

**ST. BERNARD CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 18, 2007**

The regular meeting of the St. Bernard City Council was held Thursday, January 18, 2007 in Council Chambers.

President of Council, Mr. Curits Walden – The meeting was opened with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call showed that six members were present: Ms. Hausfeld, Mr. Asbach, Mr. Schildmeyer, Mrs. Brickweg, Mr. Meier, Mr. Zix. Mr. Burkhardt was absent.

Mr. Asbach made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Mr. Schildmeyer seconded the motion.

REMARKS

Mrs. Brickweg – I do have a change for them so I can give it to you because it said that I didn't have a report and I did in the COW, yes.

Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes passed 6-0.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

MAYOR, Mr. Estep – A couple of reminders before I read my report, on Jan. 29th there is a spaghetti dinner up at St. Clement and we've added some hours to Dial-a-Ride, instead of beginning at 5:30 that evening we're going to start a driver at 4:00. We've had a couple of calls, people can't get there, and we promised that we'd add some hours in those areas and we're following through on our promise so Joe reminded me about that and I appreciate that Joe.

Also, on the Bertus St. Park project report that I'm about to give, there's a public meeting Jan. 24, at 7:00p.m. in the Main Hall of the Municipal Bldg., so just a reminder if anybody has any input that they would like to share with us any ideas, concerns, we'd love to see you and hear from you that night. Again, it's Jan. 24th at 7:00p.m. at the Main Hall.

I believe has seen the legal findings on the Bertus St. Park project and if they were here at COW they were also able to see some of the conceptual drawings that we've had made. Tonight I just want to discuss the concept of the development of the Bertus St. Park. I do want to reiterate some of the points that I made at the last COW meeting. A couple of months ago I asked our Law Director, Ed Geiser, to research whether the City would be able to develop City owned park lands, specifically, Bertus St. Park. Ed did in fact research the law in this matter and I appreciate that. He presented his findings at a Council Meeting. Ed was further instructed by Council to seek a legal opinion from an outside law firm to give us a better understanding of this issue. In the legal opinion it states; ORC 755.41 provides that land within a municipality which has been dedicated or used as a park cannot be offered for development unless the land remains unused by the public or remains vacated for a period of 21 years. However, ORC 755.43 explicitly provides; nothing contained in 755.41, .42 or .43 of the ORC shall be construed as limiting any of the Home Rule powers conferred upon

municipalities by Article 18 of the Constitution of the State of Ohio. The City of St. Bernard through its Charter has established Home Rule powers. Consequently, the provisions limiting these municipalities, their rights to sell park lands, they do not apply. This does not mean the City can simply develop all of its park lands. Other factors come into play. The City will be required to establish that the park area is no longer needed for any public purpose. Also, the owners of property which adjoin the park have the right to challenge the development of the park. Finally, once the decision to develop the park land is determined, the City will have to determine that such development is for public purpose that would be advantageous for the citizens of St. Bernard. I want to emphasize that this concept is in its initial phase and is only being discussed. Again I urge you to attend the public meeting. I had a letter sent out to the residents who live around Bertus St. Park and invited them to last weeks COW meeting and we heard a lot of positive feedback. I appreciate that. On the table we told them was the conceptual drawings and they are still available if you'd like to see them, see Joe Kempe. It shows how three plots for new houses with the Toddler Park remaining would be available. I'd like to offer my personal opinion on this subject. As Mayor I feel voters have entrusted me with certain responsibilities. I must be responsive to the needs of the community. Therefore, I intend to listen to what residents want. I also want to enhance property values, provide a safe and viable community aimed at attracting businesses and residents with family values who have a vested interest in our community. This particular park has been a magnet for undesirable behavior that we as a community do not support. In 2006 the basketball rims had to be removed to reduce the high volume of complaint call to the Police Dept. Rough language and behavior was the norm rather than the exception in and around this particular park. Since the removal of the basketball rims the number of complaints has dropped dramatically. Occasionally, the Service Dept. must perform clean up duty following unsavory activities that are conducted after dark. These activities are of a sensitive nature so I will refrain from providing too much detail at this time. Again I will be happy to provide you with details after the meeting tonight upon request. In closing I want to give you some food for thought. St. Bernard has approximately 980 acres within its borders. Approximately 30 acres are currently dedicated to park or recreation facilities. Bertus St. Park is approximately 1 acre. Approximately 1/3 of Bertus St. Park is asphalt. About 1/3 is made up of an old recreation building and a toddler pool that is no longer in use. 1/3 of Bertus St. Park is green space, if that is what you want to call green space. We could develop the bulk of the park and still have green space in the form of a Tot Lot if that is what residents want. In the conceptual rendering, lot No. 4 is green space or if residents don't want to lose the additional parking that is provided there currently, we should consider some additional parking space in our new plan. The important thing is to use this initial development as a springboard for future development that could make its way to Vine St. If we were to decide to revitalize this park simply as a park, potential cost could be between \$150, and \$200,000.00. These are based on our past project expenditures. In one we have a more attractive magnet that draws more undesirables from other neighborhoods. Please don't be naive to the point of thinking that if we do nothing with this situation, it will improve. It won't. We have an opportunity to develop a piece of property that the City already owns. I've contacted Mrs. Stover, Principal of St. Clement, to offer the Pavilion and Vine St. Park as an alternative site for St. Clement for their

