

On Wednesday, February 28th, 2024, the Council for the Village of Monroeville held a work session at 6:00 PM, in Council Chambers, to discuss the 2024 solar eclipse.

Present were Mayor Joseph Galea; Council Members: Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers, Mark Miller, Bob Whitacre; Village Administrator Tom Gray; Fiscal Officer Bonnie Beck; Chief Gary Lyons; and Lt. Troy Kimball

Absent: Councilman Sam Wiley

The Mayor opened the meeting to discuss the solar eclipse set to occur on Monday, 4/8/24. Tom verified that further communications have been established with the County. We're getting a 30-cubic yard dumpster that will be located at the Street Department, beginning Thursday prior to the eclipse, 4/4/24 and ending the day after the eclipse, 4/9/24. The dumpster will be delivered and picked up. Per speaking with the Chief, the number of barricades and where they will be deployed in the Village, if deemed necessary, hasn't been decided upon yet. Dustin Crabtree painted the women's restroom at Clark Park, which was a nasty situation. Village employees continue to be briefed during weekly staff meetings. "No parking" signs will be posted where necessary. Rick Whiteside and Dustin Crabtree are collecting stakes on which to hang the signs. Tom spoke with the Huron County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Additional information will be coming from that office as the state provides trickle down information regarding the protocol for highway traffic and prepositioned arrow boards and/or signs. The lobby to the MMC Administrative Office will be closed to the public, but it will be a normal workday other than that. Bob asked if the MMC restrooms will be available and Tom said no. Water and wastewater will continue to be treated as normal procedure requires. Dave and Colton won't be doing any substation work the day of the eclipse; therefore, they will be "floaters" among the departments and address any challenges that may arise for the Police Department. Thirty trash barrels with plastic liners will be placed around the Village. Joe asked Tom if he has been working with the Chief on a plan to keep an eye on the electric, water and sewer infrastructure. Tom verified. At the reservoir, the road gate and the inside gate will be closed. Tom is waiting for Berry Global to tell him if they are going to close their gate or not. As of right now, Berry plans to be in operation as usual and they aren't shifting their schedule at all. If they close their gate, that eliminates one of the passage-ways through the parking lot to get into the site of the substation in that area. However, that wouldn't eliminate the passage-way through Janotta & Herner. Those areas are patrolled with man power.

Sue asked why the Village wouldn't consider leaving the parks open overnight. She knows vandalism will always be an issue, but people will be looking for a place to sleep overnight. Chris agreed. (Bonnie asked Sue and Chris to please speak up in order for their voices to be heard on the tape recording.) Mark said if people are allowed to stay there, then the bathrooms will need to be kept open at night. The Mayor said he is not in favor of it, as it may create more problems. The Mayor had a conversation with Rich Marett, who is on the Huron County Fair Board. The fairgrounds are allowing camping for the solar event and very few spaces have been reserved. The Mayor's thinking is there is ample camping in the area that is designed for it and more welcoming. Chris said she has been on the Fair Board before and she thinks Rich is incorrect about that. Bob said he doesn't think it's a good idea as we don't have the proper facilities. Bonnie said it's called dry-camping, the units are self-contained and they don't require any kind of hook-up. Mark said people could drink alcohol which may cause trouble for the Police Department. Chief said 3-4 officers will be out during that time period. The parks and infrastructure will be monitored. If Council wants to open the parks up at night, it's a mixed bag, especially if we advertise it as free parking. Lt. Kimball said there is signage at Clark Park about closing at dusk, but no signage at Marsh Field. Chief talked to the city of Norwalk and they aren't concerned about the off-street parking. They are more concerned with traffic

congestion on the main streets. Chief is going to reach out of the Fire Chief about helping with traffic flow at the intersections. Chief's biggest concern is the main roads being clogged with traffic. All contingencies are being planned. Chief suggested posting necessary signage if Council is going to allow overnight parking at the parks, such as no alcoholic beverages permitted, etc. The 7-day weather outlook will tell us more about what to possibly expect in regards to the number of visitors.

