Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan called the regular meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Mrs. Pamela Cameron  
Mr. John Rach  
Mr. Steven Sims  
Mrs. Michele Weiss  
Mr. Mark Wiseman

Absent: Mrs. Susan Pardee  
Mr. Phillip Ertel

Also Present: Law Director Luke McConville  
Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas  
City Engineer Joseph Ciuni  
Police Chief Dustin Rogers  
Fire Chief Robert Perko  
Communications and Civic Engagement Mike Cook  
Economic Development Susan Drucker  
Building Commissioner James McReynolds

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MR. RACH to excuse the absence of Mrs. Pardee and Mr. Ertel. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Approval of Minutes from February 4, 2019

There were no corrections to the Council minutes from February 4, 2019.

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MRS. CAMERON to approve the Council minutes from February 4, 2019. On roll call, all voted “aye,” except Mr. Sims, who “passed.”

Approval of Minutes from March 4, 2019

There were no corrections to the Council minutes from March 4, 2019.

MOTION BY MRS. CAMERON, SECONDED BY MR. WISEMAN to approve the Council minutes from March 4, 2019. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Approval of Minutes from March 18, 2019

Mayor Brennan noted a typographical error in the spelling of his name under comments from the audience.

There were additional corrections to the Council minutes from March 18, 2019.

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MRS. CAMERON to approve the Council minutes from March 18, 2019. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Comments from Audience

There were no audience comments.
Mayor’s Report

On April 8, 2019 at 7pm there will be a joint meeting of the Cleveland Heights/University Heights School Board and the City of University Heights. The meeting will occur at the CH/UH School Board offices, 2155 Miramar Blvd. in the Board Room and the agenda will be posted later this week.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 6:30pm will be an informational session on the Heritage Home Program. Homes over 50 years old may qualify for access for guidance in low cost loan financing for home improvement projects. The restoration society is a non-profit organization focused on providing advice on home repairs. These services are available to residents free of charge. The Heritage Home Program provides free technical assistance for home repair and maintenance projects, provide feedback, advice on kitchen/bathroom make overs, advice on repairs/maintenance as well as compatible additions, assistance in finding contractors and the evaluation of contractor estimates, color consultation for exterior painting. The Heritage Home Program also offers low interest equality loans for home improvements projects with current rates as low as 2% through Key Bank and Third Federal Savings and Loan. These loans can be used for both interior and exterior repairs, maintenance, additions and modernization projects for more information visit www.heritagehomeprogram.org website or contact the Heritage Home Program staff 216-426-3116.

