

CITY OF NORTH CANTON, OHIO
CITY COUNCIL MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF
MAY 9, 2022, 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, May 9, 2022, 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
- John Orr, Ward 4
- Daryl Revoldt, At Large
- Christina Weyrick, At Large
- Patrick A. DeOrio, Director of Administration
- Jina E. Alaback, Director of Finance
- Benjamin R. Young, Clerk of Council

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1 MR. STROIA: I'll now call to order the city
2 council meeting of May 9, 2022. The time is 7 p.m.
3 Opening prayer. Jamie.

4 MR. MCCLEASTER: All right, thank you.
5 All right. Let us pray.

6 Dear Lord, I pray that you guide us always to
7 satisfy the needs that need to be met during this
8 meeting. Strengthen us as we make tough decisions.
9 I pray that we will be like a well-watered garden,
10 like a spring whose waters never fail. I pray that
11 we be fruitful. Father, please guide us so that this
12 meeting can be effective. Let us be effective and
13 decisive. Amen.

14 (The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

15 MR. STROIA: Ben, would you please call the
16 roll.

17 MR. YOUNG: Member McCleaster.

18 MR. MCCLEASTER: Here.

19 MR. YOUNG: Member Weyrick.

20 MS. WEYRICK: Here.

21 MR. YOUNG: Member Werren.

22 MRS. WERREN: Here.

23 MR. YOUNG: Member Stroia.

24 MR. STROIA: Here.

25 MR. YOUNG: Member Revoldt.

1 MR. REVOLDT: Here.

2 MR. YOUNG: Member Metheney.

3 MR. METHENEY: Here.

4 MR. YOUNG: Member Orr.

5 MR. ORR: Here.

6 MR. YOUNG: Seven present.

7 MR. STROIA: Can I have a motion and a second
8 to approve as presented the minutes from April 11,
9 2022, and April 18, 2022, as well as the 2023 revenue
10 projections as required by Section 3.03 of the
11 charter.

12 MR. REVOLDT: Revoldt moves.

13 MR. MCCLEASTER: Second.

14 MR. STROIA: All in favor?

15 ("Aye" in unison.)

16 MR. STROIA: Opposed? Motion carries.

17 Okay. At this time, members of the public
18 wishing to address council may do so. Each speaker
19 will be granted five minutes. As a reminder, the
20 rules are posted on the screen to the audience's
21 right.

22 MR. TRIPP: Larry Tripp. 1127 East Maple,
23 North Canton, Ohio.

24 My remarks tonight cover my views on the last
25 two meetings. I speak to you tonight as adults. Am

1 I wrong? I didn't think so. But then why was there
2 even a discussion that further review may be needed
3 to define an acceptable absence. There are, in my
4 opinion, no real reason for an excuse other than
5 sick, family emergencies, career position and
6 responsibilities, and one that we never like to speak
7 of, death a city government employee or family
8 members.

9 Remarks last week in addressing the charter
10 review committee recommendation on council member
11 absenteeism created, in my opinion, what you folks
12 would call a crisis situation initiated by council
13 members themselves. This should be addressed
14 immediately by council president, along with council
15 personnel chairperson, publicly. It should be known
16 by North Canton city the views and actions of some
17 council members are not the views of North Canton
18 city council and city government.

19 In the business world, picture yourself as
20 interviewing a potential new employee. Explanations
21 have been made on job requirements, the knowledge
22 needed, benefits and salary. You ask the individual
23 being interviewed, What are your concerns about this
24 position and your expectations? Among others, you
25 hear the question, Do you have an absence policy?

1 Hearing that, you now realize potentially having an
2 individual thinking to beat the system. That's
3 exactly what I heard last Monday.

4 To further solidify my remarks, I would
5 strongly ask that all council members read and review
6 the minutes of the September 9, 2019, meeting and my
7 address to council that evening along with council
8 member responses.

9 It appears once again North Canton personnel
10 showed some of its colors a couple weeks ago. Thank
11 the public speakers for their comments but then imply
12 or say we will do it my way. In my opinion, the
13 comments directed to the Albrechts, Acme top
14 management, were demeaning, somewhat crude and untrue
15 as delivered by North Canton government personnel and
16 a North Canton citizen to support -- to suggest to
17 leaders of a firm doing business in North Canton for
18 over 40 years against fair competition that they will
19 have to change their business picture and become more
20 innovative against unfair competition was a low blow.

