

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL  
VILLAGE OF MARIEMONT, OHIO  
SPECIAL MEETING HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER  
MAY 18, 2011**

Mayor Policastro called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The following Council members answered present to roll call: Mr. Andrews, Mr. Black, Mr. Miller, Mr. Scheeser and Mr. Wolter.

Mayor Policastro said the Economic Development and Zoning met to discuss the proposed parking on West Street. Mr. Miller will not be able to attend the next Council meeting and Mr. Black was out of town for the last meeting. He said we need to get going on this if we are going to go forward. The school needs an answer from us as does Mr. Spinnenweber. He is also working on projects at the Steam Plant and Dale Park Jr. High School. We need to approve the \$8600 to do the design drawing and to also contract with Martin Koepke to develop a landscaping design.

Mr. David Zack, 6946 Nolen Circle, asked if this was conducted as a broader study of the parking in the Village. He also asked if the proposed parking would impact the accessibility of Nolen Circle. Mayor Policastro said if you read the Mayor's Bulletin he believes it will help the area of Nolen Circle because of the condos that are going in. It will allow for public parking other than behind the building on the street. A study was done 10 years ago of the Village Square which yielded 10 additional parking spaces. It called for another fountain and trellises at the Mary Emery monument. It was a 1.2 million dollar plan. At the time the Village did not have the money and Council did not want to do it. Jack Hodell was brought in and Council did what they wanted which was to expand to allow for outside dining at the Quarter and provided a drop off area in front of the Theatre and Graeter's. Eventually outside dining was established at the National Exemplar. The plan also called for six parking spots along Wooster Pike in front of the Municipal Building. The Davenports came to Council and Vice-Mayor Hoffman and demanded that it not be done because it was too close to their residence. The plan also called for parking in the Beech Grove which the people in Jordan Park would be dead against it. People wanted to leave the green space alone. He met with Mr. Spinnenweber who said there are now 100 more children going into the elementary school now and using his parking lot. Mr. Spinnenweber has considered putting up a fence. Mayor Policastro said he talked with him and said to let him see what he could do. He came up with this plan between the school, the Village and Spinnenweber Builders. This is just an idea at this point and it is why we need an Engineering firm to look at it and put a plan together. Right now the Theatre is under a five year contract but that is not in granite. Discussion is to add two screens to the Theatre which would require a meeting of the Planning Commission. The additional screens could bring in an additional 300 people to the square which would require more parking in order for the Planning Commission to grant a variance for this needed parking.

Mr. Black said we can all agree the Village needs additional parking and suggested that while the Engineering firm is looking at West Street to also evaluate the overall parking situation in the Village as well.

Mr. Miller said this is an opportunity that the Village does not want to pass up. The construction cost on this would be 10-15% less expensive than if we had to go buy land etc. This could end up only being \$1500 per parking space.

Mr. Zack asked what Mr. Spinnenweber is going to do with the buildings next to Mio's and could that end up being for parking. Mayor Policastro said that could be in the future plans.

Mr. Andrews asked what the impact would be if the Village spends \$200,000 on West Street and there is parking planned next to Mio's and the West Street parking goes unutilized then we have wasted inappropriately taxpayer money.

Mayor Policastro said last he heard Mr. Spinnenweber is planning to build for an occupant. Mr. Miller said he does not want that to be a parking lot. Obviously we would want some type of revenue. An office building would make sense if it can be supported with parking. We might need to utilize another engineering firm to do an overall study of Village parking as that is not CDS's forte.

Mr. Andrews asked if CDS is skilled enough to give us a parking study. Building Commissioner Malone said possibly.

Mr. Martin Koepke, 3804 Settle Road, said he talked with CDS and while it is not their forte it is not a complicated study. The retail area is small and he believes they would be able to do the study. It would be more of an assessment of current and future retail parking needs. It is not like a traffic study. He estimates the cost to be between \$8,000 and \$20,000 but it would depend on the detail and magnitude the Village wants.

