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AGENDA

Committee of the Whole

6:00 PM February 14, 2022

Council Members:

Andy Teater

Omar Tarazi

Les Carrier

Tina Cottone

Peggy Hale

Pete Marsh

Cynthia Vermillion

President

Vice President

Michelle Crandall, City Manager

Diane (Dee) Werbrich, Clerk of Council

City Hall, Council Chambers • 3800 Municipal Way, Hilliard, OH 43026



- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. January 24, 2022, Committee of the Whole
- IV. Business**
 - A. Soccer Field Discussion:**
 - 1. Staff Presentation
 - a. Jay Dearth, HOSA Executive Director
 - b. Tim Phlegar, NWFC President
 - 2. Council Questions and Discussion
- VII. Adjournment**



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CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 24, 2022

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Andy Teater at 5:37 PM.

ROLL CALL

Attendee Name:	Title:	Status:
Andy Teater	President	Present
Omar Tarazi	Vice President	Present
Les Carrier	Councilman	Present
Tina Cottone	Councilwoman	Present
Peggy Hale	Councilwoman	Present
Pete Marsh	Councilman	Present
Cynthia Vermillion	Councilwoman	Present

Staff Members Present: City Manager Michelle Crandall, Law Director Phil Hartmann, Director of Transportation and Mobility Letty Schamp, City Engineer Clark Rausch, Community Relations Director David Ball, Recreation and Parks Director Ed Merritt and Clerk of Council Diane Werbrich

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Teater asked if there were any changes or corrections to the November 22, 2021, Committee of the Whole meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

STATUS:	Accepted
AYES:	Teater, Tarazi, Carrier, Cottone, Hale, Marsh, Vermillion

BUSINESS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Backflow Prevention Program

Mr. Fred Smith and Mr. Drew Richards, CDM Smith, engineering consultants gave a presentation on the Backflow Prevention Program. **(See attached)**

Ms. Cottone asked when the backflow preventer is installed, where does that water go. Mr. Richards replied that the water stays in the sanitary sewer and would potentially add more flow there but there is typically enough space that the backflow would be mitigated through the size of the sewer. He added it should not affect the neighbor upstream. He reported they studied homes in the Hillcrest neighborhood, which consists of slab on grade houses and a handful of basements. The homes that are slab on grade would have more water capacity because they are higher to where the flow would come up versus the homes with basements that are closer to the sewer.

Vice President Tarazi stated there are multiple reasons why there would be moisture or water in a basement and clarified that this is specifically about sewer water. He asked if the letter being sent to residents is too broad. Mr. Richards replied that residents can use the City's 311 system if they have a sewer issue, then an inspector would review the sanitary pipe to see if it is flowing full or not. At that point, the inspector would determine if it was a groundwater or a sewer issue or the lateral could be blocked. Vice President Tarazi is concerned that if everyone receives this letter about water, everyone will respond. Mr. Richards replied they have a database of complaints.



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Mr. Marsh asked how long they last and how do other cities handle the end of life for the backflow device. Mr. Richards replied that the life of the device is 20-25 years and that it is a simple device that does not require a lot of maintenance. He mentioned that he has not had any one with end-of-life issues during their research. Mr. Smith stated that as part of the agreement the homeowner would be responsible for the maintenance. Ms. Vermillion asked if the homeowner will be told how to maintain this properly. Mr. Richards agreed.

Ms. Vermillion asked for clarification to Ms. Cottone's question on where the water goes. Mr. Smith replied as the water is backing up into the sewer, it goes above the road and what happens when the valve closes is that any sewer stays in the house. He added the homeowner needs to know that water usage needs to be limited until the event subsides and the water can flow back to the sanitary sewer. The water in the sanitary sewer will continue to go downstream to the City of Columbus whether it backs up too high for their basements or not. Ms. Cottone asked if there is so much water in the sewer that it backs up into someone's house, how is there room for the water to go back into the sewer without the water trying to find another place to go. Mr. Smith replied once the water subsides in the sewer and there is less rainwater, the water would flow back to the sewer.