recess. She is very receptive and she understands the needs of this community and some of the issues we face. If you could just take a moment and just sort of picture the following walk you take with your kids. If you go past Angels Way going toward the Dairy Queen, if it stays as it is now, you go past the swing sets, you have sixteen to seventeen year old kids denying our residents a place on the swings. If the basketball courts were still there you'd see 20 to 25 guys, seventeen to twenty five year olds, from Winter Terrace, Avondale, Madeira, Indian Hill, they could be from anywhere, but they are undesirable. Using language the we don't like our kids to hear and as we mentioned earlier, after dark, they go over along the fence and whatever takes place, fortunately we have a great Service Dept. that cleans that up so the kids don't find that at recess the next day. If we went through with this project and you backed up a little bit on this walk you would come to a Tot Lot available for 7 and 8 year olds on swings and teeter totters supervised by parents and grandparents. As you went around the corner a little bit you would see a beautiful home with people sitting on their porch enjoying the evening waving at you as you go to the Dairy Queen or take your walk through St. Bernard. On the corner there would be another large, beautiful home, grass in the front yard, back and as you turn to go down Park Place, there would be another home. It's a way to generate revenue, increase family values, provide a safer environment up there which we've already done but this takes it to a new level. I see nothing wrong with this and I think I see it as a positive way to move forward. I hear people say, why don't you work on Vine St. first but Vine St. is a big project and there's nothing wrong with Vine St., we can do more than one project at a time. I'd really like to focus on some smaller parcels of property such as this, which is almost cost free to the City and build on that success. I was glad to see the Council members listen last week and be somewhat receptive and maybe even in some cases even change their mind a little bit and again this is just another sign of us all working together.

AUDITOR, Mr. St.Clair – Reports for the City's investments and bank accounts have been distributed to council and the Administration. Before Council tonight are Ordinance Nos. 2 and 3, 2007. Ordinance No. 2 is an additional appropriation of \$21,500 for professional services in the Service Department as requested by the Service Director at the last COW. Ordinance No. 3, also discussed at that COW, is the pay Ordinance for those hired after January 1, 2005, except for those involved in the summer pool and swim programs. Those employees will be covered in a later Ordinance. The only difference in this Ordinance from Ordinance No. 10, 2006 is the addition of the HIP Inspector and rate changes to the Health Department Clerk to bring her up to the new minimum wage. For those who attended the last Council meeting and those who watched it on television, I want to correct the 2006 receipts report. It was not \$15,299,079.31 as reported, but rather \$13,237,724.95. The \$15 million figure was read from the Auditor's report of cash receipts for all the City's funds without deducting transfers from the General Fund to some of those other funds. The transfers for 2006 amounted to \$2,061,354.36 and that can be found in the Auditor's report on page 10 line item 01-5-A-19. The City had a budget surplus in 2006 of \$2,959,164.79 which when added to the ending cash balance in 2005 of \$3,414,252.67 gave an ending cash balance of \$6,373,417.46 on 12/31/06.

