



**CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
APRIL 26, 2022**

I) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A Work Session meeting of the Powell City Council was called to order by Mayor Daniel Swartwout on April 26, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. City Council members present included Jon C Bennehoof, Frank Bertone, Christina Drummond, Heather Karr, Brian Lorenz, and Daniel Swartwout. Staff present were Andrew White, City Manager; Jeffrey Tyler, Assistant City Manager; Rosa Ocheltree, Finance Director; Buddy Caplinger, Public Services Director; Claudia Husak, Planning Director; Jason Nahvi, HR Business Partner; Steve Hrytzik, Police Chief; and Amy Deere, City Clerk. Also present were CIC Committee Member Nicole Scott and CIC Chairman Jim Hrivnak.

II) OPENING COMMENTS

Vice Mayor Counts began by discussing what was planned for this evening's session. He said due to the collective efforts made, Council should feel good. Our residents approved the tax restructure. We have virtually filled all open positions in the City and are fully staffed. We have elected a new Council and we have met in a Goal Setting Session and Council has goals. We will be investing \$2.1 million dollars in street and bike path repairs, which is the largest amount of repairs in the history of this City. We have created a CIP Funding Policy to annually put aside 25% per capital, which in this particular year, \$1.88 million dollars will be transferred shortly. The City revenue is up by \$2.4 million dollars or 37%, which half of that comes from the months of February, March and April.

At our last Council meeting, Mr. Hall said something to Council to which I think of daily. Mr. Hall stated you have to look up and you have to look forward. If there is anything we are in position to do now is to look up and move forward.

Further, he stated 2022 is in the bag in terms of capital, which will not be discussed this evening. We will be making meaningful progress this year. Never in the history of the City have we had multiple capital projects in multiple phases with the thought we will know what we will be doing in five years. This is a process that will change over time as we learn more things.

There is no expectation of finishing this evening. We have reserved the Finance Committee meeting so we can continue this meeting, if we don't reach completion. We need to think of community input, and we as a group need to decide how to present this.

III) COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) DRAFT PRESENTATION

City Manager White began by advising there is a Master Project List with over 70 projects, and the list of projects was minimized to 20 projects.

The CIP itself, once adopted becomes a guidepost or a blueprint for City expenditures relative to the CIP Policy. This essentially tells us what we will be doing now, next year and the proceeding three years. With that being said, once Council selects the goals for project priority status, they will be sorted out within the resource availability. This will become a reviewed plan that we look at every twelve months as part of the operating budget. There are two components to the budget, the general operations, and the CIP funded programs. The adoption of the plan over a five year period, creates predictability for the community and it aligns resources with stated priorities in the community. It is also an opportunity to forecast to the community what is coming, which is a much more sophisticated approach.

Of the priority projects developed at the committee level, he explained the project, estimated time frame and estimated cost:

Adventure Park CSX Tunnel – Option 1, 10 – 16 months, \$325,000
Adventure Park CSX Tunnel – Option 2, 12 – 18 months, \$393,000
North Depot Street Reconstruction – ROW Acquisition, 18 – 27 months, \$1,470,000
North Depot Street Reconstruction – ROW Lease, 15-23 months, TBD
Strategic Land Acquisition, Ongoing, \$700,000 + ongoing
Northeast Downtown Quadrant Parking Area, 16 - 32 months, \$2,920,000
Hall Street Extension, 10 – 16 months, \$682,000
Hall Street Reconstruction, 10 – 24 months, \$1,157,000
Scioto Street Extension, 21-29 months, \$2,478,000
Lechler Building Remodel/Reuse, 11 – 20 months, \$939,000
South Depot Street Connection, 12 – 16 months, \$1,779,000
Liberty Street Improvements & Streetscape, 22 – 35 months, \$2,943,000
Liberty Road Multi-Use Path & CSX Crossing, 11 – 18 months, \$855,000
North Depot Street Extension, 16 – 32 months, \$1,464,000
Scioto Street Reconstruction, 13 – 21 months, \$995,000
Case Avenue Reconstruction, 16 – 24 months, \$1,453,000
Signage and Wayfinding Plan and Implementation, 12 – 19 months, \$140,000
Martin-Perry Drive, 17 – 24 months, \$2,620,000
Carriage Road & Liberty Road Intersection, 19 -26 months, \$2,337,000

Staff would like to transfer the ownership of this delegation to Council to make certain the priorities are Councils priorities.

Councilmember Karr commented on 2H, Carriage Road & Liberty Road Intersection, saying traffic is already bad there, and understands this is a low priority. Councilmember Bertone mentioned there are a lot of moving parts in that conversation. He added there were road improvements there recently. Also, the middle school has a very elongated school zone that slows traffic down enough where the folks on Carriage can now get out, so it is improved in that regard.

