

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 1

A Work Session of the Council of the City of Blue Ash, Ohio, was held on March 26, 2009. Vice Mayor Mark Weber called the meeting to order in the Blue Ash Conference Room at 7:00 PM.

### **OPENING CEREMONIES**

Vice Mayor Weber led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Rick Bryan, Councilman Lee Czerwonka, Councilwoman Stephanie Stoller, Councilman James Sumner, and Vice Mayor Mark Weber

MEMBER ABSENT: Mayor Robert J. Buckman, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Deputy Clerk of Council/Public Information Officer Sue Bennett, Treasurer/Administrative Services Director James Pfeffer, Parks & Recreation Director Chuck Funk, Public Works Director Mike Duncan, Fire Chief Rick Brown, Police Chief Chris Wallace, Assistant to the City Manager Kelly Osler, and two interested citizens (Dan Hosbrook and Jim Dyer)

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilwoman Stoller seconded to excuse Mayor Buckman from the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

### **WORK SESSION – Topic: Strategic Planning**

Vice Mayor Weber explained that tonight's meeting is a work session, with the topic being strategic planning. City Manager David Waltz added that in February 2008, Council held a similar work session, and he mentioned that the intent of this meeting is to be conversational, rather than formal decision making in nature. The overall goal is to review the major efforts associated with the core services of the City. A portion of the discussion will review items discussed at last year's session, while other portions will discuss new items.

### **Fire Services**

Mr. Waltz commented that a recent success of the Fire Department is the improved ISO rating – a sizeable change from a IV to a II. He emphasized the significance of that accomplishment and noted that not many communities have achieved this rating – perhaps less than 10% across the nation.

Fire Chief Rick Brown commented that the Department is extremely proud of the ISO rating accomplishment and noted that the staff worked hard to gain that achievement. Chief Brown thanked Council for their support.

In addressing questions from Council regarding the ISO rating, Chief Brown explained that examples of factors considered by ISO when determining their rating include the dispatch center (in our case, at the County); our fire department, including staffing, equipment, and stations; and our water supply, such as water pressure, how many hydrants, how hydrants are spaced, etc. He added that the increase to a II rating most likely financially assists corporate property owners in Blue Ash more than residential property owners with respect to insurance premiums since residents were already the beneficiary of favorable fire ratings. Blue Ash's cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions, and the participation in mutual aid agreements, also plays a major role in this upgrade.

Chief Brown noted recent efforts to restructure the Fire administrative team. With the recent retirement of former Assistant Chief Chuck Martin, the administration was realigned to consist of one Chief and two Assistant Chiefs. This repositioning eliminated one administrative position. Chief Brown also noted that these individuals still participate in many fire and EMS runs.

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 2

Chief Brown noted recent efforts of the department to perform more maintenance tasks in-house, including with fire hydrants as well as vehicles. Regarding maintenance of the fire hydrants, in-house staff now takes care of hydrants "from the road and above." A contractor, through joint effort with Hamilton County purchasing, takes care of hydrant maintenance issues below the road. The Fire Department now has two certified mechanics on staff, and they work with the Service Department mechanics in regards to maintenance of vehicles and equipment.

Chief Brown noted another recent change whereby the cellular phone inventory of the Department has been reduced from 22 to 12, and he noted that change has been a positive one.

Chief Brown distributed an article from a recent *InCommand Magazine*, the Ohio Fire Chiefs magazine. The article describes the collaborative efforts of area departments, including Blue Ash, Sharonville, Loveland/Symmes, and Sycamore Township. Chief Brown explained that the departments have been working on collaborative efforts such as shared training, joint purchasing, cost sharing, and other efficiencies, while still maintaining each department's identity. The group's goal is to become a model for other communities across Ohio.

In addressing a question from Councilman Bryan, Chief Brown commented that currently the department is not working on an effort to combine fire districts. City Manager Waltz confirmed that while there are a number of communities in the Greater Cincinnati area that are considering such joint districts (such as Wyoming, Woodlawn, and Lincoln Heights), that level of discussion is not being addressed by the Blue Ash group. Councilman Bryan complimented the Department on its efforts to share resources through policies of good fiscal management.

### **Police Services**

Police Chief Chris Wallace commented that they continue to monitor the future of Mayor's Courts which continues to be a concern because of legislation at the State level. However, at this time, it appears this legislation remains pending, and the legislature appears to not be moving towards passage of any version of it at this time. He explained that the Mayor's Court systems do continue to be a mechanism for departments to deliver traffic safety enforcement services at a reasonable net cost, while offering a convenience for citizens. Overall, he does not foresee a change in these laws in the immediate future.