Mayor Brennan offered clarifying remarks to some remarks made during public forum portion of the last Council meeting. Mayor Brennan said as a candidate he ran on the creation of an Economic Development Department and the hiring of an Economic Development Director to lead that department. Mayor Brennan said he ran on that because that was one of the ways to grow the community and lift the tax base. Through economic development and redevelopment this Administration has created an Economic Development Department and hired an Economic Development Director. With that a real commitment has been made to improve housing, because key to preserving and growing the tax is to be proactive about the preservation and improvement of the housing. Because of that the Housing Department has been separated from the Building Department. Both departments have plenty of work to do. Revamping the exterior maintenance program and the hiring of building inspectors with State credentials that the previous inspectors did not have to accommodate the increase construction that is underway in the City. The Office of Community Policing was created, and Mayor Brennan noted he ran on this in 2017 so that should not be controversial. The Fire Prevention Bureau was reinstated. The City had this Department under Mayor Rothschild and the City has one once again. This is not a new position but the restoration of the old position for a new and expanded mandate to update, modernize the City’s fire inspections and raise the community’s outreach to a new level. Mayor Brennan added if persons are against the Fire Prevention Bureau then they are against preventing fires. Many of the so-called new positions have been filled in large part by internal candidates, people who are already working for the City. Other so-called new positions are merely just the same basic police and fire positions that the City has always had. Only with new people coming into retirements and people going on disability; you add those together with the new Economic Development Director and new Communications and Civic Engagement Coordinator. Mayor Brennan said that as a candidate he promoted those as separate positions, but last year he created a hybrid position combining the responsibilities of both and have gone to a Communications Coordinator and a Civic Engagement Coordinator. The reason for that was because the level of customer service out of City Hall had been lacking; the level of communication had been lacking; the level of engagement with the community had been lacking. Those levels have been raised and the City has reached new heights in customer service and satisfaction. We will continue to deliver the high level of service to the community because the residents of the City deserve it. For too long the residents weren’t getting it; and, we are not finished yet. Restoring the Finance Department and implementing best practices is an ongoing project. The Finance Department has not been able to close December 2018 for two reasons (1) there are approximately $8,000 of outstanding checks on the books going back to 2016. The Finance personnel have been combing through the old records to determine what the check were for and contacting the intended recipients so that the checks can be resolved once and for all, i.e. where these checks duplicate payments that simply need to be voided or were they checks that were never cashed and need to be reissued? Because the old records were in such a disorganized state and due to other factors such as our current Finance Director focus on the 2019 budget as well as the creation and implementation of the new accounting system the City did not complete the research on those checks until the end of last week; (2) the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) made the City aware of a problem with a
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reporting of both 2016 and 2017. When the City’s Finance Associate Denise Balint submitted the 2018 reports she included payments sick incentives, which are considered pensionable income by OP&F upon doing so red flags went up at OP&F because this income had not been reported for 2016 or 2017. The Finance Department had to go back through all the payroll records for 2016 and 2017 to figure out what amount were withheld from employees and never submitted to OP&F, as well as determining what amounts the City owed as its matching portion. Once again the state of the old record keeping by the previous administration’s Finance Department made this a very time-consuming task. Ms. Balint also researched employees who are part of the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) and found no employee reporting errors. The research on this inaccurate filing was completed and the specific dollar amounts that needed to be submitted and paid on March 22, 2019 to OP&F were done just over one week ago in the tune of $17,332.79 for fire and police for 2016 and 2017. With these outstanding matters now resolved the City is now in position to close 2018 and should do so in about one weeks-time. As fully set forth in the State of the City Address this Administration is fully committed to the restoration of the City’s Finance Department and despite the severity of the problems that were inherited the scope of which weren’t even fully comprehended until around this time last year, have not been allowed that to be an excuse or deterrent to fulling the necessary work of improving City services and investing in the city to improve the community, grow the tax base and make the City sustainable.

That concluded Mayor Brennan’s report.

Agenda Items:

A. Ordinance 2019-12 Enacting Codified Ordinance Chapter 280 Entitled “University Heights City Beautiful Corporation” and Repealing Existing Codified Ordinance Chapter 280 Entitled “City Beautiful Commission”

Mayor Brennan stated that the City Beautiful Commission (CBC) would in essence the City has revamped the concept of City Beautiful to make it the City’s Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) and the old concept of City Beautiful which was previous in the City’s Ordinances is out dated and even though the overall mission remains and is part of the CIC it bore updating in the City’s Ordinances to reflect what is being done and what the current vision of City Beautiful is.

Mr. McConville added that the structure of the CIC Board that Council approved by Ordinance will now become codified in Chapter 280 and the mission as formally expressed in the City Beautiful ordinances as incorporated into the CIC mission so that we are not doing away with the City Beautiful ideas, they are just being modernized and placing everyone on notice its mission will be carried out through the Community Improvement Corporation.