Councilmember Lorenz asked how to differentiate between project 2D, Scioto Street Reconstruction and 2E, Case Avenue Reconstruction. How do we choose one over the

other? Also, with all of the acquisition of land, he feels like there may be items to be carried out in a couple years. He asked if there was a methodology to choose between one over the other because essentially, they are the same streets. City Manager White advised the matrix itself weighted certain variables differently, which would give you the D vs. E. He feels it is important to note all the projects are conceptual and the prioritization in this packet is for presentation form. Ultimately, what he would recommend is the City carefully look at the impact to one mobilization vs. two, and secondly, the capacity for the City to carry that type of freight in one construction season. If you could do both, he feels it would be advisable.

City Manager White continued by stating the next steps going forward. Establish the projects we weighed out with the benefit to the community as expressed by this conversation.

Councilmember Lorenz further mentioned the importance of the neighbors and their vibrancy to the community. They were the first ones here and deserve a certain amount of attention.

Councilmember Bertone advised what comes to his mind when he looks at the projects. He has a downtown focus and perhaps it is myopic to him, as he is sure there are broader efforts Council should look at, such as Carriage and Liberty. Not to say they are not important, he feels there is merit to the conversation, just not for the 2023 budget cycle.

When he looks at the downtown district, with Scioto and Case, he wonders if this could be an opportunity to turn them into one-way corridors, while we look at a possible expansion of Hall Street to the north. The whole downtown district intrigues him. Obviously the southeast quadrant concerns him a bit, with Martin-Perry Drive, and when this was discussed in the Keep Powell Moving, it was one of the sore subjects of the whole conversation.

He feels there is great opportunity in the northeast for the parking improvements and opportunities, those are what appear to be low hanging fruit opportunities for the City. There is obviously developer access that is still ongoing in that area.

Depot Street connecting to Morris Road and the potential parking opportunities for us in that area would be huge. There are still noise issues we will have to contend with.

He stated his goal is to focus on our gem, which is the downtown district. There is street scape and tree scape opportunities as well as the DORA. We have funding available, not only from our TIF dollars. It is the most visible aspect we can create as an opportunity for the community to enjoy.

Mayor Swartwout spoke about the importance of the downtown, and the many moving parts to the downtown. When he looks at the secondary items, he feels there should be a higher priority on 2B, Liberty Road Multi-Use Path & CSX Crossing. This has been an item of discussion since 2016, it involves paths (Council goal), safety (Council goal) and he feels it is something we should consider moving from a secondary priority to a primary priority. He did not want to repeat everything previously stated as everyone has made excellent points, but to him when he looks at one specific project that deserves more consideration, it is this one in this group.

Vice Mayor Counts said what he saw on the Project Master List, it is very heavy on streets and roads, in terms of the priority projects. In the prioritization of the group, what was it about walks and paths that did not make the list. City Manager White responded the 70 projects that were out there, we heavily favored in that form to begin with, so it just followed through those that seemed to rise to the top, the bigger heavy scaped streets in the Keep Powell Moving Program. He spoke of internal discussions about park projects and street maintenance projects that would include pathways, maybe should have been included in this and instead are included in the operational expenses.

Councilmember Bennehoof said there was a lot of developmental interest in town. He questioned the Scioto extension from Liberty to Grace, was this to avail land the City owns back there and how would this compare to Case extension instead of skirting the north side of the cemetery. City Manager White said the alignment of Scioto with the property the City owns directly across the street would allow for a symmetrical intersection. He believes there may be some property issues along the east side of Case. He believes opening up the access point for traffic circulation makes great sense. There is so much opportunity along Grace, the depth of the lots and how it flows to the north, he feels makes sense.

City Manager White said there is an expectation that something is going to happen as Council has been a part of the conversation about the accumulation of parcels in the downtown for some time. The City is in a position of resources today that it has not been in the past and he feels this is additional leverage to potentially get more out of development.

Having these projects laid out is another sales feature to the private investment world that is out there thinking about Downtown Powell, and this makes a more compelling argument to spend those dollars here. It is also important to note the conservative nature with which the Finance Director put together our estimated resources from this do not contemplate an increase in resources that would be driven by TIF dollars in the downtown, so the City is getting some of its money back by way of the existence of the district.

Vice Mayor Counts stated the downtown plan would inform what kind of development we would hope to have go in certain areas and therefore lead us to certain things that might mean we do first or second. This leads us to this Scioto and Grace connection and that connection was part of that plan and the reason why it is so much more important in his belief, it connects the downtown to Grace, a not so busy street and suddenly Grace Drive becomes open and available for being a part of the downtown area. It was also a connection so you would not have to take Grace Drive all the way to Liberty to get back to the downtown. Also, it opened up land for public parking. We were the only ones who would build the road, and once the road was built, it opened up the area for development for others. This is his view of what the City is here for, to make things possible that would not happen if not for the City.