In addressing a question from Councilman Czerwonka, Chief Wallace explained that if the City were forced to go to a magistrate system, he would expect an increase in costs; however, how high those costs would be would depend upon what version the legislature would enact as there has been a great variety. Councilman Sumner added that the Hamilton County Municipal League supports the change to a magistrate system; however, they support the version that creates a community court to allow some control to remain in the hands of the local jurisdiction. City Manager Waltz added that there is a purpose served by maintaining a Mayor's Court system. However, he stressed that Blue Ash's position is not because this system generates high revenues. In fact, the revenues generated do not cover the associated costs. The major benefit to Blue Ash is to be able to efficiently handle minor cases in a more convenient fashion for citizens.

Chief Wallace commented that in regards to communications, the Police Administration has looked closely at our dispatch function. Our department is not responsible for the full dispatch role since emergency calls are routed through the County's 9-1-1 system. The department views the dispatch role in Blue Ash more as a service and convenience to the community.

Chief Wallace spoke briefly about mutual aid and commented that seldom does a day go by that mutual aid is not utilized on one matter or another. He added that these arrangements are efficient and necessary in order to place resources where and when they are needed.

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 3

Chief Wallace discussed some recent cost-saving actions of the Department, such as the decision to reduce the number of dispatch positions through the redistribution of work loads, while still maintaining the high quality of services to citizens.

In addressing a question from Councilwoman Stoller, Chief Wallace explained that the City does have the capability of making emergency phone calls through the CodeRed system initiated within the past few years. That system had an initial load of citizen's phone numbers based upon public information, and additional contact numbers, such as cellular numbers, can be added by citizens through the internet and other means. The system has been used at least three times since its implementation, most recently during the windstorm in September 2008.

Chief Wallace discussed briefly continuing efforts to maximize space within the department's office areas. In the not-too-distant future, he anticipates the need for additional space. Some discussion was had regarding this, and Mr. Waltz explained that the administration did have an architect review this situation. He confirmed that the current layout is not how they would have designed it if starting from scratch and that the issue will continue to be monitored.

In regards to staffing, Chief Wallace noted that the department currently has two vacancies, with replacements to depend upon the economy and the City's revenues. Additional projects being held off due to current economic conditions include potential station/office space remodeling and the postponement of placing new police vehicles in service by keeping current vehicles longer. He added that within the next two or three weeks, they expect to put into service their newest vehicle, a Harley Davidson police motorcycle that was purchased utilizing forfeiture dollars. This vehicle gets 43 miles per gallon. An officer is currently in a training program. He added that an anticipated benefit with the motorcycle will be the ability to increase personal, positive contacts with citizens, in addition to having access to areas where police vehicles may not be able to maneuver. The intent is to use the motorcycle most of the year as the officer will also be equipped with cold weather gear.

Chief Wallace commented that an additional recent staffing/cost cutting change involves the use of on-duty personnel to cover times taken off by Sergeants (in lieu of scheduling another officer to cover on an overtime basis). Cost-cutting action has also been taken in terms of streamlining training functions with an effort to reduce overtime costs.

Chief Wallace commented that the department is offering all police employees the opportunity to participate in Spanish classes which the City will pay for. He explained that the need for bi-lingual personnel continues to increase, and participation in these classes is voluntary. In addition to several officers, two Mayor's Court employees are also participating.

In addressing a question from Councilman Czerwonka, Chief Wallace confirmed that the department does have a K-9 officer, and the arrangement is working out well.

In addressing a question from Councilwoman Stoller, Chief Wallace explained that moving to smaller patrol cars would be difficult given the need for certain equipment to be housed in each. However, the department is looking towards the possibility of moving to smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles for non-patrol police vehicles.

To further discussion regarding vehicles, Mr. Waltz asked Assistant to the City Manager Kelly Osler to comment on her work towards fleet analysis. Ms. Osler explained that she has looked at 2008 data for vehicles within all departments and divisions of the City. She explained that they are looking towards the possibility of utilizing more fuel efficient cars for those roles which would be appropriate, and that the Administration is also reviewing closely the policy and procedures associated with staff take-home vehicles. Mr. Waltz added that the City has many very large vehicles and pieces of equipment that are necessary for the job they do (such as the fire trucks, large dump trucks, etc.). However, the departments are looking towards the possibility of changing related processes. Councilman Sumner complimented the staff and encouraged further work, especially towards the review of take-home vehicles.

