

**Building Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 20, 2020 1:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Chairman Canton, Councilman Berger, Building Department Administrative Assistant Grattino, Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Mayor Koons (by phone), Doug Turrington, Chagrin Valley Times

Chairman Canton called the meeting to order. The Mayor asked when the interviews would be for the Fire Marshall. Canton stated that he spoke to Chief Rizzo today, who asked how the committee wanted to handle it. Canton told him he had a great deal of respect for him and Lieutenant Fabian and questioned whether there was any need for the committee to be involved. He was waiting for Porter to get back to him to determine whether they wanted to be part of the interview process or just let the Chief and Lieutenant make the choice and speak to the candidates after. The Fiscal Officer clarified that he was referring to the Police ad and then there was the Fire Marshall position. Canton corrected himself and said that he was waiting for Carroll to return. He added that the committee had the applications and were reviewing them. Carroll was going to send his recommendations, and Canton and Berger would make theirs. After this, they would probably get together. The Mayor clarified that nothing would be done by the Council meeting on Monday, February 24, 2020. Canton agreed.

The Mayor asked for the status of interviews for Zoning Inspector. Canton said it was the same situation for the Zoning Inspector. The Mayor stated he saw a reference to a Building Inspector on the committee's agenda and asked if the committee was leaning this way. Canton said the committee had not discussed it yet. Berger stated he put it on the list because it was an ongoing concern as to what would be done moving forward on a long-term basis. He did not have any issues to discuss about this matter at the present meeting.

Regarding 98 Fernwood, the Mayor asked Grattino when the Village would be going to court on this matter. Grattino stated that Friday was the cut-off on the letter. She and Hocevar visited the property February 19<sup>th</sup> and took pictures. Chief Rizzo was going to help her with the forms, and she anticipated it being done early the next week.

The Mayor asked about Henry Mitchell. He asked if letters were sent to him and if the Village was waiting for him to not respond. Grattino said Hocevar would have to do a follow-up letter to him. Mayor asked Grattino to look at 151 Lakeview because he had a complaint about an old Volkswagen sitting in the driveway or front yard. He added that this was a familiar location and that there was a long history there.

The Mayor stated that he spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Jones after the Council meeting and they seemed happy. The Mayor asked if there was any further feedback. Grattino said he had called to see if the Village had processed the paperwork, which Grattino confirmed and explained it would be sent out. The Fiscal Officer concurred.

Regarding septic regulations, the Mayor stated a resident with a new \$25,000 septic system objected to having it pumped every two years, which is the Village's standard. The Mayor stated the resident had information, but the Mayor stated the individual was told there would be no

changes to accommodate him or new septic regulations. The Mayor thought the individual had a point and stated that other communities had different standards. He stated that he was trying to preclude the individual from coming to a Council meeting. What he was thinking about was at the first Council meeting in April, the Village would hold a public Building Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m. to talk about septic standards. The Mayor asked the committee to consider this. He added that it would need to go in the newsletter. The Mayor thought there may be other residents with this issue, but he would rather hear from the individual at a Building Committee meeting than at a Council meeting.

Regarding the septic issue, Canton asked if consideration had been given to making a comment that if a system were five years or older, then cleaning would be required every two years. The Mayor asked Grattino what the standards were in Broadview, and she said it was Cuyahoga County and septic pumping was required every three to five years. The Mayor said the resident sat next to him at the Lake Louise Homeowners Association meeting, and he was not antagonistic. The Mayor had a long history with him. The Mayor has reminded the resident that down the street from the resident's house with the beautiful septic system is stench in the road. He speculated that someone else needed a new septic system. The Mayor asked the committee to think about it, but not to make any decisions. Berger asked if there was a standard for Geauga County. The Mayor said he would imagine that was the Village's standard, and asked Grattino if she knew whether the Village was on local standards. Grattino said she did not know how the County worked but added that when the Village required a resident to pump their system, the verification was sent to Geauga County. She offered to follow up on this. The Mayor asked her to find out if two years was the County's standard or South Russell's. Berger suggested that if two years was the county's standard, it would be difficult for the Village to have a different standard. The Fiscal Officer stated that she lives in Auburn Township and did not have to send anything to the county, but perhaps the septic cleaner did. Canton said that his understanding was that the county was very tough. Berger suggested the committee find out what the Geauga County standard was and if there was a requirement to report when pumping was done.