MOTION BY MRS. CAMERON, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS for the passage of Ordinance 2019-12 Enacting Codified Ordinance Chapter 280 Entitled “University Heights City Beautiful Corporation” and Repealing Existing Codified Ordinance Chapter 280 Entitled “City Beautiful Commission”. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

B. Ordinance 2019-16 Amending Codified Ordinance Chapter 820 Entitled “Fair Housing” for the Purpose of Clarifying the Definition of “Source of Income” and Updating Various Provisions for Consistency with State and Federal Fair Housing Laws

Mrs. Chris Canary and Mrs. Carrie Pleasant, Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research. The Fair Housing Center is a non-profit community organization serving the Greater Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and Lorain County area. Fair Housing is celebrated and recognized yearly during the month of April because the Fair Housing Act was passed April 11, 1968 and outlaws housing discrimination based on race, skin color, religion and national origin. The Federal laws has since added protection based on sex, familiar status and disability. Many states, counties and cities have passed their own Fair Housing laws to provide additional protection to their residents to demonstrate their commitment to
inclusion for diversity. The Fair Housing Center joins the City of University Heights in celebrating Fair Housing month and commends the city on its commitment regarding discrimination and in assuring that University Heights is a welcoming and inclusive community. This legislation will line with Federal and State laws so that residents will have at least as much protection and then what ever additional protection the city wants to add.

Mrs. Canary noted that on page 2 of the ordinance clarifies that accessible design and construction requirements only apply to newly constructed multi-family housing because protection based on disability and certain accessibility features are necessary for new construction. Older properties are exempt from this requirement. In compliance with Federal laws requires that services and facilities for senior housing 55 and older qualify for exemption and no longer have to provide services and special facilities. On page 4 adds a definition for “source of income” – whenever there is a new term utilized in an ordinance it is best to provide a definition. This was not defined when it was amended in 2012 to add source of income as a protected characteristic, which is a reason people can’t be discriminated against in the City. The ordinance also updated to use people first language when referring to people with disabilities to clarify permission to modify a unit is not condition upon restoring it. So, if someone needs to widen a doorway, they won’t have to make it narrow again when they leave the unit. If it is not reasonable to restore to its former condition then that can’t be a condition upon which permission is granted to make an adjustment. Page 9 adds three protections that exist in State law that weren’t in the local ordinance. The City’s ordinance seemed to have been drafted on based largely on the Federal Fair Housing Act. The three protections are around application forms and keeping records about personal characteristics of people who apply for housing protection, cemetery plots and inquiries around disability. Citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility to serve on the City’s Fair Housing Review Commission. The provision that could cause a penalty to someone who files a complaint because it could have a factor to deter them from trying to file in the first place because it is an intimidating process.

Mayor Brennan thanked Chris Canary and Carrie Pleasant for helping assist the City and Law Department in help update the City’s Fair Housing Ordinance. When the ordinance was passed in 2012 at the time it appeared to be a fairly progressive looking forward ordinance. But due to subsequence court decisions and actual attempts to apply this law the City has found that there are some areas that needed to be tightened up to make consistent with State and Federal law.

Mr. Rach asked if they could expound on the source of income because he was aware throughout the City of Cleveland where if it was a HUD guaranteed loan where there is a required income threshold to live on the premise; would this ordinance exclude those type of rentals in the University Heights.

Mr. McConville replied that he believed that language in the ordinance and that particular definition is aimed at preventing the landlord from refusing to rent to a tenant who is receiving any form of governmental subsidy.

Mr. Rach asked if this would exclude rental properties that because of the financing to build the property or renovate the property where they would have to maintain maximum income levels.

Mrs. Canary said she believed Mr. Rach was referring to low income housing tax credit developments.

Mr. Rach replied yes.

Mrs. Canary continued to that that is the affordable housing development and it is under the tax credits issued by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency for affordable housing development. This would not preclude establishment of affordable housing and the tax credit program in the city. It would prohibit the exclusion of eligible ways to buy for that house. There is nothing within the definition of “source of income” as it is provided in the proposed legislation that states someone has to make so much or so little. It is not about the amount of income, it’s about the source of income/payment.

Mr. Rach gave the example of if an apartment complex chose to seek low income tax credit, in which they would have to maintain that income threshold because it is just the source of income.

Mr. Canary added that income could be spousal support, child support, all the ways in which people may derive their income or pay for their housing are covered.