### **Finance and Administration**

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 4

Treasurer/Administrative Services Director Jim Pfeffer commented that the Administration continues to take a conservative approach towards financial management of the City. He complimented all departments on their efforts to minimize staffing costs, particularly overtime. He reiterated the City's plans to slow down the purchase of capital items until at least after the first quarter when overall revenue trends will be reviewed. Mr. Waltz added that although we are postponing some capital purchases, it is important also that the City does not get behind. Given the state of the competitive market, where competitive pricing is abundant, the Administration may decide to move ahead with some projects after review of the first quarter's position. As of the 26th of March, the City is short about \$140,000 (compared to March 26, 2008 collections). Overall, given the current economy, such collections are better than might be expected.

Councilman Bryan commented that Blue Ash is a high amenity community and that continuation of quality services contributing to quality of life for citizens is crucial. He stressed that what he views the actions the City is taking is simply saving money in areas that do not negatively impact service areas for citizens. Mr. Waltz agreed and reiterated that over the next few weeks, after continuing monitoring, it might be best for the City to move forward on some projects.

Mr. Pfeffer commented that there are very few cities as Blue Ash that have held up as well in this current economic situation. He commented that about 22% to 25% of the City's tax revenues are from net profit (with the remaining representing withholding), and that net profit collections do traditionally lag. However, to date, the good news is that many of the City's largest taxpayers are doing well, even in this down economy.

Mr. Pfeffer mentioned recent efforts to control employee insurance costs and commented that the formation of the employee-based insurance advisory committee is working very well. He anticipates that overall insurance costs in 2009 will remain about level with those costs in 2008.

Mr. Pfeffer reiterated that the General Fund (including reserves) is in good shape. Including the beginning level of reserves at the start of the year, the General Fund is at about \$13.5 million today. After the first quarter, after sending approximately \$1.3 million towards the Recreation Center project, the General Fund remains at approximately \$13.5 million. He stressed that this also represents a positive reflection on our community's financial status.

In the Human Resources area, Mr. Pfeffer commented that union activity remains strong overall in the public sector. Currently, the HR team, which Kelly Osler is also assisting with, is working with the firefighters. In the fall, negotiations will resume with Police Sergeants and the Service Department AFSCME group. In 2010, negotiations will take place with Police patrol. Mr. Waltz added that strong union activity in the public sector seems to be a national trend.

In the public relations area, Mr. Pfeffer commented that regular written communications to citizens and the public continue through the community newsletter and calendar. Public Information Officer Sue Bennett summarized additional recent communications efforts:

- eBlast electronic newsletter communication to be sent out at least once a month and more often when news warrants.
- Work continues on the customer service response application being implemented by the Technology Officer. This will be another mechanism for citizen communication and will be tied to the website. Citizens will be able to request certain types of service, while at the same time, the system will allow the City to record and track requests and confirm that corrective action was taken. The Service Department is currently using the system in-house, and applications associated with community development/code enforcement will also soon be implemented. A benefit of this system is that the information can be integrated with the abundant CAGIS data.
- The alternative method for publicizing Council legislation, utilizing a "Municipal Bulletin" via the City's website, is expected to be implemented in late April pending

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 5

Council's approval.

- The Administration is looking into the possibility of a program that allows an online forum for civic engagement – called “Open City Hall.” It is likely this will be recommended, and will represent an additional way to facilitate communications with citizens as it will offer an alternative method to offer their opinions and ideas.

City Manager David Waltz added that it is the City's goal for citizens to recognize the City's website as the source for accurate information about what's going on in the community rather than other non-City related “blog” type sites which often contain inaccurate information.

Councilman Czerwonka commented that he, Tom Murphy, and Kelly Osler have been attending regular “Green Climate” initiatives, along with other interested jurisdictions throughout the region. It is his opinion that in terms of “going green,” Blue Ash is far ahead of most jurisdictions on such initiatives.

