

City of Springdale Council

September 16, 2020

President of Council Vanover called Council to order on September 16, 2020

The governmental body and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. McNear provided the Invocation.

Mrs. McNear took roll call. Council members Anderson, Emerson, Ghantous, Hawkins, Ramirez, Sullivan-Wisecup, and Vanover were present.

The minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting were considered. Mr. Hawkins made a motion to accept the minutes; Mr. Anderson seconded. The minutes were approved with seven affirmative votes.

The minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting were considered. Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup made a motion to accept the minutes; Mrs. Ghantous seconded. The minutes were approved with six affirmative votes and one abstention (Mrs. Emerson).

Presentation – Scope of Comprehensive Plan

Mayor Webster: I would like to ask everyone to remove their masks when they're speaking so we can get it on tape. Appreciate that.

Mr. Dale: Thank you Mr. President, members of Council, Mayor. My name is Greg Dale with McBride, Dale, Clarion. I'm pleased to be here tonight to present to you a proposed approach to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Springdale. We're excited to potentially be a part of this process. I know from being involved for a long time in Springdale. I know this has been on your agenda for a long time. We look forward to the opportunity to help you. What I'd like to do here is to walk you through a few things. One of them is just a little bit about who we are and what we think we can bring to the table to help the City. But, mainly, we want to focus on what we're suggesting as the approach to what we've been calling "Plan Springdale". We've been working with the Administration on this and what you see, I think, reflects kind of the collective thoughts of that. Let me start, if I can, with some kind of foundational ideas that we've been talking about. It kind of revolves around the idea that we've actually been shying away from the term "Comprehensive Plan" because, to a lot of people, the term "comprehensive plan" conjures up a growth plan for a community with a lot of green field area and expansion areas, and so forth. This is still a plan that will accomplish everything that needs to be accomplished in a comprehensive plan, but we're suggesting a couple of things, at least, as a starting point for thinking about as we embark on this. One of those is the idea of focusing on redevelopment. I don't have to tell you, the City of Springdale is largely built out. Many of your commercial areas are in second, third, fourth generation uses. We think that the issues that are going to be important for the City of Springdale are going to revolve around in-fill and redevelopment. No great insight there, but that's something that we understand. We also are aware of the bridge process that was kind of a short visioning process that you all went through. We have the notes from that. We would try to build on that, use that as a starting point. We think that's important. But, the other thing that we think is likely to occur in this and I say "likely to occur in this", because we need to let the process play out. But, we think is probably going to happen is the need to have some focus on some key planning areas. So, the map you see on the right, I think is something that's resonated with your Administrative staff. That is the framework plan for the City of Blue Ash that we did a couple of years ago and I think has been pretty successful in their efforts. You can see those big areas. It doesn't matter what they are for our point, in fact, you could probably look at that map and imagine something similar for the City of Springdale, the Tri-County Mall area and the core. Those kind of planning areas that, again, as contrasted with a growth plan that's really concerned about where are your future businesses going to be, where are your future neighborhoods going to be, this is about recognizing you have your bone structure set here and this is about focusing in on some of those areas. I think it's going to be also really important for us to help you all and you help us understand what the big evolving trends are that are shaping your future. Again, in this day and age, and I mean this day and age both because of the virus, but also because of other structural changes, future residential needs, future retail needs, future office needs, what it means to be industrial. There are some big trends, some big moving parts that are happening out there and I think it's going to be important to understand what those major drivers are that you're going to be facing in the future. So, what we would intend to do is a fairly focused and strategic analysis of that. This is not going to be

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Mr. Dale (continued): the comprehensive plan that starts with six months or some research and analysis and an existing condition study that is 100 pages long. This is really trying to “hone in” on what the really important drivers and trends are that are shaping the community so that you can understand that. Certainly, the need to engage the community and every planning effort, and during this time in particular, over the next year or so, we need to think both creatively and safely about how we do that. Certainly we would all prefer to have in-face, in-person meetings. And, there will probably be some of those opportunities. I don’t think we want to avoid that entirely, but I think this is also forcing us to think more creatively and differently about how you engage people and there’s a lot of different techniques and I’ll talk a little bit about that as we get into this. Then, finally, focusing on strategic priorities. We do not envision this being the traditional comprehensive plan that has a land use, a parks and recreation, a transportation and housing, maybe it has pieces of those, but what we think is really important is to identify what the real strategic priorities are. You’re dealing with a particular set of issues, a particular set of problems and opportunities and finite resources to deal with those. Thinking in terms of focusing on those strategic priorities. We’ve laid out a process. It’s a pretty simple five-step process that starts with a solid kickoff of the process, and I’ll talk about each in a little bit more detail. It goes into the forces and trends, community engagement, division, and then, the plan itself. Let me take those one at a time, and just walk you through them.

So, the project initiation, again, we just want to get off on the right foot. There’s some key decisions that are going to need to be made early in the process about how we organize the process. What the leadership of the planning process is, whether there is going to be some sort of advisory committee, citizen-based advisory committee. Whether there will be essentially working groups, there might be thematic working groups, it could be working groups on housing issues, or it could be working groups on a geographic sub area of the City. So, just structuring that whole organizational process, which is boring to a lot of people, but is really important to get it organized up front as we go. Already talked about the forces and trends, so you see in the bullets there some of the things that we would want to be looking at. But, again, we see this as being fairly high-level. It’s really understanding, I keep using the term. The things that are driving the future of the City, and understanding what those forces are that we’ll try to help you understand. We went through this process in Blue Ash when we started their plan, and we think it worked very well. So, you’re not likely to see a detailed report that’s 60-70 pages long, what we found there that worked better, were things like user-friendly PowerPoint presentations. Or, user-friendly on-line kind of engagement tools that would help with that. So, again, trying to understand what those forces and trends are. The community engagement, again, the planning profession, the consulting world is, I don’t want to say, “we’re making it up as we go”, but we’re getting pretty creative in terms of how we do this. I just went through a strategic planning process for a township up outside of Dayton that started right when the pandemic hit and we did the entire thing virtually, with the exception of a few meetings like this with leadership, all the engagement was on-line. Some of us it’s just good old fashioned telephone calls. It’s amazing, when you just talk to people one-on-one on a telephone what you can get done. But, surveys, community surveys, we talked about the possibility of linking a survey to your newsletter and timing it so that the survey could be in the newsletter, but it can also be on-line. On-line surveys are easy to do these days. Google surveys, whatever the technology is, we’re able to crank those out very easily. Those are really pretty straightforward now. But, again, the idea of relying, I see this as relying heavily on these focused advisory or working groups. Whatever terminology we want to use. Certainly, we want to provide an opportunity for anyone in the community to be engaged in this, but, in particular is drafting the right kinds of people, meaning, the right kinds of experience and understanding of the community to work on some of these focus working groups. Again, whether they’re topical working groups, or geographic based working groups. And then, the vision is out there. I always like to say you need to trust the process and let it play out. I can tell you that, at some point, when we have an understanding of those forces and trends, and we know what the community is saying about the community, we need to synthesize that into a vision which can take the place in the form of guiding principles, goals, and objectives. The idea is to capture the values of the community and an understanding of what’s shaping the community into some statements about the kind of future that you’re trying to achieve. If that makes sense. We’re kind of “marrying” information and values into what becomes the core of the plan. From there, it’s a matter of letting the process play out. We will, at some point, draft the plan. We like to think that it will be clearly, concisely summarized.

