



Norwood City Council
Norwood City Hall Auditorium (2nd floor)
4645 Montgomery Road | Norwood, Ohio 45212
March 28, 2023 | 7:30pm

A) CALL TO ORDER

The Council for the City of Norwood met in regular session on the above date with Mr. Ken Miracle presiding. The meeting opened with a moment of reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance.

B) INVOCATION

C) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D) ROLL CALL

On roll call, the following members answered present: Mrs. Franzen, Mrs. Hoover, Ms. Royse, Mr. Kelsch, Mrs. Winterbauer, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Breadon.

E) AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

On a motion by Mrs. Winterbauer, seconded by Mr. Breadon, it was moved to amend the agenda as follows: add the minutes from the February 28, 2023 meeting, add an ordinance regarding the Financial Recovery Plan, and add a Finance Committee report.

All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

F) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1) February 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Breadon, it was moved to accept the minutes from the February 28, 2023 and March 14, 2023 meetings, as if read. All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

2) March 14, 2023 – Regular Meeting

(approved with previous motion)

G) SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1) Steve Anderson Re: SORTA / Metro

Mr. Anderson stated he was here three months ago to address Council about the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); Norwood is still a strategic partner for Metro. Mr. Anderson spoke about the "Reinventing Metro" plan. Metro sees themselves as an economic development company. The passage of Issue 7 allowed for funds to be invested in Metro; there is still a long way to go with winning back the rider market share. Bus routes 4 and 51 are 24-hour services running through Norwood; routes 37 and 65 are new cross-town routes that were added last year. The labor market is extremely competitive at this time; Mr. Anderson stated Metro is continuing to try to retain and recruit drivers. Anyone interested in becoming a Metro bus driver may apply at www.metrocareers.com. Mr. Anderson stated riding the bus is a way to connect people to higher paying jobs; there is no need for 3 cars in a driveway. Reinventing Metro has been a success; there has been almost a 90% rider return since pre-covid. They are adding new bus stops and new bus shelters throughout the area. Mr. Anderson mentioned BRT; this project has a 5-year expected completion timeline. BRT consists of a bus that acts like a train; the cost is almost \$400,000,000 for the creation of two lines. While waiting for the completion of BRT, Metro is looking at how best to serve and utilize the Montgomery Road corridor; Norwood is a major trip-generator. Mr. Anderson asked what kind of things Norwood would like to see with bus stops, with regard to lighting, benches, or more seating. They are looking at things to make transit better and more reliable, including arriving on time and drivers who are courteous and attentive.

Mrs. Franzen asked about more public bathroom access at some of the larger transfer stops; Mr. Anderson stated they will likely not be building any bathroom facilities but he will take that concern back to leadership. Mrs. Winterbauer stated San Francisco has restroom facilities; maybe Metro can look at a policy where businesses allow riders to utilize their restrooms, and she would love for Metro to start that conversation.

Mrs. Hoover stated the stop at Kroger is popular, but the current bus stops are lackluster; Mr. Anderson stated they have been pretty aggressive in getting federal funding for bus stop improvements and better shelters. New bus shelters look nice and provide riders shelter from the elements. They are looking at consolidating the multiple stops in front of Kroger into one; this may take more space and possibly require an easement.

H) PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no Public Hearings.

I) REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

1) Chris Hanlin
Re: Marsh Park Historic Marker

Mr. Hanlin, residing at 4522 Hector Avenue, addressed Council to speak in favor of the Marsh Park marker, he serves on a committee of the Cincinnati Preservation Association that documents sites of black history. He distributed four historical news articles to all members of Council (copies of the articles are on file in the Clerk of Council's office). The property and neighboring lot on Marsh Avenue was owned by the Hirst family; the tenacity and determination of the Hirsts is what needs to be honored. Mr. Hanlin also spoke about Miranda Parker and John P. Parker; Norwood should be proud to claim Miranda Parker as a resident of Norwood. She represents a great American tradition having to do with the Underground Railroad. Mr. Hanlin brought the statement of significance and other materials that will be submitted with the marker application for anyone who wants a copy.