Mr. Sims said that he couldn’t think of a better way to celebrate Fair Housing Month other than to update the city’s ordinance. Mr. Sims asked if in order to use Section 8 specifically, the only people
that are required to rent to Section 8 persons is someone who has a Section 8 eligibility and if the property had to be inspected, etc. So, a landlord would have to agree to be a part of the Section 8 program.

Mrs. Canary replied that any housing provider can accept housing choice vouchers. If the participant in the program has the voucher and they approach a landlord, any housing provider can accept that voucher. There are a whole host of regulations and requirements mandated by the Federal Government that the property has to be habitable. That is why a unit inspection is done in making sure it meets the minimum standards for habitability. Those standards are below most city code requirements for building and housing, they are basic standards for habitability. The government has to look first to make sure that the property meets those standards before they will issue rent payment to that landlord on the tenant’s behalf.

Mr. Sims asked if the homeowner had a choice.

Mrs. Canary explained that collective understanding was that the intention was to include source of income, i.e. voucher holders as protected in the city. This is significant because many landlords refuse to and there is no choice in the Housing Choice Program for people with subsidy because the income providers would not have to take a lower rent payment than they would normally accept in order to participate in the program.

Although Mr. Sims said he didn’t know if this was consistent with State and Federal law (hopefully it is) and noted that under the city’s existing ordinance and with Mrs. Canary clarification nobody would be able to refuse to rent to someone because a part of their housing payment would be a housing voucher of some sort.

Mr. McConville replied that he didn’t believe that that was a substantive change in the ordinance; it is just a substance clarification and a way of preventing landlords from arguing that that is not what the ordinance means. Source of income protection has always been in the ordinance; it terms just wasn’t defined and this ordinance spells it out and clarifies sources of income.

Mr. Sims asked for clarification about housing for the older population and referred to Code 821.02 Section G.

Mrs. Carrie replied that the Federal, State and Local Fair Housing laws all prohibited discrimination based on familiarity status. In other words, housing providers can’t say they won’t rent to someone because they have children or say they will charge extra because you are pregnant and will have a child in the house. Protection from that was added in 1988. AARP lobbied Congress to say they still wanted housing for older people because they used to be able to say we don’t rent to families with children here and the Housing for Older Persons Act passed. That established a carveout in Federal and State laws that would provide an exemption to discriminating against families with children. Thus, properties can say no children; but they have to operate as senior housing and when it was originally written in order to qualify for that exemption those buildings had to have services, facilities and resources for the seniors that were living there. Now, that has change and no longer do they have to provide those special services in senior housing complexes.

Mr. Wiseman noted that this fits in the Mayor’s re-establishment of the city’s Fair Housing Commission.

Ordinance 2019-16 was placed on first reading.

Mayor Brennen noted the Clerk of Council provided Council members copies of Ordinance 2019-18 2019-18 Authorizing Mayor to Enter into an Agency Agreement with The University Heights City Beautiful Corporation and ask for a motion to add Ordinance 2019-18 to the agenda as its first reading.

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MR. WISEMAN to add to the agenda Ordinance 2019-18 Authorizing Mayor to Enter into an Agency Agreement with The University Heights City Beautiful Corporation on first reading. On roll call, all voted “aye.”
Added Item.  Ordinance 2019-18 Authorizing Mayor to Enter into an Agency Agreement with The University Heights City Beautiful Corporation

Mayor Brennan stated that the agreement allows city employees to do CIC work while being an employee of the City.

Mr. McConville added that the agency agreement fulfills; 1.) Chapter 1724 of the Ohio Revised Code – the chapter under which the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) was formed requires that the City appoints the CIC as its agent and that it be done contractually. This agreement meets that statutory requirement. The agreement states that the City is appointing the CIC as its agent to pursue projects that are consistent with the City’s Masterplan, and projects that are otherwise consistent with the powers of a CIC under chapter 1724. From time to time there will be instances where the CIC utilizes the services of a City employee, computer hardware and software. Mr. McConville provided the example of Rachel Mullen who is a city employee that attends the CIC meetings and takes notes for the purpose of generating minutes. Ms. Mullen is not being paid anything in excess by the City although she is performing a CIC function in taking notes and generating minutes for distribution to the CIC members. Mr. McConville added that that is something that has already been approved by City Council.