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Mr. Dale (continued): Again, it can be specific area focused, like Tri County Mall. It can be topical focused. It could be a single document, or it can be a series of documents. It can be an on-line tool, or a combination of all of those. I know, in talking with the staff, the staff looked at the Blue Ash plan, and I think liked that in terms of its user-friendliness. I'll show you a screen shot of that here in just a minute. On the other end of the spectrum is the Portsmouth Virginia plan which we did which was a couple of 100 pages because they really wanted to get down into the details and the nitty gritty. We'll work with you to respond to what the community needs are. In terms of schedule, any comprehensive plan, will take about a year to get it done. Go much less than a year, and it feels rushed; go much more than a year and it starts to feel like it's dragging. So, we set this up with about a year to process. You can see the last couple of months are a little bit fuzzy because that's when it gets in to Planning Commission and review and Council review. Very often that may take a couple of months; we don't know. That's really up to you all. We've done this enough that we know how to run these to keep them on track. One of the things to think about is where we are seasonally. So, for example, if you are ready to kick this off starting in October and we have October and November to do work and then we hit the holidays and then we come back. There is a pacing of this with the holidays. But, if we got started in late Fall, we'd have this back to you for your review before the holidays next year for you to be able to process this. That's a plan; that's a proposed schedule. We also know that there are times when we have to adjust that schedule based upon how long it takes for the community to process that. One time for Planning Commission to table it and bring it back the next month is a month in the process. The same thing is true with you all. That's the proposed approach that we are putting on the table. In terms of the personnel and the staffing of this, I would be the principal-in-charge. Liz Fields, who I think many of you have met, Liz has taken my place as "second string" City Planner before Planning Commission. I used to come out when Anne couldn't, but now Anne brings Liz out, so Liz has gotten to know the community very well. She was the Project Manager on Blue Ash, which I was just talking about, and on many, many other projects. She's a real rising star. She couldn't be with us here tonight, but she would be the Project Manager. Then, Rachel Gombosch is another young, bright planner who would be available to support Liz as needed, to do GIS analysis or other kind of research or analysis. And of course, Anne, who's been your Planner here for as long as we've been in business, for over 20 years, would be available in an advisory support capacity as needed as well. Staff asked that we just kind of give you a list of some of the projects that we've worked on recently; tried to focus on some in Ohio. Grandview Heights is an interesting case. That's an inner-ring suburb just outside, actually surrounded by Columbus, if you know that area. That's where that major mixed use development called, "The Yard" is located. We've done a lot of work there. Recently completed the Harrison plan, Middletown. You can see them there, I won't name them all. But, I will also say that we have a lot of experience doing plans like this in other parts of the country. Particularly, in recent years in the Southeast in Tennessee and in South Carolina, and Virginia. So, we'd like to think that we can bring some of that national experience to the table as well. This is just a shot of a couple of pages from the Blue Ash plan and it's organized by these geographic areas. This is one of those geographic sub-areas and it kind of walks you from existing conditions into future recommendations, but, again, this is, I think, staff just wanted you to see a visual of that in terms of what we think is kind of this simple, but effective way of communicating some of those ideas. And then, I want to just end the presentation with this. That is, again, staff asked if we could show an example of a community where we've developed a community-wide pedestrian/bike trail system. This is Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina if any of you have ever been to Charleston, South Carolina, it's just across the river from Charleston; beautiful, historic area that's experienced a lot of growth. We were the lead on the comprehensive plan there. We didn't actually do this graphic; one of our sub-consultants did this graphic, but, we kind of conceived of this idea, what's known as, "Mt. Pleasant Way", which is a city-wide network of bike and pedestrian trails that, if you're able to look at that map closely, you would see it connects a lot of key landmark areas and ties a lot of things together. Open spaces, schools, libraries, and so forth. That, I think, is probably a 20-30 year project, but, they are very serious about it and as that gets implemented, I think it's going to be a beautiful asset for that community. That was just one example we wanted to give you. So, that's my presentation. We're happy to answer any questions or if staff had anything else that they wanted to add.

Mr. Anderson: This is great. I love plans and planning. One question I have is Springdale is a majority-minority community and that came across in our bridge planning as well. In the bridge plan there was not a lot of representation of any groups in general that would be really

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Mr. Anderson (continued): represented or look like Springdale. Are there some things that you do or experience that you have, I don't know, maybe in Grandview Heights where you can make sure that the diversity of Springdale shows up and has an equal or great voice during this process?

Mr. Dale: Yes. That's a very good question. So, a couple of things about that. So, a starting point is just for all of us to agree that that's important for the community to have it occur. In other words, to have that commitment to it. The other thing that we've learned in terms of community engagement and it relates in general, but, it relates specifically to underrepresented groups or folks who don't typically get involved, or often don't get involved in a planning process like this. That is to recognize that the most effective way to get people involved in a process is where people that they perceive to be their peers, or leaders, or thought leaders, ask them to be involved. Let me just elaborate on that for a minute because that's really important. There's often the temptation I think we're going to paper the community, we're going to put flyers up, we're going to blast emails out, we're going to do Facebook, we're going to do all this kind of social media. And, that's fine, but, what we've learned when we have these processes and you ask people and we do exit surveys with public meetings and things like that, what we've learned is what's most effective is to get people involved is when people they respect ask them to do it. That takes effort. So, one of the things we could think about, for example, that we've done in other communities is had a group of people together that's really just the process group. Their job is to engage people. If you think about it, if you've got 15 people around the table and they all agree to bring ten people into the process, you can see the power of that. When you have as part of your mission that it's not just that we want to get hundreds of people involved. We want to get hundreds of people that represent, that look like the population at large in our community. But, it's all about people. It's not about sending out emails and putting up signs. Does that answer your question?

Mrs. Emerson: The other thing along with what Mr. Anderson said, there's a lot of barriers there. There's language barriers, there's financial barriers as far as computers, technology, those kinds of things, so that would have to be also taken into consideration in reaching these people.

Mr. Dale: I appreciate that. The language one is an interesting one. In another project in Tennessee, actually in Chattanooga, where there was that same issue, we actually had interpreters at meetings. So, when I talk about people asking people, we need to also think about whether there's a language barrier there that we need to think about.

Mayor Webster: I've got several comments I want to make on this topic, but, do you want to do this now, or do you want to hold this for New Business?

President Vanover: While we're dealing with this, I say, "Let's run the gauntlet here".

Mayor Webster: The Administration strongly supports contracting with these folks to do this plan. They've been our City Planners for over 20 years. Nobody knows the City better than they do. And, they've got some really great people there who all worked with these two individuals, Liz (Fields), I'll take Greg's (Dale) word for it that she's top-notch. And, we've reviewed the Blue Ash plan; I think it's excellent. Haven't seen some of the other ones, but, I mean, if you stop and think about it, here we are, look out west, we've got Harrison, north, they've got Middletown, look over to the east, they've got Blue Ash, all these other townships. So, they've got a ton of experience and I just don't see any benefit of us advertising for an RFP and interviewing firms that respond to that. I think we're going to waste a lot of time. We had to put this on the back burner because of COVID-19 primarily, and I'd like to see us go full speed ahead and award a contract to these folks and let's get this thing going, so we can try to get it completed by the end of 2021.

