed that he expects to support the resolution. He asked for Council to consider if the City will work to rebuild capacity in the land acquisition fund as it has drawn down on that fund twice this year. He also asked for more information about the costs of a newly built community center verses the proposed renovations. Lastly, he asked what will become of Human Services' existing space if a community center is located at the property.

Councilmember George expressed concern about the overall cost and requested additional meeting time to answer questions.

Councilmember O'Malley requested copies of the materials referenced at the meeting. He asked for assurance that should the City acquire the property that it will work quickly to improve the landscaping and parking lot.

Councilmember Rader asked if and when community feedback can be solicited.

Director Sylvester replied that gathering community engagement prior to the acquisition would be difficult but that they will engage the community if the sale is approved.

Director Butler provided an updated version of the resolution and explained that it calls for an additional \$200,000 for hazardous materials abatement. The purchase agreement has been updated to reflect the exhibits. These updates have not yet been approved by the church. Director Butler discussed the timeline for the purchase. The administration is seeking passage of the resolution by May 20<sup>th</sup>. Closing is essential by June 30<sup>th</sup> which would require a draft by early June. Extending the deadline beyond that would require further negotiation.

The Committee discussed the need for future meetings on this topic and scheduled May 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. for its next discussion.

### **Development Updates:**

At the request of Councilmember O'Malley, Director Sylvester provided an update on The Phantasy and Mac Toole properties:

- The owner of The Foundry, across the street from The Phantasy is working to purchase and improve The Phantasy. Building inspectors, the fire marshal and other city staff have been involved regarding the improvements.
- The Mac Toole building has been vacant for some time and was recently sold. Updates to the property are anticipated.

Director Sylvester provided an update on One Lakewood Place, reporting that it is progressing well. He stated that the projects is close to receiving Planning Commission approval, to be followed by ABR approval, and finally back to Council for its consideration of a planned development re-zoning proposal. If the rezoning request is granted then construction will begin this year.

Councilmember Bullock asked questions about a presentation slide that showed changed in the City's CDBG tracts. Director Sylvester discussed the changes and it was noted that Cove Church is surrounded by CDBG tracts.

Councilmember O'Malley asked for more detailed information about the Solove developments, Lake Homes and other development projects before they come to Council for approval. Committee of the Whole adjourned at 7:09 p.m.