Councilman Bryan commented on a recent guest column in the *Northeast Suburban Press* by Dr. Marvin Lucas, a candidate for Council, which includes a number of significant errors in its financial data. Just one example of an error included was that it stated the City had about \$101.5 million due in bond payments between now and the year 2022 – which is grossly incorrect. He commented that at the beginning of this year, the total bond obligation is just over \$19 million (\$1.5 million for Kenwood Road; \$2.6 million for Reed Hartman Highway; \$10 million for the Rec Center, and \$5 million for the firehouse), and by the end of 2009, it will be \$15.5 million. Councilman Bryan commented that he does not understand how those numbers were derived by the author, except for the possibility of his misconstruing a figure close to that representing the ending balances of all the bonds added up. A second example of a major error in the article claims that in 2007 the City's CAFR showed an operating deficit of \$21 million – another completely inaccurate figure. In fact, the governmental funds actually increased during 2007 by over \$7 million. Councilman Bryan commented that if this information is allowed to stand, it could cast a bad, and very inaccurate, picture on the entirety of the City as it implies that the City's finances are badly managed. Councilman Bryan suggested that the City's Treasurer, the person most knowledgeable about the City's true financial picture, call Dr. Lucas and try to work with him to get a correction printed. He suggested that the Treasurer write the paper to correct the factual misinformation, as the two errors quoted above are only representative of others. He urged that the facts be told and that the record be set straight for the good of our citizens.

Councilman Sumner commented that he does not believe it is appropriate for a member of the Administration to respond to what he interprets as a political attack. It is his opinion that Council should respond to such issues of a political nature, and it is his suggestion that the attack be ignored.

Some discussion was had regarding what would be the most appropriate response to this article. Councilwoman Stoller commented that she does not believe it is appropriate to ask the Administration to call the author, though she believes it is fitting for the Administration to lead the effort to clarify the facts.

Vice Mayor Weber agreed with the action of having the Treasurer respond. It is his opinion that the inaccurate information included in the article could impute the integrity of the entire City – not just him, as several comments in the article were directed at him personally. He added that there is no doubt that the numbers quoted are inaccurate, and it is his opinion that the City is obligated to provide verified and accurate information to its citizens.

After further discussion, it was the consensus of the majority of Council that the Administration (Treasurer) move forward with sending a response to the newspaper to assure the correct facts are provided for citizens with a non-political tone.

### **Public Works & Community Infrastructure**

Public Works Director Mike Duncan commented on ways the Service Department is streamlining operations. Currently the department has two positions that it is not planning to

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 6

fill. This past winter, the number of snow routes was decreased by two, while still providing excellent services for citizens and motorists. Staff changes include change of responsibilities and authority associated with the Service Worker II and Service Coordinator positions. In addition, the department staff now works four ten-hour work days, as compared to the prior five eight-hour days. This change has been well-received by the staff, and results in increased productivity since it is easier to get projects completed with the longer work days.

The department is working to reduce maintenance costs. Just one example is the relatively recent staff change which utilizes Ryan Noland as a construction inspector. Since that task was formerly performed by our engineers at CDS Associates, this move saves substantial funds. A relatively recent hire previously worked for Hamilton County and repaired fire hydrants. This person now performs our hydrant maintenance with Fire crews, along with other duties with the Service Department.

Overall strategic planning issues affecting public works were briefly addressed, with highlights discussed below:

- Salt purchase – the more environmentally friendly Geomelt product to control ice and snow on roads (derived from beet juice) was used and is effective; however, its cost is three times that of calcium chloride.
- Regarding the street maintenance program, efforts are being made within whole neighborhoods, as well as on collectors and arterials. Carver Road will need a major rehab at some point in the near future. The 2009 paving program will include Reed Hartman Highway from Glendale-Milford to Cooper (utilizing stimulus funds); Hunt Road between Plainfield and West (in conjunction with a Water Works project); the “Birdville” neighborhood (in conjunction with a Water Works project); Cooper Road between Reed Hartman and Blue Ash Road; the Sycamore Trace neighborhood; and the Hazelwood neighborhood (utilizing CDBG funds).
- Regarding the street improvement program, plans are to implement projects from the Reed Hartman Highway/Plainfield Corridor study completed in recent years. This includes improvements on Plainfield to extend a right-turn lane from Georgetown to Peppermill; adding a southbound right-turn lane on Reed Hartman at Carver; and widening Malsbary Road at Reed Hartman Highway.
- Plans are still in the works for ODOT improvement at the I-71/Pfeiffer interchange. These improvements are expected to begin in 2013. Though this interchange is physically located within Montgomery, it services much traffic entering Blue Ash from the east and is crucial to Blue Ash’s traffic safety flow.
- Work will continue each year to upgrade traffic signals to the more efficient LED type, along with some UPS (uninterrupted power supply). Three signals will be completed utilizing State Highway funds; three signals utilizing City funds; two additional UPS will be added, where LED’s are already in place (Reed Hartman Highway at Cooper and Plainfield at Hunt); and potential UPS at Reed Hartman/Plainfield/Peppermill, if funding allows.
- Recent year’s efforts to improve “connectivity” throughout the City will continue in 2009. In 2009, the sidewalk/bikeway program will include improvements on Mohler Road and to Carpenter’s Run; Creek Road to Kenwood; at the Plainfield/Hunt intersection; at Plainfield and Cooper at the Pioneer Memorial gazebo; and potentially on Reed Hartman from Creek to Glendale-Milford, Plainfield from Foxhollow to Glendale-Milford, and Cooper from Plainfield to Reed Hartman Highway.
- Several downtown projects are planned including one by the Water Works to extend a 36” water main through the Kenwood/Cooper intersection to the eastern corporate limit. This project should begin in late 2009 and continue into 2010. Cooper Road will be restored after the Water Works installation. Traffic signal upgrades and potential street light upgrades are also planned in 2010.