Mrs. Ghantous: I agree. I agree with Mayor Webster.

Mr. Anderson: I know we've worked with McBride and company for some time now. Do we have a range of what we'd be signing up for? A 12 month contract or process is pretty extensive. How would we benchmark the fees? Do we already have fees for this kind of thing in the contract with them? That's the piece I think we'd get out of an RFP process. I agree, I

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Mr. Anderson (continued): think this is the right group to work with because of their experience, but is there a way for us to do that due diligence, or do we have benchmarks that we can use to make sure that we are being good stewards of the City's funds at the same time as moving quickly?

Mayor Webster: Well, we've got the money budgeted. We have \$100,000 budgeted for the comprehensive plan and their contract will be not to exceed that. Will the bills be broken down in an hourly rate? (Addressing Mr. Dale)

Mr. Dale: There's a couple of ways we can do that. Typically, for a comprehensive plan, it would just be a lump sum fee, and we would provide you with the scope of work that defines the deliverables and things like numbers of meetings, and that sort of thing. That's a typical way of doing it for a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Anderson: But if some of these other communities around us of the same size have done RFP's, could we just verify that we're in the same range as what they got back? Those would be public, right?

Mayor Webster: Are you at liberty to discuss what Blue Ash paid you for theirs? (Addressing Mr. Dale)

Mr. Dale: Honestly, I don't recall. I'd have to look. I'd be happy to provide that to you. I know for example that Anderson Township is embarking on their comprehensive plan update and it's only a five year update, and their budgeting \$100,000 for it. It's the same amount. Middletown, with over \$100,000 I know, so, I can provide documentation if you'd like to see that, but, that \$100,000 is fair and adequate, but in the ballpark number for what communities are doing.

Mr. Kuchta: If I may add, I did speak to the Blue Ash Planning Director a week or two ago about this, and I asked if he could recall what the contract amount was. Their plan was approved in 2015 was when their latest plan was done. He does recall that Blue Ash had budgeted \$100,000 for that plan. They spent something less than that. He thinks it was around \$75,000 is what the final tally came in at because they did go by the hourly rate billing system and what the City ended up doing was they have a lot of in-house capabilities in terms of graphics and mapping, so they did some of the really large display boards that you typically tend to see at these types of processes that have large maps and large graphics. They did all those in-house, and some other things as well that we don't have the "in-house" technical expertise or the equipment to do. So, back in 2015, it was around the same price.

Mr. Hawkins: Along those lines, I guess for clarity, and what Mr. Anderson asked the question. Those things would be public record, right? In other municipalities? Blue Ash, Harrison, Middletown? So, I think the question would be if the Administration would be willing to pull that, just for a benchmark and for comparison. I agree with everybody that spoke, so far, that Ms. McBride, and Mr. Dale would be ideal. It's sort of negotiating against yourself by going and saying that, but, you guys have been with the City for decades and have done great work, but, I think as Mr. Anderson indicates, we're making these decisions, we need to be able to justify what we're doing and doing it by some kind of comparison. I don't think it's something that would probably take a great deal of time if the Administration pulled information from some surrounding cities just for comparison and then we move forward from there.

Mrs. Emerson: Just for clarification, are we hiring you for a contract for a year, or until the job is done? How is the timeframe looked at?

Mr. Dale: So, the way these contracts would read, and let me take that opportunity to elaborate on a couple of things. The way these contracts would read is that we would provide a scope of work, and we've given you a proposed approach as to what would happen next step if you would want to go forward is that we would drill down a little bit in terms of detail on that so that you have deliverables identified and you have timeframes set out. Yes, there would be a schedule in there that essentially says this is a year-long process. But, as I said earlier, we also understand that sometimes it takes longer than that. Especially because of the way things are processed at the local community level. So, to go back to the Mayor's point earlier, or the Mayor's question earlier, typically, the way we would show you a break out of the budget by

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Mr. Dale (continued): work task. And, we would identify that deliverables are there. The way we do this, I use the term "lump sum", that's a little bit misleading because we invoice based on the hours that we spend. If we get to the end of a project and it's finished, right, and we've only invoiced \$75,000 to \$80,000 dollars; we don't send you a final \$20,000 bill that basically says, "Here's the lump sum that's due next". We are geared towards an hourly rate kind of business. That's what happened in Blue Ash. Blue Ash ended up focusing their plan really on certain land use issues. Maybe you end up doing that, and maybe this takes less than \$100,000.

Mrs. Emerson: So, once your plan is done and established, we can always come back to you for reference or help also, right?

Mr. Dale: Yes, absolutely. And, Anne (McBride) is on staff for that purpose. Yes.

Mrs. Emerson: Thank you.

Mayor Webster: If I'm reading Council right, I think the concern is not that we get money back, it's that at the end of the process you say, "Hey we spent \$150,000 here and the contract is for \$100,000". Would you send us a bill for \$50,000?

Mr. Dale: Exactly. We wouldn't be able to exceed. From a consultant perspective, if we're halfway through this and there are a lot of extra meetings that are being requested and so forth, we might raise the alarm that we're going through this at a faster clip than we should be. But, again, we've done this; I've been doing this for 30 years, and at MDC, we've been doing this for 20 years. You can check our references. We have a track record of doing these on time and on budget.

Mayor Webster: We'll do whatever Council wants, but, I really question what we're going to find out other than what we have heard here tonight; \$100,000 seems to be the going rate for this type of plan and I'd just hate to see us delay this for another three weeks. If we want to get anything done this year, I think we need to get cranking with it. I would like to recommend that we add an agenda item to rewarding a contract this evening and see if Joe can cobble together an ordinance here.

President Vanover: Council?

Mr. Anderson: You said you've looked at contract terms of conditions. Typically when we get the ordinance, there's a contract behind it with terms and conditions and there's details that we would have seen ahead of time. You're asking for an ordinance tonight that would just be broadly stated without a contract behind it of "engaged for, not to exceed". Is that what you're asking?

Mayor Webster: Joe (Braun) can you share with us what you've got there.

Mr. Braun: I have a draft ordinance that would be an amount not to exceed, but ultimately what you would be doing is empowering staff to sign a contract just as you would for any professional services. Such as my firm, Don's (Shvegza) firm for engineering services. I can circulate that to you if you would like to look at it. You just have to add it to your agenda. I have a generic one prepared that addresses the comprehensive plan. It's just up to Council to move forward on it. It does not contain the contract. What it would do is it would authorize us to enter into a contract not to exceed \$100,000 for those professional services.

Mr. Anderson: And there's no issue from an ordinance or a legal standpoint to do a "no bid" contract that exceeds that?

Mr. Braun: Not the professional services that you're going to be invoiced for and approving this does.

President Vanover: Just my two cents, McBride, Dale, Clarion; Anne's (McBride) our Planner and has been for 20 years, and, I can't foresee spoiling that engagement over this. I've seen Anne's work firsthand, and I agree completely. If there's anybody that knows the City, they know it inside and out. I have no problem moving ahead with this.

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Mr. Anderson: This was presented to Planning Commission already or are we the first ones to see this. I know we've talking with Planning Commission about doing something like this for some time, but, this has only come to us? Is that right?

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: That's correct.

President Vanover: Council, I'll entertain a motion. What do we want to do here?

