

**JOINT COM DEV & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES from
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2021 [meeting began at 6:03 P.M.]**

CD PRESENT: Chair Callahan, Mitchell, Cerra, Oswald, Jessie

FINANCE PRESENT: Co-Chair Tollett, Baird, Jessie, Davis **ABSENT:** Stewart

Co-Chair Tollett noted for the record that Mr. Stewart is out of town for a family event.

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Dir Deery, Safety Service Dir Brubaker, Asst Safety Service Dir Williams, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Police Chief Whitely, Engineer Schneider, WWPC Superintendent Korzan, Councilpersons Keys and Simmons

1. Approval of the AUGUST 30th, 2021 JOINT Community Development / Finance Meeting Minutes. Moved by Mr. Cerra, second by Mrs. Mitchell to approve the above meeting minutes.

2. The matter of Determining the Appropriate Course of Action to Restore the Function of the Two Falls Connector Bridge

REFERRED BY: Council Members Davis, Simmons and Callahan

This matter was for Discussion only.

Chair Callahan began the discussion by saying the City received a \$500,000 grant in 2005 and the Two Falls Bridge was built and opened in early 2007. Currently the bridge is not functional and has been out of commission for some time now. Mr. Callahan had received calls from residents asking when will the bridge be repaired?

Mr. Jessie said there is a Cascade Park Committee that he, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Keys are members of that committee. And this issue has been discussed at recent meetings. Mr. Kasich who is the architect for Metro Parks reported that the bridge is not viable any longer to be fixed because of the way it's shifted. Their proposal is, they would restore it from one side and it would go out into the middle of the river and they would make it a vantage point with an observation deck. It was told that the bridge was not a viable fix to go completely across the river.

Engineer Schneider did not have any additional information. He does know that after the bridge was built there was movement of the land around it and it compressed the bridge which caused it to bow. Before it was turned over to the Metro Parks the City went there and they were able to relieve the pressure on the bridge. It was the earth's movements that caused that compression and without having some inclinometers or something installed they can't say if it's still moving or not.

Law Dir Deery said that her understanding, is that after the bridge was installed it did experience some shifting of the land so this is not just a matter of the integrity of the bridge itself, it involves a great deal more than that. Her office has had the opportunity to do a cursory review of the agreement between the City and the Metro Parks and it does appear this particular issue of the Two Fall Connector Bridge, that states there is specific provision for it in the agreement and the City did agree to address this matter.

Mr. Tollett asked if that means that this is the City's financial responsibility.

Dir Deery said, that based on the provision, it does say that the City would address it, [that is the wording]. The provision of restoring it, is listed as the City's responsibility. Perhaps we could work it out in some fashion with the Metro Parks, which is something they may be better suited to deal with. It was accepted by the City.

Mr. Schneider said the intention was to connect the Bridge to The East Falls River Walk.

After the bridge was built there were some large sections of sandstone from the earth that fell and actually caused erosion on the path behind the Police Department which cut that area off. To extend the bridge further out, was looked at, it was determined that it would be very expensive to connect it in the future.

Chair Callahan said the Metro Parks Director is here to speak to the committee.

Jim Ziemnik, Director of the Lorain County Metro Parks. He said he was invited to speak to the committee by Mayor Whitfield. He said that the Metro Parks has visions moving forward with this. He wants to clear up any confusion that when the made the agreement with Elyria that the Two Falls Bridge and the East Falls River Walk were not part of the agreement because the City had recently done some work on those and had problems with stability and they are not part of the Metro Park's obligation.

We did have to barricade it because it did turn into a hazard. In communication with the Mayor and his staff they had thoughts and visions on moving forward with the bridge. There are several piers, they would keep the one pier, take the second pier out, the one that goes toward Cascade Street and turn that into an overlook. You could look toward the West Falls and turn back toward the confluence and you could get a nice overall look at the river and the west falls branch as it comes into the confluence. This is their vision, but the City owns it, so it's the City's decision.

Mr. Oswald asked if this is a metal bridge?

