MINUTES COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO
MEETING HELD AT THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS/UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
SCHOOL BOARD: 2155 MIRAMAR BOULEVARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present:  Mrs. Susan Pardee
Mr. Phillip Ertel
Mr. John Rach
Mr. Steven Sims
Mr. Mark Wiseman

Absent:  Mrs. Pamela Cameron
Mrs. Michele Weiss

Also Present:  Law Director Luke McConville
Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas
Finance Director Dennis Kennedy
Police Chief Dustin Rogers
Fire Executive Captain Andy Boylan
Service Superintendent Jeffrey Pokorny
Economic Development Susan Drucker
Housing/Community Development Patrick Grogan-Myers
Communications and Civic Engagement Mike Cook

MOTION BY MRS. PARDEE, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS to excuse the absence of Mrs. Cameron and Mrs. Weiss. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Approval of Minutes:

Council Meeting November 4, 2019

Mrs. Pardee noted a typographic correction on page 3 for the spelling of Mr. Sims’ name in the motion for Item B.

There were no other corrections or additions to the Council minutes dated November 4, 2019.

MOTION BY MRS. PARDEE, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS for the passage of the November 4, 2019 Council Minutes as corrected. On roll call, all voted “aye”.

Council Meeting November 4, 2019

Mrs. Pardee noted a typographic correction on page 3 for the spelling of Mr. Sims’ name in the motion for Item B.

There were no other corrections or additions to the Council minutes dated November 4, 2019.

MOTION BY MRS. PARDEE, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS for the passage of the November 4, 2019 Council Minutes as corrected. On roll call, all voted “aye”.

Council Meeting October 7, 2019

There were no corrections or additions to the Council minutes dated October 7, 2019.

MOTION BY MR. WISEMAN, SECONDED BY MR. RACH for the passage of the October 7, 2019 Council Minutes as presented. On roll call, all voted “aye,” except Mr. Sims who “passed”.

Council Meeting October 23, 2019

There were no corrections or additions to the Council minutes dated October 23, 2019.

MOTION BY MR. RACH, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS for the passage of the October 23, 2019 Council Minutes as presented. On roll call, all voted “aye,” except Mr. Wiseman who “passed”.

Comments from Audience

There were no audience comments.

Mayor’s Report

Mayor’s Report 11/18/2019 (as prepared):

To my friends and neighbors in University Heights:

This is our first council meeting since the election. Congratulations to Councilmembers John Rach and Michele Weiss on their reelection. Congratulations and welcome to our newly elected councilmembers Barbara Blankfeld and Justin Gould.

Congratulations as well to Beverly Wright and Jim Posch for their reelection to our school board. I look forward to continuing to work with you in service to our community.

To my friends and neighbors in Cleveland Heights:

Congratulations on choosing a new system of government. I am optimistic that a popularly elected mayor will be good for Cleveland Heights, and I’ve always believed that what is good for Cleveland Heights is good for University Heights, as well as our joint school district and library system.

While both sides of Issue 26 campaigned hard and were passionate in the rightness of their cause, both sides had in mind the best interests of the city of Cleveland Heights. I know both sides will come together and work hard for a bright future for your city.

I am more than willing to assist in any way possible as you transition and transform your city.

I wish to take a moment to commend Cleveland Heights City Manager Tanisha Briley. Over the past couple of years, I have found her to be a dedicated and effective professional. I do not believe the vote was a referendum on her or her performance. I appreciate her post-election message that she remains committed to Cleveland Heights and being a “good steward of its safety, finances, development, and livability.” I hope we will see her over the course of these next two years facilitate an orderly transition to Cleveland Heights’ new system of government.

Some highlights here at home:

The Civic Awards were last Thursday. They were a huge success. We had to move from the Jardine Room to the larger LSC in order to meet demand for tickets. Even then we had to turn people away, there was so much demand. Thank you Rachel Mullen and Mike Cook for their strong work making the event a success. Thank you to Gabriella Kreuz for hosting the event. Thank you to all of our honorees and presenters for demonstrating abundantly why University Heights is more than a city of beautiful homes, but a city full of kind-hearted civic-minded virtuous people. University Heights truly is so much more than home.

