



Clintonville Area Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 5th, 2020, 7:00 – 9:00 PM Zoom Online Meeting

Recording Available on You Tube (ChannelClintonville.com)

Commissioners in attendance: David Vottero, Brian Peifer, Libby Wetherholt, Judy Minister, Brittany Boulton, Kendra Carpenter, Michael Weinman, Jim Garrison, B.J. White

Commissioners with an unexcused absence: Jim Garrison

7:05 p.m. Call to order & formal welcome by Chairperson White

Welcome to your Clintonville Area Commission "...committed to the undertaking of the preservation of the values of the community through promotion, implementation and recommendation to city officials."

The CAC was empowered in 1974 by the Columbus City Charter to represent the Clintonville community in the discussion of community concerns. By City Code, the purpose of the CAC is to "...afford additional voluntary citizen participation in the decision making in an advisory capacity and to facilitate communications, understanding and cooperation between neighborhood groups, city officials and developers".

7:15 p.m. Commissioner Introductions and District Updates

District 1, Commissioner Vottero: The city has replaced some of the streetlights on Olentangy with LEDs and they are brighter and whiter. I'm working to help the neighbors work with the city and Public Utilities to come to an agreement on solutions and remedies. This could have an impact on Clintonville on a larger scale as the city works to modernize the light system.

District 2, Commissioner Peifer: I did new commissioner training and learned about how to find business applications through the citizen's portal. Several residents have asked about the High & N Broadway intersection. The permit looks like it's for a one-story building but I am looking to learn more to share with constituents. Chair White helped me with another request down at Clintonville Veterinary office as well.

District 3, Commissioner Wetherholt: (Screenshare) There is a street repaving program including Crestview Rd (Calumet to High), Dayton Avenue (Hudson to Cliffside), Delta Drive (east and north around Webster Park and Amazon), and Summit (Weber north to Clinton Heights). Residents recently organized Three Donuts food truck to come out at Walhalla and Summit for a socially distanced community activity. The Ohio Community Wildlife Cooperative Conference through OSU on "Living with Wildlife" and resolving conflicts in Ohio 11/16 – 11/19 will take place virtually at u.osu.edu/ocwc. They will cover COVID-19 and wildlife. On Wednesday they will cover urban white-tailed deer population and the City of Mentor and New Albany will share their approaches. Clintonville Woman's Club is doing a

Santa Drive-By on Sunday December 6th from 1-3 PM. There will be a mailbox for letters to Santa and treats and decorations.

District 4, Commissioner Minister: The N Broadway & High corner will be a Bank of America and I believe that Commissioner Garrison has all the information. Katherine Cull is helping me request another traffic study for Torrence & High by Starbucks. We had a great seed collection at the Park of Roses and Parks & Rec dedicated a tree to the volunteers of the 2020 rose garden and backyard garden team (120 volunteers this summer, the most ever).

District 5, Commissioner Boulton: I have a neighbor whose tree was removed, then replanted, but ultimately died during Blueprint activity. Ms. Cull and Blueprint staff have quickly responded to my request to see whether the tree can be replaced. I attended the recent new commissioner training. All CACs received copies of the slides. I would just add briefly that while we continue to meet virtually, the Department of Neighborhoods encourages us to appear on video to ensure that we are maintaining quorum throughout the duration of a meeting. In that I handle the recording of our motions and votes, I do not see that we have had any problem maintaining quorum during CAC meetings, but I did want to mention this so we can continue to be mindful. I will be attending a training this weekend on the new website that the city is building as a one-stop for information on all the area commissions in Columbus. Commissioner Peifer and I will be contacts for the CAC on this new site and I look forward to sharing any updates and tools from that meeting.

District 6, Commissioner Carpenter: I was alerted a couple days ago to a potential chemical spill by Rustic Bridge and learned after investigating it learned that it was only dye.

District 7, Commissioner Weinman: Nothing to report.

