

MINUTES  
City of Mentor  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Council President Dowling at 5:31 p.m. followed by the pledge to the flag.

ROLL CALL:

Matthew E. Donovan, Ward 2 Councilman  
Janet A. Dowling, Councilwoman-at-Large  
Ray Kirchner, Councilman-at-Large  
John A. Krueger, Ward 4 Councilman  
Bruce R. Landeg, Ward 3 Councilman  
Scott J. Marn, Councilman-at-Large  
Sean Blake, Ward 1 Councilman

ALSO PRESENT:

Richard A. Hennig, Law Director  
Julie A. Schiavoni, Clerk of Council  
Kenneth J. Filipiak, City Manager  
David Swiger, City Engineer  
Matt Schweikert, Public Works Director  
Ronald M. Traub, Economic & Community Development Director  
Kevin Knight, Police Chief  
Robert Searles, Fire Chief  
Andy Rose, Administrative Resources Manager  
Tom Thielman, Economic Development Administrator  
Ante Logarusic, Community Relations Administrator

GUESTS:

Jerry C. Cirino, Lake County Commissioner President  
Jason W. Boyd, Lake County Administrator  
Art Lyndrose, Lake County Port & Econ. Development Authority, Board Chairman  
John W. Konrad, Lake County Port & Econ. Development Authority, Board Secretary  
Mark Rantala, Lake County Port & Econ. Development Authority, Executive Director

The Clerk of Council confirmed that notice of the meeting was given in conformity with the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22.

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**Discussion with members of the Lake County Commissioners and Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority**

Commissioner Cirino explained he wished to discuss the possibility of combining the Lake County and Mentor Port Authorities. Researched information from past meetings regarding the

**MINUTES**  
**City of Mentor**  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

subject matter. He wants to focus on economic development for the County and increase initiatives of the County Port Authority. Sources of revenue is an issue for all counties, which reemphasizes the need for an aggressive economic development program. Complimented Mentor's Economic Development team. Believes combining the 2 port authorities would be good for both parties.

Mr. Rantala provided a summary of current initiatives at the County port authority. Biggest advantage of combining the port authorities is they would no longer need to go through the process of obtaining individual cooperative agreements with the Greater Mentor Port Authority; it is cumbersome. Reminded Council they assisted in providing \$33-million for the Lake Health project and facilitated the land transfer. Anticipate issuing \$14-million in bonds for the DiNora Tech project. Had conversations with Mentor about speculative flex space to be developed. If the Mentor Lagoons boat channel will be maintained, they have arranged for approval by the Army Corp of Engineers for a plan to provide a detailed study of how to protect the channel and the boaters; would provide a portion of the financing along with the City and boaters.

Mr. Lyndrose added that the Port Authority has renewed interest to combine with Mentor.

Commissioner Cirino expressed his hope to make the agreement simplistic and easy. Planning to expand the County port authority board from 7 to 9 members; notable absent representation of the east side. Believes it reasonable to realize the importance of Mentor and the role it plays in the economic development of the County. Offered 3 Board members that would always be representing Mentor. Would be stipulated in perpetuity. There are currently 3 members on the Board from Mentor with staggered terms. Council could present 3 nominations for appointment and the Commissioners would choose from those 3. Recommended a predetermined meeting on the anniversary of a merge between Council and the County port board to review the port progress, discuss projects, strategies, issues and priorities. Other meetings could also occur. If there is an agreement to move forward, would like it to be in effect in April. Colleagues on the Commission also think it is a good idea.

Councilman Krueger asked if the City would provide 3 names each time a seat is up for reappointment.

Commissioner Cirino affirmed.

Councilman Krueger stated it was mentioned that there are currently 3 board members on the County port authority that are residents of Mentor, but that does not mean they are representing Mentor. The City would be essentially providing 9 names over the course of time.

Commissioner Cirino responded that in the future, when the City would present 3, it would be up to Council to define the qualifications. Confirmed 9 names, 3 each time 1 of the 3 seats become available.

MINUTES  
City of Mentor  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

Councilman Krueger stated that the 2016 presentation indicated that the County port authority worked very well with the Eastlake port authority.

Mr. Rantala responded that they have permanent cooperative agreements in place with Eastlake, Grand River and Fairport Harbor who all operate 'recreational' ports. Eastlake's purpose for their port authority is to have boat launches and river dredging for recreational uses; they do no commercial activities and already pre-agreed that the County would assist in any commercial activities. Grand River does absolutely no activity. Fairport Harbor operates a boat and jet ski launch; their economic development pieces are handed over to the County. The County does not want to be involved in boat launches or dredging or those kinds of things.

Councilman Krueger inquired if the County is looking for Mentor to help them with economic development.