Knez Builders were before our Architectural Review Board with preliminary drawings for an infill house on Northwood Road. Now having our ARB’s input, next they will be making drawings for the house they intend to build there.

At our last city council meeting, I shared that the city took two meetings regarding the former KFC property at 2115 South Taylor. That the owner, Danny Auyung, attended neither. That he has done nothing with his eyesore of a property for over three years, nothing to clean it up or fix it up. Not even pull the weeds and haul away the junk scattered around the site. While his attorney never did call us back to reschedule his meeting, there were people on site this afternoon, pulling weeds and spreading what appeared to be mulch. Given that the city still doesn’t have a timeline on Mr. Auyung’s supposed plan for the property, he’ll be back before the BZA to explain himself. I find it frustrating that Mr. Auyung, of the Hom family, the successful proprietors of Li Wah, Ho Wah, and King Wah restaurants, people who have demonstrated repeatedly their commitment to excellence and success in the restaurant business, have allowed this property to languish for over three years in our city. I know they are better than what they’re giving us. They may have spread a little mulch at the KFC today, we will see what they try to spread on Wednesday at the BZA.
I have no confidence that anything they’ve done today is anything more than lipstick on a pig.

Finally, I got report over the weekend that the public nuisance house at 3633 Tullamore, where there was a fire a year ago last month, was missing its basement windows. Mr. Cook and I went over there this morning, and sure enough, all the windows were out, broken window frames and glass and screens in the yards arounds the house. It was appalling. The people on Tullamore, the people on Brockway. They don’t deserve to live by such conditions, especially not for over a year running. While Mr. Cook and I were standing there, the principal of the LLC that owns the property, David Olewski of Brooklyn, New York rolled up. Said he hadn’t been there in two weeks. Said he had the windows taken out last Thursday, but they just left it like that. I had a lot of things to say to him, decorum prevents me from repeating some of those things here. He had a lot of excuses that I didn’t want to hear. In short, I told him: those window openings had better be secured today. That the junk in the yard had better be cleaned up. And that I would not accept any excuses. His next stop would be housing court. I rode by there at 4:30 today. And new glass block windows were in place. While I can appreciate that he took this matter seriously once the mayor told him he better, I have no praise to offer someone who only does what he ought to do after repeated admonishment, by Mr. McReynolds, by Mr. Grogan-Myers, then by me. I am out of patience with Mr. Olewski and people like him, people from outside the area who buy properties from afar and try to use their absenteeism as an excuse for not getting things done. This house has been a burned out problem for over a year. The last time the grass was cut, the city cut it, because, Mr. Olewski – you didn’t take of your business. You get no gold star for finally putting in some windows. That’s what you were supposed to. You shouldn’t have to be shamed into action to take care of your property. I’ve seen your street in Brooklyn, Mr. Olewski. You wouldn’t put up with that in your neighborhood, I’m not putting up with it in mine.

Thank you, this concludes my report.

Agenda Items:

A. Presentation regarding Ready Notify Program

Mr. Adam Griffith was present to provide information regarding the Ready Notify Program. The program is currently in 32 communities within Cuyahoga County and is powered by Code Red out of California. Code Red is the leader in public notifications. The program is paid for by the County so there is no cost to the communities. Mr. Griffith noted that 277 residents from University Heights are currently registered with Ready Notify.

Mayor Brennan asked if the City should have resident register again to update their information.

Mr. Griffith replied yes and added that because of FCC regulations Ready Notify can’t residents unless they are registered.

Mr. Sims asked if weather notifications were one of the forms of notification that Ready Notify provided.

Mr. Griffith answered that weather notification alerts automatically go out, but the Ready Notify Director and a few other Ready Notify Staff members have authorization to send out necessary or requested notification from the County. Mr. Griffith added that Code Red is the company that places the notification that are displayed on the highway messaging boards.

Mr. Sims asked how could University Heights increase the number of registered residents and how do registered members receive the notification alerts.

Mr. Griffith stated that the County offers its help; but, it is the City’s responsibility to inform and encourage its residents to register. The notifications are sent to members via text, email, voice, mobile apps and TDD servicing.

Mayor Brennan offered that the City would be encouraging residents to register/re-register in the December newsletter.

Mr. Ertel asked if there would be an overlapping issue if a household had multiple people with multiple notification choices.