District 8, Commissioner Garrison: Leslie Westerfelt from Blueprint reached out to figure out how to move forward on the rain gardens. We came to an agreement that it might be best to address things on a case-by-case basis. They've committed to allocating their contingency funds for the project to fixing the issues.

District 9, Commissioner/Chair White: I have been reaching out to my constituency about Commissioner Weinman's proposed by-laws change to see how residents feel. People were not aware that there is an annual slate, they thought it was an open door. Residents thought that the volunteer committee positions should be able to be changed throughout the year (for example, if someone were to move), and seemed confused by the need for a full slate. The bull moose deer are coming around often. I wonder whether the calm of fewer cars and fewer businesses open during COVID-19 has led to the influx of deer, and maybe some of the other wildlife as well.

7:29 p.m. Consideration of prior meeting minutes – Commissioner Boulton, Secretary

On October 19th, you received a PDF copy of the minutes and voting record from our October meeting. I have not received edits from any commissioners to this document. Seeing no edits necessary, Chair White, may I please ask for a motion that these minutes be approved?

Moved by Commissioner Wetherholt, seconded by Commissioner Vottero. Approved 6-0.

7:32 p.m. Katherine Cull – Neighborhood Community Liaison

On Thursday, Nov 12 from 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM we will have an eviction prevention program focused on landlords.

CM Brown is having a hearing to review capital budget projects and for residents to voice what they would like to see in their neighborhoods. This will take place on Monday, November 9th at noon.

On Saturday, November 21st from 9 AM – 11:30 AM, there will be another training on responding to community input. Participants will learn best practices for community engagement and work on honing leadership styles and way to place their community at the center of their work.

There is an opportunity to recycle our yard signs this Saturday 11/7 from 8 AM – 12 PM at 4990 Olentangy River Road.

I am working on a date with my colleagues to host a town hall about resources during the upcoming holiday season as residents struggle to provide meals and toys for their children.

I have a meeting with Police & Public Service in two weeks on the Starbucks at Torrence & High.

7:36 p.m. Chair Ann Henkener, Elections Committee

Joe Campbell, who teaches community and economic development at Ohio State, is interested in joining the committee as the 5th member. We met over coffee and I am comfortable bringing him on. The committee also met to discuss how to proceed this coming year. We are planning on in-person and mail-in voting, although this may change as the day becomes closer (the library is not available at this point). In light of COVID, we are considering changing the threshold from 50 to 25 signatures. We are also considering an option for an e-mail signature.

Since I am sure that there is funding left in the budget, there may also be an option to pay for some of the postage for voting by mail. Currently, the voter needs to buy three stamps: one to register, a second on a self-addressed stamp that goes back to the voter, and a third for the ballot itself. We are suggesting providing this postage on the second step. The most voters we have had is 214 voters in 2017 and would have cost \$132.55. We have not had that level of turnout recently. There were a number of people disenfranchised last year over that second stamp.

We are also considering a dropbox at the library as a way to ensure that the ballot was received on time, especially in light of USPS slow-downs.

Commissioner Vottero: I like the idea of making voting as easy as possible, and removing the nuisance of that second set of stamps. Could we also look into an online format for requesting a ballot?

Commissioner Carpenter: Many of my votes were suppressed because I sent a number of applications for ballots in one large packet. Even though I won in person, the voters who mailed in absentee through that bundle were not counted. I don't like the idea of sending people stamps or sending out the mail-in ballots. We need transparency and integrity.

Chair White: Chair Henkener, please email the commissioners the summary that you sent us this evening and ask for individual responses and what they propose we would do differently. To comply with sunshine laws, please reply individually.

7:55 p.m. Treasurer's Report – Kendra Carpenter, Treasurer

We have had a few stamps and a website bill come in.

7:56 p.m. Lorenzo Velazquez, Resident

Lorenzo resides in Commissioner Carpenter's district and his street is very dark at night when he walks with his dad, dog, and brother, and would like the lights to be solar powered because those are better for the environment.