Ms. Vermillion asked if other cities with this program have had any negative issues with the backflow preventers. Mr. Richards replied the three suburban communities are new at the program, but the City of Columbus has not had a lot of problems with these and have been installing them since approximately 2005. Ms. Vermillion asked if the backflow preventer is 100% effective. Mr. Richards agreed. She then asked if \$5,000.00 would cover most of the homeowner's costs. Mr. Richards replied most installations are \$5,000.00 or less but may be a few more difficult installations (deep basements or landscaping) that may cost a bit more, but the majority would be covered by the \$5,000.00 amount. Ms. Vermillion asked if there would be any additional requirements other than being a resident of the City and are experiencing an issue with sewer backup. She clarified and asked if landlords who own property in the City would be eligible. Ms. Crandall responded that it should be the property owner would be most appropriate. Ms. Vermillion then asked how the residents with the greatest need will be determined. Ms. Crandall replied that it is based on a budgeted number, which is \$120,000.00 currently. Mr. Richards added the greatest need means the residents who have experienced the issue the most, meaning multiple episodes with some having up to three occurrences in the last three years. He explained that this would be an ongoing program and as people express need, it would be able to be installed. Ms. Crandall stated that if there is a greater need than the \$120,000.00 that is allocated for this program, then Council would be asked to increase the amount to cover the homes that the City is aware of that have been verified.

Ms. Vermillion asked how many homes are impacted city-wide. Mr. Richards stated from the data from the last three years, there is a total of 34 occurrences within the City and not just in the Hillcrest neighborhood. He noted there was a concentration of occurrences in that neighborhood which is why it was used as a case study. Vice President Tarazi asked if the 34 occurrences do not include duplicates. Mr. Richards agreed.

Mr. Carrier asked if it would help with the City's insurance costs with this program in place since the City has received insurance claims for this issue in the past. Mr. Hartmann replied he would check. Mr. Carrier mentioned that he texted Tom Wood, from the Hillcrest neighborhood, who put a backflow preventer in and stated Old Hilliard could probably install them for approximately \$400.00 and that is 300 homes. He reported a couple of the backflow preventers in the Hillcrest neighborhood have failed because the pressure builds up so bad and asked what happens if one does fail. Mr. Richards replied that there would need to be a clause in the homeowner's agreement to handle that situation. Mr. Carrier asked if that would signal that there is a bigger issue with that line and that it might not be big enough. He commented that if back flow preventers are put in all the homes, then eventually the pressure would go back to the main line. Mr. Rausch replied that he has not specifically heard of any failures but has heard of some leakage around the seals and it was not a basement full of water where there was enough pressure on the seal to force some of the water out of the seal if the seal is not completely tight.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jan 24, 2022 5:00 PM (Approval of Minutes)



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Mr. Carrier asked how many basements are in the Hillcrest neighborhood. Mr. Richards replied that he has that number but does not have that information with him. Mr. Carrier asked what does smoke out show. Mr. Richards responded that they did not see any issues from the gutters or down spouts but found a lot of clean outs that did not have lids properly installed so the clean out for the sanitary lateral was open to the air. They saw a lot of smoke there and around foundation drains.