DIRECTOR OF LAW, Mr. Geiser – No report.

TREASURER, Mr. Kathman – No report.

SAFETY DIRECTOR, Mr. Stuchell – I have a traffic safety message on behalf of the Police Dept. We have been increasing our traffic enforcement efforts throughout the City and we continue to need your assistance on this safety problem. The main purpose of this effort is to educate everyone on traffic laws and problems and to improve our family's safety. Last year, alcohol as involved in 16,885 deaths on our nation's highways. 39 percent of the total figure of 43,443 killed. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 15,000 lives were saved by safety belts in 2005 and that another 5,328 would have been saved if everyone over the age of four buckled up. Speed was listed a contributing factor in 30percent of the fatal crashes. We want to prevent these types of tragedy of innocent citizens being killed in our community and to limit property damage. You have a key role to play in traffic safety. We need you to utilize safety belts, child safety seats, air bags, to watch for speed limit signs, stop signs and traffic signals; we need your eyes and ears and need you to call us when you observe dangerous trends or reckless operators. Even with the added emphasis and signage we are still stopping residents on Ross Ave. going 40+ in a posted 25 MPH zone and residents rolling stop signs. Many don't know that there are two steel companies and concrete trucks rolling off the side streets onto Ross Ave. so speed can be deadly. Also a lot of cases, the persons are either talking on a cell phone, are preoccupied eating, talking, thinking or have driven the City so much they have taken these signs for granted and don't realize that they didn't even stop or what their speed is. Many times drivers see a yellow light and press on the gas instead of the brake like you learned in driver's education. People are in too much of a hurry. We need your help to safe lives and limit property damage in our community. Therefore, please leave yourself time and distance and limit your distractions when driving. We want to gain voluntary compliance in this area so that we can keep everyone safe in 2007.

Also, I would like to remind everyone that we will be swearing in our two new Police Officers at the next Council meeting on Feb. 1st for those who would like to attend.

SERVICE DIRECTOR, Mr. Kempe – Before Council tonight is Ordinance No. 2, 2007. This Ordinance is for the additional appropriation of \$21,500 which is the amount reimbursed to the City from Cincinnati Water Works for their share of the Design Engineering cost to replace the water line in the Woodside Heights Improvement Project.

I recommend adoption of Resolution No. 1, 2007, approving the application for a grant for the remodeling of the rest rooms at Vine St. Park. There will be a public meeting held on Wednesday, January 24th at 7:00p.m. in the Main Hall of the Municipal Building just prior to the public meeting for Bertus Park, to allow citizens to offer their input on this project.

TAX COMMISSIONER, Mrs. Williams – No report.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE, Mr. Zix – I would like to again postpone Ordinance No. 1, 2007 until the Feb. 1st meeting to be places on the COW to discuss that Ordinance. Also the Finance Committee would like to recommend the passage of Resolution No. 1 and Ordinance No. 2 and No. 3.

SAFETY, Mr. Burkhardt – Absent

SERVICE, Mr. Meier – I went through and I have some figures that people might be interested in. Obviously it is a major concern for people with the housing and the people moving out of the City and houses for sale. I would just like to bring some figures in, these are fun for the last 12 months and its an area market survey. Last year there were 53 homes that were sold here in the City. Of those, 50 the price ranges went from \$17,000.00 on the low end to \$221,500.00 on the high end. Of those 53, 47 of the 53 homes that were sold in our City last year were \$139,999.00 or less. Currently we have 36 homes for sale and of those 36, 30 of those are listed at \$139,999.00 or less. What that tells us, and right now there are six homes pending, those six homes that are all pending are all less than \$89,999.00. I think this is a very factual illustration of where exactly our market is. The average home sold in the City last year was \$94,665.00. I think this illustrates that we do have, I wouldn't say a crisis, but we have an issue that we need to address with the over all quality and condition of the housing stock in the City. That being said, some additional numbers that I have is that the demand for housing in St. Bernard, despite what some people might think, is actually very strong. 75% of the homes that were listed for sale last year were sold in less than 90 days. This is in a market where currently the current inventory of homes on the market in the Cincinnati area is 5 months. That shows that the demand for the homes is relatively strong in this area. Additional information that supports that is that the average sale price of a home was 97% of the list price. Considering the market that we just went through in the last year, that an incredibly high number. I think more commonly in some of the suburban areas, you're seeing homes being sold at more like 90% of the listing price. I think all that bodes very well for the City. It shows that there is still a demand for the City. This is a place that people want to live in, but I think we need to address the overall housing stock in the City and make sure we do whatever we can to improve that. We have the meeting next Wed. night, to talk about Bertus St., I just thought that people might like to have some of these facts so that they can, when we talk about the homes that we may put some where and the quality of those homes, the price of those homes, we should keep that in mind.

