

City of Montgomery
Government Affairs Committee Minutes
August 18, 2020

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Tracy Roblero, Asst. City Manager/Acting Comm. Dev. Dir.
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council
Matthew Vanderhorst, Community and Information Services Director
Elise Williams-Sycamore High School Art Teacher

City Council Committee Members Present

Gerri Harbison, Chair
Craig Margolis
Lynda Roesch, Teleconference

The Government Affairs Committee of Council convened its meeting for August 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in person and by telephone conference via Zoom with Mrs. Harbison presiding. This remote access meeting was allowed by emergency legislation adopted last week by the Ohio General Assembly and approved by the Governor. The emergency legislation added language to RC Section 121.22 allowing public meetings by telephone conference during the current pandemic and declared State of Emergency. As required by the statute, notice of the telephonic meeting was publicized more than 24 hours in advance to allow public access through the same conference call in service. The public was also given a backup number to call in the event there were technical difficulties. This Notice was posted on the City's website and a similar Notice was sent to The Cincinnati Enquirer.

Review and Feedback of the 2021 Calendar

1r. Riblet stated that he would like to apologize to the Committee for the previous presentation on the 2021 Calendar photos and cover selections. He stated that he did not feel that the best information was provided to the Committee to make the best decision regarding the 2021 Calendar cover. He explained that the pictures provided were photocopies of the actual pictures and after seeing the original drawings, the copies did not provide an actual portrayal of how the calendar would look.

Mrs. Harbison thanked Mr. Riblet for his comments.

Mr. Vanderhorst added that since the goal of the discussion was to decide on a cover, he felt that after seeing the actual drawings, the decision would be easier for the Committee. He introduced Ms. Williams, the Sycamore High School art teacher and collaborator for the calendar artwork.

Ms. Williams explained that she took over this project at the end of the last school year as the prior art teacher retired during the Covid quarantine. She explained that due to the transition to online classes for the students and not having access to the original drawings held at the school she felt those factors contributed to the presentation of the poor quality of the pictures.

Ms. Williams explained that she has been involved in the collaboration of the art students and the City for the production of the calendar since 2002 while a student at Sycamore High School. She stated that now being a teacher involved in the process, she knows the students and their quality of work. She asked for grace and understanding of this year's drawings due to the Covid circumstances. She stated that she fully supports the program of having the students involved.

Mr. Vanderhorst stated that he felt it was hard to translate the information of what was needed into expectations that the students would understand and be able to pinpoint in their drawings.

Ms. Williams stated that while she did not think they were told to replicate a photo; she did not think they had the direction to create a creative drawing and to accomplish the level of detail that seems to be expected.

Mrs. Harbison asked what is needed to provide to the students to ensure a better end result.

Ms. Williams stated that it depended on what the Committee wants. She stated that if the City wanted to be more in control then there has be more specific details provided. She stated that it all depends on the prompt and theme. She added that the request for the drawings was made last winter when it was expected for the students to create spring, summer, and fall pictures.

Mr. Margolis thanked Ms. Williams for her feedback. He stated that he felt the calendar process was hit by the perfect storm of timing, retirement, and no school. He asked how she would like the project to be presented to her in the future.

Ms. Williams replied that decisions of themes needs to be made sooner so students could get started at the beginning of a school year and work on it throughout the year.

The Committee discussed the theme for 2022 as being "Life in Montgomery" with historic photos being reimaged as artwork to depict how life could have been in the past.

Mr. Margolis asked what Ms. Williams would need to be able to begin on this project when school began.

Ms. Williams replied that she would need historical photos, which she observed throughout the building.

Mr. Riblet suggested that rather than communicating by email he would suggest meetings held at City Hall so there were no miscommunications or misunderstandings.

Ms. Williams replied that she agreed and that she would like to bring students with her, so they understood the scope and importance of the project.

Ms. Roesch asked what the timeline for the process would be.

Ms. Williams stated that as the project is done by Advanced Placement Art Students, that their class is a yar long class.

Ms. Roesch stated that this is a project that the City and the residents love and that the Committee and staff want to continue that collaboration.

