

The COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held a Meeting on MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH, 2022 beginning at 6:00 P.M.

CD PRESENT: Chair Callahan, Mitchell, Lipian, Oswald, Schneider

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Stewart, Tollett, Cerra, Davis, Schneider

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Dir Deery, Safety Service Dir Brubaker, Mayor Whitfield, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Asst Dir Calvert, Engineer McKillips, Community Development Dir Scott, Councilperson Simmons

1. Approval of the Regular CD Meeting Minutes ~ February 14th, 2022.

Motion made by Mr. Oswald second by Mrs. Mitchell to approve the meeting minutes.

2. The matter of Updates to the Design Review Guidelines.

Referred By: Community Development Director Scott

CD Dir Scott said that over the past few years the City has received quite a few applications for cabinet signs. The current DR Guidelines state that cabinet signs are not permitted unless they do not exceed 30 inches in any one direction. Since 2014, numerous signs have been brought before PC and they have been approved. There was an amendment to the DR Guidelines to approve the cabinet signs as long as they comply with the zoning regulations and to not allow them in the downtown district. What they are asking at this time is an amendment to the DR Guidelines requesting the changes per PC's request.

Mr. Oswald asked what a cabinet sign is?

Dir Scott said they are typically rectangular multi tenant signs, where the face of the sign can be replaced.

Mr. Schneider, who used to be on the Planning Commission Board said that this was one of their most common issues that came to PC and he thinks it's a good idea to approve it as amended, he's in favor.

Chair Callahan read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Mr. Schneider moved and Mr. Oswald seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the 'said' changes to the Design Review Guidelines.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

3. The matter of identifying a Sister-City for Elyria and to enter into bilateral communications with that City.

Referred By: 3rd Ward Councilman Corbin

Chair Callahan stated that this matter was referred by Mr. Corbin but it appears he isn't able to attend this evening's meeting. Mr. Callahan asked if anyone has anything to add on this topic?

Mr. Oswald said he understands that the Mayor has been doing a good job especially with the City of Lorain.

Mayor Whitfield said they've been doing the work on a local level with Lorain. We consider Lorain a sister city. This will open up the opportunity for us to have relationships with other cities anywhere in the world.

The cities can exchange ideas, cross-promote one another. The Mayor suggested Dublin to be our sister-city. If someone from Dublin came to the US they would know to come by Elyria to check us out. This is a way to formalize a sister-city relationship.

Mr. Oswald asked if a sister-city has the same make-up because they would be on the same level as us?

Mayor Whitfield said yes, it's good to find something in common. When he was getting his MBA and studied business in Dublin because they're a legacy city and they were an emerging economy, a new up and coming community. We would look for a legacy city with post-industrial issues or other commonality.

Mr. Lipian said the Sister-City programs were started by President Eisenhower and the intention was to promote global peace and interactivity between cities. It would provide opportunities for municipalities to partner economically, strategically and culturally. It looks like the Mayor has the ability to do this regardless of whether or not council establishes something like this which is why if we all agree that it's a win-win solution. We may as well give a formal blessing that this is a good program to explore and good faith understanding to say that we're interested in seeing what he comes up with.

Dir Deery said for purposes of clarification, for what they're looking for from the committee is whether City Council would authorize membership with Sister-City International as an organization. There is a fee to become a member and it's based upon the population of the city.

Mr. Cerra asked if Elyria would get any benefit, other than just on paper?

Mayor Whitfield said we can just establish a direct connection with the city that we would want to connect with. Maybe that organization assists with the process but there is no trademark on having a sister city.

Mr. Lipian said that what we're not voting on today is the process of any payments, just a formality that we encourage the Mayor to engage in an exploratory process of finding a sister city and then in the future we can vote on a package that's put together for some kind of proposal. The Mayor can present his findings and his recommendations and then the committee could assess at that time as a council.

Mrs. Mitchell agrees with Mr. Cerra, she's not against it, but, what's the purpose? Mrs. Mitchell brought up that Elyria is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and that's what they are there for.

