

CITY OF ROCKY RIVER

October 7, 2024

The Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting of Council was called to order by Mr. Furry, President of Council, immediately following the Public Hearing in the David J. Cook Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mrs. Gallagher, Mr. O'Boyle, Mr. Shipp,
Mrs. Morris, Mr. Furry

Council Members Absent: Mr. Hunt, Mr. Sindelar

Administration: Mayor Bobst, Director Snyder, Mr. Thomas

Law Director: Mr. O'Shea

MAYOR'S REPORT:

The Mayor congratulated Dr. Previts and his wife Fran on the occasion of their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

The Mayor shared that the city's beloved resident Dan Coughlin passed away over the weekend. He was a wonderful member of the community and spent a lot of time with the Rocky River Library and many of the city's civic organizations providing lectures and participating in many things. He was very generous with his time and spirit. Mr. Coughlin will be missed as one of our residents.

The Mayor informed City Council of a resident who is currently missing. This individual's clothing and keys were found at one of the lakefront beaches. Friends and family have not been able to locate him. The Detectives are working on the case. Saturday the WestShore Technical Rescue Team and Marine Patrol boat along with the Coast Guard were on the lake and again Sunday morning. They have used drones and sonar but still have not been able to locate this individual in the lake. A big thank you is extended from the City of Rocky River to the WestShore partners. Personnel from Bay Village, North Olmsted, Lakewood and Fairview Park all helped in the search. The cities have invested in the training and equipment of these rescue teams and it is the right investment to make. There is a bulletin out for all Police Departments and the media is now involved.

The Mayor had a walk-through at Roundstone along with the contractor and owner last week. The building is tremendous and employees moved in as of October 1st. It is a remarkable building with beautiful architecture that gives a huge nod to the history of its location, which is the Cowan Pottery Factory. While excavating, several pieces of broken pottery were discovered and they have used these pieces to create artwork and color tiles out of respect and to honor Cowan Pottery along with a sign in front of the building. The Mayor appreciates all that Roundstone has done for the region and is happy to be their host community. The owner is also a resident of Rocky River and the Mayor wishes them every success.

The Mayor announced that "Once Upon a Time" Toy Store celebrated its 40th anniversary this weekend. Jack Seelie started it 40 years ago and had a wonderful celebration over the weekend. On behalf of City Council and the administration, a Certificate of Special Recognition was presented to him. Mr. Seelie was very touched. The Mayor wishes him continued success.

The Storybook Walkway at Linden Park was dedicated last week. The Storybook Walkway was an Eagle Scout project that Director Snyder and the Service Department helped with. Eagle Scout Evan Baisch's parents personally thanked the Mayor for the help received by the Service Department following the tornado on August 6th. Service Commissioner Sam Rosario was in attendance. Thank you also to Director Snyder.

The Mayor said that seven contractors attended the pre-bid meeting for the Senior Center project. The administration hopes that they all bid on the project.

The Mayor stated that Mitchell's Ice Cream Store will be having an interior renovation during the winter months and will be closed during the renovation.

There will be a Safety Town Celebration this Friday from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. to thank the many people that had a hand in making Safety Town a reality. This includes the WestShore Technical Carpentry students who built all the structures, Director Snyder for the installation of the train crossing and signal light, the Police Department, the Recreation Department and all the donors who helped to work with the city on this important safety project.

- Councilwoman Morris met a resident this week who is very excited for the new walkway at Linden Park.

MR. TONY RAMOS, RELATIONSHIP MANAGER FROM NOPEC

President Furry introduced Mr. Tony Ramos, Relationship Manager from NOPEC who discussed Ordinance Nos. 67-24 and 68-24 concerning the Opt-In Natural Gas Aggregation Program. NOPEC manages the Electric and Gas Aggregation Programs for the City of Rocky River. This evening, Mr. Ramos will specifically discuss the Gas Program. Mr. Ramos explained that currently a resident of the city who participates in the Electric Aggregation Program can leave the program or opt out of it, decide to come back and it is as simple as making a phone call to NOPEC. It typically takes 1-2 billing cycles for the resident to get pulled back into the Electric Aggregation. As it stands now, a gas customer who opts out of the program and decides to come back in a few months cannot come back as easily as the electric side. They would have to wait until the next enrollment period for gas which happens every two years. The next enrollment period happens this upcoming Spring 2025. If a resident opted out this past June and wants to come back before winter, they must wait until next year. The changes NOPEC is requesting is to update the Plan of Operation and Governance to make the change so the Gas Program functions just like the Electric Program. This is taking a step to update the POG so NOPEC can provide a higher level of customer service to the residents. This is just an administrative update as the State wrote Gas Aggregation differently than it did Electric. The Opt-Out Program is not changing but people that want to come back will have an easier time coming back.

