

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS
SPECIAL COUNCIL WORKSHOP
5:15 PM
JUNE 2, 2016

ROLL CALL: BIRO, BLOAM, DUSZYNSKI, HARRIS, HENLEY, SHOEFLER

The Mayor turned the meeting over to Mr. Dennis McAndrew from Silverload to go over the NOACCA ODOT Grant, Phase 3A of the Multi-Purpose Trail connecting Bacci Park to the Village Hall.

Mr. McAndrew addressed the Council, and explained that there are a couple of decisions to be made concerning the trail, and we want to give you the best information we have about the trail today, in hopes of supporting your decision.

Just yesterday we filed for a \$200,000.00 Grant from NatureWorks for the trail. What we want to do today is go over the timeline for the trail, and some physical planning around the trail, and our best guess today on the cost.

First, Mr. McAndrew went over the history of the trail.

In 2009, we first applied for the grant trail because we bought the railroad property to eliminate the crossing on Canal Road. At that time, our plan was to take the trail from the park to the Town Hall. For the record, on the application at that time, it was noted that the Village had been planning this trail since 1999. We were awarded \$650,000.00, but 2009 was the beginning of the recession, Village resources were becoming tighter, and we also applied in August of 2009 for 1.2 million dollars which we did not get.

In September 2009, we were awarded our \$650,000.00, at the time it was about a 2 million dollar project. In October our other source of funding fell apart, and we went back to ODNR to ask if we could scale back the project to exclude the trail going up the hill to the Town Hall. The State allowed us to trim back the project.

In 2011, the project was completed. We finished the trail, the Service Department drive, and eliminated the railroad crossing on Canal Road.

In 2013, we found what we thought was another source of funding for the project, a TAP Grant which we were awarded in September 2013. At the time, that grant was scheduled for 5 years out. The money would be available to us in July of 2018.

Last July, the organization that handles the TAP grant reached out to us and told us if we were ready, we have the money available to you now, but we would have had to have all of the engineering done within 6 months, and we couldn't do it in time, so we passed on getting the grant early. We think they will call us again this year and make us the same offer this year, but we have to have all the engineering plans in place, so we can get the money in 2017 as opposed to 2018. So we need to know how to respond to them when we get the call.

We have a number of different funding sources to add to the trail project before we get the call for the TAP Grant. There are 3 different grants that we will be going after, but they all have certain windows of when the work needs to be completed. So what we are trying to do is line up the awards, the engineering, and the construction to fall in line with all the funding. The big thing that is in the way is some engineering and geotechnical services that are needed before moving forward. Unfortunately, the decision to do those things needs to be made now. These are costs that would have to be picked up by the Village. And it is in advance of knowing whether we will get the other funding sources. This is a decision that Council will have to make if you want to move forward with the trail coming up to the Town Hall.

Ricardo Leon from Silverload explained the different options for the trail that were being looked at, and where the proposed trail will end up. Some of the options were to end at the Town Hall, Bletch Court, and another ancillary trail a little bit further from the proposed trail. The Mayor explained that we were looking for alternatives to save money and not have to use our money. For instance, we looked at ending the trail at Dressler Court, and some of the residents had a concern that there would be a lot of foot traffic on their street, it is a legitimate concern, but this was one of the things we looked at to save money. Bringing it up behind the pool is the perfect scenario, but he wanted people to know why we were looking at different areas. It was to get the most money out of the project that were appropriated.

Mr. Leon went over the alternate options for ending the trail, and explained that ultimately the best option is the original option of bringing it to the Town Hall. Mr. McAndrew explained that the trail to the Town Hall was the original plan, and if we keep it the same, we are set for funding. Any deviation from that plan, we would have to go back and request an amendment. Right now, we have \$712,000.00 in grants for the project, he explained that if we choose any of the other options besides coming up behind the Town Hall, we will lose the funding for the trail. The Mayor said he wanted everyone to know that we have exhausted every avenue we can to get funding for this project. The understanding is to have this project move forward in 2017 for a myriad of reasons, but also because our centennial year is 2018.

The Mayor and Mr. McAndrew explained that there are many reasons for the trail to end up at the Town Hall, for example, easier to monitor, parking, restrooms at the Village Hall, plus it is adjacent to the school, and they can utilize it to get to the park. Mr. Schoeffler asked why there are other options, the Mayor said he wanted everyone to know that we looked at everything, and we are trying to get the most for our money. If we are awarded the other two grants we are applying for, it would make our cost less. If we don't get them, how do we still get it done with minimal impact on the Villages budget?