Mr. Hawkins: I just had one question. With someone who has been involved in regional planning with us, I wonder if Mr. Okum had any input from his experience with regard to what he's seen in terms of cost of these types of plans or projects that he may want to enlighten those present with.

Mr. Okum: Thank you very much. As most of you know, I serve as Chairman of the Regional Planning Commission for Hamilton County. I also serve on our Planning Commission and have for a lifetime. You couldn't ask for a better opportunity to work with McBride Dale and Clarion. There's a lot of reasons why it's good for the City. One is the experience. The other thing is if you're talking about dollars, you're saving the dollars by the knowledge that you're bringing to the table. So, all of the background, and all of the research, and all of the things that need to be done, you would get with a planner that wasn't involved with the City of Springdale, you'd be paying that to somebody else to learn what they already know. So, for us, as the City of Springdale as Planner and as a member of the Planning Commission, I would endorse this immensely. I have all the confidence in the world in Anne (McBride), and Greg (Dale) and the team. Elizabeth Fields, she wrote the document, our Zoning Code. So, who else would be a better team to have with the City of Springdale? As far as costs are concerned, the dollars are pretty close. From what I've heard, sitting here in the audience, you're talking a billable per hour that you've already approved. So, the rate per hour that you're paying is part of the services that you're already paying for Planning Services. Am I correct? You're basically paying those fees already for services provided under our contract with them. So, I can't answer the \$100,000 or \$105,000 or, I like \$75,000 better (laughter), being a resident of the community. But, on the other hand, it's going to be what it's going to be. Sometimes people like Dave Okum will get up and talk too much and when that happens, it takes up time, and it costs us a little bit more money, but, hopefully, we get a better result out of it. I think it's a good choice for the City and a good way to move forward. A nice way to go into 2021. We've had a miserable 2020 so, positive thinking, looking to the future, I think it's the right thing. You know I've been an advocate for our comprehensive plan update for years, and I'm just so please that you're considering it. Thank you. If you've got any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Mr. Anderson: Just one for Mr. Okum. So, by what you're saying, you're one of those people that we can count on to come in and be an active participant in addition to the other duties that you have with the Regional and the City.

Mr. Okum: Only if I'm asked. Certainly.

Mr. Anderson: Well, that counts as my "ask" as a resident to come in.

Mayor Webster: We'd have to bar the door to keep him out (laughter).

Mr. Anderson: Thank you for those comments Mr. Okum.

Mr. Okum: Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you Mr. Okum. One last thing. When we had budgeted \$100,000, again, Administration, help me out, going back in time, I'm assuming that when we did that, that was based off of using some thought in general, what that cost may be based on some other numbers, is that accurate?

Mr. Jones: You mean with regard to what other jurisdictions are doing?

Mr. Hawkins: Yes. I mean, we came up with that number based on having done some type of research.

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Mr. Jones: The original recommendation for that number was coming from Christine Russell, our prior Economic Developer said that she thinks that's probably the ballpark of what it's going to cost us and so, when we started looking into it, that's what we were finding was pretty much the number and as the Mayor and others have indicated, that's why we also wanted to put in that it not exceed, so we know what we're getting up front and we know what the maximum cost is.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: I might add, Mr. President, if it's okay, Mr. Hawkins and others. Our staff when we told them once we had a meeting, a couple of meetings to talk about the direction we were hoping to go with this and we know that this plan is long overdue and folks have been trying to get it on the table and, as the Mayor pointed out, we were hoping to get going much sooner in the year, and then the pandemic hit and so forth, several staff members said, "Oh, I hope we don't waste time and backwards by not allowing the people that are already in place to do this for us". That just kept propelling us forward to say, "I think we've got what we already need. Let's try to get this together as quickly as we can and get it to Council". I too, am an advocate. Based what I've seen in my couple of years here, that our staff is very supportive.

Mr. Ramirez: I'm going to agree with almost everything that I have heard. On the positive side, first and foremost, it's a project that's certainly needed and needed like now. The McBride group is certainly the ones that should be doing this project. Like Mr. Okum stated, we're going to save a lot of time, effort, and money. By only going backwards, with a new firm learning what they already know from the past 20 years. I'm totally in favor of it.

Mr. Hawkins: I move to add Ordinance No. 31-2020 An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Execute an Agreement with McBride Dale Clarion for the Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan and Declaring an Emergency to the agenda this evening.

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Second.

The motion to add Ordinance No. 31-2020 to the September 16, 2020 agenda passes with seven affirmative votes.

Mayor Webster: Thank you very much.

Mrs. McNear: Mr. President, where will we place this on the agenda?

President Vanover: Well, we'll just flow in the numbers. The one published right now says Ordinance No. 30, so, we'll just tag it, write 31-2020.

Mrs. McNear: Thank you.

President Vanover: Don't confuse me. (laughter)

Committee and Official Reports

Civil Service Commission

Mr. Coleman: I was running a little late this evening due to a soccer game for my grandson, as fate would have it. I not only got caught by one train, I caught by two trains and then when I walked in and remembered about the presentation, I said, "Oh gosh, that was a good thing that happened to me". (Laughter) But, again, I'll keep my remarks otherwise short. Civil Service met on August 27th. The principal individuals were present. Myself, Mrs. Nienaber, Mrs. Darby, and also present was Mr. Brian Uhl, and Mr. Carl Lamping from the Building Department, along with Ms. Christina Ingle. This meeting was called an emergency meeting because our regular meeting had occurred about three weeks prior to that. The reason for it to be an emergency meeting was the Administrative Assistant job position in the Building Department was vacant, and we needed to move forward with reviewing the job description as well as approving the hiring process timeline. Following comments from Mr. Lamping, in regards to the position, we wanted to make sure that all parties understood the

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Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup (continued): table it. Then, we had Glenmary Home Missionaries at 540 Ray Norrish Drive to rezone to PUD. It was a public hearing. Glenmary Homes want to put 512 solar panels in that field that's back there kind of behind Peak Drive and Springdale Lake Drive in that field that they have to power the mission home that is actually located in Fairfield, and after a lot of discussion, and seeing the presentation, that did pass with us for a 7-0 vote, so that will come before us. Then, we had under Discussion, we had a developer presentation, which I believe we're going to see tonight. It was conceptual office building redevelopment for Executive Plaza conceptual on Merchant Street. That was 134 and 144, the address on Merchant Street and it's 11 acres and I believe Vandercar is here to talk tonight to talk to us about that and so, I'm just going to kind of leave that for later for you guys to see that information. There was a lot of discussion on that between the Planning Commission and lots of different ideas, and hopefully, I know that they were taking notes and writing down everything that we said and coming up with different ideas and a different plan, so, I'm excited to see what they come for tonight. Any questions? (None) Thank you.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Mrs. Ghantous: Board of Zoning Appeals met on Tuesday, August 25th. We only had one application. That was the owner from 11760 Lawnview. They came requesting a variance to allow a shed that was a little larger than is allowed in the Code. After quite a bit of discussion, and taking into consideration the square footage of their home, and the odd shape of their lot, the Board voted unanimously to grant that variance and that was all that we had. What did I do wrong? (Addressing Mr. Anderson)

Mr. Anderson: Sorry, Mrs. Ghantous.

Mrs. Ghantous: That's okay.

Mr. Anderson: I believe it was 6-1. There was one dissenting vote.