President Teater asked when there is an event and the backflow preventer is activated, the homeowner cannot use the toilet or their washing machines. Mr. Richards agreed. President Teater asked will the homeowner know when the backflow preventer has been activated. Mr. Smith replied if there is an event that produces beyond an inch and a half of rain, there would probably be troubles in this area. He noted there is storage capacity inside the homes so flushing the toilets should not be an issue but they should not run dishwashers or washing machines or take long baths or showers until the water resides to save as much capacity as possible. President Teater asked how a homeowner would know when to start limiting the use of water. Mr. Richards replied there is an option for an alarm, so the homeowner knows when the backflow preventer is activated. President Teater asked how eligibility is going to be determined. Mr. Richards replied that it would be reviewed by the City as well as the Engineer. They want to ensure that it is a sanitary issue that the homeowner is experiencing because there are other sources of water that may be coming in. It would read City-wide eligibility based on past experiences. President Teater asked if the installation would be performed by a contractor that the City recommends, paid for by the homeowner and then reimbursed. Mr. Richards agreed and stated that they did not want to show favoritism to a contractor but be able to develop a list of contractors that they could reach out to. President Teater asked if the homeowner must select a contractor from that list or can they use whoever they choose. Mr. Richards replied that the homeowner can use any contractor they choose, and the list would be provided to help them find someone. Mr. Carrier commented that he would like to see that list contain a Hilliard business or group. Mr. Richards stated the list would contain local businesses.

Ms. Hale asked if this would be worth taking bids because if there is a big disparity between someone who can install these for \$400.00 that Mr. Carrier quoted versus the \$5,000.00 quoted. Mr. Raush responded that is one way to go but that \$400.00 seems very cheap and would question the quality. If there have been failures, maybe that is the reason. Mr. Marsh commented that the homeowner should make that decision since they are signing the agreement that they are responsible for maintenance of the device. Ms. Hale asked if the City would have the opportunity to question quotes that are higher quotes than others that have been submitted. Mr. Carrier stated maybe the City can give a recommendation since it is site specific.

Mr. Tarazi reported that none of the other cities are close to reimbursing \$5,000.00 and a big piece of this potentially is where the backflow preventer is placed. If someone must dig and feed down to a pipe is different than one that can be installed in a basement. He is concerned that if the City states they will reimburse up to \$5,000.00 that gives the incentive for individuals to have it done cheaper but then charge the full amount for reimbursement. He would rather reimburse for the cost of the device and the homeowner can decide on how much to spend on a contractor. Mr. Marsh noted that there would be incentive among contractors to bid the job lower if they are competing for the work. Vice President Tarazi stated the homeowner does not care because they will be reimbursed up to \$5,000.00. Mr. Marsh commented that the homeowner is getting reimbursed for the invoiced amount.

Vice President Tarazi asked if homeowners insurance would cover preventing these types of events. Mr. Carrier replied that most policies require a backup amendment or addendum to the policy and are usually capped at \$5,000.00 to \$25,000.00 depending on the type of contract issued by the insurance company.

Ms. Hale asked if the new builds are required to have these installed. Mr. Richards replied they are not going to require it on new builds because the sewer is PVC in the area and developing areas, so the extra flow is not an issue.



Mr. Carrier asked when the program starts. Ms. Crandall replied that Administration wanted to make sure Council was on board and will move forward with a motion from Council to approve the program as presented.

Mr. Carrier, seconded by Ms. Cottone, moved to approve the Backflow Preventer Program as presented by Voice Vote.

STATUS:	Approved
MOVER:	Les Carrier
SECONDER:	Tina Cottone
AYES:	Teater, Tarazi, Carrier, Cottone, Hale, Marsh, Vermillion

2. Soccer Field Usage

Mr. Merritt presented the Hilliard Soccer Discussion. **(See Attached)**

Mr. Carrier asked what the actual numbers are for the Hilliard Ohio Soccer Association (HOSA) children and the Northwest Football Club (NWFC). Mr. Merritt replied at this time he does not have the actual numbers of unique participants for HOSA. Mr. Carrier then asked how were the percentages that were presented acquired. Mr. Merritt stated they provided a group of participants for 2021-2022 that consists of anyone who may have signed up. He explained a soccer season starts in the Spring and runs through the Fall so if someone signs up in the Spring and does two sessions, then one in the Fall and Winter so that is four times we have that address. At the time of this presentation, they were unable to provide that unique participant number but provided the data to do the GIS mapping.

