

CITY OF NORTH CANTON, OHIO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF
FEBRUARY 6, 2023, MEETING

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Transcript of Proceedings of the North Canton City Council, taken by me, the undersigned, Laurie Maryl Jonas, a Registered Merit Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, at the North Canton Civic Center, 845 West Maple Street, North Canton, Ohio, on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

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APPEARANCES:

- Matthew Stroia, Council President, At Large
- Stephanie Werren, Council Vice President, Ward 3
- Jamie McCleaster, Ward 1
- David Metheney, Ward 2
- Daryl Revoldt, At Large
- Christina Weyrick, At Large
- Patrick A. DeOrio, Director of Administration
- Catherine A. Farina, Deputy Director of
Administration and Development
- Jim Bertovich, Deputy Director of Finance
- Stephan B. Wilder, Mayor
- Benjamin R. Young, Clerk
- Ginny Grier, Legislative Affairs Intern

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1 MR. STROIA: I'll now call to order the
2 committee of the whole meeting February 6, 2023. The
3 time is 7 p.m.

4 Ben, would you please call the roll.

5 MR. YOUNG: Member Revoldt.

6 MR. REVOLDT: Here.

7 MR. YOUNG: Member Stroia.

8 MR. STROIA: Here.

9 MR. YOUNG: Member Werren.

10 MRS. WERREN: Here.

11 MR. YOUNG: Member McCleaster.

12 MR. MCCLEASTER: Here.

13 MR. YOUNG: Member Weyrick.

14 MS. WEYRICK: Here.

15 MR. YOUNG: Member Metheney.

16 MR. METHENEY: Here.

17 MR. YOUNG: Member Orr is absent. Six
18 present.

19 MR. REVOLDT: Motion to excuse Member Orr.

20 MR. MCCLEASTER: Second.

21 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

22 ("Aye" in unison.)

23 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries.

24 Okay. Let's start off with Daryl.

25 MR. REVOLDT: You have in your packet Item

1 3a, which is a request from the administration to
2 reclassify 33 parcels scattered throughout the city
3 that are currently zoned Office Building. And if you
4 look at your -- in your packet on page 8, you will
5 notice Items A through H describe the various 33
6 parcels. Some of these will return to Main Street
7 zoning -- or will be placed in the Main Street
8 zoning. Some will be returning to a residential
9 neighborhood. Some will go to GBA. This is not --
10 let me just take a step back.

11 This reclassification is consistent with the
12 current use. And it's also consistent with what we
13 did I want to say about 18 months ago when we were
14 over in the other chamber where we took some
15 residential properties and made sure that the zoning
16 for those residential properties was correct. So
17 again, this is a technical cleanup in some respects,
18 it smooths it out a little bit. And we think it will
19 make for a more comprehensive and better understood
20 zoning ordinance.

21 Patrick, do you have anything to add on this?

22 MR. DEORIO: I would just say, you know, it's
23 been an internal process between Marty VanGundy and
24 his department and Ben Young, and to a lesser extent
25 myself, working to try to get this. It does make

1 sense. It's not a classification we're ever going to
2 use again; it's more representative of a time gone
3 by. We would use some other different classification
4 today, so let's just kind of clean it up.

5 MR. REVOLDT: Ben, do you have anything to
6 add?

7 MR. YOUNG: The -- the 33 parcels are all of
8 the office building zoning remaining in the city.

9 MR. REVOLDT: Yep.

10 MR. YOUNG: And three -- part of what started
11 this is three of the parcels were -- almost
12 coincidentally, three of the property owners came to
13 us and asked to be rezoned, and it just sort of
14 spiraled into looking at all of the office building
15 throughout the city.

16 MR. REVOLDT: Okay. Citizen issue. We'll be
17 talking about that later perhaps.

18 Council. We'll be starting down with
19 Mr. Metheney.

20 MR. METHENEY: I'm good. I like the fact
21 that the residents came to us and that's easier than
22 going back to residential.

23 MR. REVOLDT: Miss Weyrick?

24 Mr. McCleaster, you've seen this firsthand.
25 It's your property; correct?

1 MR. MCCLEASTER: Yeah, actually before I was
2 on council my property was affected by the last
3 change. So no, I went through this, it all makes
4 sense, and yeah, I think we should move forward.

5 MR. REVOLDT: Ms. Werren.

6 MRS. WERREN: Same.

7 MR. REVOLDT: Mr. Stroia.

8 MR. STROIA: Good.

9 MR. REVOLDT: Okay. I'm going to make this a
10 motion then we send this to the planning commission
11 for its review.

12 MS. WEYRICK: Second.

13 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

14 ("Aye" in unison.)

15 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries.

16 And can I have a motion and a second to
17 postpone further consideration of Item 3a until the
18 condition set by codified ordinance 1118.06 on it.

19 MR. REVOLDT: So moved.

20 MR. MCCLEASTER: Second.

21 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

22 ("Aye" in unison.)