The Mayor stated he was trying to create seven binders for the seven committees so that new committee members were able to know what had been done. The binders would include job descriptions, like Grattino's job description and Hocevar's contract; minutes of the last two years' meetings; budgets for the last two years; and any forms that they basically handle. He wanted to first try this with the Building Committee. He thought this would be good for communication because it seemed like not a lot was getting done with the committees. Berger said there was a lot of soft information that did not transfer with the committee changes. He felt a handbook was a great idea. The Mayor said that the Building Committee would be first to get the binder. He added that there had been three or four Council meetings with no reports from some of the committees.

The Mayor asked Grattino what she was doing for lunch, and she explained that she eats while she is working. He asked her when she was hired, and she stated in September. The Mayor asked if she got her 25 hours in that week. She acknowledged that she had. He asked if anything came up Tuesday night at ABR, specifically the strip mall. Grattino said this was approved, and the Board gave some small suggestions to include choosing colors. Everything was approved for the facade renovation.

The Mayor asked about the diner, and Grattino said this would be addressed at the next Planning Commission meeting.

The Mayor said that if something had not been done in two years, like the dentist office, they would have to come to Planning Commission (PC) to say how the building would be used. The dentist office, for example, would be used as an art studio, and the owner was required to come to PC. The diner was in the space formerly occupied by the optometrist, which was why the owners were required to appear before PC. He stated Grattino could better explain this. Grattino explained that if something was zoned to go into a building, there was a question as to why they would have to go to PC. There was a complaint because the process held up the tenants with the scheduled PC meetings and required paperwork. This delayed renovations. The Fiscal Officer asked if it was dependent on a two-year period, or would it pertain to an immediate transition of one business to another. Grattino said such a business would not be required. Grattino said that any business with a different use than what was previously in the building would have to go to PC. She explained that there was a question why a new business would have to spend the money to attend a meeting when it was already zoned commercial or retail? The delays cost the prospective tenants money.

The Mayor stated that he had been in contact with Northfield Village, which hired out their Fire Marshall to a local fire department. He was researching why some people had a Fire Marshall and why some people had some Fire Marshall services as a part of their contract. He asked Canton for his experience, and Canton stated everywhere he had lived had its own fire department. There was a question of what Burton had for Fire services. The Mayor stated that what he was finding was everybody who hired a fire department seemed to hire them also as their Fire Marshall. He was checking with Northfield since it was far away, and it would be nice to have a different point of view with a different county.

Canton addressed the committee's next meeting. He said he wanted to have the meetings on the first Thursday of the month to coordinate with the Safety Committee meetings. Canton suggested meeting at 8:00 a.m. He asked if there was a need to meet March 5, or to wait until April 2. Grattino suggested waiting until April 2. Canton stated that initially they would meet at the Building Department and then walk over to Village Hall.

Regarding changes to staff and department head, Canton asked what the committee could do to help. Berger said he started every agenda asking why he was there and what could he do to help. Grattino suggested putting an addition on the Building Department because it was very crowded. Canton said he understood there had been talk about this and restructuring the Service Department, but that the ideas were on hold. The Fiscal Officer suggested discussing it at the end of the year when the budget was being discussed. Canton said he could see the value of having everyone together. He asked if Village Hall would work better, and the Fiscal Officer addressed the stairs as being problematic. She thought there were benefits to being together at the Building Department and added that it was more convenient for everyone. Canton said he felt it was important that before making changes, the people who would be working in the area should be counselled. They should counsel the people who want to make the changes. Grattino said she felt she was surrounded by files and files and said Hocevar had to stand. She saw the need for more work area. The Fiscal Officer added that it was good to be together, but she no

longer had her own office. She added that everyone had to give up something, but it was working better. Berger asked that as she gathered ideas to bring them to the committee so that it could be brought to Council. Berger added that the Street Commissioner expressed a need for more storage space and said that by doing this might open up more administrative space. He encouraged communication.

