

**Village of Mariemont
Council Meeting
January 22, 2024**

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

Minutes:

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone, to accept the Council Meeting minutes from January 8, 2024, as written. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Mr. York moved, seconded by Dr. Lewis to accept the Special Meeting of Council minutes from January 17, 2024, as written, On roll call; four ayes, no nays. (Mr. Bartlett and Mrs. Brownknight abstaining)

Communications:

* From Police Chief Hines: December 2023 Monthly Report

*From Service Superintendent James: Spending Request Form: Davey Tree Work \$18,000. Mr. Bartlett suggested this would be a good time to step back and look at who we are contracting with to ensure we are getting the right value. Superintendent James said he is getting bids to do the backside tree work at the Concourse. Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to approve the spending request. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

*From Administrator Barlow: Spending Request Form: Repair Pipe from Lap Pool \$42,000. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

*From Administration Office: Spending Request Form: Fireworks \$6500. Mayor Brown announced that the Fireworks will be held July 4th with the rain date of July 5th. Donations were down last year only covering 1/3 of the cost despite efforts asking for donations. The other option is to curtail the display. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to approve the spending request. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Permission to Address Council:

Mr. Syd Sabo, 3857 Indianview Avenue, was granted permission to address Council. In 2022, he was drawn by a flier titled “Do you want a shared use path through Mariemont”. From this first meeting, he has voiced questions and concerns especially when this “Mariemont Connector” seemed to be focused on a road through the Trolley Line Park. His first concern was that nothing should be decided until the 7-way intersection at the bottom of Miami Road Hill is made safe for pedestrians and vehicles. Mayor Brown has stressed this numerous times because he lives there. At last February’s formal meeting about the intersection, he listened to the problems being presented and suggested a 4-way intersection as a solution. Thankfully, this appears to be in process but has not yet been approved. His questions and concerns are:

1. What does this proposal give our neighborhood that we do not already have? He can safely walk or ride a bike from the high school to Plainville Road now as he has been doing for decades.
2. The proposed path is being sold to us by people that do not live in our neighborhood and have no vested interest in our neighborhood
3. The proposed path destroys Trolley Line Park. Although this precious green space is conveniently referred to as the “Mariemont Utility Corridor” by path advocates, it is a park used and enjoyed by the people who live around it.
4. The maintenance of this asphalt path will be an added expense to the Village for the foreseeable future. It will be an extra burden on rationing out funds for capital repairs.
5. The UC study indicated the path will be used primarily by local pedestrians.

6. How specifically does this benefit our neighborhood? He only sees the detrimental destruction of our park.
7. Why rush to build through the Trolley Line Park? What are we connecting to? Are we connecting to a future promise that could change? Will it be an asphalt path to nowhere?

Mr. Rex Bevis, 4011 Miami Road, was granted permission to address Council. He appreciates the work that has been done to design a better intersection at the bottom of Miami Road hill. Currently, there is a six- or seven-way intersection. A four-or-five-way intersection would be very nice. He complimented Mr. Sabo for encouraging this approach. He does not believe a stop sign at the bottom of Miami Road hill is a good idea. The intersection should be designed and built before any decision is made about a bike trail within the Trolley Line Park between Rembold and Hiawatha. There is not a trail to connect with on either the Trolley Line Park side or Murray Avenue. It is premature to lay out until the intersection is fixed.

Motion to Pay the Bills:

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to pay the bills. It was clarified that the payment to iWorQ would not fall under the estimate quoted from Optimized IT. On roll call: six ayes, no nays.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to accept the recommendation of the Health and Recreation Committee which met on Tuesday January 16th in Council Chambers. Present at the meeting were Health and Recreation Committee members Randy York (Chair), Susan Brownknight (Vice-Chair), and Matthew Ayer (Member). Also in attendance were Mayor Bill Brown, and Mariemont Racquet Club member Linda Bartlett. The meeting commenced at 6:32pm.

The purpose of the committee meeting was to review:

1. Budget Request, 2023 Results and 2024 Operational Projections from the South 80 Trails Garden and Park Advisory Board.
2. Budget Request, 2023 Results, Revised Membership Rates and 2024 Operational Projections from the Mariemont Raquet Club
3. Planning and Engineering Estimates for the Sidewalk through Dale Park.
4. Review of Park Bench Program.

The Committee reviewed the reports submitted by the South 80 Trails Garden and Park Advisory Board (attached) and unanimously recommend that the Council approve the funding requests for 2024. The Committee does respectfully request that the South 80 Committee review environmental standards for a flood plain to make sure that the gardens and other areas are in compliance and, if necessary, to develop a plan to move towards compliance. The Committee also requests that the South 80 Committee evaluate the current process for gardeners to clean up their plots at the end of the season, and to provide clarity on the leash law and enforcement for the South 80. The Committee reviewed the reports submitted by the Mariemont Racquet Club (attached) and unanimously recommend that the Council approve the funding requests for 2024. This approval is contingent on the Village executing a satisfactory contract agreement with the tennis pro. The committee also unanimously approved the membership rate increases for 2024. Related to the racquet facilities, the Committee is developing a long-term capital plan as a component of over Village recreational subsidies. The Committee is not currently offering recommendations on the final two items on the agenda for this meeting as further research and evaluation is necessary including an overall inventory of the condition and placement of our current park benches.