Mrs. Ghantous: Sorry. Excuse me. Any questions? (None) That will conclude my report.

President Vanover: Thank you.

Board of Health

Mrs. Emerson: The Board of Health met on September 10th. As far as the Health Commissioner's Report, as of September 10th, Springdale has had 231 cases of COVID-19. We've had five deaths. Springdale Health Department has been very, very engaged in COVID-19. A couple of things that they are doing is they continue to watch and conduct that facemask distribution to healthcare businesses, community partners are following the guidelines to the State. They're engaged in extensive efforts to inform and advise local schools about COVID-19. They continue to work with the community partners to reduce COVID-19 transmission. COVID-19 testing continues across the State of Ohio through the Ohio National Guard. Springdale Health Department also continues to release information through social media and on our Springdale website. We have a grant that was given to us for contact tracing for \$37,000. Then, there is a grant for \$9,700 and then we're looking at an additional funding of \$21,000 which comes out to about \$80,000 and, originally that money was supposed to be spent by the end of this year, but they have extended it into early 2021. With that money when we were questioning the Commissioner at the meeting, they're going to use some of that money not only for resources and things to fight COVID-19, but also to maybe hire another person because there's a lot of work involved in tracing people that have contracted the disease and so they're looking at hiring some part-time people and they'll use that money for payment. The Medicaid Administrative Claiming, Springdale Health Department received \$8,500 and that was for the June 2020 time study. The annual health fair, due to COVID-related concerns, the Springdale Health Department plans to hold a drive-thru influenza clinic in place of the annual health fair in partnership with Walgreens. The Springdale Health Department will provide Springdale employees and their families with an opportunity to schedule an appointment with the Health Department to obtain their first flu shots. The Mosquito Grant, if you remember, we were given that. It's \$20,000 and that was granted to us in 2019. They have extended that use through the end of this year. The Springdale Health Department is using some of those funds for educational things for mosquitos, ticks, and COVID-19 information. And, also, Mosquito Joe is providing monthly

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Mayor Webster (continued): attendance. Now, I think several factors entered into that. I think that COVID-19 certainly had a big bearing on that. A lot of the adjoining communities did not even open their pools, so we had several people coming from, not with memberships, but one-day passes to come here to swim. So, that drove up the numbers. But, I think the biggest thing we did is that we, and here again, when I was out campaigning last year, I picked this up from several people that we needed to extend the hours, number one at the pool. We weren't keeping it open long enough, especially on Saturdays. We needed to standardize the hours. And, we needed to do something with the concession operations. So, what we did, I asked Mr. Jones and the Recreation Staff to take a look at the surrounding communities and so what they came back with was what I had recommended they do to start with, but anyway, we standardized the hours, every day, seven days a week, and opened at noon; closed at 8:00 p.m. Seven days a week so there was no one sitting around wondering, "Is the pool open or is it not open?" The other thing we did, now, the last eight or ten years, the swim team, their volunteers operated the concession stand and we appreciated them doing that. We had to pare back our staff back in 2009, and 2010, and they volunteered to step up and do that. And they did a decent job of it, but, here again, they were manned by volunteers, and we decided we could do a much better job by staffing that with people and bringing that operation back in house. I got a lot of compliments from people that they could rely on the concession stand to be open for the entire time that the pool was open. So, just to give you the numbers there, we took in, goods sold, \$11,282. Normally, well, we don't have anything to compare that to. It's been ten years since we operated the concession stand. But, the cost of goods sold was \$5,650 and the revenues was \$11,282. So, we generated some money to help offset the personnel cost. But, still, I think the benefit for the community was priceless. Everybody enjoyed that. So, needless to say, we certainly will continue with that going forward. A huge success this year. The other thing I'd like to address, for many, many years, 50 years probably, we've had a gentleman's agreement on the hiring of elected officials' relatives. We've never had to journalize that. It's always been a gentleman's agreement. Well, we have run into a situation where we now need to put that into a formal policy. And, I have, as of this date, signed a policy that amends our Policy Number 807, hiring of relatives, and the first item says, "No person shall be employed by the City who is an immediate family member of elected City officials." This is consistent with what's been done for the last 40 some years. I know that my daughter couldn't work here, I know Mrs. McNear's sons couldn't, Mr. Ramirez, Mrs. Emerson, on, and on, and on. So, I think that all of us have abided by that. And, so since we did not have it journalized, it fell through the cracks. We had some people working there that were relatives, and so, this policy takes effect January 1, 2021. But, I signed it today, so other than that, I can read the whole policy, but the only change that we made to it was inserted in Item A "No person shall be employed with the City who is an immediate family member of an elected official" and we go on to Section F by identifying who a family member is, and it is defined as, "parents, children, including step and foster, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, siblings, spouse, grandparents, grandchildren, and legal guardian, or other person who stands in the place of a parent." So, anyway, that policy is now into effect. One quick note, we did have an SOS meeting today. We kicked off our Christmas program. I know it's only September, and you get tired of hearing me talk about this, but it's something near and dear to my heart. We do a great job with it for the underprivileged children of this community, and so I never get tired of talking about it. But, anyway, we are always looking for donor families that want to get involved with either adopting a family, making a cash contribution, or wants to volunteer their help. We'll take food donations. Any way possible, if you want to help and get involved with the program, please give us a call at 346-5725, this young lady down here will be more than happy to get you signed up. That concludes my report. Thank you Mr. President.

Mr. Ramirez: Mayor, with the increase of the number of participants at the pool, do we have any COVID-related cases with the pool?

Mayor Webster: As a result of the pool operation?

Mr. Ramirez: Yes.

Mayor Webster: No, none.

Mr. Ramirez: None. Great, thank you.

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Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Mayor, with regard to the new policy, is there any aspect, I don't know if there's anybody who's working currently that falls into that category, but are those people grandfathered in or, I didn't know if that was something that was looked at, if that's an issue right now or not.

Mayor Webster: No, Mr. Hawkins, what we do, at the end of each year, every part-time employee at the pool and Public Works, or wherever, they're actually terminated. So, we start from scratch at the beginning of the next year. So, no, there's no grandfathering extended for the people that were terminated.

Mr. Hawkins: And then, along those lines, is there something on the books, state wise, regarding nepotism or anything like that? I felt like there was something that I've seen in terms of County.

Mayor Webster: I think there is. We had Mr. Braun do some research on that this spring, and there are some regulations there and I think he looked at that when he drafted this policy. So, I think we incorporated everything, not everything, but everything in our policy is certainly consistent with the State law. Is that an exaggeration Mr. Braun?

Mr. Braun: I would say the policy that you've proposed is actually more restrictive than State law. State law had certain parameters, but the policy that you're putting in place extends that to elected officials, and other people.

Mr. Hawkins: I guess that's what I was trying to make sure we weren't running afoul of the State law previously.

Mr. Braun: We're not. I can assure you that we, without identifying some specific individuals, we've had times where various family members or people that are under the same roof of elected officials, we've dealt with it. I'll put it that way. And, we've complied with the Ohio Ethics Laws. The policy the Mayor is putting in place is slightly more restrictive and it makes it now crystal clear that, "Here's the parameters. You can/can't work for the City", and it's a policy. We're always subject to the rules of the Ohio Ethics Commission and I can assure you the individuals I've dealt with, at times, were difficult, but we always comply.