Mr. Rantala replied they would help the City of Mentor, but would be reciprocal. They have a lease on the bottom of the Lagoons Channel that allowed them to go to the Army Corp of Engineers and Department of Defense to get it approved, as a federal interest; because of who owned the pieces, the parties could not do so. Believes the yacht club owned the bottom of the channel originally, so as a private entity, they could not make application.

Councilman Krueger asked why the County port authority does not attend conferences and functions such as the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), to attempt to bring economic development to the County.

Mr. Rantala responded that the previous focus of the Commissioners did not extend into retail; the direction was focused differently, but he attended prior to his current position. The local brokerage community now represents anyone; could just pick up the phone and accomplish the same things quicker than attempting to schedule a meeting at the conference at ICSC. However, at the request of the Commissioners, he will be attending this year and will be available to sit in on any meetings Mentor may want him to be a part of.

Commissioner Cirino added that this is part of their 'stepping up' initiative. Mr. Rantala will be meeting with developers at the ICSC with whom initial meetings have already taken place.

Councilman Krueger stated the City is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest retail market in the State of Ohio; it would make sense that the Commissioners and their economic development would want to maintain or gain on that level of expertise. If there will be vacant space, that is where most it will be. Some of the developers not only do shopping centers, but will redevelop anything.

Commissioner Cirino said that the view of the Commissioners has changed.

Mr. Rantala added that they will respond to what the Commissioners ask and will be in Las Vegas. Offered to help and to sit down ahead of time.

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**MINUTES**  
**City of Mentor**  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

Councilman Krueger replied that would be helpful and beneficial. Attendees are impressed that the City is always well represented.

Commissioner Cirino added it would be a great way to get started working together.

Councilman Marn explained that the City formed their own port authority to have representation. Great to hear about the new direction of the Commissioners. What the City does, effects the County as a whole. Since Commissioners and Council can change every 2 years, need assurances that what is agreed upon brings a good working relationship.

Commissioner Cirino responded that both parties of the team need to see productive results. Makes sense for both parties; if it does not produce results, it could be dissolved. The relationship should be cast in a way to survive changes in individuals. Reiterated his commitment to economic development.

Councilman Blake expressed he believes the Commissioner's approach is more in alignment with Council. Read about the initiatives for eastern and western Lake County, but needs to ensure enough representation for Mentor. What would the port's plan be for Mentor?

Mr. Rantala replied that their number 1 focus in trying to work with the City is getting industrial spec space constructed. Their first priority is to retain a business within the community they are in; when/if other options in the community have been exhausted, then, it is to keep them in the County.

Commissioner Cirino stated the western portion of the county needs assistance with mature housing stock, not technically blighted, but in trouble from a vacancy standpoint. The local governments need County assistance that Mentor would not require. Eastern part of the County does, as well.

Council President Dowling requested review of the size and height of the industrial spec buildings that the County is lacking - and the typical industrial building size and height.

Mr. Rantala responded that the most often requested building is at least 100,000 square feet with a 30-foot clear ceiling height. The buildings constructed prior to the downturn in 2009 were 18-22 feet clear height. There is only 1 space in the County of existing inventory, that he knows of, that has 30 feet clear height, but it is only 32,000 square feet. There was a great deal of time in northeast Ohio where nothing was built, there is a huge shortage of 100,000 square foot, 30-foot clear height buildings.

Council President Dowling asked the reason for the need.

MINUTES  
City of Mentor  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

Mr. Rantala replied that the types of users are doing more vertical rack stacking of materials in warehouses.

Council President Dowling asked for confirmation of the type of users.

Mr. Rantala advised they would be light manufacturing/assembly companies, rather than heavy manufacturing.

Commissioner Cirino added that it is important to identify the deficiencies and hindrances in the County; need to develop a plan on how to overcome them. Also, important to work with developers.

Council President Dowling responded that she is a proponent of spec buildings; they had multiple spec building options when they moved their business to Mentor. It certainly sped up the moving process.

Mr. Rantala added that people do not want a build-to-suit building that will take a year to construct. They are looking to move in within 90 days.

Commissioner Cirino stated a need to leverage lenders to be more lenient regarding the problem with financing of spec buildings. Will go after this positively and aggressively. Working together as a team would be a positive move.

Mr. Filipiak noted the importance of defining specs for the City as identifying space available to construct upon; getting close to being built out. Some of the appropriately zoned areas are somewhat limited, due to wetlands and the like. The County port authority could benefit the City by helping to identify more of the properties, work with the owners and other developers to help the properties to be in closer condition to be utilized, which is a big challenge.

Mr. Rantala responded that they would love to see a new industrial class A industrial park and a new class A office park, which currently does not exist in Lake County. A 100-acre, or larger, park would be wonderful; most of the County vacant land is too far east and is without utilities.

Councilman Kirchner requested confirmation that the potential for 2 new members to the County Port Authority would come from eastern portion of the County.