Sue asked if there has been any further discussion regarding the Athletic Boosters selling food at the concession stands before and during the solar event. The Mayor talked to Jackie Schafer, who said the boosters may be able to do it one day, but she didn't know if Saturday or Sunday were possible. It depends on if people are going to show up and want parking spots to view the eclipse, therefore it may be better to just have food the day of the eclipse. The Boosters also have another event that weekend where they will be selling food.

Bonnie confirmed we have one food truck confirmed for Friday through Monday. (*NOTE* Mellow Yellow Pizzeria turned in their food permit application and their COI. However, they have not paid the registration fee & the water/electric hook-up fee yet, therefore they are not 100% confirmed. A reminder email was sent to owner Eric Roberts on 2/7/24, explaining that registration isn't considered complete until the fees are paid. On their application, they indicated they can be here Friday, 4/5, through Sunday, 4/7, but they **will not** be here on Monday, 4/8). Joe asked about where the vendor will be asked to park their food truck. Tom said on the electric side of things, the Croghan/Village lot has a panel. Tom isn't sure what their service requirements are. (*NOTE* Mellow Yellow's permit application states they will need water and electric hook-up, 50 amp). Discussion regarding placement of food trucks at the prior Village Flea Festival.

Bonnie asked if Council has determined whether they will allow overnight dry camping or not, as signage will need to be determined. The Mayor said he knows how he and the Chief feel about it, but Council will have to make the decision. Sue and Chris are in favor of overnight dry-camping. Mark said he is on the fence about it. Rails-to-Trails is also discussing this option. Chris said she doesn't want to stress the Police Department out more than they already are. Chief said he is on the fence about it, but his department will handle it as best they can with whatever decision Council makes. Bonnie suggested waiting until closer to the eclipse to see what the weather will be like and then Council can make a final decision. Tom said the city of Willard is making decisions about designated parking areas to view the eclipse. Bonnie said the April Council meeting is the day after the eclipse, 4/9/24. If Council is in favor, they can move that meeting up by a week to make a final decision before the eclipse event. Lt. Kimball advised the Ordinance about these issues is in regards to trespassing in the parks. The Mayor said we will need to see if that legislation can be suspended if parking overnight is permitted. Chris said when a decision is made, the Village website can be updated. Bonnie said signage will have to be created as well.

Lt. Kimball said he spoke with Great Lakes Trucking to see what their plans are. Beginning the Friday before the eclipse, they will use barricades to eliminate access to their back area until after the eclipse. The Mayor asked about the Industrial Park. Tom said Berry Global was planning on blocking off the Monroe Street access and they are going to need the ability to bring their semi-trucks in & out. Berry stages their trucks on the Industrial Parkway with call-ahead positioning in order to get them into the loading dock. That area will have to be managed if there are individuals trying to park there. The Mayor said Josh Ott may need to be contacted about people trying to park on his land in that area. Tom said Josh has already been made aware. Lt. Kimball will reach out to the businesses in the Industrial Park to make them aware that they may see people trying to park.

Bonnie asked if there's a definitive date for 7-Eleven to reopen. Lt. Kimball said he was advised they are shooting for March 6th. Tom spoke with Eric Cherry today from the Huron County General Health District. Eric advised 7-Eleven's permitting process has not been finalized yet. They are still working through some elements to make the permits final, so a reopen date is unknown at this time. Bonnie said she spoke with all of the businesses that sell food in order to make them aware of what to expect for the eclipse event.

The Mayor asked if anyone has spoken to Mr. Zimmerman in regards to his empty lot across from Subway. Tom said he reached out to him last Wednesday and left a voice mail in regards to parking for the eclipse, but has not received a returned call. Tom will attempt to reach out to him again.

