

NOTES:

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all upcoming for Regular or Special Council meetings; Governor DeWine's directive for meetings and social distancing will strictly be enforced.
2. The public is encouraged to email comments related to agenda items or general communications to the Clerk of Council, Michelle Blazak, email address mblazak@cityofbrookpark.com by 4:30 p.m. the day of said meeting. All emails received will be shared with all elected officials and either read at said meeting or attached to the minutes' journal.

**ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED
AT THE CAUCUS PRIOR TO THE COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Vecchio at 7:00 p.m., the clerk called the roll and the following Members of Council answered:

SCOTT, SCHMUCK, ORCUTT, TROYER, MENCINI, POINDEXTER, SALVATORE
Also in attendance were Mayor Gammella and Law Director Horvath.

DISCUSSION:

1. MEETINGS IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS (Councilman Troyer).

Mr. Troyer stated the reason for this being on the agenda is because residents are asking when is Council going back to normal conditions in the Council Chambers. As one Councilman, I want to go back to the chambers to get things back to normal as soon as possible. Out of respect of a few Councilmembers' haven't been pushing it but think Council owes it to the residents' why Council isn't going back, if not. On top of that a better way is needed for residents to speak live during audience participation.

Mr. Scott stated read an article from the Director's Stay Safe Ohio order dated May 20, 2020 item number four (4). All public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household and connected property, or living unit and connected property are prohibited, except for the limited purposes permitted by this order. Any gathering of more than ten (10) people is prohibited, unless exempted by this order. This was director's stay safe Ohio order of May 20, 2020 and also still intact on the July 30th order that came out. To continue this was in accordance to President Trump's Coronavirus guidelines issues March 16, 2020. Nothing in this order prohibits the gatherings of members of a household, family or residence. This section does not apply to weddings and funerals although wedding receptions are subject to the ten (10) person limitation. This section

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does not apply to religious facilities, entities and groups of religious gatherings. This section does not apply to First Amendment protected speech, including petition or referendum circulators and any activity by the media which includes newspapers, television, radio and other media services. This was Director's Stay Safe Ohio order of May 20, 2020 and still intact with the July 30, 2020 order. To follow through to go by the ten (10) limit there are seven (7) voting Members on Council, one (1) Council President, one (1) Council clerk, one (1) Mayor, one (1) law director, finance director, recreation director, service director and one engineer; totals 15 Council and administrators. I don't know how meetings can be opened up with not following the orders mandated in May and July, 2020. We are supposed to be leaders in this community and should be adhering to these rules. The Board of Control that I am part of has four members wearing masks and at the edge of the eight-foot tables and in and out between 10 to 15 minutes. I hope that the other (city) commissions and boards are adhering to these guidelines. I have a family member who is medically compromised so until this mandate is overruled by the governor and new orders come in I will not meet in Council Chambers.

Mr. Poindexter stated I've been receiving a lot of questions, as well, and am perfectly comfortable with going back to Council chambers and would be willing to bring my laptop for the Zoom meeting in order for residents to come and use the laptop to ask questions, if Council chose to do that, social distancing and masks would be required. I haven't missed a beat at work and all the trades continue to work through this with some voluntarily taking off. For the most part jobs were business as usual and a lot of people have been going through their daily lives business as usual; think Council should be business as usual also. How can Council expect society to go forward as normal and stay out, doesn't make sense to me? There is a lot of pressure to get the children back into the schools, my daughter is away at college currently and if trying to make everything normal I think Council should get back to normal also as leaders.

Mr. Mencini stated I think it's been pretty well known from the last three or four meetings where I stand. I understand since the epidemic began there were a lot of safety measures to be taken and we have done that and continue to do that. I'm not going to kid we have all been out and a lot of people know we've been out and have talked about being here, there and have heard that from a lot of residents. Watching the news this morning there was a Council meeting in Southeast Ohio, there was a school board meeting with people coming to the microphone, without wearing a mask. Our Council President won't allow that and have had three (3) zoning meetings and the recreation center is open and believe it's Council's job as city leaders and other people have the stamp of essential workers well people elected us to lead and have been asked by a lot of people when is Council going back to chambers. Sure that the first meeting could be a

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long one with people wanting to speak on issues at hand. I do respect the Councilmembers that have to be cautious but there are also two (2) on the zoning (board) and both of them showed up for the meeting.

Mr. Salvatore commented to Mr. Vecchio about having people coming to speak, we had that conversation a few weeks ago, about being able to set up a waiting room to allow people to come into the Zoom meetings to voice their opinions, that is something that could be done next meeting for audience participation. Have you researched that to see what could be done?

Mr. Vecchio responded the only way that I found to be done is myself controlling that and bringing those participants from the waiting room under letter L, obviously on the telephone, so they can have time to speak. Then exit the meeting and bring the next person in from the waiting room.

Mr. Salvatore asked if that could be tried to see if it works.