2) Ashton Tucker
Re: In Support of the Historical Marker

Ms. Tucker, residing at 5630 Homer Avenue, addressed Council regarding the Marsh Park historical marker; Ms. Tucker is a member of Norwood's DEI Advisory Board. She is proud of where she lives and her home; part of that involves moving forward, acknowledging what we have done, and how far we have come and yet to go. This historical marker is the least we can do to acknowledge the harm that was done and a way to honor the people who lived there.

3) Abigail Zhang
Re: Marsh Park Historic Marker

Ms. Zhang, residing at 4311 Allison Street, addressed Council regarding her support of the historical marker; she stated her kids have played at Marsh Park for years. Speaking the truth is important in correcting our wrongs; documents from the time when the park was created show that people made choices to exclude others. Communities across the nation are beginning to look more closely at stories that need to be told; it would be an honor for Norwood to participate in this Ohio Historical Marker program.

4) Michael Brooks
Re: Marsh Park

Mr. Brooks, residing at 3926 Grove Avenue, addressed Council regarding Marsh Park; racism and hate led to the Hirsts and other families losing their homes. More than one-hundred years later, there isn't much more that can be done than to remember this shameful part of history. It is important to remember things like this so that it isn't repeated. Mr. Brooks also spoke about the historical admiration given to Cincinnati Enquirer articles at the time this took place. This story of the Hirsts is part of Norwood's history and a simple plaque is one way to help right this wrong and is the bare minimum that can be done.

5) Logan Mirka
Re: Marsh Park Monument

Mr. Mirka, residing at 4916 Myrtle Avenue, addressed Council regarding Marsh Park; he is a Blue Ash resident who is showing his support. The historical marker is the bare minimum that Norwood can do to acknowledge and remedy the gross misuse of power that was displayed in 1922. Mr. Mirka asks Council to unanimously pass the measure so that the Hirst and Parker families can be remembered as the heroes and victims that they were.

J) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL
1) Finance, Budget, and Audit: 03/21/2023

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Mrs. Hoover, it was moved to receive and file the committee report. All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

K) THIRD READING OF ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

1) RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PLACEMENT OF A HISTORIC MARKER AT THE ENTRANCE OF MARSH PARK IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE PARK WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE CITY OF NORWOOD IN 1923 FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PREVENTING BLACKS FROM OWNING HOMES THERE, SUPPORTING A REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR SUCH MARKER, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

On a motion by Mrs. Hoover, seconded by Mr. Thompson, it was moved to hear the third reading of the resolution in its entirety.

Mr. Breadon asked if anyone could share the exact wording that will appear on the front and back of plaque; Mrs. Hoover replied by stating the wording had been sent via email to members of Council but she will share the latest draft of the wording. Mr. Thompson confirmed that the vote tonight is to submit an application to try to put a historical marker at Marsh Park; this vote is not to put the marker

in the park. Mrs. Hoover read the most recent draft of the wording that will appear on both sides of the plaque; she also noted that the Ohio Historical Connection may recommend changes to the wording.

Mr. Breadon thanked Mrs. Hoover for reading the draft of the plaque and stated, “we are not unanimous today,” as this is not unity in the community, this is hate. Mr. Breadon questioned how many statements appearing on the plaque are actually truth; these are 100 year old rumors and no one from that era is here to defend themselves. Mr. Breadon mentioned another recent case of eminent domain in Norwood, in which 70 homes were taken. Mr. Breadon reminded everyone that there is an election in Norwood this November. Mr. Kelsh stated he reviewed the documents and wanted to support this, if true; he has to go off of only old news articles and nothing from the city of Norwood during that time. Mr. Kelsch asked Mr. Garry if there was anything located from the city stating why they were taking this property; Mr. Garry stated Mr. Moore dealt with the issue. The Law Department was not charged to investigate the facts, they were asked to consider the draft of the resolution.