Mr. McConville stated that at the last CIC meeting this agreement was presented and adopted. Ordinance 2019-18 was placed on first reading.

C. Ordinance 2019-17 Authorizing Participation in the ODOT 18-20 Winter Contract for Road Salt

Mr. Pokorny stated that the city has used ODOT consortium to purchase winter road salt for many years, this allows the city to pay the same price per ton as ODOT. ODOT allows city all across Ohio to participate in their consortium. Mr. Pokorny stated that he anticipated the city will need approximately 2,500 tons of salt and would be required to then purchase at least 90% or 2,250 tons with a maximum allowable amount of 110% or 2,700 tons of salt under this contract.

Mr. Sims asked if the city used the anticipated amount salt during this past winter season, did the city have to purchase more than the allowable 110% or did the city need less than the 90% minimum order.

Mr. Pokorny said that 1,000 tons or closer to 1,500 tons in the Cleveland Heights salt dome and a little less than 100 tons in the University Heights garage. Mr. Pokorny added that the proposed given amount to purchase for the next winter season was a good estimate. This past winter, even though it was a light winter the city still went through 2,200 tons of road salt. We have had years as high as 3,500 tons.

Mr. Rach asked what the minimum amount to purchase was and if there a rate change of additional purchases.

Mr. Pokorny replied that there really wasn’t a minimum amount but probably about 100 tons. If the City were to exceed the 110% it would have to purchase the additional salt from different salt agency

MOTION BY MRS. WEISS, SECONDED BY MRS. CAMERON for the passage of Ordinance 2019-17 Authorizing Participation in the ODOT 18-20 Winter Contract for Road Salt. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

D. Motion Authorizing the Purchase of Pool Chemicals from SAL Chemical for the 2019 Summer Season

Mr. Pokorny stated that the City has purchased pool chemicals through a consortium coordinated by the City of Mayfield Heights for many years. Mr. Pokorny said that this year the lowest and best pricing came from SAL Chemical and that he recommended approval.
MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MR. RACH authorizing the Purchase of Pool Chemicals from SAL Chemical for the 2019 Summer Season. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

E. Authorizing the Mayor to enter into contract with GT Environmental to Update the 2009 Solid Waste Collection Analysis

Mr. Pokorny stated that is to enter into contract with GT Environmental to perform a study to update the 2009 Solid Waste Collection Analysis. GT Environmental conducted the original analysis in 2009 and the city asked them to come back and update the report with new financial information as well as looking at the current method of collection, which is similar to what it was in the past. Mr. Pokorny recommended entering into contract with them to conduct an updated analysis for $13,854.00.

Mrs. Weiss noted that it was mentioned during the committee meeting that the cost was thought to be under $10,000 and asked if there was any room for negotiation in the price.

Mr. Pokorny replied no and that the original contract in 2009 was around $10,000 and the city was hoping that figure would be around the same this time. Mr. Pokorny said that the proposed contract lists the hourly rate and those rates are considerably high than the rates in 2009.

Mayor Brennan added that there were comparable cities that GT Environmental bided on and was awarded and those rates were considerably higher than what was proposed for University Heights.

Mr. Sims asked if the approach that GT plans take limited in scope.

Mr. Pokorny replied no. The city provided GT with a request for proposals which listed the scope and then they provided the city with their agreement which met that scope and actually a few items. GT will ride through each of the city rubbish routes with a rubbish crew to analysis each route including numbers of stops. They will also survey other cities that have similar rubbish programs and different rubbish programs to show an analysis of methods and cost.

Mr. Sims noted that some of the rubbish routes were adjusted about 10 years ago, so the results may not be similar to the original study.

