

Hiram Village
Special Council Meeting
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

June 27, 2023

The following Members of Council were present: Mrs. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill arrived at 6:03 pm, Mr. McCreight, Mr. Smith, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Szell.

The following were also present: Mayor Lou Bertrand, Fiscal Officer Susan Skrovan-DeYoung, Asst. Fire Chief Jason Groselle, Village Administrator James McGee and Assistant VA Steven Schuller.

Others present: David Sporar; Attorney representing Global Development Solutions (Couch Farm), Mr. Denny Taylor and Lucy.

1. Mayor Lou Bertrand called the special meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The purpose of this special meeting is to discuss and vote on two pieces of emergency legislation and to enter into Executive Session to discuss imminent litigation and possible enforcement actions and any other business that may properly come before Council.

The Mayor asked for a motion to approve tonight's agenda as presented. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

2. Public Comment

Mr. David Sporar, Attorney for the Couch Farm spoke about the issue on the farm with a structure that either needs to be repaired or demolished. Last Friday, they presented their occupant with a notice to vacate the premises. He has until July 31st to vacate. Then in August, they plan to bring in Habitat for Humanity to assess the structure.

Paul Spencer spoke and gave the history of what has transpired in emails and letters in 2021 and 2022! Paul felt the Commission has given them more than ample time and they have not proven to the Committee in any way, good intention of repairing the property or doing something! His recommendation is to have our legal counsel move forward with legal actions! The Mayor added the property is in terrible disrepair and basically a nuisance.

Chris McCreight asked whether there has been any response from the current tenant? David Sporar said since last Friday when he served the eviction notice, no. They have to wait for his legal time to respond or act and then they can move forward at that time.

Paul wanted to make clear, the Village of Hiram, under no circumstances, moving forward in our actions was to be interpreted as a reason for evicting your tenant! That was not our purpose. David Sporar understood. David Sporar spoke about what GDS and Denny Taylor have been doing to get help with the property. He asked that the Village humbly views their efforts; they are working to get it resolved.

The Mayor said this legislative body needs some date when this can be expected to be completed? David Sporar said July 31st for vacating, early August for having Habitat for Humanity on the property.

Chris Szell said he believes the property cannot be sub-divided. Denny Taylor said he spoke with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy; they are willing to look at a possible land split in order to sell the piece of property with the house on it. Paul thanked those in attendance who came and spoke with the Council.

3. Legislation

a. ORDINANCE 2023-12: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ACCEPT NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL (NOPEC) 2023 ENERGIZED COMMUNITY GRANT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

b. RESOLUTION 2023-13: A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO DETERMINE AND DECLARE A REASONABLE AND SAFE PRIMA-FACIE SPEED LIMIT WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. Chris Szell said this gives us the opportunity to get the study from ODOT at no cost to the Village. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to convene into Executive Session to discuss imminent litigation and possible enforcement actions at 6:33 pm was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:01 pm was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Council President Chris Szell would urge Council to take no motion to act at this time until we have Solicitor Reitz present.

A motion to empower the Village Solicitor Tom Reitz to move forward, however, ask that he hold off on filing an injunction until after the next Council meeting and we have an executive session with Tom Reitz was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. Chris Szell would like to hear Tom. Chris McCreight was not sure he understood proceeding forward without Tom. Chris Szell called for the question reminding everyone that a no vote means we will wait for Tom. Paul Spencer said we are not going to empower him to move forward until the next session of Council; which means January 1st! The result of the voice vote was 2-4 with a yes vote from Mr. Hemphill and Mr. Spencer; the motion failed.

A motion to adjourn the special meeting was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan-DeYoung