Mrs. Hoover stated over 100 historical documents were sent to all members of Council; this includes news articles and deeds. Mrs. Hoover confirmed that Mr. Moore stated this is vetted. Mrs. Hoover stated one of the main reasons she ran for Council was because of her experiences in Norwood. Mrs. Hoover also shared the statistics that in 1920 there were 95 black people living in Norwood, and by the 1970’s there were only 33. Norwood was intentionally exclusive and the documents support that claim. She is working for a Norwood that is intentionally inclusive. Mrs. Hoover stated this is part of Norwood’s history, but to be proud of our community we have to acknowledge our history. Mr. Kelsch stated he hasn’t seen anything stating this is all historically accurate; he finds it hard to believe that Council 100 years ago would have gotten rid of all items proving their intention of taking this property. Taking action on this matter will take away from other instances of racism throughout Norwood and this country that do have proven documents and findings. Mr. Thompson confirmed there are over 100 documents proving this happened; saying we don’t have proof is a way to hide a dark part of Norwood’s past. This is not a vote to put up a marker, it is a vote to submit an application so that someone with all of the information presented to them will validate the installation of the marker. Mr. Breadon stated he respects Mr. Thompson’s views and agrees with having opposing views, but this is “dealing with a rumor.” Mr. Garry stated the Law Department was not asked to investigate the facts, but Mr. Moore reviewed what he was given and believes that it is accurate.

Mrs. Franzen stated she was not surprised when reading about this six months ago, as these actions happened everywhere in our country in the 1920’s. Mrs. Franzen referenced Central Park being partially erected on a community of color. Assuming this is rumor, Mrs. Franzen questioned what other reason there would have been to take these properties using eminent domain; this plaque is a way to honor those who lived there. Mr. Breadon thanked Mrs. Franzen for her comments and then stated that Norwood is a city within a city, and it is possible that the person who wrote the Cincinnati Enquirer article had issues with Norwood. Mr. Kelsch stated he is not scared of a dark time in history; he has an issue with voting on something that is largely speculation and was noted in news articles from 100 years ago. Mr. Kelsch continued to say that there is nothing in the documentation that expresses an interest of not wanting black people to live there. Mrs. Hoover stated “racism is deeply personal” to her; she does not have a vendetta against Norwood, as she raised her three children in Norwood. This is a vendetta against racism and is about a reckoning that the community has been coming toward for years about the past and about a more perfect future. There are ordinances, lawsuits, and court documents, in addition to the news articles; the family was not fairly compensated for their property. Ms. Royse stated there are deeds transferring the property to Norwood, in which the Hirsts claimed they were not fairly compensated. Ms. Royse thanked Mrs. Hoover for working hard on this project and acknowledged that Mrs. Hoover looped everyone in on this for a year. Ms. Royse stated she is proud and excited to vote on this tonight. Mrs. Franzen thanked all of those who stepped forward to speak tonight. Mr. Kelsch stated the figures for payment the Hirsts received for the property aren’t too far off, according to today’s numbers; he reviewed the documents and was looking in the documents for facts, not just subjective theories. Mr. Thompson stated there are over 100 documents of proof; the alternative reality being presented is that someone in Cincinnati had a vendetta against Norwood.

All members present voted, “Yes.” The motion passed.

On a motion by Mrs. Hoover, seconded by Mrs. Franzen, it was moved to pass the resolution.

Mr. Kelsch and Mr. Breadon voted, “No,” all other members present voted, “Yes.”

The motion passed.

L) SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

There were no second readings of ordinances or resolutions.