Mr. Jeff Ewart, 6973 Miami Bluff, indicated that he works for Hixson Engineering firm and he deals directly with this type of work all the time. He is not here to solicit business. He agrees with Mr. Koepke that a firm with engineering and architectural capabilities certainly should be qualified to be able to conduct a high level assessment. He strongly recommends the Village have a master plan assessment. The community thinks smartly about growth. He agrees with looking at this proposal but in a smart manner. Everyone wants to support the

community and businesses. He is positive that the study can be done and fast track the detail drawings as needed. Somewhere in the Village we are able to create parking spots. He is an advocate of more parking but the only solution is not just on West Street. He suggested taking the time to study the options. He would be happy to have his engineering firm make recommendations for civil engineering firms.

Mr. Miller said we all know and agree on that and that a master plan must be done. Originally we thought we had a timing issue and it seems that may no longer be the case. He talked with Paul Imhoff and there is some time. At the last meeting there was a sense of urgency but it seems we may have more time. He suggested contacting CDC, Inc. to get a master parking plan that will address the square retailers' needs along with the school's.

Mr. Jerry Garrison, 6806 Miami Bluff, said his concern is if we do this incorrectly and it does not solve the problem then years down the road we have to have it fixed. On paper it looks good but he feels it is important to maintain the pedestrian feel while also maintaining the thriving business community. The number of parking spaces is terrific but he questions if they are in the right spot and are they going to solve the problem long term.

Mayor Policastro said that is why it is important to get an Engineer here.

Mr. Ed Berkich, 5 Shelton Close, said if we can get more parking at 1/10 of the cost it is a no brainer. He believes we should proceed with the West Street plan as the school needs it and the business area needs it.

Mayor Policastro said what is neat about this plan is that it takes care of the school and the businesses. He has had people tell him that they cannot go to the professional building because there is nowhere to park. Our Tax personnel have great difficulties finding parking. This is an idea and a good engineering firm will tell us if we are wrong.

Mr. Rick Greiwe, Developer of Jordan Park, Emery Park and Nolen Park, said it appears we are talking about parallel tracks. The engineering firm can be hired to get started on the design of West Street. Once everyone sees that it is safe, has trees and sidewalks and is okay with the design we would then have the money to do the engineering. The second track that is happening at the same time is the theatre. Whatever the final number is on West Street is not going to be enough for the theatre's expansion. Having a parallel track with a study saying here is another opportunity to address the theatre's needs, a possible new restaurant and other retail needs. We need more parking than just West Street to solve the problem.

Mr. Ewart said he would hate to see the Village move forward and start construction and because we are doing parallel paths doing 60 spaces on West Street only to find out that we could have created more spaces somewhere else and we could have pulled back on some spaces on West Street.

Mr. Koepke said he agrees with the idea of a master plan. It is an opportunity that is worth looking at. The process for taking an idea and turning into a design first require a design drawing which is what he is going to do. It will show how we are going to create a pedestrian environment and a couple of ways we can maximize parking. You have to test the idea through design. He commented that some of the trees are declining while some are in better shape. You do not want to invest money in hard scape at the expensive of a tree that is declining. It is better to watch new trees grown than old trees die.

Mayor Policastro said the Mayor is in charge of trees and there are some Oak trees that we are going to save but the Sweet Gum trees are less desirable and will be replaced with a much safer type tree.

Ms. Jenny Ferguson, 2 Emery Lane, said she wanted to understand the sequence. The study is done first involving Mr. Koepke's preliminary concept drawings. Council would then say they like what they see and then it goes to the engineer to figure out the nitty gritty of it all.

Mr. Ewart said Council has made an assumption that there will be some parking on West Street. How much remains to be determined. If the number of parking spaces is modifiable he believes it addresses everyone's concerns unless they do not want parking at all in that area.

Mr. Miller said it is a low impact area because there are no residences along the proposed area.

Mr. Wolter said he thinks it is important that we do the master study and that it is done parallel with the proposed West Street parking. Anyone who would study the parking issues in the Village would come to the point that West Street is an ideal situation to solve some of our parking problems. It is in the center of the traffic generating entities such as the school and the business district. It motivates him to believe it is worth spending the money to do the concept studies. It is imperative that we go ahead and look at all the other options. It would be difficult to put parking in front of residences. The question is how we do this and how we spend the money efficiently to get it done. He believes the studies can be done in parallel. Presently we have the work being done at the school and we have an immediate need from Mr. Spinnenweber and the theatre. They have come together thanks to Mayor Policastro working with the formerly disagreeing entities to donate land and to see this project through to fruition. If Council passes on this he believes we will be sorry in five to ten years.

