

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING, CHEVIOT, OHIO

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October 21, 2008

The Public Hearing on the proposed Public Works Fee was called to order at 6:35 P.M. The following were found in attendance:

Mayor	Samuel D. Keller
President of Council	Deborah M. McKinney
Safety Service Director	Steven O. Neal
Council 1 st Ward	Ryan T. Zech
Council 2 nd Ward	James Babey
Council 3 rd Ward	James F. Sunderhaus
Council 4 th Ward	Greg J. Stautberg
Council at Large	Kathleen S. Zech
Council at Large	Dennis T. Dinkelacker
Council at Large	Steven L. Braun
Auditor	Theresa Ciolino-Klein

President McKinney explained the format of the Public Hearing to all in attendance and then turned the meeting over to Mr. Stautberg. Mr. Stautberg then explained to everyone the City's current financial situation and why the City feels the need to enact a Public Works fee.

Peggy Sullivan, owner of the IGA on North Ben Road, pointed out a discrepancy in the revised rates for the business community. Mr. Neal stated that a corrected schedule will be issued to the business community.

Bob Hildebrand of Glenmore Avenue asked if he would be charged for each dwelling in apartment buildings he owns even if they are not being currently used as rental properties. Mayor Keller informed him that fees will be assessed according to how properties are listed on the County Auditor's website, but added that if these properties are being used in a different manner, the owners can contact the County Auditor to request a change in how they are listed.

Marcia Spral of Harding Avenue asked if the fees were really going to be collected via residents Water Works bills and why that was so. Mr. Stautberg stated that due to the City's limited resources it was decided that contracting with the Water Works for collection was the best solution. Mr. Neal stated that if residents or businesses choose not to pay the fee, the Water Works would follow its existing procedures and shut of water to that property. Mr. Neal added that Water Works currently provides this service to several municipalities around the county. Mr. Neal further added that in the past these fees were assessed through property tax bills, but a problem arose when properties were sold and the new owners were assessed the fee if the previous owners did not pay it. Mayor Keller added that when the City last did this in 2005, all fees were able to be collected but that with the limited resources the City has it was extremely tough to do.

Steve Bain of Janward Avenue thanked the City for the excellent level of service provided to residents, but wanted to ask if all other options have been explored, especially for the long term. He also asked if City residents would be able to vote on this proposal. Mr. Stautberg stated that the budget deficits actually occurred last year, but that money was moved around to prevent asking residents for the additional fee. Mr. Stautberg added that the Finance Committee will be continually working throughout the next year and that every possible option will be explored. Mayor Keller acknowledged the work that has been done by the Finance Committee, adding that extremely deep cuts have already been made to the budget and that there is literally nothing left to cut. Mayor Keller added that the proposed fee is only for Fiscal Year 2009 and that Council and his Administration are working hard to find a permanent solution. Mayor Keller also stated that the City has tried to put this issue on the ballot in the past, but was told they could not because Council has the authority to enact the fee without it. Mayor Keller encouraged residents and business owners to visit the County Auditor's website to see for themselves what portion of their property taxes actually go to the City of Cheviot. Mr. Bain said that he appreciates the information that has been put out and asked that it be posted on the City's website.

Mrs. Zech informed everyone that the City is working diligently to increase home ownership and that Cheviot is currently to only community of its kind that is full service. Mrs. Zech added that Money Market Magazine has recently named Cheviot as one of the 100 most affordable cities to live in and that the city was a contender for the 100 best places to live, partly because of the quality of the City Services.

Chris Baker, owner of Second Street Saloon on Harrison Avenue, pointed out that some businesses currently use dumpsters, some use cans, and some are not using proper waste containers; she wanted to know how these different set ups will be enforced. Mr. Neal stated that some of these businesses will need to be dealt with on an individual basis, and added that he will address those not currently using proper containers. Ms. Baker asked if a recycling program can be used to cut down on the amount to trash collected, which Mr. Neal said is being looked into. Mayor Keller said that all these issues are currently being looked into, including a dumpster to can ratio for collection fees. Mayor Keller also said that recycling is being discussed, with one possible pick up point being the municipal parking lot on Harrison Avenue. Ms. Baker asked if notice can be given to the business community regarding the different pickup schedules; Mr. Neal said it would. Mr. Sunderhaus added that the City is working to increase revenues by expanding the tax base through increased homeownership, and cited the Dollar Home Program as an example.

Ms. Sullivan stated that even with the adjustments made from the original proposal, she still feels that she will not be able to afford the current rate, as costs of doing business are rising for her as well. Mr. Stautberg informed her that the fees are still being reviewed. Ms. Sullivan stated she will have no choice but to cut down on pickups if the fee remains the same. There was much discussion.

Mr. Stautberg called a meeting of the Finance Committee for Thursday, October 23rd at 7 P.M. to review the rates for business pickups, and reminded everyone that this meeting will be open to the public.

President McKinney reminded everyone that the third and final Public Hearing on the proposed Public Works Fee will be held on Tuesday, October 28th at 6:30 P.M. at the Cheviot Fieldhouse and that there will be a special meeting of Council immediately following.

The public hearing was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

Matthew D. McGowan
Clerk of Council

Deborah M. McKinney
President of Council