

**Village of Mariemont  
Council Meeting  
January 24, 2022**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Mr. Bartlett, Mrs. Brownknight, Dr. Lewis, Mrs. Rankin, and Mr. York.

Dr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to excuse the absence of Mrs. Geldbaugh. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

Mayor Brown introduced Ken Geis. Mr. Geis explained that he is a consultant who deals primarily with economic development and government operations. He has had contracts to work with communities as well as both large and small corporations and currently has contracts with the Village of Batavia and Fairfield Township. He had the opportunity to work with Police/Fire Chief Hines in the early 80's in Elmwood Place. His main focus in Mariemont is the Industrial Area. He hopes to establish a relationship with Kellogg's so he can discuss with them what their plans are currently and in the future. He also wants to investigate unused properties in the rest of the Industrial Area. Those properties could be developed into such things as office buildings or medical buildings. It's important to get the word out that the Village of Mariemont is open for business and would welcome new businesses. He also has received notice from the developer of the old steam plant property and was told it would be developed in 2022.

Mr. Bartlett asked that the minutes of January 10, 2022 be amended to reflect that a vote was not taken to add an additional member to the ARB. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to amend the minutes of January 10, 2022. On roll call: five ayes, no nays. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to accept the Council meeting minutes as amended and to accept the minutes from the Permanent Improvement meeting as written. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

From Chief Hines: Memo Dated January 18, 2022 re: Permanent Improvement Requests be referred to the Finance Committee. Chief Hines stated that the department needed five new Tasers and one new vehicle. He said that there was the possibility for the Village to save quite a bit of money if the vehicle was purchased soon.

From Assistant Fire Chief Copeland: Memo re: Permanent Improvement Request be moved to the Finance Committee for the approval of the purchase of five sets of turn-out gear

From Tax Administrator Darrah: 2021 Annual Report. Mrs. Brownknight asked if the budget for 2021 had included the overage of income from taxes as compared to 2020. Fiscal Officer Borgerding said it had.

Brad Bowers, 3149 Portsmouth Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, was granted permission to address Council. His comments were in reference to the proposed new ordinance regarding the inspections of rental properties. He has owned property in Mariemont for 40+ years. Approximately 15 years ago, another inspection ordinance was proposed, but rental property owners were not informed prior to the ordinance being read in Council. Fortunately, Council was willing to listen afterward and a new ordinance was hammered out with the input from the property owners. Everyone agreed the property owners should have been included from the beginning of the ordinance being discussed. He was upset that the same thing happened with this latest ordinance with the property owners being left out of the discussions because there are some issues they would have liked to weigh in on. He wanted Council to be aware of the challenges rental property owners faced in maintaining buildings 100 years old and the fact that taxes on those properties were much more than residential property taxes. Mayor Brown said that tonight would be the first reading of the ordinance. Mr. Bowers asked what the process would be going forward and why the ordinance needed to be passed as an emergency. Solicitor McTigue said the emergency clause had been included in error. It would not be passed as an emergency. He explained that the Village does publish the agenda but understands that many citizens don't understand what some of it means. He said the Village should look at revamping how those notices go out and try to find ways to include rental property owners about matters to be discussed that might impact their business more than others. Dr. Lewis suggested that those present should provide their names and contact information so they could communicate more proactively. It was also suggested that property owners sign up on the Village website for news, alerts and notices of meetings etc.

Mark Temming, 4420 Miami Road, was granted permission to address Council. He said he also owns rental property in Mariemont. He expressed his thanks to the Mayor and Council for being on Council as he knows it is a pretty thankless job. Part of the reason the Village has difficulty hanging on to businesses like Kellogg is the differential in the reduction factors on property taxes. To sum things up, the rental property owners would love to help write this ordinance. We want to comply, but after going through the purposed ordinance he has a lot of questions. According to the State of Ohio any rental property over three units is commercial property. That is why most rental property owners have transferred their units to condos so we convert our property to residential and our taxes go down. He would be happy to serve on the committee and to enlist some of his fellow landlords. He said the ordinance as it is currently written is confusing. It needs to be specific in order for landlords to know what to do to meet what you

want us to do. We want our units to be safe and attractive. The rents are substantial. The tenants we get are great people. While we want to comply, we don't want to be annoyed. Mr. York said he definitely wants a partnership with the landlords. He would like to see notices about things like this posted in the Enquirer four or five times. He asked Karen Koetzle to provide Council with all of the rental property owners' names and email addresses so a small committee could be formed.

Karen Koetzle, 3865 Beech Street, was granted permission to address Council. She said the landlords were present tonight because the ordinance did say it was to be passed as an emergency. We know now it is not. This is an issue that was brought up years ago. We dealt with Kirkwood before and a lot of that has been deemed unconstitutional in the State of Ohio. She has read lots of articles on property inspections. For one thing, you cannot go into somebody's private home unless they give you permission. There are some landlords that do not maintain their properties and that is probably what fueled this ordinance to be introduced. But there are good landlords here and they should be part of the discussion on this.