Mr. Anderson: One additional question on the policy change you're describing. Does that elected officials' family extend to committees, and commissions, or is it just with Administrative positions?

Mayor Webster: No, it just employment positions. Not board or commissions necessarily.

Mr. Anderson: Even those are paid positions in some cases that report to the City. Those are different. Those aren't covered by that policy?

Mr. Jones: It's not in that policy that's been provided.

Mayor Webster: Give us an example, Mr. Anderson of what you're referring to.

Mr. Anderson: So, we've got a number of commissions; Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Charter Revision Committee. All these committees and commissions. Does the policy that you put in place prevent family members of elected officials from serving on other boards?

Mayor Webster: This is for employees. This would not affect Boards or Commissions.

Mr. Anderson: Thank you.

Mrs. Emerson: One quick question. With all the uptick of usage of the pool and stuff this past year and the year before. Have we looked into any pool improvements? I know there was a discussion a while ago about changing the pool, or improving the pool, that kind of thing. Have we talked about that?

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Mayor Webster: Yes, we've looked into it, but, unfortunately we're dealing with a structure that was built in 1972, I think we opened the pool. We're to the point with the pool, which we have to be careful when we drain it in the fall. We can't even pressure wash it because the frail condition of the pool. So, I don't think we're going to be making any enhancements to that and I think that's one of the things I'm looking forward to as part of this comprehensive plan is (to find out) what does the community want to have going forward as far as a pool and some of the amenities that we see other communities have around their pool. This is one thing that Mr. Jones, when he and his group made the tour of surrounding communities, some of the great things that people have associated with their pool. You've got picnic areas, you've got splash pads, which we've talked about several times, but I think we're in a unique position here where we've got an athletic field right behind the pool, which, we can certainly expand that area because the athletic field is not being used and I don't see it being used in the future. We've got six fields down there and we could probably get by with two. So, we've got plenty of room to expand that pool area. I think we're certainly going to be looking at that, assuming that the community will support that.

Clerk of Council/Finance Director

Mrs. McNear: The General Fund Update through August 31 for receipts based on a net receipt budget of \$22.359 million dollars. We have received \$15.422 million, which is 69%. The five general fund receipts sources are Earnings Tax, Real Estate Taxes, Paramedic Services, Local Government Funds, and Mayor's Court for a total of \$14.406 million dollars, which is 93% of the revenue. General Fund Expenditures through August 31st, based on a Net Budget of \$20.172 million dollars. We have spent \$12.965 million dollars, which is 62% of the budget. The General Fund ending balance as of August 31st is \$3.942 million dollars. That concludes my report. Thank you.

Administrator's Report

Mr. Jones: Thank you Mr. President. I'll be very brief and then I'll turn it over to Mr. Uhl. I was going to make a presentation pertaining to COVID-19 and some of the things that I got from the Health Commissioner, but I've got to tell you, Councilwoman Emerson did a better job than what I would have done. Your report was very detailed. Thank you.

Mrs. Emerson: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: Very briefly, just the Census update. Nationally, we're at 65.9%, in Ohio, 69.9%, and Hamilton County 67.3%. In Springdale, 70.6%. We're doing pretty well so far overall and hope that continues. Just want to remind folks and everybody that works in government knows this, that federal funding that is out there and circulates its way down to the State, and ultimately to communities such as Springdale is tied to census responses, so, the greater the response, the better the opportunities for us because they base a lot of that stuff on the population. You don't respond to the census, they don't know that you're in Springdale. Highly encourage folks to please respond to your census and it will highly benefit everybody involved. With that, I'll turn it over to Mr. Uhl.

Mr. Uhl: Just a quick update. There's an ordinance before you this evening for a supplemental appropriation. I just wanted to kind of give you a quick background. There's a second round of funding that came from the federal government through House Bill 481 under the CARES Act umbrella for the Coronavirus Relief Fund. We received a second phase funding, \$118,000 and some change, so that's before you this evening. It has the same restrictions as the first round of funding as well. I am happy to report that we have started to take delivery of some of the items that we previously discussed several weeks ago and are beginning to get those items out into the field and implemented. One of those being the hands-free device for compressions. The Fire Department was trained and it is out in the field now.

President Vanover: Is that it?

Mr. Uhl: Yes.

President Vanover: Thank you sir.

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Ordinance No. 30-2020

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK OF COUNCIL/FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MIDDLETOWN FORD FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO 2020 FORD F-350 4X4 PICKUP TRUCKS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 30-2020; Mrs. Emerson seconded.

Ordinance No. 30-2020 passes with seven affirmative votes.

Ordinance No. 31-2020

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK OF COUNCIL/FINANCE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH MCBRIDE DALE CLARION FOR THE PREPARATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Mrs. Ghantous made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 31-2020; Mrs. Emerson seconded.

Ordinance No. 31-2020 passes with seven affirmative votes.

Old Business

Mrs. Emerson: I just had a question. I don't know if this is where it goes or not. I've had several residents question me about the Home 2 hotel. Where are we at in finishing that or what's going on with that project?

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Home 2 Suites?

Mr. Jones: Mr. President, we have our Building Official here and I'm sure Carl (Lamping) would be more than happy to discuss that.

Mr. Lamping: Good evening. The construction is moving along. Inside they're working, we're getting inspections. Their timetable is not part of our approval process. I'm still expecting it to be completed before the end of the year. With a lot of luck.

Mrs. Emerson: Thank you. It just seems like it's running very, very slow.

Mr. Lamping: I understand it was that way during the review and approval process as well. They came to us as recently as last week with a major, what I would consider a major change in how they want to put together the elevator shaft. We can't approve that, so, I think they're just meandering a little bit.

Mrs. Emerson: Okay. Thank you.

New Business

President Vanover: Council, I've got a letter resulting from Planning Commission and it's a recommendation for approval of the Glenmary Home Mission solar project. This was before Council on September 8th, or before Planning Commission, I'm sorry on September 8th, and received a favorable response and, thus it's forwarded to Council. Somewhere along the way, the letter and the request coming to Council for a Public Hearing scheduling fell through the cracks, by the wayside, whatever, and so we need to get them back on track. I would like, I guess the Administration that we schedule a public hearing for our first meeting in October, and we can take it from there. I know that's not on Mr. Hawkins' report, so that's why I went ahead and brought it up here.

Mayor Webster: Is that going to give us enough time for the advertising and so forth to have that for the October 6th (meeting)?

President Vanover: Well, then it'd have to be for the second meeting in October.

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Mr. Jones: Mr. President, Mr. Braun said he will look it up to make sure where we're at with that notice and how much we'd have to give.

Mr. Braun: I'll have an answer before the end of the meeting.

President Vanover: Okay. Alright.

Mr. Jones: So we will either do it the first or the second (meeting) based on what Mr. Braun discovers.

President Vanover: Okay. That's fine.

Meetings and Announcements

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Planning Commission will meet in these chambers on Tuesday, October 13th at 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Emerson: The Board of Health will meet October 8th at 7:00 in these chambers.

Mrs. Ghantous: Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Tuesday, the 22nd at 7:00 in the chambers here.

Communications from the Audience

Mr. Kuchta: Mr. President, with your permission, I'd like to introduce Mr. Steve Dragon with Vandercar Holdings and he's asked to be able to project something up on the screen while he addresses the Council.

