

COMMON COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
CITY HALL  
FEBRUARY 20, 2024

City Council President Frank Miller appeared in person and called a regular meeting of the City Common Council to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

**I. Meeting Called to Order**

- A. Pastor Frank Griffin with Calvary Community Church provided the invocation.
- B. Councilor Josh Burnett led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Introduction of Guests and Visitors – Jody Coffman, City Communications and Events Coordinator, provided information for the Total Solar Eclipse events scheduled for Friday, April 5, 2024 through Monday, April 8, 2024.

Mayor Mary Ferdon introduced Mike Richardson, current Chief of the Columbus Police Department, as the first Director of Security and Risk, following his retirement later this spring. Mike will begin his new role on June 3, 2024.

President Miller offered a new sign up form for individuals who wish to address the Council at the end of Council meetings. He requested the document be submitted to Council President prior to the end of the meeting, and preferably before the start of a meeting if the document can be loaded on the City's website.

- D. Roll Call was taken: Christopher Bartels, Elaine Hilber, Jerone Wood, Frank Miller, Kent Anderson, Jay Foyst, Josh Burnett, Tom Dell, and Grace Kestler were present in person.
- E. Councilor Kestler made a motion to approve the minutes from the Common Council meeting on February 6, 2024, as presented. Councilor Hilber seconded the motion. Motion passed by a vote of nine in favor and zero opposed.

**II. Old Business Requiring Council Action**

- A. Second Reading of an Ordinance entitled, "ORDINANCE NO. 3, 2024, AN ORDINANCE AMEND SECTION 1.12.010 (GENERAL PENALTIES) OF THE COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL CODE." Robin Hilber, Community Development Director, presented this ordinance. She stated Alex Whitted, Corporate Counsel, and Fred Barnett, Code Enforcement, were in the audience and available to answer any questions. Robin explained they are asking for an amendment to a General Penalties Ordinance to be consistent with the maximum penalties under I.C. 36-1-3-8(10). Discussion followed. Fred spoke briefly regarding previous violations. There were no comments from the audience. Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the ordinance as

presented. Councilor Dell seconded the motion. Motion passed by a vote of nine in favor and zero opposed.

### III. New Business Requiring Council Action


- A. First Reading of an Ordinance entitled, "ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR FUNDS FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION PARK BOND FUND FOR THE BUDGET YEAR 2024." Pam Harrell, Associate Director of Business Services, Columbus Parks and Recreation, presented this ordinance. She explained the request is to appropriate interest earned to date on bond proceeds for the Parks Bond, which was established in 2022 for the NexusPark Phase 1B project. The total interest is \$563,252.20 through the end of January, plus \$754.00 that was not encumbered in 2022. Brief discussion followed. There were no comments from the audience. Councilor Burnett made a motion to pass the first reading of the ordinance and place in proper channels. Councilor Hilber seconded the motion. Motion passed by a vote of nine in favor and zero opposed.

### IV. Other Business

- A. Presentation by ASAP Director, Sherry Jewett
- B. Standing Committee and Liaison Reports – none mentioned.
- C. President Miller stated Kerri Sinbaldi requested to speak regarding constituent engagement. She read a prepared statement and asked that it be included in the meeting minutes (see attached).
- D. The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 6:00 p.m.**
- E. Councilor Hilber made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Foyst seconded the motion. Motion passed by a vote of nine in favor and zero opposed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 P.M.



Clerk of the City of Columbus



Presiding Officer

I am here today to advocate on behalf of all Columbus constituents and in hopes that you will see that it might be time to establish a code of conduct, or at least start a much-needed conversation.

First let me say that perception is reality. I'm here to speak from my experience and the many people who reached out to me personally after the last two City Council meetings. There is no reason to be adversarial. We only want to feel heard and considered, we expect more from our elected officials. Over & over, I heard, "Their minds were already made up." The possibility of any change when moving to a 2nd-class city no longer looks so rosy.

My interactions with the majority of the city council members are really quite favorable, even outside my district and even we might not agree.

- Elaine has been great responding to almost every email I have ever sent and has no problem explaining her position. I know it is not always easy. I've always appreciated the respect that she has shown me as well as others I know.
- Grace has also always been very quick to respond to any questions on city government, or project specifics. The newly sworn councilors have also been quite responsive, and we appreciate it.

This is where it gets difficult, there is no pretty way to bring this up. Mr. Miller, you have openly "mocked" and dismissed voters who have spoken here. We do not by default understand all of the inner workings and processes of city government. Say like spending hours preparing email statements to find out that unless you say "I want this in the record" they aren't considered. You don't even acknowledge emails, and we are only allowed 3 minutes.

We specifically asked those speaking regarding the 11<sup>th</sup> & Washington St. Project to ONLY speak to Zoning since you chastised anyone for being worried about affordable housing previously. Then you made the point that you were surprised that nobody raised the topic of affordable housing in the last meeting. *That's condescending*

I am here to tell you; people are afraid to come and speak before this body for a couple reasons.

- The first is fear of professional ramifications. Some don't want to be quoted in the paper.
- I have been approached by at least a dozen in "city government" who want to, and for obvious reasons feel they can't.
- Others have seen how you are treated when you do share your position.

I have seen you attend Planning commission meetings and interject without the permission of the presiding officer. even though it may be germane to the discussion. When a citizen called you out on it you raised your voice, became confrontational & tried to justify your "untimed" comments as acceptable because of your standing on the city council.

It almost makes me question whether you really want civic engagement. Wanting engagement with constituents when wanting their votes then treating them so poorly when they remain engaged is inexcusable.

"Opportunities to Lead Together". *should include the community*