Mr. Carrier stated that in reviewing the record from the past, staff was supposed to provide Council with an amendment to the HOSA contract in July 2021 to basically regulate traffic and adding some standard on how that was going to be managed. He asked if the contract was edited, which was supposed to be updated in July 2021. He could only find updates to the contract dated September 2020. Mr. Merritt stated the contract was updated regarding tournament usage and sub-leasing. Mr. Carrier requested a copy of that. Mr. Merritt replied Council was provided a link to that. Mr. Carrier reported that was dated September 2020. Ms. Crandall noted that is the date of the most recent addendum.

Mr. Carrier reported that the Sports Commission addressed baseball, which was somewhat fragmented as far as participation and utilization. At that time staff told all of the teams that the City was going to manage it so that all of the Hilliard kids could play. He added soccer was left where it was with one club managing most of the rectangular field space. He stated one of his concerns with the current proposal is if HOSA has 380 participants per season do they need the number of fields they have. Once the City took over the management of the baseball space, we were able to make sure all Hilliard kids were taken care of. He asked if there is a way forward, working with HOSA and the other clubs with Hilliard kids so that all of them have some access to be able to train now as we transition. Mr. Carrier noted the other issue he has with waiting until 2024 is that area is going to be under construction so why wouldn't the City want to have control before then. Mr. Merritt replied that he believes that will be the last piece of the property that will be touched because it will have to be kept open and operational until the new fields are ready. Mr. Carrier said he is concerned about that when the City started looking at the traffic issue and stated Ms. Schamp did a great job explaining the round-a-bout. He asked if the current design of the soccer fields and the fact that 20 percent are larger than the current HOSA park is enough capacity to handle where all of Hilliard kids can play. Mr. Merritt replied it is a matter of working with those groups. Mr. Carrier asked how much time does the City have to ensure that there is enough field space between bull dozing the HOSA fields and the new fields. Ms. Crandall replied that the fields will be designed and completed ideally by May 2024. She noted staff is suggesting using the synthetic fields because the regular fields may still need to rest and the HOSA fields will stay open as long as possible. Ms. Crandall added there will be 20 percent more rectangular field space than currently on the HOSA property and there will be synthetic fields that will not need to rest and will also be lit, which provides for longer use



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time. There will be an analysis while going through the process of designing to determine how much more field space could be utilized and what that rotation looks like.

Mr. Carrier stated Ms. Schamp presented some assumptions in her traffic analysis, Club of Ohio Hilliard and St. Brendan's soccer have not been discussed, both of which have a significant number of kids. When looking at the total number of kids, it is important that Council make a policy decision that the new facility, under Issue 22, to service all Hilliard kids and the problem is how they are prioritized. He reported the City has not determined yet how many fields and what kinds of field space is needed and have guessed at 20 percent but have already started traffic analysis for the region. Mr. Marsh responded that the traffic analysis is based on the number of fields and the preliminary plans and is not necessarily based on a certain percentage but is based on what can fit on the site. Mr. Carrier remarked that there are 84 acres that are still green. Mr. Marsh replied that is the difference between the 24 and 24 field analysis that Ms. Schamp presented of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 fields. Ms. Crandall added that space was reserved in the middle because the City may be fine with the number of fields and there might be another future need in the community that space could be used for. It could be more fields, more baseball diamonds, etc. She added after the analysis of the fields she is confident that there will be a lot more field space and usage than the City has currently. Ms. Crandall stated who does the City want to serve because residents who voted for Issue 22 would mostly likely like to see the money go towards servicing Hilliard first. Mr. Carrier commented that residents who voted for Issue 22 would also like to see things happened before 2024. He noted that staff is suggesting waiting until 2024 to address the field space needs and asked why the City would not address it like they did with baseball so more Hilliard kids get a chance to play. Ms. Crandall reported that one of the recommendations Mr. Merritt presented was to work with HOSA and NWFC to understand current and future needs and if there is more field time availability right now. She stated time is needed to determine staffing especially with understanding the rest of the campus needs to be designed and constructed.