They went over a number of different options for the stairway leading to the trail, but it would be determined by the geotechnical studies, and if the hill would support them. Mr. Sciano explained that we have to be careful, because if we use the shortcut route, we might be cutting our funding. Mr. McAndrew said that it is also possible that they take away the funding completely.

Mr. McAndrew went over the funding for the project. He explained that we were awarded \$712,000.00 in July 2018. This grant is solid, it is ours to use for the trail project that is estimated to cost 1.23 million. And as Ms. Biro said, it is only to be used for construction.

Mr. Sciano explained that you have to do the geotechnical surveys before you do anything else, even the engineering. Ms. Duszynski asked when we will know about the other grants. Mr. Leon told her it would be late fall or early December, but in order to be ready if we are awarded the grants, we have to do the soil boring, the investigative reviews, and the geotechnical studies first. There was a discussion on the integrity of using the hill behind the Town Hall, and the Mayor stated that the people that would do the studies have been doing them for 50 years, and if they said it would hold, it will hold. If we do use the hill, it will also shore up the property at the McManus residence, next to the hill. The Mayor is confident that if the surveyors say the hill will hold the structure with no problems, it will hold.

Mr. Leon put together a trail funding project planning schedule, with three different options, taking into account many different variables such as property acquisition, geotechnical studies, environmental surveys, and grant funding. They made the timelines for the project so it will be complete before our Centennial in 2018. Ms. Harris asked if this was the only reason we were pushing the project, and Mr. Leon said that the plans also fit into the timeline for the grants. Ms. Duszynski said that in order for the project to get completed, we have to invest money in studies now before we move forward with the project. Mr. McAndrew said yes. The Mayor said he wants Council to invest in the project because they believe in it. If you don't, then we need to abandon the idea altogether. We already have secured \$712,000.00 for the project, and it would be a shame to walk away from it knowing we may never be eligible in the future, but if Council is not on board, they need to walk away from the project.

Ms. Henley asked to give Council a ballpark figure on what it would take to get the project prepped before we have to make a decision on moving forward. Mr. Sciano said it will be approximately \$100,000.00. The project is 1.23 million total, and as of right now, we have \$712,000.00 in grants. Without any other grants, the Villages portion of the project right now would be \$500,000.00. Mr. McAndrew stated that they have applied for every grant available in Cuyahoga County for this project, and we don't know where that is going to go. We might get some of those grants and then the Villages portion will be less.

Mr. Schoeffler stated that if we are going to do it, we need to plan now because the costs for everything are going to do nothing but increase. So if the money is available, and we have it, and we want to do this, we need to move forward. He believes it is a great project, because Bacci Park is inaccessible by pedestrians, you have to drive down there and park there. He feels it would be great for the residents of E. 71st Street for accessibility. He thinks we should do the work, and move forward with the prep work. The Mayor said that Council has held off on this project since 2009 because of the economy. Now we have to make a decision to move forward or not. The time is now for the grants to line up, and get the most out of the grants.

Ms. Henley asked if we have the money to do this. The Mayor said that yes, we have the money in the General Fund. He stated that we have it, but we don't want to use it on something frivolous, but we are also looking at other sources of revenue in the future. He believes that this project of building an entrance to the park from the Town Hall is the Cadillac plan as an entrance to the park. It will be wonderful.

Mr. Sciano said the only way you can go forward with this project is to do the work we are suggesting. Even if you decide as some point to not proceed, you will always have the information you need at a future time to move forward with this project, but you must do the leg work first.

Ms. Biro stated that if Council decides to move forward, they will be investing an initial amount of \$100,000.00. She asked what legislation we will see in June. Mr. Sciano explained where the \$100,000.00 would be spent, and the legislation we will need. She would like to see three pieces of legislation for the testing, and also a new Financial Fund dedicated to the Bacci Park project.

In summation, the Mayor stated that the project total is 1.23 million, and we currently have secured \$712,000.00 in grants, and we are looking to get two more grants. So the best case scenario is that the project would cost us a total of \$143,000.00, and that number could be higher or lower, but we need to decide if we are going to do the prep work at the next Council Meeting.

WHEREFORE, there being no further business before this Council, Ms. Duszynski made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Bloam. All voting aye, none opposed; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.