Mr. Vecchio responded if that's what Council wants to do, I'm fine with that.

Mr. Salvatore continued would like to also present a Resolution through Zoom by inviting Southwest General Chief Executive Officer for the month of October as Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Mr. Vecchio commented Councilmembers should take a look at this, run it through the law director to make sure we meet all the parameters, I have no issue if that's what Council wants to do.

Mr. Orcutt stated this is a good topic and glad it's being discussed Mr. Vecchio and I have discussions on this as well. The Zoom program the Council President put on has been very efficient, worked very well and had compliments from people they can see faces and expressions. On the other half as a veteran, the microphone is for the residents is the most key important item to be able to speak at a Council meeting. This has to be fixed immediately and was there any progress made with IT about being able to set up to give the residents the opportunity to speak at the microphone and be on camera?

Mr. Vecchio stated that could be done on camera within the Council Chambers as previously (before COVID-19). The issue is you will need someone within the chambers to switch the camera off the pad the clerk utilizes to switch the camera from the dais to the audience camera.

Mr. Orcutt continued Councilman Poindexter has offered to go in the chambers and capable of being trained by the clerk. When it comes to Zoom (meetings) I

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understand there are some Councilmembers that have compromised immune systems and understand that some of us are working with a lot of people and that won't help the matter. I am going to stand on this where I stood a few weeks ago when the topic came up it's this I am comfortable coming back to the chambers when all my colleagues feel comfortable in doing so. I think it's very important that the microphone is given back to the residents. It's one thing they can write a letter and understand that's what had to be done at that time and think the Council President did a good job with this but some residents want to express their own feelings on certain topics. Will end with the flooding meeting scheduled for next week that is one that I talked with the Council President with having a resident in Ward 3 wondering if there was going to be some video and microphones available for the residents.

Mr. Vecchio responded I will let the Mayor on that but to answer part of your questions. Council, those that have requested being back in chambers I've taken the time and your voices have been heard, believe me, and have done the research down to looking throughout our entire region of Councils' to see who is in chambers, who is doing remote, who's doing hybrid (meetings) meaning doing a split with some people being via Zoom and others in chambers. Listening to everybody and which way to go and what needs to be done I would feel that for the City of Brook Park for the safety of the residents, for the safety of the Members of Council, Administration and everybody in attendance that a hybrid (meeting) would be one solution. By doing that as Mr. Orcutt laid out and Mr. Poindexter offered up somebody could be trained to operate the camera within the Council chambers. Any member of Council or the administration or directors who do not feel comfortable at this time to return to chambers in person. Should not be held to a different standard because that's their feeling of protection can still continue to operate remotely via Zoom. That does afford the residents their time at the microphone and Council has done a great job in affording the residents the ability to be heard, granted in written form and read into record. Everyone is covered by HIPPA Laws (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) so nobody has to, in turn, provide medical history and feel it's in your best interest or interest of your family to work remotely that's something the government has laid out across the country. Council can decide what you want to do, I will run the meetings however Council wants them as the administrator. Which ever way Council goes we have to look at applying some rules from some of the mandates and CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines before jumping into this. We could automatically that things can be done tomorrow but there also needs to be rules in place.

Mr. Troyer stated there are a lot of people concerned and we need to getting back to as close to normal as possible. The hybrid is one idea but think its really important to be able to have the residents speak live to Council under (letter) L;

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think that's the main complaint and what I'm most concerned about. The hybrid you spoke about would be great and would know how it's going to work. The audience participation being live for the residents is what I'm mostly concerned about.

Mr. Mencini stated if one Councilmember is to go back I am going back and willing to help in that way. Zoom (meetings) served it's purpose for a long time but I do hear the residents.

Mr. Orcutt suggested, if possible, putting a monitor for the residents that come to the meeting to be able to watch the meeting live on the monitor; to be able to see what other Councilmembers are saying

Mr. Vecchio stated depending on which way Council decides to go those items need to be figured out. As Mr. Salvatore would like as soon as the following meeting I think Council needs to put some parameters together to make sure everything is set. Don't think we can run wide-open without having a trial by fire.

Mr. Salvatore commented whatever Council decides to do I would hope it can be done beautified where I don't believe in the philosophy half Councilmembers on Zoom and half in chambers and the Council President running the meeting in the chambers or Zoom, wherever you're going to be. Is there going to be a Sargent of Arms to control the audience, the rules of the masks, number of people allowed in there are some elements here that have to be taken into consideration. Everybody wants to get back to normal but what is normal? Right now I don't think there is anything that's normal and Council is concerned about the residents but also needs to be concerned about their safety as Council comes back. City Hall doors are locked, Building Department doors are locked and if Council is going to go back then that's what Council should do; let's work together to figure out how we're going to open up City Hall, Building Department, Council meetings as a group collectively to come up with a method that will work for everyone.