Mayor Brown said he would like the ordinance tabled so everything is brought forward to whatever committee is working on it. We need to get a dialogue going with the landlords so we can better understand their concerns, but we also want to convey our concerns. The Village has had serious concerns about rental properties and conditions in the Historic District. If we can get a dialogue started, we can hopefully reach some kind spot where we're all going to be satisfied and things will get better in the Historic District.

Dennis Hamilton, 7740 Rock Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio was granted permission to address Council. He owns a few units in the Historic District on Chestnut and on Maple and has owned them for 30 years. He said the tenants can be rough on the property. The ordinance says the inspections would be farmed out to an outside company. We need to have a discussion with whoever that is and see what his scope is. The buildings are so old that there are always things that don't work anymore. He would like to see if the inspector has been on one of the older properties to check it out. It is his concern that the inspector will want these old buildings to be a 2021 piece of property. He has upgraded panels 20 years ago and put in central air, but there are still some tenants that don't have central air.

Mr. York said some of the first buildings Mary Emery built were apartments. The census suggests that 38% are apartment dwellers. They are a very important part of our Village. The work we have done on this ordinance is probably for those landlords that are not here tonight. He said he welcomes the idea of doing a luncheon and inviting the landlords and having a dialogue about this. If you are really uncomfortable with the way this ordinance is written, he has no problem tabling it. We just want to do the right thing. We will get an email out on when we can get together. We do need to be partners. It will benefit all of our residents, especially our rental residents. Mr. Bartlett said he would like to see the discussion on metal/chain link fences as part of any meeting. It seems like a lot of the rental properties have chain link fences and there was legislation like this that we might want to do over. Solicitor McTigue said it is a great idea to address both issues at the same time. Mayor Brown agreed and said the matter should be tabled until there could be a meeting with the landlords. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to table the issue and refer the matter to the Rules and Law Committee.

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownknight to pay the bills as approved by the Mayor, Fiscal Officer and Chairman of the Finance Committee. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Dr. Lewis to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee which met on Monday, January 18, 2022 at 4:00 pm in Council Chambers to discuss the annual salary increases for Mariemont employees. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee members Rob Bartlett, Kelly Rankin, Marcy Lewis, Mayor Bill Brown, Joanee Van Pelt, Allison Uhrig, Chief Rick Hines, and John Scherpenberg. Salary data was collected from a number of neighboring communities of similar size to see how Mariemont's salaries compared for similar roles. The goal of the committee is for Mariemont to be in the middle of the salary range. Attached are two documents which show where Mariemont stands relative to the other communities, as well as an attachment with the proposed increases. For full-time and part-time employees, the Finance Committee is recommending a base increase of 3%. For those roles that were not in the middle of the salary range, adjustments were made to the percent increase to move the roles closer to the average. Ohio is also increasing the minimum wage by \$0.50/hour. As such, all of the swim pool roles are being proposed to increase by \$0.50/hour as well.

Mr. York was confused because we are not paying the pool employees anymore. Mr. Bartlett said Mrs. Van Pelt had a good point that we should update it anyway just to make sure it is up to date with the new Ohio law for minimum wage. Mrs. Van Pelt reminded Council that part of the new contract for the pool stated the Village would pay the swim team coaches. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. York to accept the recommendation of Finance Sub-Committee which met on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 3:00 pm to discuss the Operations Officer role for Mariemont. Present at the meeting were Finance Sub-Committee members Rob Bartlett, Kelly Rankin and Randy York, and Mayor Bill Brown. Mr. York made modifications to the previous description for the Village Administrator role to address specific needs

of the Village. Attachment A is the final version that was agreed to by the sub-committee. We agreed to call the role an Operations Officer. The role will be part time and will report to the Mayor. The role will have no direct reports. Based on other roles in other communities, we believe the pay could be up to \$32/hour. If Council is in agreement with the role description, the next step will be to post the role and begin to accept applications. The sub-committee would then work with the Mayor to schedule any interviews. As part of the role description review, the sub-committee also discussed there are a lot of actions or activities that do not fall under a committee but which still require follow up by either the Mayor or a Council member, and that these items should be tracked and reviewed until they are resolved. The sub-committee is recommending that a section be added to the standing Council agenda called "Task List" to capture these items. Either the Mayor or a Council member will be assigned to each task. That person will then decide what the target date is for completion, similar to items that have been assigned to a committee. Attachment B is an initial cut at this Task List. The final recommendation of the sub-committee is that at the first Council meeting each month, the items in the Task List are reviewed by the Mayor and Council. And at the second Council meeting each month, each item that has been assigned to a committee be reviewed via a verbal update. The sub-committee believes implementing this process will help ensure that items are being addressed in a timely manner.