21 As I stand here today, the idea of a business
22 campus was great. However, you lost it. You lost
23 it. And in spite of COVID, Diebold moved its
24 headquarters to Hudson. Thus, as we now know it, the
25 former Kmart property is supposedly becoming a strip

1 retail mega somewhat designed with unfair advantages
2 given by the city to drive out local business. That
3 doesn't appear to be too innovative to me.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. STROIA: Dominic.

6 MR. FONTE: Dominic Fonte. Is that coming
7 through? 965 Fair Oaks Avenue, Southwest.

8 So I'm here just to chat a minute about the
9 rental registration. As most of you know by now, we
10 talk -- I'm not for it, and it's not that it's
11 necessarily a bad thing, it's just that I'm trying to
12 understand like with the demographics, the video, all
13 the stuff I sent you guys so that you could get
14 educated about what the market was doing, it's not
15 really a big issue unless you feel that you need to
16 have a better handle on who lives in the city; right?

17 So we have, you know, maybe 66 percent
18 homeowners and a good balance of rentals. Now, there
19 are a few bad eggs out there. Maybe some don't even
20 file their taxes. Possibly some of the tenants
21 don't. Why not just send a letter to all the
22 residents and saying that, you know, we're
23 entertaining rental registration again, and the
24 reason why is because there's some bad eggs out there
25 that aren't filing their taxes and/or whatever and we

1 want to make sure that everybody's paying their fair
2 share; right? You know, because if not, then as
3 what's happening as we head into this, I mean, it's
4 not like I have one rental so it's 150 bucks, a
5 little inconvenience so it's not the end of the
6 world, but we're working one to eight family. You
7 have many units where they're multi-units where
8 they're really running it like a business. Most of
9 the one to eight are small people that are mom and
10 pops, and more than likely they're filing their taxes
11 most of the time because that's how you get the
12 benefit of depreciation and you're earning the income
13 and the write-off; right?

14 So if not, if you know anything about real
15 estate, it's not like a get rich quick scheme, it's
16 like a slow methodical process over the course of
17 many, many years unless you have multiple, you know,
18 units. Then it's like a business. Marian and I were
19 just chatting a minute ago. She didn't quite get
20 that. She was like, you know, you're making a penny,
21 you need to pay your fair share. Well, I do pay my
22 fair share.

23 But I'm just saying, as we head into this
24 market, and if you're watching anything about the
25 economics, the 35 years I've been doing real estate I

1 remember the high interest rates like 23 percent, I
2 remember the Gulf War, I remember 9/11, I remember
3 2008 to 2013 is where we had an issue with rentals
4 because people bought at the top of the market,
5 lower/no down payments and they had a financial
6 situation where they were upside down then they
7 couldn't bring 30K to closing so they turned them
8 into rentals. Bad move. It devastated Canton city.
9 They have 47 percent of homeowners where we have
10 66 percent of homeowners. So when you look at the
11 balance, it's not really a problem.

12 So if you feel the problem is safety, I've
13 been in most of the houses, many houses in North
14 Canton, and the majority of them were built before
15 '79; correct? So that means lead paint and asbestos
16 and all these other things that you're talking about
17 affect everybody. So this is a whole citywide thing.
18 So Kurt Schuring said they're working on some monies
19 to help people to renovate, and, as you know, many of
20 you, you know, there's no inventory. So there's like
21 five people for every house. This is the wrong time
22 to do it. And on top of the wrong time to do it,
23 it's because economically, watch the stock market
24 since April 1. Look at what's happening
25 economically.

1 Just to give you an example, folks,
2 December 31, just four months ago, the interest rates
3 were 3.09. Do you know what they are now? 5 1/4 to
4 6 percent and they're going to push it much higher.
5 So the worry I have, because remember, I was sitting
6 where you are, too. And if it's real and it's legit,
7 believe me I'm all for it, but I know too much about
8 this subject.

9 Now, here's the thing. The unknown. When
10 COVID came, we were looking at office jobs. We were
11 looking at good jobs for Kmart like everybody says.
12 Then COVID came. Guess what happened? Changed the
13 whole dynamic, didn't it. The paradigm shift came
14 and now people worked from home. They're
15 reevaluating office space. So as a city with our
16 little 6-mile space, we got to worry about that. So
17 as we're doing the land banking for the right
18 reasons, the worry I have is that focus of getting a
19 good mix of businesses in here to accentuate what
20 we're all about, the fabric we have.