Canton stated that prior to the end of the year, there had been movement to modify or do away with the Building Department. Speaking for himself and Berger, Canton stated they would like to see it stay and expand and go back to the way it was. Berger said he agreed and said local control was important for the Village; to have standards the Village wanted and not to live with the standards and limitations of the county. With that in mind, Berger asked what would be necessary to make the department function the way "we" want it to function. He explained that "we" was not the Council or Mayor, but the Village as a whole doing the job that the residents want them to do. A physical facility and people in place to make it happen are necessary and are what the committee is trying to accomplish. Canton stated he did not personally know how much acreage was available to build homes. He agreed it was not much. He stated, however, that there was no question in his mind that there was remodeling. Grattino agreed. Canton said he believed in the next 10 years the Village would be seeing some major renovations and there would be a need for a Building Department to check it out. Grattino expressed a need for five or six extra hours and said she was a few sets of minutes behind. She said it was constant all day and she was busy from the time she got in until she left. Canton said it seemed Council was very sensitive with the hours, but he had to believe that if Council was shown that there was a need, that it would be possible to get the hours. Grattino explained the difficulty with one person doing all of the department things, where formerly the Board Secretary things were done separately. She thought it was good for one person to do both because she had the insight of all the permits and things that go with it. When the Mayor was letting her have extra hours to do the minutes, this was how she was using the extra hours. Berger asked to address the matter with Council. Grattino said it was a little slower than it would be a month from now. When the weather improved, it would be busy with home improvements. Canton stated no one worked eight straight hours and explained that there was an ebb and a flow, which was part of business.

Berger stated that there was previous discussion about reducing the construction deposits from \$1,000 to \$500. Grattino spoke to Hocevar about it, and he wanted to make sure it was specified that it was just for roofs, siding, and window permits, but not for additions or new homes. Berger asked if an ordinance would be required to make this change and asked about adding it to the agenda for the February 24<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Grattino said it was a struggle for some residents to make this deposit. Berger asked for clarification for justification for reducing the deposit from \$1,000 to \$500. Grattino explained that the Village has never kept a deposit for work not done. The Fiscal Officer asked if deposits were done in Broadview Heights, and Grattino said not for siding or roofs. She explained there were different fees that were kept. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Village takes a deposit that Grattino puts through the system, the Fiscal Officer then logs it and the Fiscal Auditor takes it to the bank. When it is complete, the funds are returned after Grattino logs them, the Fiscal Officer cuts a check, etc. She pointed out that it is a lot of work. Grattino stated that a roof, siding, or window permit would be \$100 flat fee plus the deposit where other communities might charge 1% of the cost value. If the Village changed its policy, it would be making more. The Fiscal Officer added that Hocevar was

paid \$75 to inspect it. Grattino stated that some of the Village's fees were good, but some were very low. She stated that residents must pay \$250 to appear before PC, \$150 of which they get back. She questioned why this money was being taken. Berger asked if Grattino was suggesting that a deposit no longer be taken. Grattino clarified that it was necessary to take deposits for permits, but not for the meetings. She said the fees needed to be increased for the Boards, and have it be a flat fee. The Fiscal Officer stated that nothing was being taken out of the deposits, and if the Solicitor or the Engineer was involved, there would be expense. Grattino offered to make some inquiries about what other municipalities were charging.