Mr. Carrier asked if Olimpia USA could use the Cross Creek fields that were not used in 2021. He stated HOSA and NWFC has space issues since they are bigger clubs with more concentration of Hilliard kids but is there an opportunity to open some of the City's pocket parks in the interim during the construction period to solve the issue or begin to attempt to address it. Ms. Crandall replied some of the pocket parks are not designed to accommodate because they do not have parking around them etc. She explained that if there was additional space, there are two other teams that want space as well. Mr. Merritt reported Cross Creek is used by the Cricket Club five to six times a week. The challenge with pocket parks is a lot of people would not want that type of activity and parking is an issue. He stated Cross Creek may be an option for practice because of the condition of the turf and the shared parking with the school district.

Vice President Tarazi stated that Mr. Merritt is not recommending HOSA run the facility into the future because it is better that the City do it in 2024 because there is a value added with the City running them versus sub-contracting. He asked why the recommendation is to take over from HOSA. Mr. Merritt replied it is a management principal because most places run their city parks themselves and allow their volunteer groups to operate program. He explained the City could have a baseball/softball field policy because a lot of the pieces were already in place like staffing and equipment. The City was managing those facilities already and the difference with HOSA is that they signed a contract that had length to it because at the time the City did not have the funds available. HOSA stepped forward to operate and provide that service to the community. As the City moves forward, it is his recommendation that the City take care of the parks and allow the partner groups to operate and provide that service to the community. Vice President Tarazi asked if paid employees could maintain the fields better than a nonprofit organization. Ms. Crandall replied that HOSA has done a good job as a nonprofit maintaining that property. The City would have someone on board that understands turf management and other expertise and funding to keep those fields maintained. Vice President Tarazi asked since it is fundamentally better for the City to manage the field, why is HOSA not being approached about the City taking over prior to 2024. Ms. Crandall replied that it would be a clean transition and there will be new fields but it gives the City time to figure out the design of the campus, staffing, equipment and field policy coming from the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee (RPAC). There is a lot to deliver on in the next few years on the development of the entire campus and staff are just asking for some breathing room on this one item.



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Mr. Carrier explained that they are linking the old and the new and there is a policy in place with baseball that works and could work just as well for soccer, and it does not appear that the City would need a lot to start maintaining the current soccer location now. He does not know what is needed in the short-term to address the immediate field utilization needs on the current ground that the City has, which is a separate issue than the development of the new ground. Mr. Merritt replied that as the City moves forward and take over the new facility, the City would be lining the fields and taking care of that. He added the goals would be the City's or work out a deal with HOSA. Mr. Carrier reported that under the current contract HOSA is supposed to provide their utilization and any excess the City handles. Mr. Merritt replied that in terms of utilization, HOSA provides their schedule. Mr. Carrier asked what is currently done with the other utilization that is available. Mr. Merritt stated the City has worked with HOSA who provide times to work with other groups in the City to include lacrosse, field hockey etc. Mr. Carrier asked for a commitment from staff to do that for these other groups because when you have one group running all the fields, the others get excluded. If an independent body like the City runs it, then the fields are managed, which is what happened with baseball. Mr. Merritt stated there were restrictions in the past, like the contract. Mr. Carrier stated does it make sense to follow the contract and utilize the space or eliminate the contract in the current term and manage the space like baseball. He commented residents passed Issue 22 to ramp up Recreation and Park programming and not wait until 2024 to do it and is why he is putting pressure on staff to move the needle on this space because people want space. The City of Columbus has been letting Hilliard kids utilize their space for years at the detriment to the Hilliard clubs and teams and now they are raising the rates. He suggested Council needs to start sooner rather than in 2024 and what that looks like and where we temporarily do things and the City has to get outside the box.

Ms. Vermillion asked when the surveys were sent to the residents last year, where in that feedback was more soccer fields listed. Ms. Crandall replied that it was fairly low on the list, which would be true with any smaller group within the City, but things that everyone uses, like trails, would be higher. She noted the top three were three different types of trails, which was clearly what the community wanted. Ms. Vermillion commented that Mr. Carrier is very involved in sports, but maybe the community does not view this at that priority level. Mr. Carrier responded that a swimming pool was low on the list as well, but he is certain the community expects a good size pool at the community center so everyone can enjoy those amenities.

