

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL AMBERLEY VILLAGE COUNCIL WORK SESSION
HELD AT THE AMBERLEY VILLAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2019**

The Council of Amberley Village, Ohio, met in a special work session at the Amberley Village Municipal Building, 7149 Ridge Road, on Monday, June 24, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Mayor Tom Muething called to order the work session and the following roll call was called:

PRESENT

Richard Bardach
Peg Conway
Ed Hattenbach
Elida Kamine
Tom Muething
Ray Warren
Natalie Wolf

ALSO PRESENT

Scot Lahrmer, Village Manager
Wes Brown, Zoning Administrator
Tammy Reasoner, Clerk of Council

Mayor Muething welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Amberley Village Council and led those in attendance through the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO SPEAK

Susan Glazer, 9055 Rollingridge Lane, stated that she thought the idea of developing Amberley Green is good, and that she is not opposed to the JCC. She stated that Amberley Village residents are trusting council to listen to residents as they determine what is best. She expressed concerns about developing housing, and stated she felt it in the best interest of Amberley Village not to expand housing on the property.

Michael Gressel, 3050 Glenfarm Court, thanked Mayor Muething and Council for the opportunity to speak, and requested that the Village develop a master plan. He stated that the Village should receive a return from the JCC proportionate to the Village's investment in the land, and that the bulk of the funding for development expenses should be derived by leveraging funds from Amberley Green.

Steve Cushard, 3205 N. Whitetree Circle, stated he feels the Village should keep the property as green as possible, but questioned the methodology by which the Village got to the present. He said that the JCC should get what's left after development has been planned, or should have to pay as Mercy Health did. He said he wants to know that Village needs come first, and not those of the JCC. He asked Council to go back to putting together long-term plans, and then figure out how the JCC fits into it.

Colin Driscoll, 6600 Ridge Road, stated that he had a lot of questions regarding why the original development process for the property fell apart, and asked if any Council members or their families are current or former members of the JCC. He stated concern that a conflict of interest exists, and called for Council members to cancel their memberships during the negotiation process.

Mayor Muething stated that council members would have three minutes each to speak. He said that the goal for the special session would be to gain clarity on how to move forward.

Village Manager Scot Lahrmer summarized how Amberley Village and the Mayerson Jewish Community Center (JCC) have been working together to examine options for a JCC expansion on a portion of the Amberley Green property. One of the objectives is to allow the JCC to provide additional and improved services for its members as well as recreational amenities to Amberley residents. The JCC presented their latest concept plan meant to create something that looks and feels like a park. Even though there were a lot of unanswered questions, Village Council wanted to proceed with seeking resident comments before moving forward on the property.

The Village held six (6) open house sessions during May to seek resident input regarding a proposal from the Jewish Community Center for use of a portion of Amberley Green.

Village staff reported the total attendees by date as follows:

May 14:	20	
May 15:	18	
May 16:	16	
May 20:	22	
May 21:	39	
<u>May 23:</u>	<u>38</u>	
Total attendees:	153	(over 10% of our households)

After the open house sessions were held, the condensed display was placed in the lobby for an additional three (3) weeks so Village residents could continue review of information and the Village could collect further comments.

The Village received 83 individual responses which resulted in 209 comments that staff logged into eight (8) topics, or “buckets.” Council was provided all the raw comments and a spreadsheet with comments assigned to their respective buckets. This was done to help gauge where the attention was focused from our residents.

Eight (8) buckets of the top responses were categorized and a preliminary snapshot of where the comments landed was shared with Council as follows:

1.	\$1 lease agreement	32 comments	18%
2.	benefits/amenities for residents	51 comments	29%
3.	traffic	24 comments	14%
4.	dog park	14 comments	8%
5.	revenue generation	33 comments	19%
6.	future cost/maintenance	22 comments	13%
7.	value green space	10 comments	6%
8.	need more information	23 comments	13%

Additional feedback on topics mentioned by residents was reported as follows:

- Security
- Alternative development opportunities
 - Mixed-use development
 - Restaurant for gathering
 - Equestrian Center
 - Retirement
- Distrust of relationship between JCC & Village
- Feeling that it’s a “done deal”
- Potential noise from amphitheater

- Impact on future development opportunities
- Too much/best part of property being “given” away
- Duplicate amenities
- Community Garden

Staff committed to regular updates to the feedback as additional responses are gathered.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Rich Bardach stated that his primary concern was with the economic viability of the proposal. Additionally, he said he thought that the clubhouse was going to be a part of the plan. Mr. Bardach stated he would like to use the existing clubhouse as a meeting center, and suggested that someone should be brought in to explore options for salvaging the building. He stated that he anticipated a natural conflict between dog lovers and those in support of a day camp with regard to the use of green space. Mr. Bardach called for clarification regarding responsibility for future maintenance of the property.