Mr. Rach asked if a report/presentation would be given to Council once ready to explain their findings because he didn’t want to be just handed a study.

Mr. Pokorny answered yes and noted that within the proposal it request meetings with the Administration and meetings with Council Committees and a final presentation of the report to Council as a whole.

Mayor Brennan added that when GT was initially approached they were given a very aggressive schedule that included having meetings going into the summer months, irrespective of Council’s summer break that is typically taken. The Administration wanted to do that so that there could be the option for Council to decide if it wanted to meet over the summer or allow this continue into the Fall.

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS authorizing the Mayor to enter into contract with GT Environmental to Update the 2009 Solid Waste Collection Analysis. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

F. Motion Authorizing the Mayor to advertise for bids for the 2019 grass nuisance abatement program

Mr. Grogan-Myers stated that this was to advertise for grass nuisance abatement for when the lawns reach 8” or more in height and the homeowner is then cited by the Housing Department. The citation gives the homeowner a few days in which to get the grass cut otherwise the city will abate the nuisance.

Mr. Grogan-Myers said that this work was last bided out in 2014 and as best practice this would be the time to accept bids for the upcoming lawn care season.
Mr. Wiseman asked if the bids would be for someone to actually cut the grass and then the city would pay them. Because the previously Mr. Wiseman said he remembered the city waiting until the end to pay the contractor.

Mr. McConville said that the contractor would only be paid for the lawns they cut and then the city has the right to access the property.

Mr. Grogan-Myers stated that the city would directly pay the lawn service directly for their service and then the Finance Department bills the homeowner the fee per Ordinance. Any invoice that is not paid go to Council for approval to be place on the tax duplicate as an assessment.

Mr. Wiseman cautioned the Administration because a lot of these contractors charge a lot of money and it doesn’t have to be that expensive to cut the grass per cut considering the sizes of the lots.

Mr. Sims agreed with Mr. Wiseman’s comment and added to make sure that this service is advertised as broadly as possible so that it is as competitive as possible. Secondly, the city could be charged one amount by the contractor and then the city could assess a different amount as a penalty if desired.

Mr. McConville remarked that he believed that Mr. Sims comment regarding assessing a different amount was correct; but he would look into it and report back to council.

Mr. Sims continued to say his point was that the city needs to take every effort it can to make sure that every property owner in the community maintains a certain standard. And, if that means charging $150 to the homeowner because they refuse to cut their grass then maybe that is what done. But, that doesn’t necessarily mean that the contractor charges the city that same $150 per cut. It is very important that every that can be done to limit the amount that the city is being charged by the contractor and then the city can decide later what it wants to assess the homeowner.

Mayor Brennan noted that since he has been Mayor it not so much how much the contractor charges the city but how promptly the work is being done once it is assigned to them. Mayor Brennan said to him the ideal bidder will be the one who at a fair price also comes out promptly when called upon to do the work.

It was suggested that a timeline be included in the contract.

Mayor Brennan replied that is the intention to have some sort of timeframe for the work to be completed.

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MRS. WEISS authorizing the Mayor to advertise for bids for the 2019 grass nuisance abatement program. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

G. Motion Authorizing the Approval of the Engagement Letter with Ciuni & Panichi for the Fiscal Year 2018 GAAP Conversion in an amount not to exceed $16,500

Mayor Brennan read a memo that was provided by Finance Director James Goffe. Mr. Goffe memo advised Council that he had been in consultation with Ciuni & Panichi, Inc. regarding the preparation of the City’s unaudited financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2018. The process for preparing the unaudited financial statements for the City in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) is generally referred to as a GAAP Conversion since the process principally involves the conversion of the cash-basis financial reports, generated by the accounting system for the daily cash-basis operations, to the accrual-basis reporting and footnotes required by GAAP reporting. Mr. Goffe memo also spelled out the various fees as follows: Base Fee of $11,500; GASB 75 Implementation Fee of $1,500 and Initial Setup Cost of between $2,000 - $3,500 for a total estimated proposed service cost of between $15,000 - $16,500.

