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PLANNING COMMISSION

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Regional Policy Roundtable
May 16, 2023
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Members in attendance introduced themselves.

Special Update from Ohio House Minority Leader Allison Russo

The Chair recognized a guest, Ohio House Minority Leader Allison Russo, who provided an update on the state transportation and operating budgets. On the transportation budget, Leader Russo highlighted funding for public transit, federal highway flex funds, the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program, a statewide strategic transportation study, funding for transportation improvement districts, and new railway safety regulations. In the operating budget, she highlighted H2Ohio and the Rivers Initiative, brownfield remediation and demolition funds, the Connect4Ohio program, the local government fund, and inflation adjustment of the homestead exemption. She further noted that the priority of the House Democratic Caucus has been to support services that support jobs and help workers get to jobs.

Mr. Tugend asked about the minority caucus's relationship with the Speaker in light of HJR 1/SJR 2. She noted that while last week's vote was difficult, the caucus continues to pursue areas of bipartisan agreement.

The Chair asked how Rep. Russo's relationship with the speaker's office has progressed or regressed over the last few months. Rep. Russo responded that she and the Speaker share a common pragmatism and communicate frequently and openly.

Mr. Warner asked about the State Low Income Housing Tax Credit's (LIHTC) chances in the Senate, and how she sees the conversation going through conference committee. Leader Russo noted that she is very concerned about the issue and the President's narrow focus on single-family housing. She is hopeful that the Governor may become involved in the conversation.

Mr. Garrity asked what Leader Russo is most proud of in HB 33. She noted the Fair School Funding Plan, the increase in childcare funding, and the increases to direct care service provider wages.

Drive Investment Update

Mr. Bradley and Mr. Garrity provided an update on MORPC's Drive Investment approach. Mr. Bradley made note of Money Mondays. He also mentioned the Drive Investment member survey, and encouraged members to participate. Mr. Bradley also noted several funding opportunities MORPC will be applying for, including CPRG, Amtrak, Tech Hubs, RAISE, and CFI.

Mr. Garrity provided additional context on the Drive Investment approach, making note of new staff and resources for MORPC members. He also provided an update on MORPC's Amtrak applications, and the role of the Columbus Region Coalition in securing support from members of Congress.

Legislative Update

Mr. Tugend provided an update on the operating budget, noting that a more conservative budget is expected from the Senate. Specifically, the Senate President wants to further cut taxes and reduce the LIHTC provisions to only incentivize single-family home development. It is unlikely the Connect4Ohio program will survive. It is also expected that Senate President Matt Huffman may challenge Speaker Stephens in the next GA. This significant disagreement will likely precipitate a lengthy conference committee process. There is also rumor that more conservative members of the House may attempt to concur with the Senate amendments.

Mr. Tugend also relayed that the Senate Democrats are all supportive of MORPC's amendment, and while there is some Republican support, it is by no means unanimous.

Mr. Garrity thanked the Chair for his assistance on RTPOs and relayed to the group that while the distracted driving bill has now become law, further improvements are needed and conversations have occurred with State Senators Kunze and Hackett on a budget amendment.

Mr. Tugend provided an update on eminent domain legislation. Despite widespread opposition, the substitute bill does not make significant changes. The bill would be detrimental to trail development, as it would no longer classify trail development as a public purpose under the eminent domain law. It would also raise the burden of proof and eliminate rebuttable presumptions for property takings, and would increase litigation costs for local governments.

Defense Update



Mr. Tugend also provided a brief defense update, detailing efforts to collaborate with the Department of Defense on procurement, as well as efforts to modernize the KC-135 stratotanker at Rickenbacker ANGB.

Other Business

Mr. Rogers noted this would be his last meeting as he is soon retiring. He will be replaced by Dublin City Manager Megan O'Callaghan.

Mr. Schadek made note of the City of Columbus's \$20 million appropriation for juvenile violence prevention and job training. Additionally, Mayor Ginther will be hosting the U.S. Conference of Mayors during the first weekend of June.

Mr. Strickland relayed that the Kirwan Institute's new Executive Director, Ange-Marie Hancock, is now months into the job. Director Hancock is working with the Institute on its strategic vision (MORPC's Niel Jurist is assisting this effort). The Institute is also administering the "My Brother's Keeper" program – a community program for young boys of color.

Mr. Garrity noted the next NARC Conference in Detroit. MORPC will have a presence there. The Central Ohio Defense Group will meet next on June 6. The Summit on Sustainability has been scheduled for October 26, 2023 and award nominations are now open.

Chair Scheffler shared that union negotiations are ongoing in the City of Lancaster.

Mr. Woodruff shared that the City of Whitehall is working to develop its strategic plan.
Steve Tugend: Sheila is off to a great start

Ms. Leuby announced a MORPC event: Enriching Lives at Today's Modern Library at the Gahanna branch of Columbus Metropolitan Library on Thursday, June 15th from 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Ms. Laking emphasized the Columbus Partnership's continuing focus on housing and the federal funding war room.

Mr. Strickland moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Schadek seconded.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without objection.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm.