Mr. Ramos is required by State rules to conduct two Public Hearings which he has scheduled for November 6, 2024, in Council Chambers, from 12:00-1:00 and 5:00-6:00 p.m. No one from the city is required to participate. Mr. Ramos will then come back to City Council and report on the meetings. NOPEC will take care of filing the paperwork with the PUCO and it will be complete. Mr. Ramos left literature and his business card at each of Council's places.

- President Furry asked if residents are automatically enrolled in the Gas Program. Mr. Ramos explained how the programs currently work. A new resident of Rocky River would receive an eligibility letter explaining the Aggregation Programs. They will automatically be pulled into these two programs, unless an Opt-Out card is completed. If a resident would opt-out, they

would then need to find their own retail supplier. If residents do nothing, they are enrolled in the NOPEC Program.

- The Mayor added that there are no fees or penalties at NOPEC's end but there could be fees and penalties with other suppliers.
- Mr. Ramos said that next spring, everyone who is eligible for the Aggregation Program will receive the required reenrollment letters letting them know and that it is on a two-year cycle for gas and every three years for electric.
- The Mayor said that several communities have already passed this legislation on NOPEC's behalf. Mr. Ramos said that currently Parma Heights, Olmsted Township and the Village of Lindale are all in the process of passing this legislation.
- The Mayor added that this was on the Ballot several years ago and was approved by the residents. As Mr. Ramos has explained, if residents are presented with a better rate, they can move to a new supplier. A caution is given to be sure that there are no fees or penalties if you want to move back after the rate changes. Many have variable rates. The Mayor appreciates the support that NOPEC has given administratively to the city and residents. Mr. Ramos said that over fifty communities have already passed this legislation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Amended Ordinance No. 32-24: Mr. O'Boyle said this was discussed during the Public Hearing Council just had. Unless there are questions or observations from other members of Council, Mr. O'Boyle will move for passage of this ordinance at the next Legislative Meeting.

Ordinance No. 56-24: Mr. Furry stated that this is currently on hold while details are being worked out. Hopefully by the next meeting this will be addressed.

Ordinance No. 64-24: Mr. Furry said this is for participation in the Heritage Home Loan Program. The city was in this program years ago but was not used much and left the program. There is more interest in it now, so the city is giving it another trial. This Program provides both consultation and some lower interest loans that might be effective now. This has been read once and Mr. Furry will seek three full reads with passage in a few weeks.

Amended Ordinance No. 65-24: Mr. Shipp said this is to enter into a contract with SmithGroup for Bradstreet's Landing to complete tasks two through four of the Spencer Creek Stream Restoration. In the minutes of the previous meeting, Director Snyder described task three as completing the design and permitting process and preparing the construction plan bid documents; task four is the construction implementation assistance where submittals are evaluated and requests for information for anything the contractor may have and will provide. Director Snyder has forwarded the email to City Council with all the details concerning the tasks.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 66-24: President Furry said this ordinance was addressed by Mr. Ramos from NOPEC.

Ordinance No. 67-24: President Furry said this ordinance was addressed by Mr. Ramos from NOPEC.

Ordinance No. 68-24: Councilwoman Morris said this ordinance is to repair the roof of the WWTP Screen Building. Munich Insurance will reimburse the city minus the deductible of \$5,000. A. W. Farrell and Sons, Inc. was the winning bid at \$83,000 compared to other bids of \$113,000 and \$124,000. A. W. Farrell and Sons have been vetted and have been used previously.

- President Furry asked Council if they would agree to suspend rules at the next Legislative Meeting to pass this legislation. Council agreed to suspend the rules at the next Legislative Meeting.

Ordinance No. 69-24: Mr. Shipp said this is an ordinance to enter into a contract with Redcon LLC for the Elmwood Park ballfield fencing at a cost not to exceed \$219,925. There is Exhibit A with contract details. This is to replace all the ballfield fencing at Elmwood and this has been discussed at the Parks and Recreation meeting. Two types of fencing were discussed comparing aluminum footed steel and one with a vinyl covering. One of the members works for the MetroParks and said with his experience of vinyl fencing, it would be better not to use the vinyl as it chips. Mr. Shipp coached a travel baseball team that practiced and played at Elmwood Park and he can vouch for the need to replace the fencing. This will have three full reads.

COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Furry thanked Chief Lenart for the Fire Department showing up at his home this morning to check on smokeless wire issues. Thankfully it was a false alarm. Mr. Furry will not be able to attend the Safety Town dedication this Friday. He will be out of town for a family wedding. In honor of Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day, City Council will not be meeting next week. There will be a Special Meeting on October 21st before the Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: NONE

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS: NONE

President Furry adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

David W. Furry
President of Council

Susan G. Pease
Clerk of Council