M) INTRODUCTORY READING OF ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

1) ORDINANCE PROMOTING THE "CITY WIDE STREET SALES" MAY 12th & 13th, 2023, AND SEPTEMBER 8th & 9th, 2023, AND ABATING ALL PERMIT FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SALE, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

On a motion by Mrs. Franzen, seconded by Ms. Royse, it was moved to suspend the rules and hear all three readings of the ordinance. All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

Mrs. Hoover asked the procedural question for how Council tends to remember to do this sale twice a year; Mayor Schneider stated the Secretary to the Clerk of Council can put together a planning schedule.

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Mrs. Hoover, it was moved to pass the ordinance. All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

2) ORDINANCE APPROVING THE SEVENTH AMENDMENT TO THE DETAILED FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE CITY OF NORWOOD AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Mrs. Franzen, it was moved to suspend the rules and hear all three readings of the ordinance.

Mr. Thompson stated this was reviewed at a high level at the Finance Committee meeting; he received the final copy of the plan last night. Mr. Thompson has issues with this version of Financial Recovery Plan (FRP); he understands and appreciates the work that went into this plan. Since being on Council, Mr. Thompson stated that every year he asks to get the plan more than just the day before, so that there is time to review it. By the end of the fifth year, we are spending \$1,500,000 more than what we make; according to the plan, in the sixth year, Norwood will be \$1,500,000 in the hole. Mr. Thompson referenced the capital improvement worksheet; the Fire Department has \$0 allocated for capital improvements for 2026 and 2027. There is a similar pattern in the capital improvement plan for Parks and the Community/Senior Center; dollars tend to dwindle. Mr. Thompson expressed his fear that the numbers work but it is not a great plan; everything is covered for the next two years and he can't believe this made it by the State Auditor the way it is written. Mr. Thompson stated Council can pass this, knowing next year Norwood will have a different Auditor; if not passed, it puts a hardship on department heads. Mr. Thompson stated he agrees with Mr. Thompson about things that need to be done, but are not being accounted for or showing in the plan. Mr. Thompson expressed his fear with such small dollar amounts appearing in several departments, that department heads will not be able to adequately run their departments.

Mrs. Hoover stated she has questions about the previous and current versions of the FRP, including the difference in staffing numbers and where these budget numbers came from; Mayor Schneider replied by stating this was his budget and he put it together with Mr. Powers. The State Auditor and Norwood Auditor are also constantly working on numbers. Budgets are sent to the administrative team; they go through to see what will or will not work. Mayor Schneider stated the city had 16 years of deferred maintenance; this resulted in three years of spending a lot of money. The capital spending is going to drop off. Mayor Schneider stated there are always changes in staffing, with regard to union compliance. The FRP is a dynamic changing document; they are plotting out what we're doing this year and in 2024. Mayor Schneider confirmed that he has worked on this plan with Mr. Stith since November; the Financial Recovery Commission meeting was cancelled in January. He would like to see this passed with all three readings tonight. If the State Auditor do not accept this plan, then Mayor Schneider will come back to Council with another edited plan.

Mr. Thompson stated this is a 3-year plan and not a 5-year plan; this plan, as written, is not realistic beyond 2025. Mrs. Franzen stated she does not want to pass something that is bad for the city or something that will hurt the department heads who need this money. Mrs. Hoover asked about the consequences for only having one reading of the ordinance; Mayor Schneider replied by confirming the Financial Planning and Supervision Commission is meeting April 11th. If Council is willing to have special meetings in the next two weeks, then they can pass it, if only having one reading tonight. Mr. Breadon stated he agrees with Mr. Thompson about correcting some things with this plan. Mr. Breadon stated the FRP is a living document and changes will be made; he recommends to pass it tonight and send it to the State, knowing it is a flawed document, then make the changes when it is sent back to Council. Mrs. Hoover stated this is important enough to warrant having special meetings; Mrs. Winterbauer also expressed support for having special meetings to discuss and pass the FRP prior to the next Financial Planning meeting. Mr. Thompson confirmed the plan was shared with the Auditors of State on February 2nd, but changes have been made since then. The way to get out of Fiscal Emergency is to make this work; the first step is to make us look good over five years.