Mr. York thanked all those who contributed to this report including Kevin Taylor, Linda Bartlett, Carter Kemper, Stan Bahler, Steve Spooner, Mark Glassmeyer, John Fakes, Jon Morgan and Andy Seeger. His understanding is that the solar pump will allow residents to fill up buckets to be used in the lower South 80.

Fiscal Officer Rankin said the monies from the Mariemont School District for the tennis courts will go into a restricted account. Mr. Van Stone said it appeared to him that the park expenses should be looked over and the expenses kept track by our PT Village Administrator. Discussion ensued regarding creating a consistent uniform format to track expenses and reviewing the contract for the Tennis Pro. Solicitor McTigue is reviewing the contract and will send an updated opinion to members of Council, Mayor and PT Administrator. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Miscellaneous:

- Mayor Brown referred to the Rules and Law Committee the matter of sick time donation to/from Village employees. A sample ordinance from Amberley Village will be sent to the members of the Rules & Law Committee. Chief Hines said the community support has been outstanding.
- Mayor Brown referred to the Finance Committee fees for the Building Department.
- 2024 Council Committee assignments were made. Mayor Brown announced that there would not be any more sub-committees of Council. “Economic Development Strategy with Envision” will move to the Planning and Zoning & Economic Development Committee and “Refine Code Section 151.075 and Code Section 150” will move to Rules and Law.
- Annual Outstanding Citizen Award will be due to Mrs. Van Pelt by March 7, 2024

Resolutions:

- “To Appoint Tim Wiley as a Member of the Pool Commission for the Calendar Years 2024 and 2025” had a third reading. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-8-24 was adopted.
- “To Confirm the Reappointment of Michael Lockhart as Swim Pool Manager for Calendar Years 2024 and 2025; and To Set Compensation” had a second reading.
- “To Confirm the Reappointment of Christopher M. Ertel as Village Engineer for Calendar Year 2024; and To Set Compensation” had a second reading.
- “To Reappoint Rod Holloway as Village Zoning Officer for Calendar Year 2024; and To Set Compensation” had a second reading.
- “A Resolution Authorizing the Village of Mariemont to Apply for a 2024 Saving America’s Treasures (“SAT”) Federal Grant for the Family Statuary Project; and To Declare Emergency was tabled December 18, 2023. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to remove the resolution from the agenda. On roll call;

Ordinances:

- “To Amend Ordinance O-8-23 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances to Increase Payment for Employees had a second reading.
- To Repeal Ordinance No. O-12-23 Pertaining to Maximum Pay Rates for all Grades of Recreation Employees and to Enact New Legislation Pertaining to Maximum Pay Rates for all Grades of Recreation Employees” had a second reading.

- “Creating Mariemont Raquet Club Board” had a first reading.

Task List:

Council agreed to remove Kelly Rankin from the Walking Path at Whiskey Creek. Mrs. Rankin said it is an insurmountable task.

The trellis work at the Concourse is being led by Mayor Brown, Mr. Ayer and a number of volunteers.

Mr. Van Stone asked to be included in the meeting with Waldorf School regarding the parking lot.

Mr. Bartlett asked about the Optimized IT contract and if it was going to be brought back before Council. The Resolution was approved contingent upon reviewing the contract. Dr. Lewis said the matter is not on the agenda and should not be discussed. Mr. Bartlett said it would be helpful to see what the cost was from the other vendors. As elected officials, we need to know that we are getting the best value for taxpayer dollars. He would also have felt better if Ms. Wendler was involved in the process. Mayor Brown said he sent an earlier email to Mr. Bartlett detailing why that was not going to happen. It is not a process that lends itself to preparing a spreadsheet analysis. Mr. Van Stone said comparing services is hard to do. He trusts the judgement of Mayor Brown and PT Administrator Chuck Barlow.

Dr. Lewis said she was really uncomfortable discussing something that was not on the agenda. Solicitor McTigue said Council sets the policy and the administration actually implements the policy set forth by Council. He does not believe they need to be micromanaged in everything they do. Good questions and issues were raised and were answered by the proposed IT provider. He has reviewed the contract and finds it to be an enforceable contract. Mayor Brown indicated that he had not yet signed it.

Mr. York would like to see where we are regarding the Village Administrator job description. Mayor Brown said Council is deviating off the agenda. A draft of the job description was sent out. When asked to put both the IT contract and the job description on the agenda for the next meeting, Mayor Brown said he would not be micromanaged.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Kelly I. Rankin, Fiscal Officer