Mr. Vanderhorst explained that in the past the theme was not determined until the current calendar was sent to print. He added that this is the first year a theme was determined early and felt that would be a positive improvement to the process.

Mr. Riblet stated that ideally in September or October we should submit the next years theme and scope of the calendar.

Mrs. Harbison thanked Ms. Williams for her passion for her students and this project.

Mrs. Harbison explained that a motion should be made to reconsider the prior motion about the calendar cover and to move forward with the drawings as originally submitted.

Mr. Margolis made a motion to move forward with the originally submitted drawings. Ms. Roesch seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Mrs. Harbison asked Ms. Williams which drawing she could use for the cover.

Ms. Williams replied that she would use the drawing with City Hall as the cover. She felt it was very well done and appropriate for a City Hall calendar.

Other Business

Mrs. Harbison asked if there was any other business to discuss.

Mr. Riblet replied that there were two items that he would like to discuss with the Committee.

Mr. Riblet explained to the Committee that staff is continuing to monitor the possibility of holding MCLA in 2021. He stated as staff continues to pursue holding the program, there are three options that are still under consideration. He reminded the Committee that the options were:

1. Hold the normal sessions based on which partners will participate.
2. Offer a modified reduced schedule that would not include Twin Lakes, Bethesda North, Sycamore Schools and likely, Ohio National.
3. Defer to 2022.

Mr. Riblet stated that staff is waiting as long as possible before making the final recommendation but wanted to discuss it with the Committee to make them aware of the options.

Mrs. Harbison asked how many applicants there were.

Mr. Vanderhorst stated that there are no new applicants, however, there is a list of 10 people who deferred from prior years. He added that he had not contacted those individuals to see if there was interest in participating in 2021.

Mr. Margolis stated that he liked the idea of forging ahead and then scaling back if we had to.

Mr. Riblet explained that by November we will have to determine what to do although he does not feel like there will be a change by then.

Mr. Vanderhorst stated that staff discussed offering it as a virtual academy but felt that was not a plausible solution.

Ms. Roesch asked if we could offer it at a different time in the year.

Mr. Riblet replied that the challenge with that is that the closer we get to spring many of the applicants could be obligated to family commitments such as sports with kids or other activities and

would not commit to the program.

Ms. Roesch stated that she felt we should wait until the end of November and then decide.

Mr. Riblet stated that staff would keep it on the radar and report back to the Committee at an October or November meeting.

Mrs. Harbison stated that she would rather not offer it than to give a scaled back version of it.

Mr. Margolis stated that we could have plans in place but if the partners are not going to participate that it would not make sense to offer it.

Mr. Riblet stated that he agreed with Mrs. Harbison in that it would take away from the program to try to scale it back. He stated staff would provide an update in the next couple of months.

Mr. Riblet stated that he wanted to run a couple of 2021 calendar dates by the Committee before the calendar was sent to print. He explained that December of 2021 was a five-week month which would have the Work Session scheduled for the fourth week landing on December 22. He stated that historically we would not hold a meeting the week of Christmas to allow people to be with their families and asked if moving the meeting to December 15 would meet their approval. He added that this would also prevent Council from having back to back meetings at the end of December and beginning of January.

The Committee discussed the dates and agreed with holding the Work Session on December 15, 2021.

Ms. Roesch mentioned that the City of Blue Ash has cancelled their Labor Day BAMSO concert but were impressed with the live streamed July 4th Concert that the City sponsored with BAMSO and is now considering holding a Veterans Day concert in the same format.

Guests and Residents

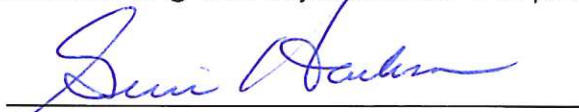
Mrs. Harbison asked if there were any guests or residents on the line that wished to speak. There was no response.

Minutes

Vice Mayor Margolis moved to accept the August 10, 2020 Government Affairs Committee minutes. Ms. Roesch seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Adjournment

Vice Mayor Margolis moved for adjournment. Ms. Roesch seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed. The Governmental Affairs Committee of Council meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.


Chair