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 7

- Future public works projects related to the future signature park near the airport would include potential purchase of property near the Senior Center; the need to begin design approximately two years prior to construction; and improvements to Glendale-Milford to complement access to the future park.

Mr. Duncan mentioned briefly the efforts by the City of Cincinnati owned Water Works utility to restructure which would involve separating from the City of Cincinnati and re-creating its own regional utility. He mentioned, and Councilman Sumner agreed, that the Water Works is considered a well managed and world-class utility. Councilman Sumner also spoke briefly regarding his involvement with the Water Works' effort to restructure.

### **Economic & Community Development**

Mr. Waltz commented that Judy Clark was unable to attend this evening's meeting, and the Assistant to the City Manager, Kelly Osler, will be updating Council on recent efforts of the Economic & Community Development office.

Mrs. Osler updated Council on the economic development outreach efforts focused on retaining and attracting new businesses to Blue Ash. The Blue Ash Ambassadors continue to meet with area companies with their personal one-on-one visits. The goal is for the group visit about 150 existing companies this year, and they target companies that have leases due to expire within the next three years. An example of one benefit already gained this year from these visits was the fact that we learned that a company's Asheville, North Carolina based headquarters leadership team is planning to choose the location for a future consolidation of two Ohio offices. One choice is Blue Ash and the other is another Ohio community. Knowledge such as this allows the office to proactively work to encourage this company to select Blue Ash for their expansion.

Business attraction efforts include continued participation with Cincinnati USA Partnership as it continues to market the region for investment nationally as well as from around the world. Continued participation in future business trade missions with this group is also planned.

Work continues on the Blue Ash Life Science collaborative, with two additional programs planned this year – a networking function scheduled for late spring and an educational function planned in the fall.

In addition to the focus on the life sciences industry, efforts will also be made towards attracting firms within the IT industry, to complement the already sizeable IT community in Blue Ash. The City plans to partner with The Circuit, a local IT association, to convene and recruit IT professionals to Blue Ash.

Examples of recent relocation/expansion successes include:

- Epsilon moved to Lake Forest Drive in late 2008 to 28,000 square feet formerly occupied by Fidelity Investments. Epsilon is a marketing service firm with about 104 employees which moved from Milford.
- Diversified Brokerage Specialists moved to Blue Ash from downtown into the former Dermopath building in downtown on Kenwood Road at Fairview Avenue. DBS was in downtown Cincinnati for 60 years and moved to Blue Ash in late 2008.
- The Oncology Hematology Care facility underwent a major expansion at their facility on Reed Hartman and Malsbary Road.

## BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 8

- Omya Industries moved to Blue Ash from Vermont in 2007 into 25,000 square feet at Duke's Landings II building. Earlier this year, they added an additional 9,400 square feet to accommodate the additional staff they are hiring locally and relocating from other offices. Omya's initial employee count was 66, and it is estimated that they will exceed 100 with their additional space.

Efforts towards potential redevelopment in the future are being made for Osborne Boulevard. Progress continues on the Osborne study currently underway by the Hamilton County Development Corporation (HCDC). The study will investigate site assembly, a redevelopment strategy, the possibility of financial incentives (TIF, tax credit) and development programs (job ready sites). Also related to potential future redevelopment, areas such as Ronald Reagan Highway/Plainfield Road, Ronald Reagan Highway/Blue Ash Road, Reed Hartman/Cornell Road, and the Deerfield Road area will be considered. Also, as mentioned earlier by the Public Works Director, attention will continue to be made in downtown, with near future streetscaping improvements in the works.