One of the things that we have talked about up here a couple of times that I had brought to mention is that Cincinnati Housing Partners is interested in working with us, revitalizing some housing stock in the City. They do have income limits and there has been some voice as I've talked with people, some concerns with that. An example of the type of people, according to their housing limits is with and income limit of \$36,000 for a one person household, I think that is a good average starting salary for a school teacher. I know a lot of people that I do mortgages for, they're a lot of single school teachers that make that price range and I think, I don't think anybody would object to living next to a school teacher. For a family of two people, that number is a little over \$41,000, which is the salary that we're paying for our building inspector, our HIP Inspector and certainly I don't think anyone would object to living next door to a HIP Inspector. If you have a family of

three, which may be a single mom and two children, would be an income of \$46,000. Again, I don't think anybody would object to somebody making \$46,000 in that situation. Cincinnati Housing Partners has again, one of their missions is revitalization of neighborhoods, they're willing to work with us, using their own funds and using City funds as well, if we can do that. They would like to make available an invitation to anybody on Council and the Administration to come and look at some of the projects that they have done. In talking with them, the best days that they have available are late on Wednesday's or on Saturday. So perhaps on Saturday, the 3rd of Feb., if anybody in the Administration or on Council would like to go and visit some of the sites and see exactly what they are doing to the homes that they're working on, how they do it, what they look like after they're finished, I'd be glad to make those arrangements.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, Mr. Asbach – I'd like to run through the packet for 618 E. Ross. This is coming up and I'd like to run through the procedure that one would follow.

LOT FOR SALE

Initial sale period will last approximately two weeks – January 26 thru February 9, 2007.

APPLICATION

THERE IS ONE LOT TO BE SOLD

- 1.) Any interested buyer may apply for this lot. Sale Price is \$15,000.
- 2.) Each application must be accompanied by a \$1,000.00 cash deposit.
- 3.) At the conclusion of the sales period, a lottery drawing will be conducted and a winner will be drawn. A first alternate and second alternate winner will also be drawn.

AWARD PROCEDURE

AFTER AN APPLICANT HAS BEEN AWARDED THE LOT

- 1.) Applicant has six weeks to submit architectural drawings to the Planning Commission for their approval.
- 2.) After the Planning commission approves the plans, the applicant must furnish proof of financial ability to pay for the project (letter of credit from a lending institution).
- 3.) City Council passes Sale Ordinance.
- 4.) Applicant then enters into a purchase contract with the City.
- 5.) Applicant has four months to start the project.
- 6.) Applicant has ten months from date of Purchase Contract to complete the project.

LAWS, CONTRACTS, & CLAIMS, Ms. Hausfeld – As I stated last week at the COW meeting, my Committee met Wednesday, Jan. 10th to discuss residency, soliciting and property maintenance code ordinances. I would like to be put on next weeks COW agenda with our recommendations.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY, Mr. Shildmeyer – No report, but I did have a couple of calls of interest I thought I'd bring up. Some residents saw a dumpster in from of Long John Silvers over the last couple of days and thought that they were planning some kind of move and called me on it to check into it. I stopped in and spoke with them. It was just that they were

remodeling the inside of the building. There is no worry, they are going to be around a long time. They like the St. Bernard area, they do a good job down there. I just want to reassure the residents that there is no move taking place for that restaurant on the corner down there at Vine St. and Ross Ave.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION, Mrs. Brickweg – At last weeks COW meeting the Safety Director, Jonathan Stuchell informed us on a traffic study we could have done on Ross Ave. to give us ideas on how the City can fix the speeding and the number of auto accidents on Ross. He informed us that we could have TEC Engineering do a traffic flow study on Ross from Fisher to Vine for the cost of \$22,800. After some discussion it was decided that the City will look into what it would cost to change Ross to three lanes and allow parking only on the north side of Ross. I was hoping to deliver a letter to the residents on Ross asking them to contact me with how they feel of this idea, but with all the rain last weekend and with it being dark when I get home from work on weeknights, I was unable to do that. I am hoping that many residents on Ross watch our Council meeting on Cable or read the minutes and they will contact me. My goal is to hear from many of the residents on this subject. At the COW meeting a resident of Ross stated that he thinks the speeding has gone down on Ross since the installation of the pole lighted devices and the increase police presence. He also said with only three lanes it would cause a problem on trash pick up days, because no one could pass the packer. I did receive some numbers on the amount of auto accidents on Ross from the police. I would like to continue to urge the citizens on Ross to call the police if their cars are hit. Even if you do not fill out a police report, this will still help them keep track of the number of autos hit. It was also suggested again to pave the City owned lot at 618 Ross and give the residents of Ross an alternative to park. I hope to hear from more citizens, feel free to call me at home 242-5183 or email me at pbrickweg@yahoo.com.

Mr. Asbach – The Committee of the Whole Report has been submitted to the Clerk.

**Committee of the Whole
January 11, 2007**

1. Council approved the minutes of the Jan. 4th Council meeting, 7-0.
2. Mayor John Estep – Introduced a plan to build houses on the Bertus S. Park property. After much discussion from Council and the public, there will be a town meeting on Jan. 24th at 7:00p.m. at the Main Level of the Municipal Building.
3. After a short discussion, all dept. heads will be at least one COW meeting per month.
4. Mayor, John Estep, no report.
5. Auditor, Walter St. Clair, no report.
6. Director of Law, Edward Geiser
 - A. Ed gave Council a copy of Municipal Home Rule

B. Ed reported that Joe and he met with the Enquirer on the newspaper rack ord. They will work with the Enquirer on a solution to the problem of the plastic racks.

7. Safety Director, Jonathan Stuchell

A. After discussing the Ross Ave. Survey, Council agreed to look at other alternatives.

8. Service Director, Joe Kempe

A. Council agreed 7-0 to put an ord. on the table to transfer \$21,500.00 to pay JMA for work on the Woodside Heights project.

B. Council voted 7-0 to let Joe go out for bids to replace the ramp at the Municipal Building.

C. After Joe explained to Council and the public about the need to upgrade the restrooms at Vine St. Park, Council agreed 7-0 to put a resolution on the table to apply for a State of Ohio Nature Works Grant.

9. Tax Commissioner, Sheri Williams

A. Sheri explained the City received \$500,000.00 in the month of Dec. that she expected to receive in Jan. So the projections for 2007 would be short and the 2006 projections would be over by that amount. Also the tax forms for 2007 would be out by the end of Jan. They are also available on the internet at the City's web site.

10. Laws, Contracts, & Claims, Patty Hausfeld

A. Patty reported that her committee met and will bring recommendations on ords. for residency, soliciting, and property maintenance code to the next COW meeting.

11. Public Improvements, Steve Asbach

A. Steve informed Council that his committee would meet soon on the ord. for the newspaper racks.

12. Business & Industry, Mike Schildmeyer, no report.

13. Safety, Bill Burkhardt, no report.

14. Highways & Transportation, Peggy Brickweg

A. Peggy asked Council to discuss longevity pay and City Hall salaries. Greg Zix said the Finance committee will be working on it.

15. Service, Kevin Meier

A. Candidates for the Tax Abatement council were given to Kevin. He will report back when he has all the names he needs.

16. Finance, Greg Zix

A. Council agreed 7-0. to put an ord. on the table for the pay for the part-time employees.

17. Council went into Executive Session to discuss litigation and the purchase of property.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Burkhardt
President of Council, Pro-Tem

COMMUNICATIONS – None.

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Mr. Meier to read this evenings Resolutions and Ordinances by title only. Motion passed 6-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 1, 2007, AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE NATURE WORKS PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC RECREATION PURPOSES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to suspend with the second and third reading of Resolution No. 1, 2007.

REMARKS

Mrs. Brickweg – I don't remember, I don't think we discussed this, I was just curious if somebody could explain better what this is for.

Mr. Kempe – What this is for is in order for us to go out to apply for this grant, we have to pass a Resolution, where Council says they are in favor of applying for the grant and the other factor is, we have to hold a public meeting, that what the Jan. 24th meeting is for. This is just one step in the process.

Motion to suspend passed 6-0.

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Mr. Meier to adopt Resolution No. 1, 2007 as read. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Walden – At this time I will accept a motion to postpone Ordinance No. 1, 2007.

Motion by Mr. Zix, seconded by Mr. Asbach to postpone the reading of Ordinance No. 1, 2007 until the Feb. 1st meeting.

REMARKS

Mrs. Brickweg – I know that we discussed this at the COW meeting and I thought we agreed that we were going to go ahead and pass this because we took the swim portion off and it was also discussed that Walt needs some of this to be able to pay people. Am I wrong, I mean is this going to cause a problem if we postpone it Walt?

Mr. Asbach – That's what Ordinance No. 3 is Mrs. Brickweg, the separated amount.

Motion to postpone passed 6-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 2, 1007, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE AUDITOR TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 2, 2007. Motion passed 6-0.

Motion by Mrs. Brickweg, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to adopt Ord. No. 2, 2007 as read. Motion passed 6-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 3, 2007, FIXING THE COMPENSATION OF THOSE FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF ST. BERNARD FOR THE YEAR 2007 WHOSE FIRST DATE OF SERVICE IN THE POSITION IS AFTER 1/1/2005, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Meier, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 3, 2007. Motion passed 6-0.

Motion by Mrs. Brickweg, seconded by Mr. Asbach to adopt Ordinance No 3, 2007 as read. Motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Meier – I have a question for Mr. Wiedman. Gerry, I was looking on the 618 E. Ross packet. It says that the design must include a full basement and it also says that Ranch Style construction will be permitted. Does that mean that if it is a Ranch Style it does not have to have a full basement or you have to have a full basement at any style?

Mr. Wiedman – As is states, Mr. Meier, the way the packet was written out as a full basement, however, that's one of the reasons it has to go to the Planning Commission first. If it is determined that they're going to allow that Ranch, I'm certain that they would review it as to whether or not they had to have the full basement.

Mr. Meier – Is that a yes or a no or it depends?

Mr. Wiedman – Well it would be dependent upon the Planning Commission. They will review the plans.

Mr. Meier – So if the Planning Commission approved the Ranch Style without a basement that would be acceptable.

Mr. Wiedman – Yes.

Mrs. Brickweg – At last weeks COW meeting Mr. Zix asked for an update on Dr. Romanos from the University of Cincinnati. I tried to answer a few times, but the subject got changed before I could speak. I would like to give an update now so everyone knows what is going on.

Dr. Romanos did give the City back the \$16,000 for his study because the University was drawing on his accounts to pay other items in their budget. I have talked with Dr. Ramonos about his plans for St. Bernard and how he

sees the study going. In the meantime I have talked with Gerry Wiedman and I have done some thinking on this project. After attending the University of Cincinnati's presentation on our City I was very excited. It was very nice to see and hear possibilities for our City and Vine St. At the time I thought this was a great way to get fresh ideas and at a low cost. Since then I have seen various projects take a lot of time to get started and even longer to get accomplished in this City. I realized that Dr. Ramonos' study may have some great ideas, but they are just plans. I have stated many times that we need to spend money to accomplish these plans, but it falls on deaf ears. People often ask "why is nothing being done with Vine St." and I tell them I feel we lack the vision, plans and implementation to get anything done. That is why, after talking with Mr. Wiedman I have come to the conclusion that I think our City must take a different route. I would like to suggest that we start looking for developers that can come in with the plans and actually do the work to make the plans happen. I was very impressed with McGill, Smith, and Punchion when they came into speak with us and I think we should talk with other developers. Mr. Wiedman and I will be meeting next week to discuss other potential developers that our City leaders may want to speak with.

I am also currently studying finance reports for 2006 and it appears that we do have a good surplus this year which I hope we will reinvest some of this money on fixing up Vine St. At the end of 2006 the residents of St. Bernard voted to increase their property taxes to "Save our City". Let's start saving it by saving Vine St. Vine St. is the heart and soul of St. Bernard. It is the first thing many people see when they come into our City. It is our business, school and government district. It is the main road through our City. "Build it and they will come", that is the motto St. Bernard needs to start following. We have witnessed for the past few years that waiting for people to "want" to build does not work, just look at NuMaid for a prime example of that. Let's learn from our mistakes and invest in ours and our children's future. I would also like to comment about the Cincinnati Housing Partners. I was the one that would like to go on record to say that I am against that. I went on their web page and almost every page on that list says it is for low income housing and on their mission statement it says it is for low income housing and I just don't feel like that's a good goal for our City to just say that we're going to start aiming and our way to fix our City is to attract low income housing. I just want to go on the record that I am not in favor of that at all. Some of the communities it even listed as examples are, Over-the-Rhine, Price Hill, Fairmount, and I don't want St. Bernard to be listed in that group of cities. I think when you look at the budget and you see the amount of money in the budget and maybe Walt can help me to make sure I have this right but he gave the numbers and with the investments we had \$6,578,474. but if you look at the beginning of the Auditor's report and appears we've been doing this for many, many years, we roll money in from the General Fund at the end of the year into the next year. What we're going to be rolling this year is \$6,373,417.

Mr. St. Clair – That's it, that is the money in the bank, that is the money in our investments, that's the money in our accounts.

Mrs. Brickweg – OK, I guess my question is how much money was left over in the General Fund at the end of the year that we roll over to the next year?

Mr. St. Clair - The ending cash balance in the General Fund as of 12/29/06 was \$5,630,303.16. That will go into the beginning year to date balance of 2007 as \$5,630,000. That amount is shown as the beginning balance for 2007.

Mrs. Brickweg – And then when we have the sheet that says the investments, is that something different?

Mr. St. Clair – The investments are part of that \$5 million. In other words, if we have \$5 million cash balance, don't think of it as strictly tens and twenties over at the bank. This is in various accounts, it's in our checking account for operating expenses, it's in investments, those types of things. We don't have \$5 million in our checking account, we have, I don't have a figure for that right now,

Mrs. Brickweg – About \$2.5 million?

Mr. St. Clair – That sounds a little high but it could be close to that, but we do know the investments are, it's on the report that I handed out tonight.

Mrs. Brickweg – Bare with me, I just think this is very important that we understand how much money is in the bank. I feel that if we're going to start fixing up the City we need some money, we need to go get some property and fix it up and to hire developers.

Mr. St. Clair – OK, we have a little over \$4 million in investments, but that's included in the \$6 million.

Mrs. Brickweg – In the \$6,578,474.00 That's just the total on this account, on this paper that you gave us.

Mr. St. Clair – Which one are you looking at? You're looking at all the totals of all the accounts? Including the investments? Yes, \$6,578,000.

Mrs. Brickweg – OK, and then we paid off NuMaid so we still owe on the swimming pool and the sweeper.

Mr. St. Clair – The swimming pool and the street sweeper and I think the police cars will be paid off this year.

Mrs. Brickweg – OK, I'm just suggesting that I think it's time that we start investing in our City and we're going to need to hire professionals, it's very obvious if you look at the last ten years, I mean I'll be very honest, I'm not qualified to do that and there's people out there that are and we need to get those people and get them in here. I just think the longer we wait, the more people are moving out and it's going in the opposite direction and I would just like to suggest that and I feel bad, when I heard that Dr. Ramonos talk at first I got really excited but I realize it's just a plan and that doesn't seem to work in this City, so that's an update for you Mr. Zix on Dr. Ramonos but I would like to put it on the COW agenda that we at least discuss possibly looking at other developers and bringing them in to speak to us.