Commissioner Carpenter: I shared your request with our city neighborhood liaison, Katherine Cull, and we would like to get you in touch with the city to make your plea. We want to make sure that your voice is heard. I can't guarantee an outcome, but I will do anything I can to assist you along the way. You might want to start a petition that you can use to show neighbor support to the city.

Katherine Cull: I am going to e-mail you tonight so you can walk me down your street and we can start a 311 request and talk to the Department of Public Utilities.

8:00 p.m. Impending Traffic Management Items, Chair White

Justin Goodwin, Transportation Planning Manager with City of Columbus Division of Traffic Management has shared that there is proposed updated parking at Deland and High to improve sightlines as cars on Deland turning right (south) onto High Street. There is also a proposal to restrict westbound to southbound left turns from Weber Road onto the alley immediately west of the Railroad due to traffic backing up onto the railroad.

Commissioner Weinman asked whether we could comment on these impending changes, and Chair White indicated she will connect him to Justin Goodwin.

8:05 p.m. White-Tailed Deer Update, Chair White

If you oppose development and want to preserve green space, then one of the consequences is an abundance of wildlife. I think COVID-decreased traffic has allowed more wildlife to come out. The 35-acre property of the Ohio State School for the Deaf and Blind is state property, on which there have been illegal hunters.

The state has indicated that we cannot control the poaching, they cannot come out in the middle of the night to watch for poaching hunters, and though we have the natural topography for deer they do not have an interest in pursuing the deer population.

Sharon Woods addressed this 13 years ago in Westerville. We can consider designated hunting areas, especially if hunting is already happening illegally, and birth control options.

Resident Carole Tomko: I have lived in Clintonville for 44 years, including Olentangy Village, Walhalla Ravine, and East North Broadway, which all offer perfect places for deer but we have not seen them until the last ten years. The first time we saw a deer, it was a 12-point buck that crossed a street with thousands of cars each day and emergency vehicles. We now where they are crossing, we see them get hit, and it's not safe for pets or humans. I am concerned we are going to wait until someone is hurt for anything to happen.

Commissioner Wetherholt: You need 5 accidents/incidents of some sort in order to start discussions about a deer crossing sign, according to James Cameron at the city.

Commissioner Carpenter: I struggle between hunting and animal rights. I think we need to enforce not allowing people feed deer out of their hands. Education for citizens has to be uncomfortable along the lines of public service announcements around children and animals in need of adoption.

Commissioner Vottero: We need to look beyond ODNR; when we had a problem with rats, it was a public health and public engagement issue. We need to explain that deer carry ticks and Lyme disease. Maybe the city can be involved in putting up signage asking people not to feed the deer. We had a deer in Glen Echo Ravine hit by a car struggle back into traffic and a police officer had to euthanize it in a public park. I would also call the police when people are coming onto the State School for the Deaf and Blind with weapons and focus on the safety rather than the deer connection.

Chair White: I think Clintonville should push for a deer feeding ordinance, and Commissioner Wetherholt and I will share information from next week's conference sessions on deer management. We can lean on Greenspot Committee and push back on Mayor Ginther with a well-formatted response. So far, we have accepted his response and not countered with any substance. This will be top of the agenda for the December meeting.

Katherine Cull: I will reach out to the mayor's communications staff to see whether they would like to be present at the next meeting.

8:30 p.m. Proposed By-laws Change

Commissioner Wetherholt: I cannot support this as written. I think it gives too much power to the chair and assumes that the chair of the CAC knows what the chairs of each committee need on their committees. I also think the timeline will not work as it could conflict with the officer changes.

Commissioner Weinman: I would add a language change to ensure that no CAC members or their immediate families could be on the Elections Committee. I would note that the chair would be whittling down the list, not making the ultimate decisions. The current process allows for committee chairs to appoint people who are "yes men" for their goals.

Chair White: There are already rules for the Elections Committee that do not allow CAC members or their family members to be on the committee. I believe that we're a community organization, not a legislative body, a rule-making body, or an enforcing body. We are here as a volunteer, community-based organization to advocate for residents. I think that making this a selective membership politicizes the process. I first wondered why we are voting on slates for all of these committees. I could support a timeline on formation of committees and publicizing that we are seeking new members. This would also impose a burden on those who have had seats to re-apply. At our last meeting, we discussed a templated register. Where I stopped buying in is on the CAC chair making the decisions.