Mayor Brennan added that the City’s Engineer Joseph Ciuni informed him that there was no conflict or relation between him and Ciuni & Panichi.

Mrs. Weiss commented that she was glad that this change was being made based on the financial history of the City.
Mr. Rach asked how long the process would take.

Mayor Brennan stated that the audit has certain deadlines that go with the GAAP Conversion and that it was his understanding that Ciuni & Panichi are prepared to meet those deadlines.

Mr. Rach made the analysis that if the conversion were to be done by the City itself there would be a time commitment on the staff which the City doesn’t have the time for. Mr. Rach said he believed that there would be a savings to the City if this is subbed out to Ciuni & Panichi to allow the Finance Department to do the other duties they need to do.

Mayor Brennan said that last year the City didn’t perform the GAAP Conversion either. Zapka performed both the GAAP Conversion and the audit.

Mr. Rach asked if this pricing was similar to last year cost.

Mayor Brennan said it is more than the cost last year. But there were issues with Zapka last year and because of GAAP Conversion process last year Mayor Brennan did not want to use them this year. However, Zapka will still be used for the audit.

Mr. Wiseman asked the Mayor to keep Council inform regarding the timeline for completion.

Mayor Brennan said the goal is complete the information gathering for the GAAP conversion by the start of May 2019 and the Administration is tentatively scheduled to meet with the auditors on to begin the testing for the 2018 audit on April 15.

Mr. Sims noted that he was sure that the City would get a high-quality product from this firm as well and noted that with service contracts there is usually definition of the staff levels that will be working on the report, their going rate and the number of hours they are expected to spend. That way there is a better sense of what the different fees represents.

Mr. Sims said he was comfortable with the proposal as submitted and requested that Council be provided those numbers.

MOTION BY MRS. CAMERON, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS Authorizing the Approval of the Engagement Letter with Ciuni & Panichi for the Fiscal Year 2018 GAAP Conversion in an amount not to exceed $16,500. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

H. Motion to hold an executive session immediately following this regular meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel, legal and real estate matters

Mayor stated that there was a need for an executive session for the discussion of real estate matters.

MOTION BY MR. RACH, SECONDED BY MRS. WEISS to hold an executive session immediately following this regular meeting for the purpose of discussing real estate matters. On roll call, all voted “aye.”
Directors’ Reports

Finance Director – Mayor Brennan provided Mr. Goffe’s report and stated that the Finance and Deputy Finance Directors are finalizing the close-out of cash base reporting for 2018 with the report forthcoming shortly. Mr. Goffe is also gathering information for the GAAP conversion and the auditors will begin testing for the 2018 audit on April 15, 2019. Following the GAAP conversion and the 2018 Audit Mr. Goffe will begin work on the City’s 5-year financial forecast.

Mrs. Weiss Mayor Brennan if Council could begin receiving the monthly financial reports again.

Law Director – Luke McConville reported that the Fire Prevention Bureau has been meeting to review the City’s Fire Code and that he is currently reviewing those reports and recommendations from the Fire Prevention Bureau for future code legislation changes.

Police Department – Chief Rogers provided a Department hiring update. A patrol officer candidate has been given a conditional offer, with an expected swearing date in the next few weeks. After which there will be one more vacant position to be filled. The hope is to be fully staffed in the next few months.

Fire Department – Chief Perko reported that fire hydrant flushing started and will last for about two weeks. After hydrant flushing watermain flow testing will occur for another two-weeks. Residents should allow their water to run until clear if they have rusty water. On March 16 the department hosted a mass casualty drill in conjunction with John Carroll Univ. with approx.50 volunteers.

Service Department – Mr. Pokorny provided an update on the Dominion East Ohio Gas project and stated that Saybrook, Channing, Traymore, Fenwick and a portion of Dysart have their new gas mains hooked up. Next week Dominion will be connecting those line to the southern Meadowbrook line. Then they will move to the north side of Meadowbrook.