The housing study was delivered to Council several weeks ago, and the Administration is hopeful this report will assist in developing specific future strategies. After brief discussion, it was suggested that this discussion be scheduled as a potential future work session.

### **Parks & Recreation / Leisure-Time**

Highlights of recent activities associated with Parks & Recreation were presented by the Parks & Recreation Director, Chuck Funk, and are summarized below:

- The Recreation Center project is on schedule, with the project nearing completion. The majority of the facility will be open by the Memorial Day weekend. In order to open by this time, it will be necessary to close the building for approximately two weeks to complete the transition. The entirety of the building will be ready for the planned dedication and celebration set for Saturday, July 25. Recreation offices should move from their temporary trailer home to their final home within the building the week of April 6. The goal throughout the project was to minimize closings and inconvenience to citizens and members, with it necessary to close only approximately two days thus far. After brief discussion, it was mentioned that Council members who wish a tour of the building prior to the next Council meeting (April 23) should meet at the Center at 5:30PM.
- Planning continues towards the future golf course clubhouse and banquet facility. A market and feasibility study is currently being done with a May presentation to Council hopeful. Mr. Waltz added that since the last study was completed several years ago, the desire is to confirm that the size and type of facility being planned will still be supported by the market. It is anticipated that the architect will resume clubhouse design activity this summer or fall.
- With 2009 representing the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the golf course's opening, special activities are planned to celebrate. On July 7, representing 30 years to the day after the course's opening, the plan is to offer a "golf like in 1979" special, including a rollback of golf and food rates. This year also represents the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Recreation Center since it opened on the very same day in 1979, with special ceremonies and a special reception in the works for the July 25<sup>th</sup> dedication event. Mr. Waltz added that dignitaries are being invited. In addressing a question from Mr. Waltz, it was the consensus of Council that if someone of extremely high political stature at the State level, such as the Governor, could be secured as a keynote speaker, to move forward with such. Otherwise, the ceremonies will retain local representatives.
- Mr. Funk commented that he and his staff have recently met with downtown restaurant representatives regarding Council's desire to increase activity in downtown. It is their hope that additional activities in downtown will take place this summer. The Tuesday and Friday evening concert series will continue to be held on Towne Square, along

BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

March 26, 2009

Page 9

with the SummerBration and Taste of Blue Ash special events. The plan is to have “42 events in 100 days” during the summer months. In addressing a question from Councilman Sumner regarding requests for events in downtown sponsored by parties other than the City, Mr. Funk commented that he has received no requests to date.

- Regarding the future signature park near the airport, Mr. Funk commented on the need to determine what park amenities would be desired. Concepts continue to be discussed internally. After brief discussion, Mr. Waltz encouraged Council to consider whether they would like to schedule a public “walking” of the future park area – similar to the walk-through Council experienced in late 2008. In addressing a question from Councilwoman Stoller, Mr. Waltz commented that there is no update to report regarding Cincinnati’s efforts in attaining FAA funds for reconfiguration of the airport.
- Mr. Funk spoke briefly regarding the effects of recent natural happenings on trees throughout the community. Parks and golf maintenance crews are involved with this activity. Over the past year, about 100 trees were lost on the Golf Course. The department continues to remove dead and dying trees and to plant additional trees each year (about 50 to 100 this year). To date, the existence of the Emerald Ash Borer has not been confirmed in Blue Ash.
- Like other City departments, Mr. Funk commented the Parks & Recreation Department is also working diligently towards cost savings. Staffing has been reduced, as well as overtime, and some capital purchases are on hold. Some operational changes are planned for special events to reduce costs – particularly to reduce overtime costs associated with the Fire, Police and Service departments. These changes will not be “visible” in a negative sense to citizens or visitors. Also, with Mr. Funk handling the booking of national entertainment for SummerBration this year, costs are being saved in the entertainment booking area.

City Manager Waltz thanked Council for their continuing support and for their participation in this evening’s planning session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

After all items on the agenda were acted upon, Councilman Czerwonka moved, Councilman Bryan seconded to convene an Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to personnel (Council vacancy). The Deputy Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Stoller, Sumner, Weber, Czerwonka, and Bryan voted yes. Five yeses. Motion carried.

After matters pertaining to personnel were discussed, Councilman Sumner moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to convene to the regular meeting. A voice vote was taken. All Council members voted yes. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

All items on the agenda having been acted upon, Councilman Czerwonka moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 PM.

---

Mark F. Weber, Vice Mayor

MINUTES WRITTEN BY:

---

Susan K. Bennett, Deputy Clerk of Council