

ASHTABULA CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ASHTABULA – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4717 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Monday, August 12, 2019

The City Council met in a **PUBLIC HEARING**. The President of Council called the hearing to order at 6:07 p.m.

Member(s) Present: Mrs. Kym A. Foglio (Ward 1)
Mr. August A. Pugliese (Ward 2)
Mr. Richard A. Quaranta (Ward 3 – 6:14 p.m.)
Ms. Jane E. Haines (Ward 5)
Mr. John S. Roskovics (Council President)

Member(s) Absent: Mr. Michael D. Speelman (Ward 4)
Mr. Christopher J. McClure (Vice President)

Officer(s) Present: Mr. James M. Timonere (City Manager)
Mr. Michael Franklin (City Solicitor)
Mrs. LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC (Clerk of Council)

Officer(s) Absent: Ms. Traci R. Welch (Finance Director)

SUNSHINE LAW: The Clerk of Council certified conformity to the Sunshine Law.

PURPOSE

The President announced the purpose of this Public Hearing was to hear a request to designate the following properties as Historic Landmarks of the City of Ashtabula, Ohio, by the enactment of Ordinance No. 2019-93:

- 4509 - 4519 Main Avenue, and 223 Progress Place, Ashtabula, Ohio (former Carlisle Building)
- 4439 - 4441 Main Avenue, Ashtabula, Ohio (former Masonic Temple)
- 355 Center Street aka West 47th Street, Ashtabula, Ohio (Castle Block Building)

WELCOME

The President welcomed visitors.

DISCUSSION

- Mr. Shawn Neece is with Renew Partners, the development company.
- There are two real estate holding companies:

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- Carlisle-Allen, LLC, an affiliate of Renew Partners, owns the Masonic Temple and Carlisle Building
- Castle Block Properties, LLC, an affiliate of Renew Partners, owns the Castle Block building.
- Renew Partners owns the land behind the Castle Block building, the Willard building on Elm Avenue at the end of the Ace Parts store where Metcalf Glass' shop is located, the Steve's Car Care building and the house to the north of Steve's.
- Long term development plan is to "demolish the house; use the property that wraps around Steve's and goes behind Castle Block for parking, and land, and a little yard and garden for that property."
- At this evening's Special meeting Ordinance No. 2019-93 will be presented for consideration. The ordinance, if enacted, will landmark the three properties noted above as historic. "This then jumps these up in order and also allows the entities to apply for historic tax credits and also be considered for placement on the National Register. But, because this step is done they don't have to go that whole elongated process with National Register placement."
- One must apply for historic tax credits before being placed on the National Register of Historic Places, as long as landmark designation is in place, and then the processes happen simultaneously.
- Renew Partners were the developers on the renovated old Mentor Village Hall, originally built in 1880s; it was renovated with historic tax credits; the building is now used as an office building.
- The former Ashtabula Hotel was already on the National Register prior to Mr. Charles Borsukoff purchasing it; he and Mr. Neece raised tax credits and redeveloped the hotel into the now operating Signature Health; they still own the building; Signature is their tenant – the structure is a federal and state tax credit adaptive reuse rehabilitation project, which means federal and state tax credits were secured; and the same pressures facing the team with regards to the three properties above did not exist on the hotel project because they were already on the Register.
- The plaques on Bridge Street buildings was a Civic Development Corporation (CDC) funded project; they are not technically historic plaques like the one on the Signature Health building. It would be a nice project to do on Main Avenue if the funding was available.
- The Certified Local Government legislation City Council recently enacted gives the former Architectural and Restoration Review Board (AARB) now titled the "Ashtabula Historic Preservation Commission" (AHPC), the ability to work with the landowner to put appropriate plaques on landmarks and historic properties.
- The State of Ohio program for marking historic properties is called "Remarkable Ohio". They plaques/markers are paid for by the building owner; a limited amount of plaques are approved each year; and there is an application process. After Renew completes a project they seek historic markers. An interesting fact is that there is only one company in the United States who manufactures historic markers for all of the national. It is Sewah Studios located in Marietta, Ohio.

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- On August 7, the AHPC reviewed the application for the properties; discussed them thoroughly and voted unanimously to approve the request that they be landmarked.
- The Secretary of Interior establishes the guidelines for renovations, restorations, and preservation, but do not get into actual colors.
- The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) holds developers accountable to do what is required.
- Tax credit funding comes with stringent conditions.

- Plans for the buildings:
 - Carlisle's: Multi-Family Housing (the number of units is unknown at this time); they – spoke with a potential tenant that does not want to be revealed, but would consider being a large office space user; and Renew very much wants to reopen the Stow-Away restaurant, but would have to find an operator.

 - Castle Block: Renovate the current housing on the upper floor; 1st floor will be a mix of housing and commercial.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS – City Council/Administration

This section was combined with above discussion.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS – Public

Marty Cephas, Ashtabula Downtown Development Association

Asked if Renew Partners has future plans to apply for Main Avenue to become a historic district.

Mr. Neece, Renew Partners

“Everything that’s been done by the City Council with this legislative process does not create the district. But, we will still bear the burden of the district and work with ADDA on that. Bearing the cost is the best way to put it, because it is expensive.”

City Manager

“What has been done so far, and the purpose for this public hearing, and the upcoming special meeting has nothing to do with developing a historic district. We know it is an intent and a desire for, not only these developers, I would say somewhat a desire for the City to establish a historic district on Main Avenue, as well. The power is now vested in this group and the Certified Local Government that we’ve established, to designate a district, but I’m not sure what costs are associated with that if we do it. Mr. Neece said just like the City could landmark a building through the legislative action of City Council, which is a local designation by a Certified Local Government (CLG), it could also, which this legislation does not do and we never asked for it, it can designate a district, which would then be a locally designed historic district. That would, in certain cases, allow other people to go to the front of the line within the district without coming and separately being landmarked. Separate and apart from that, much of what happened at the

former city hall (4400 Main Avenue) which did not involve the City's time, attention or money to designate it as a National Register property, is a different process and does not require legislation."

Timeline

- Wednesday, Renew Partners and JCI will go to the State Historic Preservation Office in Columbus for their state historic tax credits pre-meeting,
- Due on August 30, is the landmark designation legislation,
- Renew Partners will then ask for a state historic tax credit allocation, which gets them to the front of the line to be considered for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, and then
- They have to proceed with the work of the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the Park Service, which is part of the Department of Interior.

- Messers. Neece and Borsukoff were thanked for cleaning up the Carlisle's property. Mr. Neece attributed the cleanup to Mr. Borsukoff. It was noted that plans for all the properties except for Steve's Car Care were mentioned, which property needs some beautification.

- Not much is able to be done at the properties until the plan is approved, but they will try to do their best to keep the property areas clean and neat around.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The President announced that, by law, no formal action may be taken at a public hearing. Ordinance No. 2019-93 will appear on this evening's Special Meeting agenda for a vote to enact.

ADJOURN

Hearing no further business to come before this Council, the President adjourned the Public Hearing at 5:52 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: August 19, 2019

ATTESTED BY: John S. Roskovics
John S. Roskovics
President of Council

ATTESTED BY: LaVette E. Hennigan
LaVette E. Hennigan, MMC
Clerk of Council