23 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries.

24 Okay. Moving on to Street and Alley. This
25 is mine. This is our annual agreement to participate

1 in ODOT's purchasing program for rock salt. We do
2 this every year. We're doing it earlier because they
3 usually give us very little notice. This -- we pass
4 this now, then we are ready to pull the trigger at
5 any time. We've done this for years and years and
6 years. Pretty standard.

7 Patrick, do you have anything to add to this?

8 MR. DEORIO: No. I guess I would just say
9 that, you know, it's something that gets put on our
10 contract review system that we have so we kind of
11 know when things are coming. And we recognize that
12 we do get very little notice from this state agency,
13 and it seems to be a lot of that going around these
14 days of little notice. And as a result, I -- you
15 know, one time we had to, like, react very quickly
16 through council and it makes it very difficult, and
17 this typically was happening like in April. So we're
18 kind of front-loading it, like you say, to get this
19 out of the way now and when they decide to release
20 the program to us to get involved in we'll have this,
21 put it in, boom, we're done. Thank you for that.

22 MR. STROIA: Okay. Any comments? Questions?

23 MR. REVOLDT: You said, coming from Patrick,
24 I think it should be noted that one of the reasons
25 we're doing this for the next round is that we have

1 had situations in the past where we have not acted
2 timely and found ourselves shopping for salt at the
3 very highest price. And so this is a way that at
4 least will reduce some of the fiscal damage should
5 the prices spike.

6 MRS. WERREN: But I will say we've been
7 really good about it for a long time.

8 MR. REVOLDT: Yes. I'm going way back.

9 MRS. WERREN: It's -- I know since you've
10 been administration. It's a long time. We have not
11 had that issue.

12 MR. DEORIO: I think the last time we had it
13 was when Earle Wise was administrator.

14 MRS. WERREN: Yeah, I'd swear.

15 MR. DEORIO: We were buying it for an ungodly
16 amount because we were late to the party.

17 MR. STROIA: And we're going to want to put
18 this on emergency when we do, so I will move we put
19 this on the agenda.

20 MR. REVOLDT: Revoldt will second.

21 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

22 ("Aye" in unison.)

23 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries. Okay.

24 MR. REVOLDT: Before we adjourn.

25 MR. STROIA: Yes.

1 MR. REVOLDT: Is there anything else?

2 MR. STROIA: There is nothing else.

3 MR. REVOLDT: Would council indulge me for
4 just a moment or two?

5 MR. STROIA: Please.

6 MS. WEYRICK: Sure.

7 MRS. WERREN: Should we ask what first?

8 MR. REVOLDT: I want to talk to you --

9 MRS. WERREN: Can we get a topic first?

10 MR. REVOLDT: Yeah.

11 MRS. WERREN: I want to say yes or no.

12 MR. REVOLDT: Here's what I want to discuss
13 tonight. I want to discuss what I call price of
14 lying. Most of the time when lying occurs in a
15 public forum, it's off everybody's radar. But I've
16 got a couple of examples that affect the taxpayers in
17 two very different and important ways.

18 The first was the neighbor call about a year
19 ago, we had a discussion about behavior in this
20 chamber. And I suggested that it seemed to me, in my
21 opinion, using the simile "like" was like political
22 Munchausen's by proxy. Mr. Tripp filed a false
23 statement with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission.
24 Even though he attested that the facts were true in
25 his statement. The Civil Rights Commission rendered

1 an opinion, and I think it's important that I read
2 it, that says there's no evidence that Respondent --
3 the city, me -- made any derogatory comment or
4 treated the charging party in a disparaging manner
5 due to protected basis or made an assumption the
6 charging party had a disability.

7 Now, I think it's important to understand
8 that Mr. Tripp declared under penalty of perjury that
9 the facts were true. They were not. Now, it's his
10 prerogative to do that. He can file charges all day
11 long. What people need to understand is that it cost
12 the taxpayers \$1,860 to defend a bogus charge. Lied
13 under oath and the taxpayers paid for it.

14 More significant was the episode two weeks
15 ago during our discussion of the master plan.
16 Mr. Osborne, who is here with us tonight, brags about
17 his 20 years of experience. 20 years. Attends all
18 the meetings. He knew, knows now, knew then, knew
19 before the meeting that council was nowhere close to
20 rezoning 5th and 6th Street and Orchard. It was a
21 marker for some future council. It was a lie.

22 Now, what's the cost? Well, here's what it
23 is. 22 percent of the homes in that particular
24 neighborhood are already rentals. At some point,
25 somewhere below 50 percent rentals likely rot the

1 neighborhood. How so? Well, they're owned by
2 out-of-town landlords who really don't care about
3 property maintenance. The first thing to go is
4 usually landscape and then there's dogs chained in
5 the yard. Paint goes. You can drive around town.
6 You can see it. And then the second part about it is
7 not only do the landlords not invest because they
8 have no commitment to the community, and if you doubt
9 me, look at Canton. Look at Akron. You can get on
10 the auditor's website in Canton, in Stark County, and
11 you can look. Happen here? Don't know. I'll come
12 to that in a minute.