Peg Conway stated she had done her own categorizing of the comments, and had arrived at “what’s the benefit to Amberley Village” as the primary feedback. Ms. Conway said that Council heard the concept, but needs to recognize that the concept and the details are inseparable, and that Council will have to make a stronger case. She said that Council has a lot of ongoing communication to do, and must do a better job of clarifying to everyone else what it sees as the benefits of the proposal.

Natalie Wolf stated that Council has been talking in ideas, not specifics, and that the open house was the first time she had seen the \$1 per year lease proposal. She explained to residents that this was the J’s proposal and that it came to council members at the same time it came to everybody else. She stated that the J was always slated to be a part of whatever the master plan would be. She emphasized the importance of “low impact” development, with a master plan to include the JCC, a dog park, residences, possible businesses and connectivity. She said that while she loves the camp idea, she didn’t want to plop one thing down without knowing what the rest would be.

Elida Kamine expressed concerns that feedback is coming from a small percentage of Village residents, with most comments coming from older, longer-term residents. Ms. Kamine expressed concern that younger residents and Orthodox residents are not represented, and suggested the importance of meeting more people where they are to gain feedback. She also had concerns regarding a lack of detail with regard to the proposal. She said that the downside of the open houses was that people were getting different information from different people, and called upon Council to clear up the confusion. Ms. Kamine called for an open meeting with the JCC so residents, Council and all interested parties could hear the same thing, and suggested looking at other revenue models to determine what could be asked of the JCC to generate revenue.

Ed Hattenbach commented on how the JCC proposal has caused a lot of excitement, both positive and negative, and stated that over 1/3 of the resident feedback had to do with the financial aspects of the proposal. He referenced the ad hoc committee’s recommendations regarding the monetizing of Village assets, and said that \$1 per year doesn’t cut it. He said he’d prefer something more like \$6000/month, closer to what Mercy is doing. He stated he’d like to see the Village limit its financial risk.

Ray Warren stated upfront that he is a member of the JCC, but that council members are fiduciaries of the Village. He also said that even though he is a member of the Orthodox community, he doesn't speak for all. He cautioned that responses were based on open feedback requests, which did not garner the same response as directed questionnaires or surveys. He spoke about identifying a value equation and recommended additional research. Mr. Warren stated that the eastern part of Amberley Green is probably the most valuable part of the property, and asked that in light of not having a master plan, if the western part of the property could be used for the camp. He requested obtaining real estate tax data from private swim clubs in the county.

Mayor Muething said to remember that part of our return is the preservation of green space. He said that the economics have to improve for the deal to move forward, but also said that the JCC and the Jewish community are critical to Amberley Village. He said that the last thing he wanted to see would be for the Jewish community to become less tied to Amberley. He stated that the Village is in a better position for having the JCC in Amberley.

The floor was opened for Council to vet resident comments and determine how best to proceed.

Suggestions, recommendations and potential action items were compiled from the open floor discussion as follows:

1. Staff to sit down with the JCC to improve the economics for Amberley residents.
2. Staff to address concerns regarding reduced access to Amberley Green.
3. Identifying other ways to increase revenue for the Village.
4. Identify Village wants and needs, then develop plan.
5. Research and identify costs for parking lots, amenities, utilities and other expenses.
6. Gather feedback from police, maintenance and village service providers on topics that impact them.
7. Consider options for former clubhouse or require demolition by JCC.
8. Ensure regular updates are made available to the public, including regular update of documents to be posted to the website.
9. Consider community meeting with an agenda, including recorded presentations.
10. Summarize next steps and distribute to council.
11. Schedule follow-up council work session for August or September.
12. Identify and articulate the investment value and benefit to residents of the JCC proposal.

Council members unanimously agreed to move forward in discussions with the JCC in order to get some of the questions answered with regard to the proposal.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tammy Reasoner, Clerk of Council

Mayor Thomas C. Muething