Mr. Borsall commented on the revenue pieces; the city currently has a cash balance. In 2021, there was \$9,000 in investment income, in 2022 it was \$202,000, and he thinks it will be about \$365,000 in 2023; this will likely go down in 2024 and 2025 because of lower interest rates. There was one company that paid an extra \$1,000,000 in earnings tax; he feels comfortable where earnings tax is, but still some economic uncertainty. Mr. Borsall recommends passing the FRP; there are a lot of great

things in 2023 and a lot of things that need to be done in 2023. If the FRP is not passed, it will put the city and the administration in a bind. Mrs. Franzen stated a better 5-year plan is needed; the capital projects need to happen on time.

Mr. Thompson voted, "No," all other members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

On a motion by Mr. Breadon, seconded by Mrs. Franzen, it was moved to pass the ordinance. Mr. Thompson voted, "No," all other members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.

N) ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Mayor Schneider stated he asked for SORTA to come and give the presentation; the presentation tonight was different from the presentation several months ago. Norwood has already received money from SORTA for paving that is being completed; he wants to keep SORTA engaged with the city of Norwood. Council had a great discussion about the Marsh Park plaque; there were many people in the 1920's who were very happy that Mrs. Parker was living in the city of Norwood. Mayor Schneider stated they are making progress with the Forest Avenue underpass project.

Mr. Bonsall stated he previously sent an email to Council making them aware of the new e-file system for filing Norwood taxes. There is no more filling out the paper form if residents choose to e-file; entering your W-2 information will auto-populate in the form. Mr. Bonsall stated the Treasurer's office is offering a tax amnesty program; any fees or penalties that might have been added will be waived.

O) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

P) NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Hoover rescheduled the Housing Committee meeting; it will take place April 6th at 6pm.

Mrs. Hoover placed the Marsh Park survey into the Parks Committee for discussion.

Mrs. Franzen had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Gabbard about his plans for the Recreation Department over the next 5-10 years; he will be present at the next Parks Committee meeting. She announced the Parks Committee meeting taking place at 7pm on April 5th.

Mrs. Franzen stated there were several more trees that Keep Norwood Cool will be planting; Dana Boll will create a Facebook event for those who are able to assist. This will take place at the pocket park on Elsmere Avenue and at the corner of Beech and Robertson.

Mrs. Franzen explained some of the difficulties that Public Works has encountered filling potholes; they have been using cold mix, which crumbles fairly quickly. Hot mix works better to seal the potholes, but the plant where they previously purchased hot mix from is no longer available; there has been an inability for the city to purchase hot mix at a rate that isn't double what they usually pay. A new plant is opening soon, so Public Works will be able to utilize hot mix to fix the potholes. Mrs. Franzen plans to have a community outreach event about city infrastructure and streets; this will take place at 2pm on April 8th, the location will be announced once confirmed.

Mrs. Winterbauer placed the topic of coyote discussion into the Housing and Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Thompson placed the creation of a non-discrimination ordinance into the Law Committee.

Q) COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

R) EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS

There were no absent members.

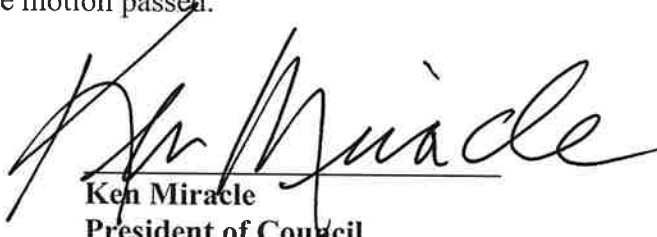
S) ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Franzen, seconded by Ms. Royse, it was moved to adjourn.

All members present voted, "Yes." The motion passed.



Joseph S. Geers
Clerk of Council



Ken Miracle
President of Council

