



PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

www.FranklinOhio.org

CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Dr. Sarah Nathan, Paul Ruppert, Christine Pirot, David Hopper, Mayor Brent Centers, Jason Hall, Brian Rebholz

Staff: Barry Conway, Jonathan Westendorf, Cindi Chibis

Guests: Cameron Goschinski, Ryan Cook

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Nathan.

4. APPROVE THE CLERK'S JOURNAL AND ACCEPT THE TAPES AS THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Clerk's Journal was accepted as the official minutes of the March 13, 2024, meeting. Written minutes were accepted with two revisions.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Doctor Nathan.

Voting Yea: Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

Voting Abstaining: Mayor Centers

5. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The Oath was administered to all guests.

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

PC 24-05 - Reinvent Franklin 2040 Comprehensive Plan – In 2021, the City of Franklin retained the Warren County Regional Planning Commission to assist with the creation of a citywide comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that presents a unified vision for the future of the City. Staff is requesting Planning Commission to forward a recommendation of approval of the Reinvent Franklin 2040 to City Council.

Cameron Goschinski approached the podium, confirmed that he has been sworn in, and provided his address. He explained that he was in attendance as a representative of the Warren County Regional Planning Commission (WCRPC) to answer questions about the 2040 Reinvent Franklin Comprehensive Plan, as presented by Hadil Lababidi, Planner II, WCRPC, at the March Planning Commission meeting.

Rebholz stated that he was impressed with both the depth and the quality of the Plan. Stating that collectively we have done a fantastic job.

Pirot asked if Commission members should share suggestions for minor clerical changes, such as punctuation or spelling, in the public meeting, or if there was a preferred alternative method to provide non-substantive revisions.

Mayor Centers responded that instead of detailing recommended clerical revisions today, the Commission had an option to adopt the Plan for Council approval with clerical, non-material amendments.

Pirot said that although Franklin is located between Dayton and Cincinnati, it appeared to her that in the Plan Document we are strongly aligned with Dayton. She asked what propelled us to make that choice.

Westendorf responded that this is likely due to the tremendous support received from and allegiance to MVRCP throughout the planning Process, which resulted in increased funding opportunities. He stated that efforts to actively market Franklin to both the Dayton/Montgomery County area, as well as to Cincinnati/Warren County area, are underway.

Pirot suggested that if using this document to support our marketing strategy we may want to consider revising the language in the *Introduction* on page 14 of the Plan, to more clearly indicate that we are in overlapping metropolitan areas.

Mayor Centers agreed that Franklin has a foothold in both places and suggested that before the Document is finalized the recommendation be considered.

Hall stated that Franklin has a long history of supporting our Veterans. He suggested that housing support for Veterans be added to page 99, and that local resources available for Veterans as well as Franklin's designation as a Purple Heart City, be added to the *Quality of Life* section.

Dr. Nathan highlighted areas within the Plan that she found particularly compelling, (e.g. a call-out to the community's spirit of optimism; *Quality of Life* - importance of the Public Library, *Implementation* - developing a 48-hour City Guide, and a neighborhood awards program, City Employee Residence Incentive Program). She also suggested that we consider ways that the Franklin Fund can support some of these initiatives.

Westendorf agreed and reminded Commission members that he closed last night's Town Hall with a call to action to encourage creative thinking on how community members and organizations can contribute to City development.

Hopper said that he is astounded by the amount of thoughtful planning that went into the comprehensive document and is impressed with the overall plan for Franklin. He described the document as an in-depth blueprint that provides guidance for residents, City staff, Boards and Commission, and for City Council. Hopper said that the Plan incorporates cutting-edge modern thinking and theory in ways that remain applicable to our community's unique strengths and challenges. Hopper stated that this Plan helps us make Franklin better while at the same time not forgetting about the people who live here, or what makes Franklin uniquely Franklin. Hopper used

grocery stores reviewed on page 99 of the Plan to illustrate this concept. Hopper concluded his comments by saying that he was “extremely impressed”.

Ruppert said that he remembers when downtown Franklin was vibrant and bustling, explaining that he has wondered over the years what we could do to save the town. Ruppert stated that the only thing that has kept the town alive was the resident’s remarkable spirit, saying that “what we are doing is fantastic and I’m proud to be part of the change”. He highlighted examples of successes already happening such as water savings of over 300 thousand gallons a day resulting from infrastructure improvements currently underway downtown. He said that with these changes Franklin will be a remarkable place to live and work.

Hopper said that this process is a testament of how government and private sector capital can work together to improve the Community-it’s a reciprocal process. This cooperation is a critical piece in a virtuous cycle. He stated that we are collectively creating an environment where individuals can thrive and grow.

Westendorf expressed his appreciation of the positive comments. He agreed that WCRPC has done an excellent job. He explained that he had high expectations and realizes that we have not always been easy on them, but the results are a testament to the amount of work that went into the planning process. Although the staff contributed in significant ways, he reminded Commission members that this really is a work product of the Community. The Plan grew out of two years of community input. We asked and this is what the Community told us that they wanted. “I will forever be grateful to this community for showing up, participating and for dreaming big. Together we will make this happen”.

Discussion regarding Plan revisions ensued. Suggestions included, but were not limited to, a date change on page 20, the removal of the reference to Main Street Franklin on page 151, inclusion of Ohio Means Jobs on page 153.

Hearing no further discussion, Hopper entertained a motion to recommend approval of the Reinvent Franklin 2040 Comprehensive Plan, subject to administrative edits.

Motion made by Nathan, Seconded by Hall
Voting Yea: Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Centers, Hall, Rebholz

8. DISCUSSION

Westendorf announced that he and Mayor Centers are hosting Walking Tours of Downtown Streetscape Project at 9:00 AM on Saturday, April 27, and 5:30 PM on Tuesday, April 30. He explained that the Walking Tours are an interactive exercise designed to highlight planned construction projects, answer citizen questions, and address resident concerns. Westendorf stated that this is a historic opportunity-outside of a natural disaster it isn’t often that we get the chance to reinvent a community. He said that he is so proud of the community and that it is wonderful to see our citizens, staff, Boards and Commissions and Council working together to achieve our dream.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Motion made by Pirot, Seconded by Dr. Nathan
Voting Yea: Nathan, Ruppert, Pirot, Hopper, Centers, Hall, Rebholz