

COUNCIL OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

Topic: Van Wert Forward Downtown Parking Study

September 13th, 2021

President Jon Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Tomlinson asked representatives of the Van Wert County Foundation (VWCF) and Van Wert Forward (VWF) group - Seth Baker, Hall Block, and Laney Nofer - if they had any additional information to present to Council. It was noted that they did not, and were present to answer any questions or address any concerns that Council, or the public, might have during the meeting.

Balyeat recalled working on Main Street in the past when there were many more businesses present, and didn't believe that a study today could accurately account for a time when there was more customer traffic and business traffic than is currently present. She continued by stating that parking restrictions were in effect during that time, and with the VWF plan to fill those buildings again in the future with residential units and business units, she couldn't imagine not bringing back parking restrictions in the future. She would be concerned about any plan that did not have specific parking restrictions and enforcement in place.

Davis noted that while he was aware that there would be minimal impact during Phase I on the overall VWF master plan, he was concerned with the future potential investments the city would have to make toward parking restrictions and enforcement, due to current financial restraints. He wants to make sure that Council considers current and future financial implications with any decisions that may occur, even if these implications don't crop up until Phase II or later. He stated that he knew projections would be difficult to identify that far into the future, but also stated he wasn't sure if the city was in a place to make investments.

Tomlinson commented that the financial constraints are dependent on the downtown remaining in status quo. He noted that if the downtown fills up, and more jobs are brought in, then the city's tax situation and financial picture would change significantly. He also stated that, if this turns out to be the case, then parking restrictions and enforcement would likely pay for themselves, using the water meter project as a comparison. He acknowledged it was difficult to predict the future, in terms of downtown, job situations in Van Wert, or the economy overall. He also stated that the points that Balyeat and Davis brought forth were valid points for Council to consider.

Marshall asked about possible investments for the enforcement of parking permits or other forms of parking restrictions. It was noted that Van Wert hasn't utilized meters, or other similar methods, for many years, so it was difficult to project.

With no other concerns or questions stated from Council, Markward summarized the city administration's views. He stated that if there was no residential parking permitted on Main Street or Washington Street, then the rest of the proposal from VWF was satisfactory. Tomlinson added that if additional issues should arise, then the VWF plans would need to adjust accordingly.

Nofer passed out a copy of the VWCF/VWF's proposed language for a possible ordinance amendment. Baker, Block, and Nofer acknowledged that additional definitions would need to be added, and other language may need to be adjusted with the help of the Law Director.

Block also provided an update on the current VWF Phase I progress, noting that selective demolition has begun. He explained that selective demolition meant that specific or selective demolition of building additions or interior elements had begun. They would begin to block off and delineate pedestrian pathways along the Phase I locations this week.

With no further questions or concerns from Council or the public, the Council of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.



**Clerk of Council
Andrew Bittner**



**Council President
Jon Tomlinson**

9/27/21

Date