Councilmember Drummond said she thinks of this as balancing the "shovel ready" projects as we see outlined here with planning and land acquisition, as well as fund raising. She wanted to note strategic planning, while it takes time, could lead to bigger piles of money and be useful down the road. She believes we have a strategic opportunity when it comes to land acquisition. Some land development we have the

right-of-way, we can develop it in the future, but once the land is developed by private development, we do not have the same opportunity we may have in discussion now.

She feels there are opportunities not listed, such as connecting to Dublin, both in terms of our trail network but more importantly connecting our fiber network.

She stated she felt, as Council, it is important for us to remember we are putting together a five year signal to both our residents and those we want to attract for economic development, appears with how it is going to look five years from now and here is what we are prioritizing to get there. What we include or exclude is going to send the signal.

Vice Mayor Counts asked Councilmembers individually, to identify a project they feel is of consideration that is not on the list of 70 projects.

Councilmember Drummond stated to raise street, roads, paths, to a 61 grade. The second project is connecting to Dublin, a safe trail, and the connecting fiber.

Councilmember Bennehoof said the building to the east of CVS by Seldom Seem, he would like to see the City contemplate a way to acquire that. He would like to see a purchase for administrative, wellness or a variety of things. Secondly, a comprehensive bike path plan, to connect all of the gaps currently.

Mayor Swartwout stated the Home Road Pathway which covers a lot of basis as far as all of the development north of Home Road. With the new library, you are looking at a safety component of kids wanting to get to the library. Secondly, the Wellness Center needs to be on a priority list and is a piece to keep in mind with everything we are doing in this area since so much is in the focus of downtown.

Councilmember Bertone said he was going to center around Parks & Recreation. He feels from a programming standpoint we have been waiting for two plus years, for some activation of the programming side, which may include facility upgrades. When you look at Seldom Seem, a general purpose turf structure would give the City access to a multitude of tournaments early in January and February, etc. To that end, he would look to the land east of the tracks that is not getting any use, could also be a potential expansion to the park opportunities we offer to our community. A lot has been mentioned about the paths and transportation, which are crucial, we need those opportunities. Folks do not necessarily want to drive downtown, maybe they would like to take an alternate route to downtown, and this is certainly something, as you look east of downtown going towards the Chase, what can we do to connect in that direction.

Councilmember Lorenz agreed with Councilmember Bertone and the activation of the park with a turf field as a revenue generator. He also feels a hotel could be considered as a development opportunity close to the park. A safe connection to the library is a very appropriate project. Also, a salt barn.

Councilmember Karr agreed with Councilmember Drummond on the topic of fiber. She also agreed with Councilmember Bertone about the multi-use path or continuation from the Chase to Olentangy Ridge.

Vice Mayor Counts spoke about a salt barn. He believes first there needs to be a plan of the facilities because it is not just the salt barn, it is a parks and recreation facility, and it

is not just that, it is an administrative service facility. Secondly, there is 32 acres on the south side of Powell Road, and to him is the perfect place to have a park. It provides a different kind of park setting, allows us to have the bike path connection from the eastern side to the downtown. It has land to where you could have a Parks & Recreation building, not having it on Seldom Seen, to where there could be extra fields. It has prime access to Powell Road. We will never get 32 acres of land and the City should really look at that if the opportunity comes up.

Council took a ten minute break.

Vice Mayor Counts advised Council was going to divide into groups of two, Councilmember Karr and Councilmember Lorenz, Councilmember Bertone and Mayor Swartwout, and Vice Mayor Counts, Councilmember Bennehoof and Councilmember Drummond. Each group were going to take a portion of the 70 Project List and each group choose two for consideration.

Council broke into their groups for discussion.

Vice Mayor Counts said what we are striving for is to see what rises to the top for Council. Additionally, please provide feedback and if there is more information needed let it be known.

Mayor Swartwout said the scope on the list of the 70 projects, he can give a pretty good idea on what could be eliminated.

Councilmember Lorenz stated there was a committee formed to produce a list of recommended projects. We have received a priority analysis of primary and secondary projects. He understands one project may be important to one Councilmember that isn't on that first or second tier, but why are we talking about 70 projects. He feels Council is going backwards. Why are the 70 on the table at this point in time?

Vice Mayor Counts advised when we received the draft report, it was heavy in roads in the downtown area and in his standpoint as a Councilmember, that was not his goal for the residents of the City. One of the themes he heard in the discussion were parks, bike paths, fiber, etc., and to him those rise to the top.

Councilmember Bennehoof said downtown is a jewel we need to cut the facets off and turn it into a diamond. There is an opportunity to drive a lot of economic engine by having a vibrant downtown. This is where the revenue is made. He feels the downtown should be heavy on the priority list.

Councilmember Drummond spoke about the staging, for example, you have to acquire the land before you can develop the land and knowing if there are dependencies on this list, naturally runs itself to the top of the list.

Vice Mayor Counts stated that was Staff's role. Council does not focus on the land acquisition, Council focuses on the end product.