Canton asked if the purpose of the deposit was to cover the labor involved in preparing for the meetings. Grattino provided an example of the work involved with the Zoning Board of Appeals application, and cited the expense involved in mailings and legal ads alone, which exceeded the fee charged to the resident. She said the Village was losing money for every applicant who appeared before the BZA. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Village could take the money out of the fee instead of returning it, and Grattino explained that it had never been done like that. She felt a flat fee would be better. Berger said a proposed schedule of changes was needed. Rather than doing it piecemeal, he felt presenting a comprehensive list would be better and suggested having Hocevar review it. He added that Board personnel should also sign off in agreement and it should be then reviewed by the Solicitor before the matter was taken to Council because he suspected Council would question why changes were being made.

Grattino clarified that the committee wanted her to make inquiries. Berger advised that she should not wait for the next committee meeting but forward it to the committee for review. He explained that with this approach, he would hope to simplify Grattino's job and recoup losses of the Building Department, which had been an issue in the past.

Berger asked if there was a budget for the Building Department. The Fiscal Officer stated there was, and Berger asked how much of her time was billed to the Building Department. She stated that none because it is charged to the General Fund. Berger indicated it was important to discuss all the costs involved with the Building Department. He did not know how in depth the discussion needed to be but said there had been an argument made previously in Council that the Building Department costed money. Berger said he was not looking for the Building Department to be a revenue center because that was not its purpose, but if there were costs, Council should recognize them and be able to explain them as a value added to the community.

Canton asked how long the three employees had been together in the Building Department spaces, and the Fiscal Officer explained it had been a month. He asked if they found that if one of the three was overworked, would the other two help. The Fiscal Officer stated that this was the plan. She stated that cross training had begun with Galicki (the Administrative Assistant) working with Grattino trying to understand the permit process and trying to get familiarized with the software. Galicki would be going for a full day of software training, and then Grattino would be going March 12<sup>th</sup> for the advanced level training with the software. The idea was that if Grattino was not available, someone could help in the department. The Fiscal Officer stated that this was based on the work that each individual had of their own in addition to cross training. Grattino would eventually learn Galicki's responsibilities. Canton reiterated the benefits to cross-training. Grattino stated that although Galicki would learn the process, there would be

things that Grattino knew though years of experience that Galicki would not know. Grattino explained that she, too, still had to ask questions about her job. Berger explained that although Galicki nor the Fiscal Officer would ever be experts in the Building Department, that was not the intention. The intention would be in the case of an absence of Grattino, Galicki or the Fiscal Officer could handle some of the more straightforward processes and the complicated matters could be deferred until Grattino returned. Berger stated what was necessary was to figure the situation out and move forward. He did not plan to be having this discussion in six months.

Berger asked Grattino what the problem had been. Grattino said that it was in the ordinances that if work had been started or done without a permit, a double fee was to be charged. The Fiscal Officer clarified that this was what was in the Codified Ordinances, but not what had been implemented or enforced. Grattino said people started work all the time without permits. She illustrated the problem and explained that she would not issue a permit until all contractors on a particular job were registered and all permit applications (HVAC, plumbing, and electric) were submitted. She was finding when scheduling final inspections that permits were missing. She clarified that the Codified Ordinances required contractors to be registered to pull a permit. To be fair to contractors who had not been subject to enforcement of the rules, she was keeping a list of contractors who had received notice and if there was a repeat offense, they would be charged double fees, which was also in the ordinances. Grattino explained that there were exceptions like water heaters, which were an emergency. Berger endorsed following the rules. However, he was asked by a contractor why every person who worked for the contractor had to be registered. Grattino stated that the contractor's subcontractors must be registered. If it was a true employee, that person did not have to be registered. If it was a subcontractor, the Village would have that company's bond in the event there was a problem with the work. The Fiscal Officer explained that with each registration, the contractor provided the bond, insurance, worker's comp, etc.

Canton stated the next meeting would be April 2, 2020, at 8:00 a.m. He adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.



---

Gerald Canton, Chairman

Prepared by Leslie Galicki