

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
February 22, 2021 – 6:35 p.m.

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward (Absent)
Lyvette Mosley	4 th Ward
Edwin Martell	5 th Ward
Dennis Packard	6 th Ward

Also present was City Manager Sam Sutherland and City Clerk Diana Ratliff. Solicitor John Haas and Auditor M. Trent Williams were absent.

1. **Ballot Referendum Renewable Energy** **CM-21-10**

Manager Sutherland this will move the legislation forward to Council’s agenda and if Council passed it on their agenda, it would then go on the ballot to be voted on by the public.

Councilwoman Gordon motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **Scioto County Heritage Museum Lease Agreement** **CM-21-11**

Manager Sutherland stated that Attorney John McHenry had approached him about moving forward with the lease for the museum in the old Marting’s Annex off of 5th Street. They have done work to the inside under the Memorandum of Understanding that Council authorized almost one year ago. They’ve made significant process with installing an HVAC system as well as some other things. They would like to move forward with a lease agreement. He will ask Mr. McHenry to be at the next meeting to answer any questions that Council may have.

Councilwoman Gordon motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **Boating Facility Grant Application** **CM-21-12**

Manager Sutherland said that Community Development Director Tracy Shearer has been delving into the endeavor of applying for riverfront improvement grants and she found one that if secured the project would cost approximately \$800,000 and he didn’t believe that there was any match to the grant. It would enhance the Court Street landing with two boat ramps and possibly a large boat dock facility for River Boats to dock and this was also part of the Master Plan.

Councilwoman Gordon asked if there was retooling done to the current site because she knew that walking around that area was a pain and she believed that Director Prosch had drawn up plans. Manager Sutherland stated that he thought Director Prosch had been working with Director Shearer. Mr. Sutherland said that as far as retooling, it was a tough spot because of the way it was laid out and he believed that the current facility was installed in the 1940’s. He said a lot of it was brick which wasn’t good for pulling a boat out of the water. He added that they would like to get better concrete facilities and make it where River Boats could actually dock and with two ramps it would make a very nice facility. He said the city tried to keep it cleaned up the best they could but they were fighting with a lot of uneven surfaces. Ms. Gordon stated that part of the problem that made it difficult to walk was the traffic pattern and she realized that it was subject to flooding, but she was hoping the basic lay-out would change. Mr. Sutherland felt that it should be looked at and he had witnessed vehicles trying to make a U-turn to go back toward the park, but it was something that definitely needed to be addressed. Councilman Martell asked if this would help the current boat docks and Mr. Sutherland replied that this would not be for boat clubs and it would be more of a facility where

boats could be launched with an area to park your trailer. Vice President Dunne asked about the cul-de-sac down from Alexandria Park and if there was a way that the City could rent that spot out for events? Mr. Sutherland stated that he would have to look into the logistics but he didn't foresee any problem. He said that particular area was very hard for the city crew to maintain. Mr. Dunne stated that Ironton had a tiered wooden bike trail and if someone was able to cycle along the river, getting under the Scioto River Bridge would be tough and if it were built out or an elevated wooden deck installed which would allow the city to connect from the stadium along the river and then turn and cycle to possibly Buffalo Wild Wings.

Councilwoman Gordon motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

4. **Department of Youth Services Community Prevention Grant**

CM-21-13

Manager Sutherland stated that Council received information from Auditor Williams regarding this grant. The City would receive the money and then redistribute it back to the local folks that had applied and would be administering the grant.

Councilwoman Gordon motioned to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Discussion –

Resolution condemning/denouncing acts of hate and discrimination in the City of Portsmouth.

Councilman Packard stated that the 133rd General Assembly didn't receive the votes on New Year's Eve of 2020, but that doesn't change the evidence and he sited the evidence. He said that Megan Squires of Elon University of North Carolina had tracked some of the dissemination of hate on Social Media and a couple of points that she had discovered were significant. First the General Assembly – The American Medical Association said that racism contributed to health inequities in the U.S. which had life-long effects on health and those affects effect housing, education and employment. It also stated that systemic racism was a system of structure and opportunity where value and advantage was assigned based on ones looks and that zapped the society's strength because it took away a huge part of human resource. The Health Policy Institute of Ohio sites redlining as a historical discriminatory lending practice that results in decreased access to nutritious food and education and that law enforcement and the violence that was inherent with that was disproportionately affected by marginalized groups. The American Psychiatric Association said that discrimination caused minor children to be more likely to be exposed to traumatic events which result in both an increase in negatives impacts of physical and behavioral health. The CDC stated that there was a National disparity between white and black people and infant mortality rates and Ohio tops the list; the Ohio Department of Health said the disparity was 2.5 times higher. The Urban Institute stated that 56% of incarcerated youth were black and yet this population made up only 16% of those under the age of 18 in Ohio which Mr. Packard thought was a significant statistic. The impact of racism on public health deserved action from Council and all governments should act. He said that Megan Squires researched how the hate groups disseminate their message and discovered that not only had it doubled from 2018 to 2019, one of the main targets were college campuses. He said that one of our city's most wonderful attributes was Shawnee State University. He said a resolution such as this could be done at no cost to the public, but the benefit would be priceless. He said that he would like to make a correction to the paperwork he submitted, in that he wrote that it was the 133rd General Assembly, Resolution #12 but it was Resolution #14.

Resolution for the Crowns Act

Councilwoman Mosley stated that people of color had been discriminated against because of the way they wear their hair and if their hair was in its own natural form, they had been told it wasn't professional and they were only allowed to wear their hair in a certain manner for their job setting. She said that she had been discriminated against because of her hair and had put relaxers/chemicals to straighten it so that she could look like her counter part employees and it had caused her to have alopecia (loss of hair), but hers was under control with treatment but that was the cause. She said there had been a bill that was passed in

the U.S. State House of Representatives called the “Crowns Act” which was to prevent people from being discriminated against because of the way they wear their hair. She said the law was in California, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Colorado and many more states. She said that she had not heard of this happening in Portsmouth and inquired from various people and found that there were people that had been discriminated against because of their hair. She said that they wrote it off because they had been born and reared in Portsmouth and had learned to adapt to that way of thinking, “which should not be because we all should feel comfortable with who God made us and what he had given us.” She had mentioned this to Mayor Johnson but would get more information for the rest of Council to look at. She said that when she first moved to Portsmouth, she worked in a bank for 28 years. She went to a bank in Portsmouth thinking that it would be no problem to get a job but was kindly told to go to another bank because the other bank hired colored people. She felt that these people were crazy but she moved on to another bank. She said that those things should not be and we’re way passed those attitudes and that outlandish discrimination against one another and if we’re trying to make our city inclusive for all to feel comfortable, then that was something that needed addressed. Ms. Mosley stated that she would like the Crowns Act to be added to Councilman Packard’s legislation.

After some discussion Vice President Dunne stated that it should be two separate resolutions.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m. on a motion by Councilwoman Gordon.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk