

**Village of Mariemont
Special Council Meeting
March 31, 2025**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Present were Mr. Ayer, Mr. Bartlett, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Van Stone and Mr. York.

Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to excuse the absence of Mrs. Brownknight. On roll call; five ayes, no nays. Mrs. Brownknight arrived at 4:35 p.m.

Mr. Emil Liznianski from Envision presented Council with a follow-up to the economic development strategy developed for the Village of Mariemont. Economic Development is creating the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, businesses and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, job creation, and private investment. It is needed to maintain the high quality of Village services and facilities. The Village relies primarily on municipal earnings tax and commercial/residential real property taxes. Most real property taxes go to public schools and various county levies. Mariemont is largely “built out” with few properties remaining undeveloped. The Village must consider opportunities to make productive economic use of vacant and/or underutilized properties. Job retention/creation and private commercial investment are critical for sustainable economic growth. A Steering Committee was established and comprised of representatives from Village administration, Council, staff and residents. Meeting Topics: June 2023 – initial meeting to establish geographic focus areas and priority assessments. August 2023-meeting to review priority assessments and refine geographic focus areas. October 2023- meeting to review initial development concepts and economic development toolkit. March 2024- review draft strategy and develop community engagement activities. Potential investments areas were identified as Old Town Center (small business), Healthcare, Industrial Park, Town Center (mixed-use) and the East Gateway for potential growth area. The potential strategy focus areas include: industrial tax base and incentives for business attraction; municipal expansion to address the need for additional growth areas; infill development to determine highest and best use of underutilized properties; vibrant town square and strategies to re-energize underperforming commercial spaces.

Surveys were conducted and results were tallied based on resident feedback and input.

Recommendations:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Graphic Focus</u>	<u>Strategic Tools</u>
Industrial Tax Base	Mariemont Industrial Park (warehouse space)	*Grant funding assistance – in-progress *Financial incentives (Community Reinvestment Area, job creation & retention incentive grant) *Business retention visits *Marketing & coordination with REDI/The Port
Vibrant Town Center	Underperforming/vacant Historic buildings (especially Mariemont Theatre)	*Downtown redevelopment district *Innovation District *Community Reinvestment Area

Strategic tools include: grant funding assistance, financial incentives (CRA, job creation, and retention incentive grants and website development through a contracted developer)

Strategies Considered & Dismissed

Municipal Expansion	East Gateway (Wooster Pike East Corp. limits to Walton Creek/Kroger entrance)	*The potential area is located within a Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) between the Village of Fairfax and Columbia Township.
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While Mariemont was not a party to this JEDZ, it is not clear if there is any precedent in the state for a third-party municipality annexing territory in JEDZ. Legal challenges may arise in any future annexation effort.

*Another strategic consideration (assuming the most common form of Type II annexation) is that property owners in the potential annexation area would likely need to see a benefit in municipal service levels to be completed to petition for annexation into Mariemont.

*Should either (a) the JEDZ terminate in the future or (b) property owners along the corridor indicate support for annexation into Mariemont, the Village should carefully consider the cost-benefit and legal issues before pursuing such potential annexation along the corridor.

*The community survey showed a strong opposition to commercial development on undeveloped Village-owned properties.

Infill Development Undeveloped Village
Property adjacent to
Town Center

The strategy in action implementation progress for the industrial tax base: Project Highlights include:
*Village of Mariemont was awarded Hamilton County Community and Economic Development Assistance Program (CEDAP) funding for Mariemont Industrial Park Site Readiness in 2024 *Funding award will be used for rehabilitation of long vacant warehouse building at 5801 Mariemont Avenue *\$100,000 matching CEDAP award to Village *\$104,000 matching private contribution from landlord/tenant *Tenant (Pease Brothers) will have 13 employees on-site with plans for additional 17 jobs by 2028.

Discussion ensued regarding next steps, questions and concerns. Council reiterated that in a past meeting, Economic Development was agreed to be the number one priority. The Industrial Park is being set up as a CRA. Standard forms/applications/legislation can be supplied as far as job creation etc., on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Retail is mostly based on payroll taxes and the needs of individual retailers. It was suggested to work with the major property owner to implement this process. Hamilton County has monies for façade enhancement grants, which can be attractive to businesses. The website should be a good place for information links for business owners to find what incentives the Village offers.

Mayor Brown referred to the Economic Development, Planning & Zoning Committee to work on the CRA language for the business incentive documents/job retention incentive rebates and developing marketing materials.

Questions were raised about the economic data. It was agreed to remove the financial data altogether..

Mayor Brown said with certain elements of the zoning code, now that we have changes in our Industrial Park, and referred the matter to the Rules and Law Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.