Mr. Griffith replied that the system would not duplicate the messages.

Mrs. Pardee commented that this a very useful tool and was glad that it will be featured in the December newsletter.
B. Motion to Authorize City to enter into Agreement with Cuyahoga County for FY2018 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Local Matching Funds

Fire Executive Captain Andy Boylan explained that this related to a grant that the Fire Department received from FEMA’s Assistance to Firefighters Grants. The grant awarded was in the amount of $55,000 with a required 5% match of $2,619.00. The 5% match cost will be paid by Cuyahoga County.

Mrs. Pardee noted that the total award amount exceeded the total cost and asked if the remaining funds could be used for something else.

Captain Boylan replied yes; the addition funds could be used for something else as long as it was related otherwise the excess funds go back.

MOTION BY MR. RACH, SECONDED BY MR. SIMS to Authorize City to enter into Agreement with Cuyahoga County for FY2018 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Local Matching Funds. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

C. Resolution 2019-66 Requesting the County Budget Commission to Advance Taxes from the Proceeds of Tax Levies for the Period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 Pursuant to Section 321.24 Ohio Revised Code (on emergency)

Mr. Kennedy stated that Resolution 2019-66 is standard protocol and allows for fund advances from the tax levied collected monies.

MOTION BY MRS. PARDEE, SECONDED BY MR. WISEMAN for the Passage of Resolution 2019-66 Requesting the County Budget Commission to Advance Taxes from the Proceeds of Tax Levies for the Period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 Pursuant to Section 321.24 Ohio Revised Code. Roll Call on Suspension of the Rules, all voted “aye.” Roll Call on Passage, all voted “aye.”

D. Motion to hold an Executive Session immediately following this Regular Meeting for the Purpose of Discussing Personnel, Legal and/or Real Estate Matters.

Mayor Brennan stated that there was a need to hold Executive Session for Real Estate matters.

MOTION BY MR. ERTEL, SECONDED BY MR. RACH to hold Executive Session for the purpose of Discussing Real Estate matters. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

Director’s Reports

Finance Director – Dennis Kennedy reported that three (3) of the City’s CD’s have matured in the Money Market account and that he is working on an Ordinance regarding Worker Compensation.

Law Department – Luke McConville reported that he is working on various Real Estate matters such as the Residential Attached Contract with the Cleveland Heights/University Heights School Board and others.

Police Department – Chief Rogers reported that signage has been placed at Silsby and Green Road to help in identify cars should stop.

Mr. Sims commented that he had been noticing more vehicles being parked on the streets over night all over the City and asked what should residents do when they see this.

Chief Rogers stated that residents should notify the Police Dispatch. Chief Rogers added that there are times when residents may need to legally park overnight on the street and in that case they can either request permission on the City’s website or they can call Dispatch.

City Engineer – Joseph Ciuni reported that the waterline project on Meadowbrook is completed. Washington Blvd. is still under construction; the base layer is down, the catch basins are completed and the remainder of the paving is weather dependent, the temperature has to be above 40degrees.
Communications/Civic Engagement – Mike Cook the City will be giving out frozen turkeys on Friday, November 22 beginning at 11am. The turkeys were donated by 1-800-compensation. Bailey Bagels is helping by storing the turkeys in their freezer from Thursday until Friday morning. The City will be collecting new socks to donate to the homeless shelter. The fundraiser will be done in connection with the University Heights Public Library and addition information will be provided later.

Economic Development – Susan Drucker reported that a new business “Little Bellies” will be opening at 13950 Cedar Road. Mrs. Drucker reminded everyone about “Small Business Saturday” and noted that so far 42 University Heights businesses are taking part.

There were no other director reports.

Standing Committees:

Finance Committee – Mrs. Pardee stated that she would like to hold a committee meeting on either December 3, 4, or 9th in regards to the City’s Salary Ordinance.

Safety Committee – Mr. Rach stated that he would like to have a committee meeting either November 26, December 4, 9, 10 or 11.

There were no other committee reports.

MOTION BY MR. RACH, SECONDED BY MR. WISEMAN to resume the Regular Council Session. On roll call, all voted “aye.”

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Michael Dylan Brennan, Mayor

Kelly M. Thomas, Clerk of Council