

**CITY OF MASON
COUNCIL RETREAT
JANUARY 21, 2006**

Mayor Pelfrey called the meeting to order at 7:44 a.m. Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

The following members of Council were present: Victor Kidd, Steve Osborne, Tony Bradburn, Matt Kline, Todd Wurzbacher, Tom Grossmann and Charlene Pelfrey.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION DISCUSSION

Paige Rothstein along with Bob Richardson and Chad Edwards, both from KZF, presented to Council an overview of the current status of the revitalization effort for the downtown area. This included an outline of the goals and a time frame necessary to maintain the grant awarded to the City. The issues of importance that needed Council's direction included streetscape, parking, traffic improvements, economic development and utilities. Future phases of the downtown development were discussed to point out some of the possibilities. Reports were presented on the results of the community feedback including both positive and opposing viewpoints. An energetic discussion took place among Council members where passionate views were expressed. Disappointment was expressed on the lack of marketing the downtown redevelopment area to attract private developers/investors. The time frame for the grant was identified as the catalyst for making decisions now. Council as a possible alternative considered refunding the grant. Paige presented six budget options which ranged from including the on street parking, burying the utilities, proceeding with the installation of a round about on RT 42 at Main Street to only burying the utilities in the target area. It was explained to Council by Bob Richardson that to elect to do only portions of the work now would increase the cost estimates for adding them in the future. After much discussion, and Council's recognition of the many years there existed a lack of inertia regarding downtown, it was agreed upon to proceed with option one with an estimated cost of \$5.2 million dollars. This was done with the understanding staff would begin the creation of a marketing plan to attract private developers. Council requested they be kept updated on this effort monthly or bi-monthly.

Scot Lahrmer stated with this decision they can proceed forward with the attempt to build the round about. He stated it is not possible to eminent domain any property in this area to accomplish it.

Richard Fair explained to Council the only thing accomplished this year might be burying the utilities. He said sidewalks etc. would happen next year. He also pointed out the City may lose the grant if this action is not viewed as proceeding with the project.

2006 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Jennifer Heft and Paul Stubbins with Seasingood & Mayer presented a municipal debt overview to Council. This included the various types of debt a municipality may incur and how it is viewed against the debt limitations. This was followed by a comparison of the City of Mason's financial debt per capita with other communities including Fairfield, Dublin, Lebanon and Springboro.

CAPTIAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Richard Fair explained Bethany Road on the Capital Improvement List has been pulled off due to the problems with the decision by the Southwest Warren County Transportation District. He explained they changed their mind on the project due to the opposition they heard from residents which resulted with them changing it from 5 lanes to three lanes. He said the City is currently designing the road improvement for a portion of this road from SR 741 to Mason Morrow Millgrove Road. He requested direction from Council as the City has received a grant for \$411,000 to be used on the construction portion of the job. Council discussed the various pros and cons of the design of the road and the purposed layout. Richard reported Butler County is planning on bringing 5 lanes to the City on the west side of the corporation line. Council agreed to proceed with the design and build at 5 lanes.

Kurt Seiler reported on the plans for the Mason Montgomery Road widening from RT 42 to the I & O bridge. He pointed out what properties will be affected and asked Council for direction on how to proceed.

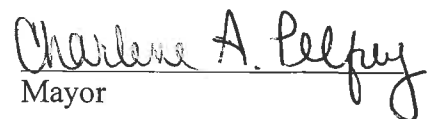
Kurt Seiler provided Council with an update on the 16 potential road improvements from Engineering and Building. Other department heads reported on the their various potential capital improvement projects. Michael Hecker reported for Parks and Recreation, Ernie Stickler reported on Public Utilities, David Riggs on Public Works, Chief Fletcher on Fire Department and Chief Ferrell on Police Department and Jennifer Heft reported on the Finance Department. Council requested a chart predicting the future debt load based on the items discussed on the project list.

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Bradburn, seconded by Councilmember Wurzbacher. VOTE: ALL YEAS

Time: 3:28 p.m.


Clerk of Council


Mayor