21 And far as the rentals go, you know, you have
22 one to eight. Think about this. Christina, do you
23 rent?

24 MS. WEYRICK: Do I rent currently?

25 MR. FONTE: Yeah.

1 MS. WEYRICK: No.

2 MR. FONTE: Have you ever rented, anybody up
3 there? You might do it transitionally. You might do
4 it going through a divorce, maybe a sickness, a
5 financial hardship. And so sometimes when this
6 happens, you know, you don't want to have more
7 inconvenience, more hassle unless it's a big issue.
8 Canton city is a big issue. They had a devastating
9 market after the debacle happened. Were covered very
10 quickly. When I sent you that video last week, five
11 homes on the market, one rental property on the
12 market, 15 within 12 months sold, right. Over a
13 hundred percent of value. And on the housing, you
14 had 29 pending sales, five on the market, 233 closed
15 transactions.

16 So in closing, God bless all of you. Pat, I
17 love you over there. Looking forward to seeing you
18 at the park.

19 MR. STROIA: Thank you, Dom.

20 MR. FONTE: Thank you.

21 MR. STROIA: Anyone else want to go address
22 the public?

23 MS. ATCHISON: Hello, everyone. My name is
24 Kayla Atchison. I'm the government affairs director
25 for Stark Trumbull Area Realtors. We are the board

1 of realtors --

2 MR. STROIA: Can you state your address for
3 the Record, please.

4 MS. ATCHISON: Okay. Our address is 7110
5 Whipple Avenue, Northwest, Suite B, North Canton,
6 Ohio 44720.

7 MR. STROIA: Thank you.

8 MS. ATCHISON: We are the board of realtors
9 of record that represent over 1,400 realtor members
10 within Stark, Trumbull, and Carroll County. So we
11 are the voice of real estate within the region. It
12 is our job as a regional entity of Ohio Realtors and
13 National Association of Realtors to play an important
14 role in stimulating our local economy and conversing
15 with community leaders like yourself to promote
16 community investment within our region.

17 To say I speak as an interested party to
18 Ordinance 43-2022, an ordinance establishing Chapter
19 703, Registration of Rental Units within the City of
20 North Canton. The Stark-Trumbull Area Realtors is
21 interested in protecting private property rights and
22 improving real estate within the Stark County region,
23 including North Canton.

24 We appreciate the opportunity to address
25 council today to express our concerns regarding this

1 proposed legislation and to engage in a productive
2 dialogue regarding how we can meet the needs of
3 current and future homeowners within North Canton.
4 STAR believes in a housing market that consists of
5 safe, diverse, and affordable homes. We believe that
6 in order to maintain a healthy market, local
7 governments like yourself must play a role.
8 Specifically, STAR believes in your role as in
9 instituting exterior-only inspections. And we have
10 asked in a previous administration that it be
11 maintained to exterior-only inspections.

12 By creating a rental registration, that would
13 include tenant information and frequent inspections.
14 And STAR understands that you're doing this in order
15 to maintain a high standard of living within
16 residential dwellings within the city of North
17 Canton, but is concerned about the inconsistent
18 standards that this ordinance sets for mom-and-pop
19 investors, and the potential constitutionality
20 concerns regarding government-mandated registry.

21 In fact, realtor associations across the USA
22 have found that rental licensing and inspection
23 ordinances are discriminatory in practice and they
24 have been ruled unconstitutional for infringing on
25 private property rights and violating other privacy

1 rights of tenants. Recently, the Southern District
2 of Ohio ruled that the City of Portsmouth rental
3 registration was unconstitutional and in violation of
4 the Fourth Amendment.

5 In addition to constitutional concerns about
6 rental registrations, we also believe that this
7 creates an unfair market for mom-and-pop investors as
8 this specific ordinance is only relating to
9 individuals who own less than eight properties while
10 large corporations, including out-of-state and
11 foreign investors, which we have seen an influx in
12 recently, they are not required to register their
13 rentals, thus creating an unfair market that stifles
14 the entrepreneurial spirit and the community spirit
15 within North Canton.

16 There are many reasons why individuals choose
17 to reside within the city of North Canton. Whether
18 that be a single parent seeking good schools for
19 their children, recent college graduates that are
20 looking to plant their roots within a community,
21 transitional workers that are meeting the growing
22 needs of Stark County as we've seen recently with the
23 new Amazon facility.

24 North Canton has a well-maintained housing
25 stock that is increasing -- increasingly desirable.