

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
October 1, 2018
East Conference Room

Present: Councilmembers O'Malley, George, Bullock

Also Present: Councilmembers Anderson, Litten, O'Leary, Public Works Director Beno, Finance Director Pae, Mayor Summers, Planning Director Sylvester, three members of the public

Call to order: 6:02 p.m.

RESOLUTION NO. 9020-18 - A RESOLUTION to formally identify agreed-upon priorities that Council would like to see reflected in the 2019 budget.

Councilmember O'Malley identified the three budget priorities that need further discussion – Cleveland Restoration Society membership, slate sidewalks, and Clifton Blvd. Extension sidewalks

Install Sidewalks on Clifton Blvd. Extension

The Committee discussed the potential cost of this project which is estimated to be \$200,000 per side (not including the design work).

Mayor Summers expressed support for the spirit of the plan but was concerned about the cost. He stated that adding sidewalks cannot be justified compared to other priorities of the City.

Director Sylvester stated that the City is currently working with Rocky River, the Metroparks, and the County on a grant application to study the bridges connecting Rocky River and Lakewood with an eye on making them more pedestrian and bike friendly. If these funds are received then the plan would be complete in 2019.

Councilmember Rader expressed satisfaction with setting long-term goals and maintaining progress toward the achievement of sidewalks.

Members of the public who are residents of the neighborhood expressed frustration about the lack of progress toward sidewalks.

Mayor Summers pointed out that reducing the number of traffic lanes was important progress for which the City received a lot of push back from commuters. He advocated for continuing a gradual approach.

Several Councilmembers expressed support for a compromise approach where the proposal remains in the Resolution with the understanding that it will take multiple years to achieve. The Committee expressed a desire to see the design work completed by the end of 2019.

A motion was made and seconded to include the Clifton Blvd. sidewalks proposal in the Resolution with changes made to indicate that only design work is to be completed in 2019.

All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

Councilmember O'Malley moved to include the remaining budget priority proposals in the Resolution with the exceptions of the Cleveland Restoration Society and slate sidewalks proposals.

Motion was seconded. All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

The Committee briefly revisited the three parks improvement proposals, clarifying that the intent of putting forth the proposals is to ensure that resources are devoted to these parks and to continue their planning processes, including St. Charles Green.

The Committee clarified that the Council conference/travel proposal also includes membership dues to National League of Cities

Cleveland Restoration Society/ Heritage Home Program

Councilmember O'Malley stated that following last Monday's Finance Committee meeting that he received an amended proposal from the Cleveland Restoration Society that was complicated and not fully developed. It included an idea for them to partner with Lakewood Alive.

Councilmember O'Malley expressed a preference to leave this proposal out and continue to work on it. He acknowledged that the 1.99% interest rate loan for residents is very attractive but that it ends up costing the City about \$2,000 - \$3,000 per loan.

Councilmember Litten expressed a preference for the City to engage with CRS on a limited trial basis.

Councilmember George countered that a 1-2 year period of engagement would provide the best possible snapshot of residents' interest levels.

Mayor Summers explained the City's previous difficulties working with CRS. He stated that the City repeatedly requested data from CRS about who in the City was participating/benefitting from the program and that they did not provide that information. The City wants to be sure that it is not subsidizing a program that only helps high income residents.

Councilmember Anderson stated that he received data from CRS about the number of loans, site visits, and technical assists that he will share.

Slate Sidewalks

Director Beno discussed how the City handles sandstone sidewalks today. There are options for residents who want to keep them. The City contractor will not give a general quote on the sandstone pieces because each is unique in its fragility, age, size, etc. The City encounters very few people each year who choose to keep the sandstone.

The Committee discussed the costs of preserving the sandstone sidewalks.

Councilmember George reiterated her goal to make preserving slate sidewalks cost neutral to encourage residents to keep them and maintain the City's historical charm.

The Committee identified lingering questions such as the number of sandstone slabs remaining and whether the program will impact those whose sidewalks have already been evaluated by the City.

Councilmember O'Malley expressed concern about the unknowns in the proposal, particularly the cost.

Councilmember Bullock summarized that the City's existing financial policies don't encourage homeowners to value the slate and don't encourage homeowners from taking the extra effort to preserve it. He expressed interest in finding some way for the City to encourage maintenance of the slate pieces, perhaps in a less costly way such as through coordination among neighbors.

Councilmember Rader proposed setting a financial limit on the program and/or making it a first-come-first-serve grant program to address the unknown costs.

Mayor Summers remarked that the slate has a shorter useful life (5-10 years) than concrete (50 years) and that the City cannot commit to replacing the slate multiple times.

Councilmember O'Malley moved to include the slate sidewalks proposal in the Resolution with the understanding that a great deal of it remains to be fleshed out and that implementation will take multiple years.

Motion was seconded. All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

Mayor Summers summarized that Council has asked for close to \$1 million in additional items to the budget without proposing any cuts. He asked Council to consider which items are not priorities in order to have a balanced budget.

Finance Committee adjourned at 7:05 p.m.