Mr. Vollmer: Good evening. First of all, I'm Chris Vollmer, I'm with CBRE, a commercial real estate firm here in Cincinnati and I'm an office broker. I specialize in the office market sales/leasing and what you see on the screen here is a pretty detailed presentation that Steve Dragon with Vandercar Holdings is going to present. I'm representing Vandercar in the potential purchase of these and then the repurposing of the buildings. So, I thought, maybe what we could do, and what might be helpful for Council is just to give just a real, I'll call it "high level" overview of the office market. There's certainly a lot going on right now with COVID. So, by the way, I'm going to get through this quickly, but, if you have any questions, by all means ask. So, as you can imagine with COVID, the past several months have been extremely slow in the commercial real estate market. I would tell you it feels like the trends we're seeing is employers are trying to figure out, number one, re-entry, and that is, hopefully, for some folks, at least, over the next month, several months, we'll have re-entry plans and procedures underway. And then, more importantly, where is all this headed, and what does it mean in the future? We all hear and read a lot of articles and opinions on that. Early on, I would get several a day. So, our company works with a number of the Fortune 500, and we've had a pretty unique opportunity to reach out and really, at a high suite level from real estate directors and executives hear first-hand what these employers are seeing and what they expect. Their view is that office is not dead, but it is certainly changing. To be specific on that, we think that a lot of employers are going to embrace and employ more flexible workplace strategies. So, i.e. and that mainly that would be work from home and we've read a lot about that. There was a really interesting article that's timely for this in the paper today about Fifth Third. I don't know if anybody has seen that yet, but Fifth Third is going to be vacating about 200,000 square feet of office space downtown in the 580 Walnut building. Their CEO, Carmichael, if I'm pronouncing that correctly, was quoted as saying, "Their intent is to reduce their office footprint, company-wide by 20%". So, we see that trend continuing. I think that's a perfect real-time example of where we're at and where we're headed. So, it's not dead, it's changing. You're going to probably see companies do more with less, and what does all that mean for us in the local market? We think that there's going to be some big changes coming, and, quite honestly, some rough times ahead. Ultimately, like any recession and recovery, it will normalize, but, this area, Tri County, West Chester, the past five years in a very strong market, the vacancy rates have been pretty decent. Call it 15% or so. The biggest change I think we're going to see here in Springdale's backyard, if you will, is at Union Center Boulevard, there's a number of red brick office buildings, you

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Mr. Vollmer (continued): probably drive by all the time. Those historically have been 90%+ occupied. Very well occupied. We think that a couple of major employers are going to put a lot of space on the market for sub-lease. And, in addition, not renew leases in those buildings. So, I think the question is, again, what does all that mean? I think that will probably turn that vacancy rate into double; 15%-30%. Obviously, that's not a good thing. That's a big number. It's going to drive competition. So, the crux and the theme of tonight, and Steve, is we feel like we have a really creative strategic idea that we're seeing in other first tier markets of how to repurpose these buildings, but there's going to be winners and losers, in our opinion coming out of COVID. This strategy, you'll hear more about, we think is a win-win that would bring the labor into the backyard of office buildings. It would effectively repurpose two of the most obsolete office buildings that have been vacant for many years now; too long. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Steve. I covered a lot of ground there. Are there any questions just on the office market or any questions just on the office market or any of the numbers that I spoke to? If not, I'll let Steve jump in here. Thank you all for your time.

President Vanover: While they're getting ready, Council, this has only been perused concept-wise at the Planning Commission level. There has been no action from Planning. This is atypical procedure they requested. regardless, we're here and so I would say I would garner our comments to the thought process that Planning hasn't seen it, hasn't dealt with it, and what we say may not be purposeful at all, but, give them a chance to make the sales pitch. But, again, Planning hasn't seen this. Well, they've seen it, they haven't put their stamp on it yet, so, there's really for us nothing actionable to consider.

Mrs. Emerson: So, was this presented at Planning (Commission)?

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Of course, I'm going to refer to Mr. Ramirez as well. We did see this as a conceptual office building redevelopment. Again, they had asked for input from us on if we felt like this was something that was a good idea for that space, or what we felt, in general. They stated, "These are all plans we're thinking of. We haven't nailed down anything". So, what they were giving was complete conceptual, and what we were giving them was complete conceptual back.

Mrs. Emerson: I just didn't want to get in the same situation we had several Council meetings later where we're completely going out of order how this is supposed to go. Thank you.

Mr. Dragon: Thank you. I appreciate the conversation there. My name is Steve Dragon. I'm with Vandercar. We are here informally tonight as we were last week at Planning Commission, and you're absolutely right, we understand that nothing here is gospel, or in any legislative. We're here just, since it's kind of an unusual and a unique concept, we wanted to present it, gauge the temperature of the community. It's a pretty significant change in use from the current use, and we're in the process of trying to make a "go/no go" decision on whether to move forward with this. This is important to us to know if this is something that the community may be receptive to if done properly. So, we're here to show it to you informally, conceptually, not as part of the formal zoning process in hopes of getting your feedback as far as your comfortable giving it. If this is generally something that the City would be open to. With that, let me move forward. I don't want to take up too much of your time this evening. I assume most of you are probably generally familiar with the location of the site. This is 134 and 144 Merchant Street. It's to the south of Tri County Mall, west of (Route) 747. It's located in sort of a business district of the City. Basically, a suburban office park kind of an environment. The specific site itself is 11 acres in size. There are two virtually identical, not quite, but very similar buildings. Each three stories in height, and about 90,000 square feet of space each. As Chris (Vollmer) said, these have been vacant for several years, and, with the current market conditions looking forward, we don't think there's going to be much opportunity to see the re-tenanted any time in the foreseeable future. So, with that in mind, we have a proposal to redevelop the property that we think, we're pretty excited about. We hope that the City will look favorably on it too. These are the type of suburban office product buildings that have come generally under a lot of pressure over the last several years with employers looking to locate in more dense, walkable, mixed use environments, primarily with the idea that those are where the kind of young professional talent wants to locate. The employees that these employers want, want to be. So, that's been the draw. Many of these buildings