Mr. Ziemnik said it's a steel bridge which was built in 2006. The contractor was Don Mould's Construction. There had been some problems, over the years, with shifting and twisting and torquing and the Engineer's Dept had looked into it. Mayor Grace and Mukund who was the City Engineer at that time had reported that there had been some mini earthquakes and geologic shifts which torqued it. Then Metro Parks had conversations with City Engineer Tim Ujvari and they had solutions where they would saw cut the ends to give it room to maneuver an expansion joint, but unfortunately that didn't take care of the problem. There could still be movement there anytime in the future. It was determined that it's unsafe. You could see twisting and torquing and the displacement of the decking and they determined that it just wasn't safe and that's why they had barricaded the area. The worst part is the Cascade Street side. It's more stable on the park side and that's why they're hoping to salvage that one big piece, add a rail and turn it into a nice over overlook so you could see the Falls and confluence.

Mr. Oswald said that we know that the earth moves and we don't want to keep throwing money at this because it will still move. He has ideas that if we keep going on an area that we know there's disturbance and it will most likely continue, so there is a possibility that we will still run into problems years down the road.

Mr. Ziemnik said they don't see evidence of movement on the Cascade Street side, the issues appear to be on the other side. There is a risk that there could be additional movement of twisting and torquing, though we're not seeing it at this time.

Chair Callahan said that he had a conversation with Councilman Jessie, who is on the Parks Committee along with Council members Davis and Keys and Mr. Jessie said that a study may be needed to give the members more detailed information.

Mr. Callahan asked if there had been any kind of a study by the Metro Parks?

Mr. Ziemnik said that they have not commissioned any studies. They did improvements of the trail and the big new bridge which connects Cascade to Elywood. They used KE McCartney and their staff for those projects.

Chair Callahan said moving forward, the City along with Metro Parks will have to make a determination based on reporting of engineering on whether we want to repair the current bridge, have another bridge built, or go with the Metro Parks idea of the observation / overlook deck.

Mr. Jessie said he would like to get a quote to do the proposal of the overlook deck that Metro Parks suggested. And we can also look into getting infrastructure funds, which this may fall under that category.

Mr. Ziemnik said they had KE McCartney and contractors looked into it, and came back with an estimated amount of \$140,000 to \$150,000 to mobilize the equipment and stabilize the banks, take out the Cascade Street side of the bridge and cut and salvage a piece of that rail use that rail across the front. They just got that figure in late June and it should still be valid number. Though re-decking was not included in this estimate. But they feel confident that the existing decking on the Cascade Park side will be salvageable and could be reused.

Mrs. Davis asked, that since the City owns that bridge, can we get specific engineers to look at it to see exactly what is wrong with it? It would be good for the committee to know for sure what's happening. They know it's shifting on one side. It would be good to have specifics of the problems.

Chair Callahan said this would be to find out what the best course of action should be. In getting a study on whether the bridge can be repaired or should be replaced or to build the observation deck, we have these options, but we don't know the best route to take. We need experts to look at it. If we need to appropriate some money for the experts to look at it, so we know where we're at.

The key is if we do decide to build another bridge, there are a lot of grants out there that we could apply for, there is a lot of money available and by being proactive, we will know where we're at.

Mr. Ziemnik said that was part of the discussion that he and his staff had with Mayor Whitfield, Mr. Brubaker, Mr. Jessie and the staff. That they continue to get together periodically to discuss these things. And they're may be dollars that might be available through infrastructure grants and money through the County which would be a good investment.

On a different topic, Mr. Jessie wanted Mr. Ziemnik to know that he attended an event at the barn across from the Joint Vocational School and he wanted to say that it's just spectacular. Every facility, every park in the county is beautiful and he wanted to thank Mr. Ziemnik along with his staff for all they do for the county parks and facilities.

Dir Ziemnik thanked Mr. Jessie and he said that is the North Star Preserve and the barn is called Henry's Barn.

Mr. Callahan thanked Dir Ziemnik for being here and thanked Mr. Brubaker. We will table this matter at this time and continue the discussion at a later date. And he would like to refer this to the Metro Park committee that Mr. Jessie, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Keys sit on and to get ideas with those committees. Thank you everyone.

***Mr. Cerra moved and second by Mrs. Mitchell to adjourn this evening's Community Development portion of the Meeting at 6:30 P.M.
MOTION CARRIED***

[The evening's meetings continued with the Finance Committee Meeting]

Respectfully submitted by,

Colleen Rosado, Council Clerk Secretary (Committee Meeting attended by Secretary Rosado ~ Minutes were transcribed by Secretary Rosado)