Mrs. Brownknight asked for the background that led to this position being created. Mr. Bartlett explained he had originally purposed the Village should have an administrator role. The position was posted and people were interviewed. A candidate was offered the position but accepted a job elsewhere. We reviewed the role and decided to narrow the scope of the role and to make the position a part-time role. The person who accepts the job would basically be helping out the Mayor. Mr. Borgerding said Ken Geis has been brought in to do some of the things we had thought an administrator would do. Mrs. Brownknight asked if the decision to bring on Mr. Geis was why the position was changed to part-time or was it financial. Mayor Brown said it was both. He explained that hiring an administrator was very expensive. Going with a part-time Operations Officer would allow us to see how that was going to work out. He said there are a number of things on the list of the Operations Officer that would help him. Dr. Lewis asked why the Operations Officer would be the one helping the Mayor with preparation of the annual budget as that had been the duty of the Fiscal Officer. Mayor Brown explained that he is trying to evolve that role because he would like to have a more comprehensive look at the finances on something like a monthly basis. Mayor Brown said this may not be a perfect model, but it is a good place to start. He said that because he is the person who is actually going to be working with this person, he would like to be the one to make the recommendation on who to hire, after which Council would approve or not. He wanted that sentence added to the report. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to accept the amended report. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

There was discussion regarding the task list of the Operations Officer. Mrs. Rankin said that Council needs to be cognizant of tasks that need to be done and the list would do that. Once a task gets assigned to a committee it would come off the task list and the committee would then be responsible for submitting a report to Council so the task could be discussed and completed. This would help to make sure things get done more quickly.

Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Dr. Lewis to accept the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee which met on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 3:00 pm to discuss CDBG grant opportunities. Present at the meeting were Finance Sub-Committee members Rob Bartlett, Kelly Rankin and Randy York, and Mayor Bill Brown. Hamilton County has grant money available via Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The projects need to fit certain criteria in order to be eligible for the funds. The sub-committee has been reviewing several projects in the Village and believes the best project to submit for CDBG funds would be painting the rest of the lamp posts in the Village (the lamp posts around the square were painted in 2021) and fixing any globes. The amount of grant money that could be available is in the range of \$26,000 to \$29,000. Also, any lamp posts that are on Wooster Pike could use our Highway Improvement Funds. Mr. York is also looking to see if any funding would be available if we moved to more energy efficient LED bulbs, as well as seeing if individuals might be willing to "sponsor" the painting of a lamp post (hopefully via the Village of Mariemont Foundation that the Mayor is working on). Developing a plan to paint the remaining lamp posts is already in the Public Works committee. As such, this sub-committee is recommending that the Public Works committee take the lead on developing all of the details and submitting the necessary application to receive CDBG funds for painting the rest of the lamp posts in the Village, along with seeking any other potential sources of funding.

Mr. Bartlett said the sub-committee had met with Hamilton County to help decide which projects best met the criteria for the grants. He said there is also a 'mini grant' proposal that they are still working on. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

Mayor Brown made the following miscellaneous announcements:

Annual Outstanding Citizen Award Nominations are due to Mrs. Van Pelt by March 10, 2022

Recommendations for Nominations for Village Strategy Session. Mayor Brown said Mr. Bartlett had broken down the categories to help match names to the categories. By the first Council meeting in February everyone should submit the names of those they hope to be willing to commit to working on the committee.

Explanation of how Committee Assignments are assigned and tracked. Mr. Bartlett said we need to have the committee chairpersons report to Council the target date they have for each of the items in their committee.

Resolutions:

“To Appoint Betsy Bybee as a Member of the Pool Commission for the Calendar Years 2022 and 2023) had a third reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to adopt the resolution. On roll call: five ayes, no nays. R-1-22 was adopted.

“To Reappoint John Bentley as a Member of the Architectural Review Board for the Calendar Years of 2022 & 2023” had a third reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to adopt the resolution. On roll call: five ayes, no nays. R-2-22 was adopted.

“To Appoint Matt Ayer as a Member of the Architectural Review Board for the Calendar Year of 2022” had a second reading.

“To Authorize Adoption of a Premium Only Insurance Plan” (For Health Savings Account) had a second reading.

Ordinances:

“To Delete in Their Entirety Sections 151.115 and 151.116, Solar Heating, Cooling, and Hot Water Systems, from the Mariemont Code of Ordinances and to Include New Sections 151.115 through 151.21 Solar Energy Systems” had a first reading.

“Ordinance to Amend Section 151.105 to Address Invisible Fences in the Mariemont Code of Ordinances” had a first reading.

“Ordinance Amending Section 151.091, Temporary Portable Storage Units, and Temporary Portable Toilets of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances” had a first reading.

“To Amend Chapter 152 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances Rental Dwellings and Units” was tabled.

Chief Hines said he wanted to address a situation that occurred over the weekend. There was a fire in Fairfax where people were trapped. This included a woman who was trapped in a wheelchair. Several officers from Mariemont and from Fairfax responded. Mariemont Officer Adam Geraci suffered smoke inhalation from going into the building to rescue the wheelchair bound woman. We will of course have some sort of ceremony to recognize these heroic officers for their bravery.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07.

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William A. Brown, Mayor

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Anthony J. Borgerding, Fiscal Officer