Commissioner Cirino affirmed. There is no representation from the eastern portion.

Mr. Kirchner stated there is significant difference from someone being from Mentor and someone representing Mentor. Knows Mr. Konrad and has met with him to discuss issues, but has never met the other 2 referenced members. Expressed concern related to who is listed as being from Mentor. Also, the City has a number of bike paths and road projects with NOACA

**MINUTES**  
**City of Mentor**  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

(Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency). Asked the Commissioner's thoughts on the fact that the City was previously offered a seat on NOACA Board.

Commissioner Cirino responded that 1 of the members is John Uhran, who is a Vice President at Lubrizol and lives in Mentor; believes it important for Lubrizol to be represented, as they are the largest manufacturer in the County. His first meeting is tomorrow. The other is Chris, from Cohen & Company. Can arrange meetings. Stressed the need for a team philosophy and a synergy with Mentor. Acknowledged that Mentor is the powerhouse of the County and should get that recognition. Structure can be created, but there needs to be a philosophical meeting of the minds for success. Previous feedback received was there was not much interest in a seat at the NOACA Board. Please advise if there is interest; will revisit it.

Councilman Marn expressed his support. Gave examples of previous economic development possibilities that received no support from the County. Something needs to be done to work together. Cannot come close to competing with some of the offers made by other states; it helps when they know we are giving them our best offer. Their employees have friends and family here, but that only goes so far.

Commissioner Cirino expressed that he does not believe our winter weather is a disadvantage; not selling ourselves as well as we could.

Council President Dowling noted the County has an aging population and workforce. Asked what is being done as a community to bring and retain younger couples here.

Commissioner Cirino responded that we need to do a better job working with our educational institutions. If we are not training and educating people for the jobs that will be available here, they will go someplace else. Housing is another issue; have discussed initiatives in western Lake County because of the mature housing – trying to get developers interested in taking the housing stock and adding value to them by making design changes that would be more attractive to younger adults.

Councilman Donovan noted that Chicago successfully redesigned their old housing stock. It is important to have entertainment for younger adults available.

Mr. Filipiak stated he is an advocate of a consolidation. Requested discussion about long term conceptual plans.

Mr. Rantala replied that they will be discussing 5 strategic plan proposals from a variety of consultants at their next Board meeting. Hoping to select a consultant to assist in developing their next 1- year plan. Most of the goals from the last plan were met. Would sit down with City Council or Administration for input.

MINUTES  
City of Mentor  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

Commissioner Cirino added that the community with the highest velocity of economic activities is going to demand more time and attention. Do not want to ignore other communities, but their needs are different. Welcome ideas, plans and input to consultants.

Mr. Filipiak wondered if there were some tangible goals such as establishment of a bond fund. City would be interested in brownfield development. One of the strengths of port authorities is to help manage public facilities. Interested in being involved in the current planning process of the airport.

Commissioner Cirino responded that the airport is at the end of their current plan. Looking to make the new plan an outstanding strategic plan.

Mr. Rantala added that Tim Cahill has been in communication with Tom Thielman of the City for opportunities to bring County economic loan funds to close some gaps. Need additional activity with Mr. Thielman.

Councilman Blake inquired if the City could have 1 of the expanded Board seats along with an alternate Commissioner seat with NOACA Board.

Mr. Zampedro questioned the necessity of Council presenting a selection of 3 to ultimately be decided by the Commissioners, rather than Mentor making the selection. Is it because of the statutory framework by which the County port authority was formed? Used Cuyahoga Cleveland as an example of what is more of a partnership where the entities appoint the 6/3 mix directly.

Commissioner Cirino replied that when it was established, it was determined the Commissioners would retain the right of appointment.

Mr. Rantala added that he believes the Ohio Revised Code requires that Commissioners to make the appointment, but how they choose to appoint may be different.

Mr. Zampedro further asked that in lieu of having to present 3, would the Commissioners entertain Council determining their representative?

Commissioner Cirino responded that, in the unlikely event Commissioners would find a person objectionable, with 3, there would be other options as choices.

Mr. Zampedro suggested an up or down vote. Trying to understand the latitude of the structure.

Commissioner Cirino added that believes the City could present 3, that any of them would be favorable to the City. Believes there was a previous concern that by receiving only 1 candidate, it would be viewed as giving up their vote of appointment. Believes it is a legitimate concern.

MINUTES  
City of Mentor  
**COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
February 21, 2017

Councilman Donovan expressed that this topic previously took place, causing the subject matter to not move forward.

Councilman Krueger noted that there are 2 ways in the Ohio Revised Code to create a port authority. One is the way the County port authority is set up and the other is that representatives are taken from each city in the county to form the board. Second is a much better way; maybe the 2 could be crossed.

**MOTION** by Councilman Kirchner, second by Councilman Marn to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

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President of Council

ATTEST: 

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Clerk of Council