

**MT. HEALTHY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 3, 2007 at 8:10 P.M.**

The City Council Meeting was preceded by an open house to review the latest draft of the city's land use plan. The open house began at 7:00 P.M. and the regular Council meeting was called to order by President Sylvia Lawson at 8:10 P.M. The invocation was given by Mr. Cook and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Cook, Mr. Lombardo, Mrs. Lingo, Mr. DeBruler, Mr. Roetting, Mr. Wolf, and Mrs. Moody.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Auditor Jill Claire, Safety Service Director Bill Kocher, Treasurer Deb Schaefer, and Law Director Steve Wolf.

MINUTES:

A motion to adopt the minutes of the March 20 Council meeting as printed was made by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Roetting. An aye vote carried the motion.

CORRESPONDENCE:

President Lawson noted a reminder by the Ohio Ethics Commission that financial disclosure statements are due April 15.

Mr. Roetting noted that anyone intending to run for Council who is not currently serving needs to file by April 9.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

CITIZENS/GUESTS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

Many Mt. Healthy residents, some of whom did not give their names, had questions and comments on the proposed land use plan. Major points are summarized here.

Several Council members thanked people for attending this meeting and encouraged them to attend other meetings and become more aware of and involved in the city's projects. None of these projects will happen overnight and the process will be improved by more citizen involvement. All but one of the Council seats are uncontested in the upcoming election. City Hall is open 8:30-4:30 weekdays. The next Council meeting is April 17 at 7 P.M.

Residents would have liked to be better informed about this project. Many of them heard about this open house from a neighbor and not from the city. A sign-up sheet was circulated during the open house; perhaps the city can use it to maintain communication with interested parties. The city should take advantage of the ideas available from people who may be affected by the proposed projects. The proposed city newsletter sounds like a good idea. A Mt. Healthy property owner (nonresident) recommended that the city better communicate the planning process and the timeframe in which it will happen in order to allay the panic that is evident tonight.

Residents are also responsible for finding out what the city is up to; the city does not have the resources to call everyone whenever something is going on. Attending Council, Block Watch, and Neighborhood Action Group meetings as well as checking the city's web site, the sign in front of City Hall, and the Community Press are all ways to do this. Frequently, Angie Buettner is the only person in the audience at Council meetings.

Residents would like to know exactly what changes are planned to streets in Mt. Healthy and whether their homes and businesses will be affected. This land use plan is still in development and has not been formally presented to Council, much less adopted in its entirety as city policy. Council may choose to adopt all or part of the plan, and will then proceed based on the parts that are adopted. It seems very likely that the city will decide to do something about traffic congestion on Compton, but what to do has not been decided, much less how to do it. The maps and diagrams shown in the presentation are some ideas that have been put forward for consideration. There will have to be much more discussion and planning before actually doing anything. Steve Wolf pointed out that the only way the city can take someone's property without their agreement is through eminent domain. This is a pretty unpopular process in Cincinnati right now and it is unlikely that Mt. Healthy will employ it. One gentleman commented that people knew about Cross County highway for a long time before construction began; these things don't happen quickly. There will likely be some property changing hands related to the Wal-Mart being built at the old Rinks site, and the city needs to know what we want and be prepared to ask for right-of-way or other changes as part of the process of permitting any new construction.

Restricting parking on Hamilton, either during rush hour or permanently, was put forward as an alternative to some of the plans that would require demolition of existing buildings. Restricting traffic during rush hour doesn't work especially well in College Hill and would require significant police resources for enforcement. This plan was very unpopular when it was proposed in 1989 but seems to be more acceptable now.

Residents are concerned about increasing traffic on Harrison and Perry as a result of the proposed changes, and are also concerned about large truck traffic on these streets. The city was not aware that truck traffic on these streets was a problem. The city's planning for traffic congestion is not directly related to the Wal-Mart that will be constructed; this process was already underway when the Wal-Mart project was announced.

Residents would like to have a copy of the land use plan in order to study it in more detail. Mr. Kocher will arrange to put a copy of the slides from tonight's presentation on the city's web site, and copies of the land use plan will be available once it is final.

One gentleman stated that individuals pay more taxes in Mt. Healthy than businesses and also noted that Mt. Healthy has more bars per capita than any other municipality in the area. When he was involved in this process in 1989, it was not feasible to move the electric service wires underground because this would require bringing the buildings up to current electrical code before reconnecting them and most business owners on Hamilton cannot afford this. He believes

that the business district is outdated and cannot be saved. He recommended that the city try eliminating parking on Hamilton for a six-month trial period.

Residents are concerned about the high proportion of rental homes in the city. Many people have made substantial investments in their homes and fear that people purchasing property to rent view Mt. Healthy negatively. They fear that renting neighbors may not have the same interest in caring for their property, children, and children's safety. The first step is to make sure that people purchasing property in Mt. Healthy are invested in Mt. Healthy. There are some houses behind Maple with broken windows, bricks on their roofs, and naked children. Mr. Roetting commented that people should tell the city about problems like this. The property maintenance inspector is part time and does not have time to look at everything, so complaints are useful in focusing his work.

Steve Wolf commented that the city is investigating and will probably pursue a process for licensing rental property owners. This will allow us to inspect rental properties regularly as well as maintain more accurate tax records. Other communities are passing similar legislation and it is being tested in the courts; Mt. Healthy intends to learn from their experiences.

The track at the baseball field needs better lighting. There are drug transactions and public displays of affection going on there, but they are generally over with by the time the police arrive.

Residents would like to know what the city's beautification ordinance contains. There is a property maintenance ordinance, but no beautification ordinance per se. The latest codified version of the city's ordinances is available on American Legal's web site. There is a link to this site from Mt. Healthy's web site. Ordinances passed since this codification are not on that web site, however, nor are ordinances that are under consideration. Minutes of Council meetings are on the city's web site, and they are a way to keep track of proposed ordinances. Ordinances that have been passed are posted.

One gentleman commented that pets do not seem to be as well trained as they used to be and that he would like the city to encourage people to clean up after their pets. An area near his house is a particular problem.

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Kocher intends to present an ordinance authorizing the city to accept a bid for this year's grinding and overlay project at the next meeting.

Mr. Kocher has been working with the parks committee to plan events for this summer; plans include combining the car show and the policemen's/firemen's dance with some donated fireworks; a concert in the gazebo by the MacIntyres, a Mt. Healthy bluegrass duo, and bingo again this summer.

The loan for the dump truck and police software is arranged.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT: None.

AUDITOR'S REPORT:

The 2005-2006 outside audit is getting underway. Council members will be receiving questionnaires as part of this process.

TREASURER'S REPORT: None.

ORDINANCES: None.

RESOLUTIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Roetting and seconded by Mr. DeBruler. An aye vote carried the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

Sylvia Lawson, President of Council

Margaret Roulier, Clerk of Council