LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/ Cleveland Heights City Council meeting highlights

OCTOBER 21, 2019

- Evans Energy presentation
- Public comment
- Vice city manager’s report
- Severance redevelopment project
- Change in code on dangerous animals
- Mayor’s report

Present were Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Carol Roe, Kahlil Seren, and Michael Ungar. Excused were Jason Stein and Melissa Yasinow. The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Mayor Roe announced a change in the order of the agenda and that all legislation for the evening was offered as first reading.

Evans Energy presentation

Jeff Evans reported on the two-year project his company, Evans Energy, implemented to improve energy efficiency of city-owned buildings. Most of the work upgraded city hall, the community center, and the service garage. The project was in partnership with the county’s sustainability program. Improvements will result in an expected $6 million in savings in energy use and maintenance. The firm used local businesses and green solutions whenever possible.

Public comment

Twelve residents spoke and, in several instances, council members responded.

Animal Control Ordinance - Kyra Hall, Valerie Ross, and a third resident all spoke in favor of ending the practice of using a specific breed as criteria for defining what is a dangerous dog. They cited research and experience that indicate that dangerous dog behavior is not a function of a specific breed.

Severance redevelopment project – Resident Paul Volpe expressed his opposition to the proposed selection of the firm AE7 to lead the planning process for the redevelopment of Severance Town Center. He urged them to find a firm with a track record in suburban redevelopment projects and offered his assistance in selecting an appropriate firm.

One-floor living options—Chris Hall pointed out the lack of one floor/first floor living options in Cleveland Heights and asked for them to be part of new development.

City responsibility for demolition – A resident of Englewood Drive objected to lack of city supervision of contractors that demolish property and of notice to residents of the date of demolition. Contractors did not ask his permission before parking on his driveway, and pulling firehoses across his yard.
Campaigns on Issue 26 – Gary Kanter, Tony Cuda and Len Friedson, all supporters of issue 26, the proposed city charter change to establish an elected mayor, took turns criticizing council members for their relationship to the campaign. Kelly Zender, who is undecided, criticized the “no” campaign because Jimmie Hicks is a visible advocate. Bob Jefferes, who is opposed to the issue, encouraged voters to read the wording of Issue 26 and expressed concern that it gives too much power to the mayor.

Vice city manager’s report

Susanna Niermann O’Neil expressed regrets for any confusion created by the last minute change in the date for shredding day. Leaf pickup will begin on November 4 and may extend beyond the December 6 end date, depending on “how the leaves fall.” She announced the “Howl-O-Ween” Bark in the Park for dogs at Cain Park on October 27 at 11 a.m. The city is a partner in a local coalition to encourage a full count for the 2020 Census.

As clerk of council, she made a matter of record an application, made to the Ohio Department of Liquor Control, by the Elise Bistro at 2195-97 Lee Road for a D5 permit.

Severance redevelopment plan

Planning and Development Committee chair Ungar introduced, on first reading, Resolution 93-2019, which would approve an agreement with AE7 Pittsburgh to provide planning services for redevelopment of Severance Center. He also introduced a resolution to remove the emergency clause from the legislation, which was approved with Mayor Roe voting no.

Change in code on dangerous animals

Safety and Municipal Services Chair Craig Cobb introduced, on first reading, Ordinance 94-2019 that would end the practice of naming specific dog breeds as vicious.

Mayor’s report

Mayor Roe, acknowledging the acrimony surrounding the referendum on city leadership, urged citizens to take a deep breath and step back, and called for some form of reconciliation process after the election so the community can move forward together.

The next meeting will be Monday, Nov. 4, at 7:30 p.m.

LWV observer, Susan Kaeser