Mr. Estep – I just want to comment on Peggy there, I'm going to have to agree with you 100% and I think we've discussed that and I think we all agree that nobody in this part of the room is a professional developer and if you leave something sit long enough, it's just going to fall apart and I think Council is on board with this and we need to discuss that. I'd like to get with you and Gerry Wiedman, narrow it down to two or three developers, find what the price is going to be and have them lend their hand for a price, naturally and lead us in the right direction. We need some guidance and we're going to go nowhere without it.

Mr. Meier – I just have a question, back when Dr. Ramonos was making his original presentation, at that time the CIC had recommended that we look at both private or professional developers as well as Dr. Ramonos, listen to those proposals and then come back with a recommendation. The decision to go with Dr. Ramonos was made by this Council and this Administration after that presentation. I think after that we had voted to put that Vine St. project back into the CIC. I'm all for having some private developers and there are some others that we have seen in CIC that were outstanding presentation. I guess the question I have is, is Vine St. still in the CIC or not? If it is and we're having additional meetings outside, is it still in CIC where CIC is going to go back and look at it now or is this Mrs. Brickweg and Mr. Wiedman and Mr. Estep are you going to take the lead on this? I think we need to get some clarification on this so that we don't have people running into one another in working on this project.

Mrs. Brickweg – Mr. Meier these were just some suggestions and to be very honest, I've attended the last couple meetings and they were good meetings but you don't meet that often. There was like a meeting in August and a meeting in October and nothing since then. I don't see why we can't all work together and Gerry knows a lot about this and I really think he would be a big help in this. John is the Mayor, so I think the Mayor should be included in this and I was not in agreement with putting it in the CIC because I think Council should be involved and whoever else wants to help and we should be able to attend the CIC meetings. I think the more at this point, the better and to get the ball rolling because it doesn't seem to get rolling and that's why I brought it up but I'm not trying to step on anybody's toes but I want to see some action.

Mr. Estep – I don't want to belabor the point on Council floor but I think it's something we need to discuss at COW. I'm not going to bash the CIC, I think there's been some snags and some hold ups that have prevented them from making the progress we wish they would have made. They put a lot of time and effort in and we all want it to happen right now. I don't know if I'm comfortable adding more to CIC's load, we need to get this developer in, find one, get them on board, get a contract with them and move forward with it and if we want to have them maybe possibly work with the CIC, I don't want to make this political, I don't care who gets the credit, I just want the job done.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Schildmeyer – Right before the meeting, Forrest mentioned something about the corner of Mitchell and Greenlee Aves. The road itself is kind of rocky and fallen to disrepair after some original work that was done over the last year. From the sidewalk out where it's all covered in black top all the way out to the street, it's kind of rugged. Could you contact someone, Joe, and see if that is going to be repaired again when the weather gets better and give the people up there in the subdivision a time frame so that they can figure better ways to drive through.

Mr. Kempe – That is a temporary fix and they will come back and the sidewalk down Greenlee to Advance will be replaced with cement sidewalk and then they will blacktop and refill those holes that they dug up. I'm sure that it's due to the weather but I can call them and try to get a time line when that's going to be done.

Mr. Schildmeyer – Forrest mentioned something about the street, I guess the street is just falling down because of the work in that area too but if there's another group to contact regarding that street and to contact them and see if there's some time line we can get on that.

Ms. Hausfeld – Just to let the residents know besides Greenlee and Mitchell streets that Mike just mentioned, I also mentioned to Joe beforehand about the Bertus and Mitchell Ave. having the same kind of problems. You can add to your list too.

Mr. Kempe – It's the same company.

AUDIENCE WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

None.

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Mr. Meier to excuse the absent member. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Asbach – The next COW meeting will be Thursday, Jan. 25th at 7:30p.m.

Motion by Mr. Zix, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to adjourn. Motion passed 6-0.