Mr. Andrews said at the Committee meeting the understanding was we had to hurry on this. How much time do we have now? Mr. Miller said he ballpark the time between October and November. Mr. Andrews said we have much more time than six weeks and we can take the time to do this right. We can do this in parallel and

we can assure that the parking assessment impacts what we do on West Street. It solves a lot of concern that he has heard from many residents.

Building Commissioner Malone stated that it would take approximately 6-8 weeks to conduct the study.

Mr. Frank Raeon, 6505 Park Lane, said he was glad to hear of the strong support for the master plan because he believes it is long overdue. There was a study done in 2001 which the Village paid \$15,000 and was not sure how many members of Council have actually seen the report. It has some good recommendations and he believes the group that is hired should certainly reference the study when doing their evaluation. The most important thing we are talking about is not necessarily the number of parking spaces but the location of those parking spaces and the convenience are absolutely essential. His question is why it is always the Village that has to solve the problem. The private sector also needs to solve part of the problem. He suggested there be a partnership between the private and public sectors when it comes to parking. It is not fair to the taxpayer's of this community to think that we are going to solve the public parking problem or the private parking problem. He believes Mr. Greiwe, Mr. Goldman and Mr. Spinnenweber should kick in to help the Village pay for the master plan. They all have something to gain. He does not think the Village should have to pay for all of the evaluation and providing all of the parking on its own.

Mr. Matt Weinland, 3812 Indianview, asked if there was an understanding of what the school's final plan is in terms of ingress and egress. Are we able to modify our plans to address safety concerns at busy drop off and pick up times? Mr. Koepke said they will have access to the drawings and site plans and will certainly work with the school. The engineering firm will also identify safety issues.

Police Lt. Tom Ostendarp said the Police Department is in favor of it. During certain times of the day there are a lot of cars on West Street. It is dangerous for the kids coming out of school and crossing the street. Parking spaces would definitely help with kids running between the cars. Mr. Andrews said he is confused because he thinks adding this many parking spaces would add to traffic and be more of a risk. Lt. Ostendarp said right now there are two lanes of traffic with cars stacking up, double parking and going left of center with kids crossing the street.

Mr. Scheeser said concentration of parking in a back out situation with 70+/- cars in a sequence fashion at 3:15 cannot possibly be safer than what it is now. In 2006 we removed the parking on West Street because it was dangerous. Mayor Policastro said we removed parallel parking. Mr. Scheeser said parallel parking is safer than back up parking because you can pull forward. He does not get how making West Street the epicenter of all parking at 3:15 in the afternoon could possibly be a net safety improvement versus what we have today. He has not heard any convincing arguments to change his stance. Mayor Policastro said when we built the Strand he heard the same argument. To date we have not had an accident yet.

Ms. Stephanie Griesmer, 4414 Grove Avenue, said it changes the dynamic on West Street by having traffic come out both ways of the street. At the Strand there is actually enough room to back your car out and another car to go by. Mayor Policastro said he believes at that time of day most cars will be on the school side not the business side. Ms. Griesmer said she does not believe that would be true - if the parking spots are there people are going to park.

Fire Marshal Tim Feichtner said on behalf of the Fire Department just keeping the congestion out of the roadway would be a benefit.

Ms. Natalie Lynch, 3756 Indianview Avenue, said her concern is that there has been parking there in the past and then it was deemed unsafe. There has been parking in front of residential areas that has been deemed unsafe in the past three months. She is not against parking on West Street but she is against doing it in a knee jerk fashion when it is going to happen really fast. She is a proponent of an overall study to determine what other parking is available and take an extensive look at our existing parking. West Street might be a good place for some parking but the proposed number is way too many. She said parking should only be considered on one side. If the school is going to donate land then it should be with the understanding that during certain hours a sign be posted that it is for school parking only.