13 But the second most-challenging issue is not
14 only do we have 21 percent, so you're halfway to 50
15 already; that's not 11 or 12 homes. And I can tell
16 you by looking at the list, and I've looked at all
17 the properties, some of those that are rentals are
18 masquerading as owner occupied because there's a
19 little owner-occupied tax break that they get. I
20 found a couple of them.

21 The second issue we have is that oftentimes,
22 not exclusively, now again, I'm being general,
23 tenants display behaviors that undermine the very
24 quality of life those people who came up here cherish
25 most. How do we know this? Because we have the

1 police reports. Trespass, threats, theft, larceny
2 already shown up in our police report for that area.

3 It wasn't all that long ago that Mrs. Revoldt
4 and I bought our first house. We scrimped and we
5 saved and we got it and we were happy. And I
6 recognize that for many of the people who live up
7 there in an owner-occupied home, that home is the
8 single-largest investment that they have. Larger
9 than their 401(k), larger than their savings account.
10 That's it.

11 Now, as I look at tenants, the police
12 reports, as I look at the percentage of landlords, is
13 this a freckle? Or is it melanoma? What is it? I
14 don't know yet. But here's what I can tell you: The
15 very man who was denigrated a year ago is
16 accomplished in data analytics. And I think it's
17 important that our citizens understand that we are
18 beginning to merge all the data from rental
19 registration, property code maintenance, police, et
20 cetera. We're going to have a pretty good picture
21 eventually. The preliminary one should raise our
22 eyebrows. But let's not talk about it. Let's not
23 put it anywhere that any future council will even
24 think about it until the damage is done.

25 What's the solution? I don't know. But I do

1 know this: That if at some future point the
2 administration and the council are not attentive to
3 this issue -- and it's not only in this
4 neighborhood -- property values will go down. And
5 like melanoma, that cancer can metastasize to other
6 neighborhoods. More police calls, more complaints.
7 But let's not talk about it.

8 No. Why would we want to worry about where
9 taxpayer resources are going to be spent in the
10 future or some future council? We don't want to
11 know. So instead, we're engaged in outright assault
12 on citizens. Boy. Who said that? The plan will
13 destroy well-maintained homes. I'm going to suggest
14 it's the rental that will destroy well-maintained
15 neighborhoods. And, of course, for drama, actively
16 wipe off the map 100 homes. Well, it's actually
17 closer to 50.

18 So, what does a lie do? Those people up
19 there who worked hard for those homes were asked to
20 ignore the protection of their investment. Can I
21 calculate the number? I can't. But what I can tell
22 you is this: Is looking at home values in North
23 Canton, they go up, but I've got a news flash. They
24 also go down. And if you're in the trough, that
25 investment doesn't grow or, in fact, may diminish in

1 terms of its market value depending on who's on
2 either side of you.

3 How crazy is this. After the meeting, a man
4 called the city, said, "What are you guys going to do
5 up here?"

6 "Nothing."

7 "Good." The property owner said, "I'm going
8 to make my -- convert my owner-occupied home into a
9 rental." Think about that a second.

10 So there's one more. A friend of mine has a
11 rental property up there. He says, "I hate rental
12 registration. It's a rental."

13 "Why is that?"

14 "You guys are coming into my place."

15 But I'm glad, because I went in. Smoke
16 detectors were beeping. The tenants removed all the
17 smoke detectors rather than put batteries in them.
18 Now, where those houses are stacked one on one, big
19 fire, again, behaviors that aren't conducive to a
20 well-ordered and well-run neighborhood.

21 Here's the problem again. If you lie about
22 this stuff, it's the homeowner who pays the price.
23 It's not going to be anybody on this council. It's
24 the homeowner. And I would submit to you that I find
25 that conduct offensive and, in fact, I even struggle

1 for an appropriate adjective. Anybody who's been
2 around this room knows that in the last 24 months we
3 have undergone one fairly decent rezone up on North
4 Market Avenue. And anybody who is paying attention
5 knows that the council, the administration, and the
6 developer spent an inordinate amount of time ensuring
7 that the residents affected were happy and pleased.
8 And for an individual to claim that the city is going
9 to cause the extinction of a neighborhood is
10 disgusting. There is no defense for lying like that.
11 None.

12 I'm done.

13 MR. STROIA: Okay. Anyone else want to
14 comment?

15 I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

16 MR. REVOLDT: So moved.

17 MR. MCCLEASTER: Second.

18 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

19 ("Aye" in unison.)

20 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries.
21 adjourned.

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23 (Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.)

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Attest:



Benjamin R. Young
Clerk of Council



Matthew Stroia
City Council President