Commissioner Carpenter: I don't agree with the chair reviewing the committee member applicants. It is too much power for one person. The proposed changes have nothing to do with any individual but are to ensure that after all of us have moved on, we have solid processes in place.

Commissioner Minister: I see value in keeping things open year-round. I also support the spirit of the diversity of thought provision, ensuring that all the members of any given committee are not necessarily all employees of the same field or organization (for example).

Commissioner Wetherholt: Greenspot is open year-round. I worry about what type of "standards" we set and about not being too rigid. We may want to consider standing rules.

Zoning & Variance Chair Hardwick: There have not been problems with the existing processes yet, so we should not be trying to fix something that is not broken. I have encouraged Z&V committee

members to attend trainings, we could consider requiring trainings. While I do not think that a volunteer's day job is necessarily important because they can be trained, a simple interest statement might be appropriate.

Commissioner Carpenter: There is a hierarchy of committees. Zoning and elections are the most important.

Commissioner Vottero: A couple years ago, we did a better job of announcing and forming committees. Perhaps we publicize again that way. Also encouraged Commissioners Peifer and Boulton as new members to voice opinions.

Commissioner Boulton: I am very supportive of efforts to better publicize committee openings and to share background on volunteers with commissioners, perhaps not reading bullet by bullet resumes on a screen, but some type of a more public vetting process because I applied a few years ago and was told "no thanks" and was not sure why, so I decided to run when the opportunity arose. After last month's discussion, I am unclear on whether a by-laws change is necessary, but I do not want to table this indefinitely because I want it figured out this spring before we come into election season and want our slates developed.

Commissioner Peifer: After reviewing the CAC by-laws as well as the charter documents for various area commissions in Columbus, I wonder whether we could we consider whether we need a charter document for each committee. *Commissioner Wetherholt* notes that this may require a standing rules change, and *Chair White* notes that we would need the full CAC to vote for the rules on each committee.

Commissioner Wetherholt motions to table item to December 2020 Meeting, Commissioner Minister seconds. 9-0

8:30 p.m. Public Comments and Open Discussion

9:25 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

Addendum: In follow-up to the comments Commissioner Carpenter made regarding elections processes, Commissioner Wetherholt shared the following by-laws language highlighted via email to the other commissioners

II. Officers

1. **Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall be a voting member of the Commission, preside at meetings of the Commission, prepare the agenda for the Commission meetings, approve the spending of all funds, and, in consultation with the other Commission members, appoint chairpersons of standing and special committees of the Commission. No person who has served three consecutive full terms in the office of Chairperson shall be eligible for election to a fourth consecutive term in that same office, but shall be eligible for election to any office in subsequent years.

V. Committees

1. **Election Committee:** The Election Committee shall conduct elections for District Commissioners. The Election Committee shall have all necessary authority to conduct Commission elections, including certification of candidate and voter qualifications, establishment of and staffing of polling places, counting of ballots, and adjudication of disputes and challenges. The committee will consist of five Clintonville area residents appointed by the Commission.
 - a. No committee member may be any of the following:
 - i. a Commissioner;
 - ii. a candidate for election to the Commission; or
 - iii. a member of the immediate family or household of a candidate for the Commission.
- B. The Commission Chairperson, following the July annual meeting, shall appoint a chairperson for each of the standing committees established in accordance with these Bylaws. The chairpersons of the Planning and Development Committee, the Historic Buildings Committee, Technology and Community Relations and the Zoning and Variance Committee shall recommend to the Commission members of those committees who may be Commissioners or non-Commissioners. The chairperson of the Election Committee shall recommend to the Commission members of that committee who shall all be non-Commissioners. The Commission shall approve the membership of the standing committees at the August regular meeting of the Commission. Appointments to the standing committees shall be for the period of one year until the next August regular meeting.