Mr. Wolter said he believed those issues could be worked out with the school by blending their parking plan. Cars are going to be parked there whether there is organized parking or not. One of the goals of the plan is to have as much organized parking as is safe and practical to eliminate the pressure when all the cars are parked there. He finds pulling into a 45 degree parking spot to be easier than parallel parking. It is difficult when you are parallel parking to facilitate two things to make it safe. One you are backing in towards another car and with the larger cars you cannot see a child walking between cars. It is difficult for an older person to look 180 degrees behind them. To pull out of a parallel parking spot that must be done. We are going to evaluate all of these issues with the engineering firm and the concept design people. He does not believe West Street to be the epicenter of parking - he thinks it is the parking lot behind the theatre.

Ms. Griesmer asked why the grassy area behind the Executive Building is not being used by Mr. Spinnenweber as parking. Mayor Policastro said that is not up to the Village because it is private land. Ms. Griesmer said it is up to the Village because it is all part of the private/public working together. Mr. Black said in a previous conversation with Mr. Spinnenweber regarding the building by Mio's it would cost approximately one million dollars in lost revenue to make that a parking lot. Ms. Griesmer said right now there is nothing in the lot and it would be cheap to blacktop that into a parking lot. Mayor Policastro said Mr. Spinnenweber did indicate that after this was done that area may be used for parking back by the Dilly Deli.

Mr. Ken Fields, 6725 Fieldhouse Way, said Mr. Spinnenweber is already providing school parking right now and as a private owner it is not his responsibility. For him to develop something so the school can park there does not make any sense. The school should be responsible for its own parking. As far as safety - two cars backing out may cause a dent but as it is now someone backing up can hit a child. It is chaos at 3:25 in the Executive Building parking lot. There needs to be more parking for the businesses and the school. West Street is ideal for the schools. We all are the schools and to some degree we are all the businesses. He sees it as everyone in it together.

Mr. Greiwe said Mr. Spinnenweber's philosophy is diagonal parking will be like a barrier that will separate parent parking from office parking. He is donating his green space to provide diagonal parking to provide a barrier between where people going to the school park and people who are visiting the office building or shops. Superintendent Imhoff has to take up more field space and get more service parking for people using the school or he has to find it on West Street. He sees this as a solution. He has expanded the Parish Center lot and he may have to extend it even more if we say there will be no parking on West Street. Ms. Griesmer asked why the school does not use the land it has. Mr. Greiwe said the school is donating the land and the public sector is putting in their share. You will be getting free public spaces for the Village and the private sector is donating land. Ms. Griesmer asked if anyone from the public sector parks in the school parking lot. Mr. Greiwe said the job of a Village is to support business so there are taxes to grow.

Ms. Dina Wilder, 6716 Hammerstone, said she does agree that we need more parking from a business perspective and expansion purposes as well as school parking. Her concern is she feels it is a little rushed. Everyone is saying the same thing about safety and how it applies to the parking as proposed. There are so many cars on the street for a short period of time during school drop off and pick up that having that many people at that time is still having people use their rear view mirrors to back up. There will still be kids running everywhere and now there would be parking on both sides of the street with two way traffic. All of the kids will be forced out the West Street door instead of multiple doors. Her other concern is if we go through with this and the school and Spinnenweber give their land and 2-3 years down the line a sign shows up in front of the school that says no parking between of hours of 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mayor Policastro said there will be attorneys who will put this together so that scenario would not happen. There will be an agreement which will be written into the legislation. It will be included in the land transfer. Neither party will do anything if they do not have their way therefore the lawyers will put together an agreement. But the agreement cannot be put together without a study first.

Mr. Wolter said he believes Mr. Spinnenweber and Mr. Greiwe have paid a dear price to keep parking off the streets. Mr. Greiwe spent \$25,000 per spot to have them park in the basement. Mr. Spinnenweber has been supplying generously public parking to this community for a lot of years. He is demonized for being Mr. Spinnenweber and he has made long term commitments to spend an enormous amount of money to meet our stringent building requirements. He could go to other communities and net out more money for less capital investment. He is passionate about this community. He is willing to donate land and he has proved that he has skin in this game as does the school and Mr. Greiwe. We need to work with the school to answer questions. The businesses have the biggest parking concern between 9-4 and for the most part the school rush hour is over at those times. There may be less of a challenge in making this work because of the timing.