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Mr. Dragon (continued): have been left behind. We think we have a proposal here that can kind of help the City address that issue, not only for this site, but from some of their other office product in the area. In a nutshell, what we're looking to do is take the two office buildings, basically, completely do an interior demolition entirely and adapt the buildings for residential apartment use. Then, take the surrounding asphalt parking lots and redevelop those as a resident townhome neighborhood in amongst the apartment buildings. This conceptual site plan here contemplates a total of 144 apartments; 72 in each building, and 97 townhomes. The townhomes would be three story buildings. Each with a two car garage; alley loaded from the rear. That allows us to move the driveways out of the front of the buildings, push the front porches towards the sidewalks, keep the cars in the back, and make a much more pedestrian-friendly walkable environment in the streetscape. The townhome buildings are clustered in pods of 20 or 30; each with close proximity to community greenspaces that are kind of scattered throughout the development. Again, to promote walkability and to give a pleasant outdoor environment for any of the residents that are living in that area along with the apartment residents that are there as well. We think both of these products, the apartments and the townhomes will be very desirable to the employment base that's in the area, and we think it's frankly a modern housing product that Springdale lacks currently. So, we think it kind of serves two important purposes for the City. One, it provides that kind of housing option that these employees want to live in close proximity to the other area offices that are right here. And, it puts this vacant and deteriorating property back into productive use. This just kind of gives you a better feel for how that lays out the existing features that are there. Again, sort of replacing a lot of that parking with the townhome community. I just wanted to share a few more images with you, then would welcome any input or questions you might have. Just to give a sense of how this might fit in to the character of the existing neighborhood, this is a relatively current picture. As you can see, it's a very commercial area. A lot of office buildings, some commercial buildings, retail buildings, additionally. This is a basic overlay of how that concept would fit itself into that scene. We think it can be done to make it very comfortable and compatible with the surrounding office uses and commercial uses. We think it can fit with the character of the neighborhood. Frankly, help knit together some of those uses that are, right now, separated by a lot of empty asphalt parking lots. And, start to move towards a little bit more and walkable environment for the neighborhood generally. This is an image of a basic concept of what that converted office to residential apartment building might look like. Essentially, as you can see here, it's just a freshening of the building, clean, kind of contemporary lines with more vertical elements integrated to kind of break up that kind of long horizontal look that the building currently has, and hopefully being able to incorporate some balcony features to bring some of the outside into some of those residential units as well along with a little bit more light. This is an image that's the inspiration for the townhome design. The townhome design has not been completed, but this is the look, generally that we will be trying to achieve. I should say, we will be working with a development partner on this for the townhome product, WP Land Company, Matt Walker would have been here tonight, except his back went out yesterday morning and he hasn't been able to get off the couch, so, he apologizes for not being able to be here. But, this is the inspiration; we think it can fit very well, not only with the converted apartment building on the site, but also with the adjacent office buildings that surround the property. This is kind of a conceptual image, a 3-D model of what the development could look like. Again, it's pretty consistent with the flat layout that I put on the screen earlier. Again, you've got the three story apartment buildings and surrounded by the three story townhomes with parking in the rear, and the green space is kind of scattered throughout the project with ample sidewalks and walkways connecting through it. Again, here's an image of the apartment building, kind of the streetscape that kind of creates the transition from the apartment to the townhome building here kind of looking between the two components. This is an image across one of those little green space areas. Again, it sort of provides a front yard area, and an outdoor space for gathering and recreation. You can walk your dog, you can throw a Frisbee, a place for people to get outdoors and be with neighbors and just enjoy the outdoor environment. This is another view across another similar kind of area. Just some common green space areas and with the townhome buildings pushed up on to the street to kind of create a really walkable pedestrian-friendly environment. With that, I will welcome any of your input, any thoughts. If you have concerns, issues, anything we should be aware of as we move forward, we'd love to hear from you.

Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup: Very quickly, I just wanted to reiterate something that we had talked about at Planning (Commission), was that all of these, you were looking at the high-end kind of things. This was not going to be low-income housing, this is going to be the high-end, more expensive housing throughout, correct?

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Mr. Dragon: Yes. It will be market-rate housing targeted towards young professionals of the kind that are already in the area that may not have an opportunity or be encourage to live in Springdale now, but this, hopefully, will keep some of them here, and encourage some others from the area to move into these apartments. We expect these to be renters by choice probably, and not because they have to be as we're seeing that demand grow in Cincinnati rapidly and across the nation has been for some time.

Mr. Hawkins: That was along the lines of what my question was. Do you have a projected rent or townhome cost range that you would anticipate this might look like?

Mr. Dragon: One of the first things we need to do, if we make a "go" decision here, and, again, we really hope to engage a full market study to identify what those target rent rates, identify the exact features we want in each one of these kind of products, whether it be the apartments or the townhomes. I would say, generally, and don't take this as gospel because we really need to dig into it, but, we're probably looking in the \$1.60 to \$1.75 per square foot range for the apartment type rent, pretty higher end of the suburban apartment market. I don't think there's anything competitive in the Springdale area right now that would compete with that. We're one of the development partners, one of the master developers at the Blue Ash Airport Redevelopment Project, the Summit Park Redevelopment. It would be probably not quite to that level, but it would be close to competing with that. It would be close to the Streets of West Chester, those kind of projects. Depending on the market, it could get up to that level though. This is a little bit of an untested product, and so, we're going to have to proceed cautiously, but that's the hope is to go for those same kinds of residents.

Mr. Hawkins: And then, last question. With regard to the buildings, obviously you've kept the two office buildings there at 134 and 144 Merchant Street. Was there any talk of razing those buildings and rebuilding something else or is that cost prohibitive?

Mr. Dragon: We think there's still a lot of value in those buildings and we think here, and we've been looking throughout the market for an opportunity like this and we really are excited about this location. We think this is really ideal; the buildings are suited, reasonably well suited to become apartments. Not all office buildings are. They are usually too deep for apartment buildings. These are a little too deep, but we think that offers some opportunities as well and the bones of the building, as far as we've examined it so far, are good, and we think they're valuable enough to reuse and we think we can put a good product in there that will hit the market where it can be successful.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you.

Mr. Ramirez: I know, I'm on Planning and we had some suggestions and I know it's way too soon to enact on some of this, but, I'd like to see some small retail in there. Maybe, whatever, it could be a coffee shop, could be a gathering for people, could be a dry cleaners. I'm just looking to make more of it small community in itself. Because, where that's located, it's not really walkable to many of the facilities, shopping, or dining, unless you want to go to O'Charley's. Just a thought.

Mr. Dragon: Yes. I think that's something we'll examine further, and see if there's an opportunity there. Thank you. I appreciate your time tonight.

President Vanover: Mr. Braun, did you get us a ruling?

Mr. Braun: Yes. We need 15 days, so we have plenty of time.

President Vanover: Okay. Alright.

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Update on legislation still in development

Mr. Hawkins: As you review your Internal Memorandum, Item Number I which was addressed with Ordinance No. 28-2020; An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement with Kelley Brothers Roofing for the Community Center Roof Replacement – Phase 1 and Declaring an Emergency. That passed with a 7-0 vote. We had Item Number II which was addressed with Ordinance No. 29-2020; An Ordinance Adopting Supplemental Appropriations/Estimated Receipts to Adjust Appropriations for Current Expenses and Other Expenditures and Adjust Estimated Receipts for the City of Springdale, Ohio During the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2020. That passed with a 7-0 vote. Item Number III which was addressed with Ordinance No. 30-2020; Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Enter Into a Contract with Middletown Ford for the Purchase of Two 2020 Ford F-350 4X4 Pickup Trucks and Declaring an Emergency. That passed with a 7-0 vote. We also had an additional agenda item Ordinance No. 31-2020; An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk of Council/Finance Director to Execute an Agreement with McBride Dale Clarion for the Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan and Declaring an Emergency. That passed with a 7-0 vote. All other matters were forthcoming.

Recap of legislative items requested for next Council meeting

Mr. Hawkins: There's a request for a Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies for 2021. There's also a request for legislation with regard to Glenmary Mission Solar Panel request with a request for a public hearing in that matter and, that would conclude all matters unless there's anything else from Council or the Administration. (There was nothing).

Adjournment

Mr. Hawkins made a motion to adjourn; Mrs. Sullivan-Wisecup seconded the motion and Council adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McNear
Clerk of Council/Finance Director

Minutes Approved:
Tom Vanover, President of Council

_____, 2020