Mayor Whitfield said it's really around having a global mind-set for your city. It's really just trying to encourage your city to see itself as a part of a global community and be connected with folks outside of Elyria. On a national stand-point it's helpful to have that sort of sister-city relationship. It can develop into an economic development relationship where they have a company in their city who's looking for a US Headquarters because of our relationship we could say, hey, think about Elyria.

Mr. Lipian said he noticed that Lorain doesn't have a sister-city as yet and he thinks it would be a great trendsetter to get them on board and give us an opportunity to take the lead in this.

Mr. Callahan said that perhaps the Mayor can explore this, maybe we can have a National City Sister-City as well as an International Sister-City.

Dir Deery said that her take on this matter from a legal perspective, is that she doesn't know if there is any legislative activity that needs to be taken at this time.

When we get to the point where the Mayor is ready to announce what city he's chosen as the sister-city, then at that time, is when a resolution would be needed. Or the Mayor can make a proclamation declaring as such. So, there is no council manic authority that needs to be passed at this time.

Chair Callahan said he agrees with the Law Dir and this is a good idea to go forward, have the Mayor explore the city of Dublin or any other city. He asked the committee if they concur. The committee concurs.

4. The matter of a resolution of support establishing a joint statement between Elyria City Council and Mayor Whitfield denouncing the aggression by Russia against the Sovereign Nation of Ukraine.

Referred By: 1st Ward Councilman Lipian

Mr. Lipian said it was an honor to attend the rally and support of the people of Ukraine yesterday in Parma along with Mayor Whitfield, Parma Mayor, Parma City Council, Congresswoman Captor, Senator Portman, Governor DeWine. It was an honor to be a part of that support along with our Mayor. Mayor Whitfield hung the Ukraine flag in support. As a Ukraine American he thanked everyone for that honor and solidarity.

Mr. Lipian feels it's dependent upon each of us to do what we can, in whatever capacity we can, to take a stand against tyranny. He feels it's important for Elyria to speak in concert with Cleveland and Cuyahoga County and others.

Mr. Lipian read the resolution he is presenting;

We, the city of Elyria do hereby declaim The Russian Federation's brazen invasion of Ukraine to be unlawful, inhumane, and an international threat to democracy.

To wit:

We shall dedicate the instruments of our local power toward policies which will assist Ukrainian and other refugees to our communities and support the State of Ohio in stopping sales of Russian products. We beseech the United States to enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Russia for War Crimes.

We furthermore resolve that Vladimir Putin, leader of the Russian Federation, is guilty of the very things of which he wrongfully accuses Ukraine: Neo-Naziism, fascism, and genocide.

We stand in firm solidarity with communities around Ohio including the City of Cleveland and the County of Cuyahoga, as well as other communities around the country in our embrace of Ukrainian refugees, asylum-seekers, or immigrants fleeing this war of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

We also stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters here in Ohio, urging Ukraine be admitted into the NATO alliance.

Whatever freedom taken from Ukraine, is freedom lost by us all. We condemn Russia's warfare, demand that it stop, resolve the instruments of our local power to provide aid and refuge for Ukrainians fleeing this infamy, and join shoulder to shoulder with the freedom-loving people of Ukraine.

Mr. Callahan thanked Mr. Lipian for presenting this proposed resolution. He's glad we're taking a stand and feels others will follow. He applauds Mr. Lipian for bringing this forward.

Mr. Callahan read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Mr. Lipian moved and Mr. Schneider seconded to recommend a resolution and joint statement with Elyria City Council and Mayor whitfield authorizing the 'said' resolution as was read by Councilman Lipian, Emergency Clause requested.

MOTION MADE

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

The evening's meetings continued with a JOINT Meeting of the Community Development Committee and the Finance Committee which began at 6:30

**Mr. Lipian moved and Mrs. Mitchell seconded to adjourn the Community Development portion the this evening's meetings at 6:36 P.M.
MOTION CARRIED**

The evening's meetings continued with The Finance Committee Meeting.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Colleen Rosado,
Council Clerk Secretary*

CMR/