Ms. Griesmer said they show their appreciation to Mr. Spinnenweber by patronizing his businesses every day.

Mr. Weinland said he would like to hear that there is a commitment to a safety study being part of the master plan so there is a good understanding of how these parking spaces will affect businesses and the school traffic. Not knowing what will happen there moving forward opens us up to bad publicity or lawsuits after we do this. He would like commitment of a proper traffic study and safety study.

Ms. Griesmer said we do not live in a perfect world and you are going to have crossover of children on West Street. Her concern is the cars backing up while the kids are crossing the street.

Clerk Borgerding said eventually the businesses will pay for this with higher taxes as their businesses grow and they will be paying more in income and payroll taxes. Eventually down the road there will be money coming in from this project.

Engineer Ertel said it is as safe as a mall parking lot situation. Mr. Kopeke said the street is congested two times a day whether there is parking there or not. The situation right now is dangerous and it is not going to get more dangerous by a design that accommodates these concerns.

Mr. Scheeser asked what Mr. Spinnenweber's immediate need is to fast track this project. Mayor Policastro said he wants to start construction over the summer not in the fall. Mr. Andrews said his frustration with this whole thing is this should have been started six months ago. It could have started with the previous study and we would not have the level of anxiety. We would have been able to determine how many spaces we need to support the school and the businesses that we have today and the businesses we want to have in the future. If we knew the answer to those questions we could then get an answer to the question of how many spaces is the school going to have when they finish construction. We should know that answer now. He called Superintendent Imhoff who told him the answer is 76. Building Commissioner Malone said the number is 150. Mr. Andrews said it is 76 with an additional 20 behind the playground which can be used after school hours. The process to

him smells like a dead fish. Fortunately we have more time than we thought we did so we can do the study and do it right. He is glad we have the time, the residents’ support and we have Council’s support to do that.

Mr. Wolter said at the Committee meeting our understanding was that Superintendent Imhoff only had five weeks to get his design team some assessment of what the Village’s intentions were. Mr. Andrews said we should have said we cannot justifiably spend more money on a Permanent Improvement project than we have spent in the last five years without knowing answers to key questions. Mayor Policastro said six months ago the two entities were not even talking. Mr. Andrews said the Mayor is not the only one who can get the two entities to talk - that is a job of Council.

Mr. Black moved to amend the Committee report to incorporate CDS, Inc. and Koepke Design to develop a concurrent master engineering study/traffic study/parking study not to exceed \$18,000 seconded by Mr. Miller. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

Mr. Black moved seconded by Mr. Miller to accept the recommendation of the Planning/Zoning and Economic Development Committee which met on Monday May 2, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the proposed West Street Parking Plan. Present at the meeting were Committee members Joe Miller, Andy Black and Dennis Wolter. Also present were Council members Denise McCarthy, Jeff Andrews and Cortney Scheeser as well as Mayor Policastro, Building Commissioner Malone, several residents of the Village and other guests. The meeting began with the Committee presenting the proposed plan to widen West Street and add approximately 80+ parking spaces to alleviate the parking shortage around the elementary school and the Strand. After discussion of the pros and cons of going forward with the plan the meeting ended with the Committee agreeing to recommend that Council contract with CDS, Inc. at a cost of \$8600, for engineering and design services to develop a final plan for bidding purposes. Additionally, it was decided to recommend contracting with Martin Koepke to develop a landscaping design for the area. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

Mr. Scheeser said this special meeting was brought together on Monday evening. He did not get a phone call. Mrs. Van Pelt called him at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday morning to alert him of the time change of the meeting. He would appreciate the common courtesy of a phone call from the Mayor. He received an e-mail from Mr. Andrews indicating that the Mayor contacted him regarding the meeting. He believes he deserves a little common courtesy and grown up behavior. A phone call should have been placed to see if he was available because he is a valued member and elected official in the Village or we are going to go ahead with the meeting and hope you can make it. It is really frustrating. Mayor Policastro said he did not call Mr. Wolter or Mr. Miller but had Mrs. Van Pelt make the call Tuesday morning. Mr. Scheeser said he respects the Mayor’s office and asked that the Mayor respect his.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

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Dan Policastro, Mayor

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Anthony J. Borgerding, Clerk