Motion by Mr. Salvatore, supported by Mr. Scott, that item number one was discussed.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Salvatore, Scott, Schmuck, Orcutt, Troyer, Mencini, Poindexter
NAYS: None. The motion carried.

2. KEYS TO THE RECREATION CENTER FOR ACCESS TO THE COUNCIL OFFICE (Councilman Troyer)

Mr. Troyer stated was holding off on this because the recreation center was not open but needed keys more at that time to get agendas and use the Council office. Now that the recreation center is open its limited time and in my previous term I always had access to the Council office, no matter what time. I am aware that the

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Mayor's assistant told me months ago that keys would be made for entrance to the recreation center and don't want to put the Council President on the spot but you seem to have an issue with Council having keys. The administration would provide keys for Council to enter the recreation center for access to the Council office.

Mr. Vecchio stated since I was called out on that I would like to respond first. Mr. Troyer I don't have an issue for anyone to have keys but it's not my decision; to give keys to the building itself. That is for the Mayor and/or in this case the safety director he is in charge of these buildings, I am not in charge of the recreation center that the Council is housed within and Council has been given keys to that office. That's the only thing that I want any responsibility for is the Council office, I do not want nor will I accept the responsibility to allow anyone to enter in or out of that building not during (open) hours; that is not anything any Councilmember should have on their shoulders.

Mr. Mencini stated many other people have keys to that building i.e. people at city hall, people that work for the recreation center, some janitors and many department heads have keys to that building. I find it strange in the year 2020 that Council can't have keys; some work odd jobs with different hours that Council can't have keys for access to the Council office. Special keys could be made for the backdoor and asked Mayor Gammella if there is an issue with having a key for that door?

Mayor Gammella responded the first thing I would have to do is as you mentioned custodians and people who work in the recreation department have keys as they should. I personally don't have a problem with Council having keys but would have to check the liabilities and the reason I say that is this. What if one Councilmember decides to use the weight room and is found with a 400' weight the next morning. Let me look into the insurance liabilities but agrees to have a key I think this should have been designed in when the Council chambers was made. Then at the next meeting Council could make a motion for verbal approval for elected Councilmembers to have a key, I don't have a problem with that.

Mr. Mencini continued Mayor you make valued points and I understand that.

Mr. Vecchio commented let the Mayor find out what the liability factors are and if everything is good Council will get keys.

Mr. Poindexter stated if it does come back that there is a liability that doesn't solve the problem and will need to find another way for access to the building i.e. key code or something like that. Last week I worked late on Friday and worked on Saturday and with the recreation center closing at 12:00 noon wasn't able to get my paperwork until Monday. Luckily I was able to get there early enough to prepare for

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the meeting but what if it was a huge agenda i.e. budget talks and don't have the budget paperwork I am unprepared due to not having access to the office. If there is liability Council needs a plan B to have access to the building and people know we're in there.

Mayor Gammella stated to Mr. Poindexter if there is a problem I will work with Council to find a plan b and work this through.

Mr. Vecchio commented since this pandemic began I haven't been in the Council office receive everything by email and read everything there. Granted it will be a thicker file when budget talks begin but there are ways to receive within Council's time schedule. I understand the frustration because everybody is used to have the freedom to come and go before and unfortunately Council doesn't have that with the new setup.

Mr. Poindexter commented one other point is not only getting paperwork there is a nice little conference area to meet with somebody in a more professional setting, rather than the local restaurant or coffee shop, on a Saturday afternoon. I think for Council to do their jobs to the fullest ability Council needs the tools to do that and the key is one of those tools.

Mr. Troyer thanked the Mayor, in advance, for looking into this issue and hope it works out for Council, there are a lot of uses off-hours for that office for Council.

Mr. Salvatore stated if that conference area is to be used there must be some protocol for cleaning both before and after the usage. This is not a simple fix of here is the key do what you want things have to be in place prior to that. There's way for Council to get in i.e. Holland Road doors and not have access to the entire recreation center. Money may be involved to do that of not having access to the recreation center from Council chambers. Willing to hear what the Mayor says about the liability but me personally do not want a key to the recreation center.

Motion by Mr. Mencini, supported by Mrs. Schmuck, that item number two was discussed.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mencini, Schmuck, Scott, Orcutt, Troyer, Poindexter, Salvatore
NAYS: None. The motion carried.

There being no further business to come before this meeting a **motion** by Mr. Mencini, supported by Mrs. Schmuck, to adjourn.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mencini, Schmuck, Scott, Orcutt, Troyer, Poindexter, Salvatore
NAYS: None. The motion carried.

Council President Vecchio declared this meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED *Michelle Blazak*
Michelle Blazak
Clerk of Council

APPROVED *October 20, 2020*

THESE MEETING MINUTES APPROVED BY BROOK PARK CITY COUNCIL ARE A SYNOPSIS, NOT TRANSCRIBED IN THEIR ENTIRETY, ALTHOUGH ACCURATE.

3,390 words