Mr. Rach asked if Dominion was fully committed to replacing any sidewalk blocks that they damage.

Mr. Pokorny replied yes in addition to any the restoration of any tree lawn or object that they disturb.

Mr. Sims asked if there was a timeframe for the restoration of property.

Mr. Pokorny answered that they (Dominion) hope to have everything completed in May.

Mr. McConville added that prior to the beginning of the project the Administration met with the Dominion representatives and the City expressed its dissatisfaction with their prior performance of that type of remedial work and indicated that that would not be tolerated with this project.

Mr. Pokorny also reported that Spring curbside leaf collection cleanup will be starting soon.

Mr. Rach thanked Mr. Pokorny for holding the tree seminar just prior to the Council meeting and suggested that the City publicize in a positive way why the City does what it does to the trees by noting that the trees are the city’s assets and that the City wants the trees to mature corrected and grow beautifully. Mr. Rach also suggested that a cartoon, animated sketch of a tree showing the various required distances for the branches, explain why the branches are cut off, etc. as well as having informative booklets and pushing the video that is on the website.

Mayor Brennan added that in an effort to educate the residents a few things were done differently, for example sending a letter to every person on the list informing them what was being done to the tree on their tree lawn.

Mr. Sims commented that Mr. Rach suggested was great and added that anything that can be done to better educate the community would be helpful. Mr. Sims noted that it is not just the homeowner of the property where the tree is location but the entire community. A broader approach to educating the community about the tree program, why trees exist, what the goals are and what is being accomplished would be helpful. The City takes a lot of pride in the tree canopy look that the city has as well as being Nationally recognized for many, many years as a Tree City USA member. The City really needs to take a step back and make sure that it is doing everything it can do to make sure that everyone in the community understands what the tree program is, the benefits of it, and if your tree is cut what it will look like in the future, year 1, year 5 and year 10.
Mr. Wiseman commented that overall the tree program has a good success rate and yes, a better job could be done to inform resident. Mr. Wiseman added that he didn’t think the public realizes how much money is actually spent on the trees and the maintenance of the trees in the city. The Administration, Mr. Pokorny and the arborist do a great job.

Mrs. Cameron suggest the use of better marketing, campaigning and the community youth.

Building Commissioner – James McReynolds reported that the entire staff of housing and building attended a class on ethics.

Communications and Civic Engagement – Mike Cook reported that he is working on the second issue of City magazine.

Economic Development - Susan Drucker reported that she has started another “Small Business Spotlight” promotion and is working with the Fire Prevention and Building Departments in completing the administrative plan review policy to help new businesses entering the city. Mrs. Drucker said she is also working with Mike Cook on the upcoming Relator Breakfast. Work continues on the Employee Policy and Procedures Manual.

Housing/Community Development – Mr. Grogan-Myers reported that he is will be attending the City’s Relator’s Breakfast. A city-wide housing survey will be conducted where employees of the Building Department will be looking at the front of every University Heights home as a precursor to the exterior maintenance program.

There were no other director reports.

Standing Committees

Building Committee - Mr. Wiseman said there would be a Building Committee meeting on April 9 to review the chicken program and the implementation of the new rental ordinance program.

Civic Information – Mrs. Cameron reported that the Civic Information will meet at the City Hall Annex on April 2 at 6pm to discuss “Move to Amend”.

Safety Committee – Mr. Rach reported that the Safety Committee also met and will meet again once the Law Director reviews proposals from the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Service /Utilities Committee – Mr. Sims stated that the Service/Utilities Committee will be meeting at some point in early May regarding the rubbish study, the upkeep of commercial properties; specifically, the parking lots and municipal broad band accounts.

There were no other committee reports.

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MR. RACH to return to regular session. On roll call, all voted “aye.

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MRS. CAMERON to adjourn the meeting. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06pm.

Michael Dylan Brennan, Mayor

Kelly M. Thomas, Clerk of Council