President Teater announced the Regular meeting is scheduled to start soon. He thought that there was significant progress made with the report from Administration and Council has more information now than they had a week ago when this conversation started. Ms. Crandall reported Administration has a list of recommendations and asked where Council stands on those recommendations. Vice President Tarazi stated Council can motion to accept staff recommendations, to direct staff to renegotiate with HOSA and take over the fields as soon as possible or to notify HOSA that the contract is canceled on a certain date. Mr. Carrier responded that he is not sure that needs to be done because under the current contract HOSA can stay and utilize the fields but also allows the other groups to step in if it is managed like the contract says. The contract states HOSA sets their time, and the other times could be utilized by other clubs and between November and March the public can use the fields under the current contract. If HOSA does what is in the contract there is a way to manage the space. Mr. Carrier stated Council will obviously motion to terminate the contract and control the ground because of the construction piece, it is just a matter of when. He added the real way forward is for Mr. Merritt to solve the immediate issue of some of kids that do not have the dollars to pay for the bigger clubs and are in a socio-economic position that they really need help. Mr. Carrier remarked that Olimpia USA LLC did not ask for help from the City because they want to make money, they asked because they want to help kids. He would like to see how the City can accommodate the Hilliard kids that are being priced out of the market and how to allow other clubs to start to have access to the ground that has been exclusive access for one club for 40 years. He added the model no longer exists because the City has grown too much.

Ms. Vermillion asked if HOSA has a scholarship program. Mr. Jay Dearth, Executive Director of HOSA, reported that HOSA has approximately 1,415 individual players between the recreational and competitive program. There are 658 Hilliard resident kids and that does not include camps. Mr. Carrier asked what



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the total number of Hilliard City or Hilliard School District kids in HOSA is. Mr. Dearth replied he does not have that data with him. He replied to Ms. Vermillion that HOSA does offer scholarships which is based on hardship and need and there are many kids who are playing at no cost or either the recreational or competitive side.

Vice President Tarazi asked from Mr. Dearth's perspective would they like for the City to take over because then they can focus more of their resources on the kids. Mr. Dearth replied that they are very excited for the plan the City has put forward for them to manage the fields for another couple years and then turn them over when the new fields are built. He added HOSA has spent almost \$3 million since taking over the field-on-field maintenance so anything that can be done to lessen that cost would be fantastic. Mr. Dearth reported that HOSA has grown over the last couple of years and there were comments made at the last meeting that they do not utilize all of the field at soccer park is not factual because they do use the fields for archery, lacrosse, etc. and they facilitate that by moving multiple teams to one field to practice to free up that space for the City to use for the other programming. His preference would be to keep maintenance of the fields until the new fields are ready to go because they have expertise they have built over that last 20 plus years, it is built into their budget and they have submitted their practice plans based on the trajectory and extrapolating the growth of the club.

President Teater stated that with the information Council received tonight that they are not ready to take the steps that Vice President Tarazi spelled out. He noted there is a recommendation from Administration that Council needs to review and suggested scheduling another COW meeting on February 14, 2022, to allow staff time to gather some of the information Mr. Carrier has requested and to have more conversation to move this forward. President Teater asked for accurate information and numbers to be presented at the next meeting.

Vice President Tarazi, seconded by Mr. Carrier, moved to adjourn the meeting by Voice Vote.

STATUS:	Adopted
MOVER:	Omar Tarazi
SECONDER:	Les Carrier
AYES:	Teater, Tarazi, Carrier, Cottone, Hale, Marsh, Vermillion

CITY MANAGER UPDATES - None

ADJOURNMENT – 7:08 PM

Andy Teater
President of Council

Diane Werbrich, MMC
Clerk of Council

Approved: _____