Bonnie spoke about the multitude of complaints that the Village has received in regards to the conditions of the downtown sidewalks and the streets. Bonnie said we are aiming to get financial assistance for the proposed parking lot. Bonnie proposed to take \$150,000 from the General Fund (\$50,000 for each project) and move those funds into a Star Ohio interest bearing account in order to start building the funds up. That way, we have equity when those projects start being worked on. That's what we did for the MMC building. For ten years prior to the MMC being built, we put money away, which paid for all the soft costs. If we put funds into a Star Ohio account, we can always take the money out within 24 hours if we need it moved back to the General Fund. This way, we would be making an effort to improve safety for the community. If we are going to be a trail town, we want our community to look nice. The streets need attention as well. Bonnie advised she will need legislation for that. The Mayor, Chris and Bob all agreed this is a good plan. Chris said we still need to talk about a means to get to where we need to be with working on the sidewalks.

The Mayor asked Bonnie about the UDAG fund and asked if there is a process in order to use those funds. Bonnie explained that the County is involved in the process, meetings have to be held and the meetings are consistent throughout the term of the loan. Berry's was the last one that used the revolving loan fund and they borrowed a lot, so they had a 10-year tax incentive plan. The tax incentive plan is handled on an annual basis and meetings are held for that as well. The Mayor asked Bonnie what type of businesses are considered a good candidate and asked if the business has to be a certain size. Chris said job creation is important with the process and Bonnie agreed. Bonnie said it's a means of a last resort, the business can't use us as a bank. They need to go to the bank and see if they can secure a loan first, and if they can't get the entire loan, the UDAG funds can supplement. The Mayor asked if the businesses can apply for UDAG funds if they have applied for a loan from the bank and were turned down, but they have ideas that could create payroll. Bonnie verified that is correct. Chris asked how that process is initiated. Bonnie said she isn't sure, as meetings aren't currently being held. Bonnie has been waiting to see if UDAG contacts her to request those funds back since they've been sitting dormant for some time. The Mayor asked if the Village can advertise to show businesses that there are funds available. Bonnie verified we can do that. Bonnie is assuming Joshua Ott at Crazeweld has the funds to finish his project. Tom said there is a commitment from a lending institution to cover the costs of that project. Bonnie said if down the road, Joshua wants to expand the business and can't get the financials to do so, he can apply for UDAG funds. Last year, there was a person who wanted to put up a building at the Industrial Park, but she wanted \$350,000 from the UDAG funds to do so and Bonnie had to explain the process to her. Bob referenced the merge occurring with the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation, the Huron County Chamber of Commerce and the Huron County Development Council and he asked if they could be a source of information for this process. Bonnie said she will reach out to Kevin Rasnick to see if that group is taking the process over. The Mayor mentioned reaching out to Michael Jackson in regards to see what he is doing with his property.

Bob asked how the Village is made aware when grants are available. Bonnie said she gets information from the Ohio Municipal League (OML), the State, the Ohio Bureau of Workers Comp (OBWC), etc., and she knows Tom receives information as well. Tom verified this and said we're in a number of global emails chains that start at the federal level all the way down to the State level. Bob asked if the Village uses a grant writer when applying for grants. Bonnie said Tom has done most of our grant applications and Bonnie has done a few as well. Chief said he has been writing grants for over 20 years. Tom said there is so much embedded in the grants and the qualification process can be lengthy. The federal government is becoming more and more beyond our scope. Chris asked if cities compete with Villages for the same funds and Tom verified. Discussion about the grant writing and grant eligibility. The Mayor said we still have a grant request pending under Representative Swearingen. Commissioner Wilde told the Mayor that he would be happy to sign a letter of support that would go to Representative Swearingen and to the State Senator. The Mayor said he will work with Tom on that.

Chris advised Council needs to discuss outdoor wood burners. The Mayor would like to review the Ordinance and determine if we should continue to allow outdoor wood burners. Bonnie said in our discussions with Jeff Stopar (the gentleman who is assisting with re-doing our zoning Ordinances), when the portion about wood burners was discussed, it's being recommended to eliminate outside wood burners. If someone already has one and it needs to be repaired, it's a no go. When that section of the Ordinance is ready, legislation will be presented to Council. Discussion regarding outdoor heating units that need to be addressed in the future Ordinance.

Steve Fannin, who is running for Huron County Commissioner, will be at the next regular Council meeting.

There being no other business to come before them, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist