

# BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

January 26, 2023

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## **1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Blue Ash, Ohio, was held on January 26, 2023. Mayor Marc Sirkin called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was video recorded and live-streamed on the City of Blue Ash YouTube Channel.

## **2. OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor Sirkin led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **3. ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Jeff Capell, Councilwoman Jill Cole, Councilman Lee Czerwonka, Councilman Brian Gath, Vice Mayor Pramod Jhaveri, Councilwoman Katie Schneider, and Mayor Marc Sirkin

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Solicitor Bryan Pacheco, Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper, Assistant City Manager Kelly Harrington, Treasurer Sherry Poppe, Police Captain Roger Pohlman, Public Works Director Gordon Perry, Parks & Recreation Director Brian Kruse, Fire Chief Chris Theders, Communications Coordinator Rachel Murray, local media, and interested citizens

## **4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**

Councilwoman Cole moved, Councilman Gath seconded to accept the agenda. A voice vote was taken. Six members voted yes. One member voted no. Motion passed.

1. *MEETING CALLED TO ORDER*
2. *OPENING CEREMONIES*
3. *ROLL CALL – Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper*
4. *ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA*
5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES*
  - a. *Regular Meeting of January 12, 2023*
6. *COMMUNICATIONS*
  - a. *Communications to Council – Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper*
  - b. *Reports From Outside Agencies*
7. *HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS*
8. *COMMITTEE REPORTS*
  - a. *Finance & Administration Committee, Lee Czerwonka, Chairperson*
    1. *Resolution No. 2023-06, Providing for amendments within the 2023 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2022-64*
    2. *Resolution No. 2023-07, Appointing a member to the Charter Revision Committee*
  - b. *Planning & Zoning Committee, Pramod Jhaveri, Chairperson*
    1. *Resolution No. 2023-08, Appointing a member to the Board of Site Arrangement / Board of Zoning Appeals*
  - c. *Public Safety Committee, Jeff Capell, Chairperson*
    1. *Resolution No. 2023-09, Authorizing the purchase of three replacement police cruisers for the police department utilizing the State of Ohio's Cooperative Purchasing Program and the disposal of three surplus vehicles*
9. *MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS*
  - a. *Update on the Neighborhoods at Summit Park Development*
10. *ADJOURNMENT*

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilwoman Cole moved, Councilman Gath seconded to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 12, 2023. A voice vote was taken. Six members voted yes. One member voted no. Motion passed.

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## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### a. Communications to Council

There were no communications presented to Council.

### b. Reports From Outside Agencies

There were no representatives from outside agencies present at the meeting.

## 7. HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

Mayor Sirkin commented that there may be some citizens here tonight based on an opinion piece article that was published in the Cincinnati Enquirer this morning. He stated that he wanted to clear up some of the confusion from the article. He explained that the former Blue Ash airport was 230 acres, of which the City purchased 130 acres in order to develop what is now Summit Park. Summit Park includes the restaurants, Tahona, Senate, Brown Dog and Nanny Belles. It also includes the glass canopy, the playground, the Great Lawn, the observation tower, the pond, and walking trails, the dog park, and several parking lot areas. The remaining 100 acres to the south and east of Summit Park, was purchased from the City of Cincinnati by a developer partnership between Al. Neyer and Vandercaar Holdings to develop the Neighborhoods at Summit Park. This development includes, the Approach apartments, Anthology Senior Living, the Daventry single-family homes and Arabella townhome and condo residential developments, the Nobis medical rehab hospital, and it also includes the land in question that was brought up in the article that will be the focus of a presentation that may be presented later in the meeting. He stated that Council periodically requests the developer to come to a meeting and provide an update on the ongoing and future development within the Neighborhoods at Summit Park. Tonight, the developer is planning to present a concept idea that Council will see for the first time along with all of the attendees at tonight's meeting. There will not be any vote on this concept, it must go through several steps in the approval process including public hearings and Planning Commission, before it will come before Council. He noted that by the First Amendment, any property owner has the right to propose any development they so choose, and it is Council's and City Administration's job to determine if it is in the best interest for the citizens of Blue Ash.

April Koenig, Blue Ash resident and business owner of Creatives on Call, and also the Park Pour located at 4815 Cooper Road. She stated that she is very happy with the City of Blue Ash and is a big supporter of the revitalization work for the downtown area. She expressed her concerns about parking for the downtown businesses recently and also during the upcoming Towne Square project construction. She stated that she is very supportive and excited about the project, but she is concerned about the plans for customer parking during the construction period. She stated that the lack of convenient parking will potentially have a negative effect on many businesses. She suggested perhaps using the vacant property across Kenwood Road where the BLUE development will be constructed as a location for temporary parking during the Towne Square project construction. She also offered to work with City staff on a task force to work on solutions for parking that will not negatively affect the surrounding businesses.

Jim Siuda, 5761 Donjoy Drive, thanked the Mayor for clarifying the article in the Enquirer this morning. He also commented on another recent news story reporting that Hamilton County is considering developing a youth sports complex, similar to Spooky Nook in the City of Hamilton. He thinks it would be great if City Council and Administration worked with the county to bring it to Blue Ash.

Kathy McClure, 6082 Brasher Avenue, stated that she is very concerned about the overdevelopment of Blue Ash. She stated that the City has had time to develop according to the needs of the current residents and carefully plan for the increase of both the businesses and planned residential areas. She stated she has many concerns and she has been remiss as a citizen for not attending Council meetings to address issues that she has talked about with her neighbors. She stated that the City is starting to get overdeveloped, and there are no designated green spaces, except for a few parks. She stated that new townhome developments coming in are in the \$600K price range, which is not a problem, but those are transient units and not necessarily places to raise a family. She stated that she feels that these new developments also cause a strain on the current infrastructure and increase issues with parking and traffic levels, which are already a problem at certain times of the day. She stated that Council should focus on filling the vacant office spaces to capitalize on these untapped tax bases.

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Franny Kroner, representing Sleepy Bee Café at 9514 Kenwood Road, stated they are excited about the new Towne Square park, but they are also concerned about the parking situation for the businesses during the construction period. She stated that recently, there has been a massive pinch in available parking with new businesses opening in the area, and the restructuring of parking areas from the construction project could be a serious hindrance to many of the businesses now and in the future. She stated that she would be interested in being involved in any discussions or forming a task force to figure out solutions to the parking problems.

Rick Trembley, 5750 Samstone Court, stated he will be interested in finding out more about the stadium proposal later in the meeting. He inquired about the proposed townhome development on Kenwood Road. Mayor Sirkin stated that the developer withdrew their proposal.

Peter Nord, 10527 Kenridge Drive, wanted to congratulate the Public Works staff for doing such a terrific job in clearing the streets during the recent snowstorm earlier this week.

Gary Bates, 5702 Bomark Court, commented on the former Malsbary Park property that was given to the City by Mr. Malsbary. He stated that the City is overdeveloped with condominiums and he thinks that Summit Park is a mess, noting that the park is surrounded by high density multi-level buildings. He stated he is opposed to it and thinks the City can do better to add more parks and open space.

Hearings from Citizens was declared closed at 7:18 p.m.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Prior to the Council meeting, Council members received the following report describing agenda items:

*This memo offers a brief description of the topics included on the January 26, 2023 Council agenda.*

### **8.a.1. Resolution No. 2023-06 – Providing for amendments within the 2023 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2022-64**

*Resolution 2023-06 provides for the following 2023 budget amendments:*

- *Based on total grant revenues and expenditures in fiscal year 2022, adjustments are needed to balance the 2023 Budget for the OVI Grant Fund (281) and the Law Enforcement Liaison Grant Fund (293). Each grant year is from October 2022 to September 2023.*
- *A budget increase of \$12,872.52 is needed in the Law Enforcement Assistance Fund (280) and a budget reduction of \$1,500 is needed in the Federal Law Enforcement Fund (285) based on the actual December 31, 2022 fund balances.*

*Please direct any questions regarding this resolution to the Treasurer/Administrative Services Director or related Department Director.*

### **8.a.2 Resolution No. 2023-07 – Appointing a member to the Charter Revision Committee**

*As directed by Council, Resolution 2023-07 appoints Edwin Loayza to fulfill the vacancy created by the appointment of Carleton Brown to the Board of Site Arrangement and Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Loayza will fulfill the remainder of the vacant term which expires on July 1, 2027.*

### **8.b.1 Resolution No. 2023-08 – Appointing members to the Board of Site Arrangement and Board of Zoning Appeals**

*At Council's direction, Resolution No. 2023-08 appoints current alternate, Andrew Wittkugel, as a member and Carleton Brown as an alternate member to the Board of Site Arrangement and Board of Zoning Appeals. Andrew Wittkugel will fill the vacant position previously held by Jeff Uckotter, who recently resigned from his position on the Board. Carleton Brown, who was serving on the Charter Revision Committee, will fill the alternate position.*

### **8.c.1. Resolution No. 2023-09 – Authorizing the purchase of three replacement cruisers for the Police Department**

*Resolution No. 2023-09 authorizes the City Manager to purchase three replacement police cruisers. Three 2023 Chevy Tahoe PPV Police SUVs will be purchased from Tim Lally Chevrolet, Ohio through the State of Ohio's Cooperative Purchasing Program at the price of \$43,407 each for a total of \$130,221. This purchasing contract recently opened and was not available when the department purchased a cruiser and command vehicle earlier this year.*

*Please direct questions regarding this Resolution to the Police Chief*

#### **a. Finance & Administration Committee, Lee Czerwonka, Chairperson**

Councilman Czerwonka asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2023-06 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

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RESOLUTION NO. 2023-06

PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENTS WITHIN THE 2023 ANNUAL  
APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION NO. 2022-64

Councilman Czerwonka moved, Councilwoman Cole seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2023-06.

There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Jhaveri, Councilpersons Capell, Cole, Czerwonka, Gath, Schneider, and Mayor Sirkin voted. Seven yeases. Resolution No. 2023-06 passed.

Councilman Czerwonka asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2023-07 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-07

PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EDWIN LOAYZA TO THE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BLUE ASH

Councilman Czerwonka moved, Councilwoman Cole seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2023-07.

There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Capell, Czerwonka, Cole, Schneider, Gath, Vice Mayor Jhaveri, and Mayor Sirkin voted. Seven yeases. Resolution No. 2023-07 passed.

Mr. Loayza was not present at the meeting to be sworn in. Mayor Sirkin stated that he will be sworn in at a subsequent meeting or at the next meeting of the Charter Revision Committee.

**b. Planning & Zoning Committee, Pramod Jhaveri, Chairperson**

Vice Mayor Jhaveri asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2023-08 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-08

PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENTS OF ANDREW WITTKUGEL  
AS A MEMBER AND CARLETON BROWN AS AN ALTERNATE  
MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF SITE ARRANGEMENT AND BOARD  
OF ZONING APPEALS FOR THE CITY OF BLUE ASH

Vice Mayor Jhaveri moved, Councilwoman Cole seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2023-08.

Vice Mayor Jhaveri stated that these appointments are to fill vacancies created with the recent resignation of Jeff Uckotter. Councilman Gath stated that he is grateful to all the volunteers that fill these positions on the City's Boards and Commissions.

There being no further discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Schneider, Capell, Cole, Czerwonka, Vice Mayor Jhaveri, Councilman Gath, and Mayor Sirkin voted. Seven yeases. Resolution No. 2023-08 passed.

Mayor Sirkin administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Brown, and thanked all the citizens who volunteer to serve on the City Boards and Commissions.

**c. Public Safety Committee, Jeff Capell, Chairperson**

Councilman Capell asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2023-09 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-09

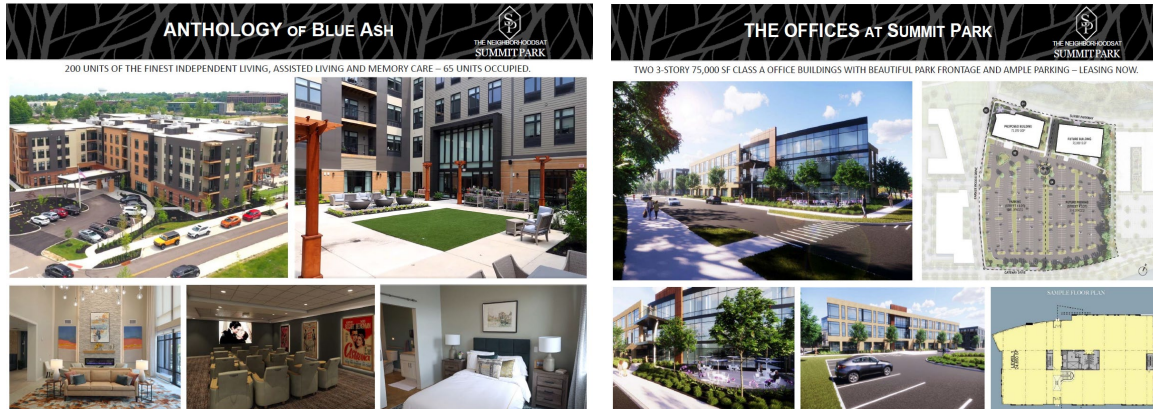
AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF THREE REPLACEMENT POLICE  
CRUISERS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT UTILIZING THE STATE  
OF OHIO'S COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM AND THE  
DISPOSAL OF THREE SURPLUS VEHICLES

Councilman Capell moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2023-09.

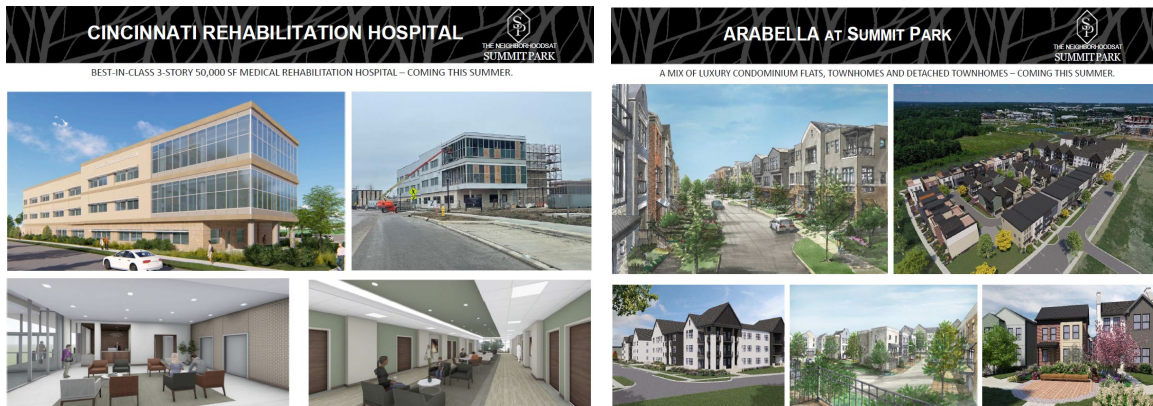


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Anthology of Blue Ash located west of the Approach is the senior living component of the project. It opened for staff training and orientation last year, and currently 65% of the 200 units are occupied now. The Offices at Summit Park is on the site located just to the west of Anthology. Construction has not yet started due to the current demand for office space post –pandemic, however pre-leasing efforts are continuing. The current office market is really focused on exhausting the existing vacant space in empty buildings, so it is expected that it will be some time before there would be a demand for construction of new office buildings, however AI. Neyer and the brokerage team at CBRE are actively marketing the site.



Catty-corner to the proposed office site along Carver Woods Drive is the Cincinnati Rehabilitation Hospital, which is currently under construction. This state-of-the-art, 50,000 square feet medical rehabilitation hospital developed by Elity Management and operated by Nobis Rehabilitation Partners, is nearing completion. Supply chain, material and labor shortages delayed the project, but it is on track for completion in June and they expect to have patients at the facility within 30 days after completion. Arabella at Summit Park is a luxury single-family townhome and condominium project developed by WP Land Company. Construction has just started on the first few units and several more units will follow as weather begins to improve. The first 36-unit condominium building is slated to start next month. Pre-sales and interest has been strong with the selling price of the first few townhomes right near the \$1M range and strong interest in the condominium units with a long list of potential buyers waiting to see the project. WP Land Company remains very optimistic and happy about the success of the project so far. Mr. Dragon concluded his presentation and introduced Mr. Bill Baker, with MSA Design, who will be presenting a concept vision for another site located within the Neighborhoods at Summit Park development.

- INFILL DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD.
- RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL, CULINARY, HOTEL, AND CORPORATE HQ USES.
- 200+ MARKET RATE RESIDENTIAL UNITS INCLUDING STUDIOS, 1 BR, 2 BR, PENTHOUSES W/HIGHER END FINISHES AND AMENITIES.
- COMMERCIAL GROUND LEVEL SPACE TO ACTIVATE STREETScape AND ENHANCE SUMMIT PARK DISTRICT.
- COMMUNITY VENUE FOR A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES: SPORTS, CONCERTS, SUMMER CAMPS, FESTIVALS, LARGE GROUP GATHERINGS, AND MORE.
- ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES & DRAW FOR SUMMIT PARK.
- ONE OF A KIND VENUE UNIQUE TO THE UNITED STATES.

**“THE SUMMIT”**  
 ENTERTAINMENT & EVENT VENUE | BLUE ASH, OHIO  
 JANUARY 2023

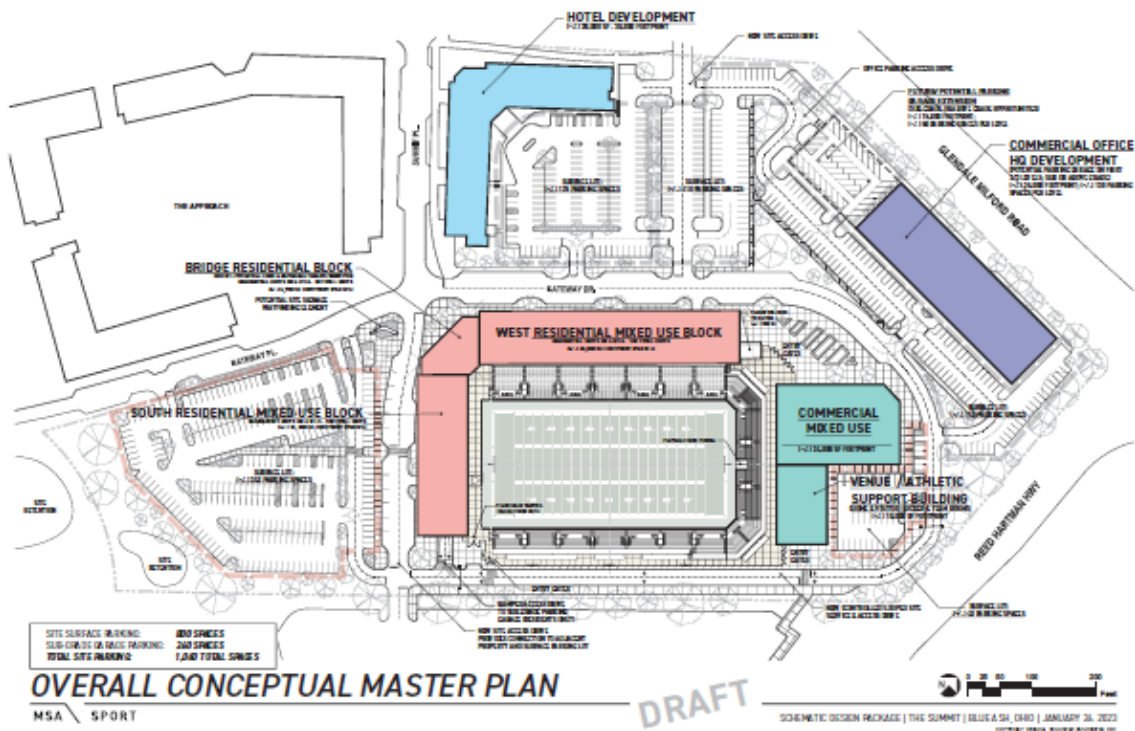


Mr. Baker thanked Council for the opportunity to present an informative discussion on this

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initial idea for an entertainment and event venue called “The Summit”. He stated this is an infill development to enhance the existing neighborhoods and fit within the character of some of the newest development. The concept includes residential, retail, culinary, hotel and corporate headquarter uses, along with the stadium. Currently, the concept includes 200-plus market rate residential units with a variety of mixes as yet undetermined, including studios, 1 and 2 bedroom, and penthouse units with higher end finishes and amenities, commercial ground spaces with the intent to activate the streetscape and enhance the Summit Park District, a community venue suitable for a variety of activities including sporting events, concerts, summer camps, festivals, and large group gatherings. The idea is to have a one-of-a-kind venue unique to the United States to bring additional community activities and a draw for Summit Park.



He presented a high level conceptual drawing diagram to illustrate the orientation and location of the other elements of the design, On the northwest end of the site is a hotel development, and the idea is to maintain a corporate office headquarter development along the main intersection which the developer knows is a priority of Council and the community. The stadium venue is tucked and hidden within a residential mixed-use block with multiple levels and stories. The green space would be the sports field itself surrounded by stadium seating and adjacent to the stadium would be a low-rise commercial mixed-use block that could be developed into residential, retail or restaurant, and the venue support building which would be locker rooms, multi-purpose rooms and other spaces to support the venue. The conceptual plan shows the loop circulation taking advantage of some of the existing surface lots, and structured parking would be developed within and beneath portions of the development as well as plans for parking and potential structured parking and future development at the corner site.

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Aerial view of the existing conditions showing the glass canopy and the Approach



Same view with conceptual hotel, corporate site and stadium venue located behind residential



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Current aerial view looking towards the west from Reed Hartman Highway



Aerial rendering with proposed stadium venue and mixed-use residential on the back side

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Rendering of the view from the streetscape showing the potential hotel site

Mr. Baker concluded his presentation and offered to answer any questions. Mayor Sirkin noted that with this being the first time seeing this concept, Council members may want to take some time to digest the information, however he invited anyone to feel free to ask any questions of the developers.

Councilman Capell inquired about the funding plan and if there will be any direct or indirect government assistance requested by the developer. Rob Smyjunas, president of Vandercar Holdings, stated that nothing has been determined yet. Councilman Capell asked if the developer plans to use the Port Authority for this project. Mr. Smyjunas stated that there has not been any determination on that yet. Councilman Capell stated that in his experience, high school stadiums do not have a lot of employees, and inquired on the number of full-time employees expected for this stadium project. Mr. Smyjunas stated that they expect it will be operated as more than just a high school football stadium. Councilman Capell inquired about the traffic plan or additional roads envisioned as part of this project in order to accommodate the amount of people coming and going at the same time during a sporting event. Mr. Smyjunas stated that they do not imagine it would even come close to any of the Blue Ash special events that happen at Summit Park. Mr. Smyjunas clarified that currently the City special events bring in about 20,000 – 40,000 people, and they do not suspect that this venue's crowd will ever be that large. In response to Councilman Capell's question of the estimated number of additional parking spaces to accompany the development, Mr. Smyjunas stated that they will work with adjoining property owners for parking. Mr. Smyjunas clarified that parking will be offsite, and the developer is working on it with adjoining property owners. Mayor Sirkin stated that at such an early stage, these types of things are not worked out for a long time and would be presented at a Planning Commission meeting in the future. Councilman Capell stated that Council didn't ask for this presentation and it was thrown upon them. He stated that when the agenda was posted on Tuesday, it listed an update of the Neighborhoods at Summit Park development under Miscellaneous Business. He commented that not many people could have read that statement and deduced that there would be a presentation about a football stadium and a whole bunch of additional apartments.

In response to Councilman Capell's comments, Mayor Sirkin stated that all seven Council members asked for an update on the Neighborhoods at Summit park development, including any plans for the future as well as any concepts. The developer went through the entire 100 acres and provided exactly what was asked for, including a first look at this concept idea just like the whole audience did. He noted that there may be a positive or a negative attitude towards it, but it is exactly what was asked for by all of Council, including Councilman Capell, so he doesn't understand why Councilman Capell is angry now. Councilman Capell stated that an update is not the developer trying to stuff a football stadium and a bunch of apartments

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on the site. He stated he does not have any more questions, but he will be happy to provide more opinions on this at a later date. Mayor Sirkin asked if anyone else wants to make any comments on this concept.

Councilman Gath inquired about the original concept for this area that included hotels, commercial buildings and a corporate headquarters. He asked how these plans have changed the original concept at this site. Mr. Smyjunas stated that this site was going to be a parking garage in the original plan. In response to Councilman Gath's questions, Mr. Smyjunas stated that because of how they are configuring this development, the parking garage is not needed. He clarified that the size of the hotel and corporate headquarters hasn't changed much from the original plan, and the developer originally had envisioned a two-story parking garage at the same site where they are now presenting this new stadium concept.

Councilman Czerwonka asked about the footprint of this concept plan and if it includes the Belcan property. Mr. Smyjunas stated that it only includes the property owned by Al. Neyer and Vandercar. In response to Mayor Sirkin's question, Mr. Smyjunas clarified that the total area for this concept idea including the stadium, hotel and corporate office encompasses about 18-20 acres. The stadium, residential, and support building includes about 7 acres.

Councilwoman Cole stated that because this was made public before it was presented to Council this evening, it has created a lot of anxiety with the residents. She added that this is a long process, and the developers have a right to bring proposals to Council, which are evaluated over time, but she hopes that people will not react emotionally right away. She suggested to let the process work as it usually does very well in Blue Ash.

Vice Mayor Jhaveri stated that at this point he has a lot of questions, but it is too early to ask those kinds of questions, so his opinion is that he will wait to see if this moves forward and ask more questions at that time.

In response to Councilman Gath's question about market studies results and the demand for apartments in the area, Mr. Smyjunas stated that their analysis shows this is a different market than the downtown Blue Ash area and there is a higher demand because it is closer to the jobs. He added that in speaking with Michael Dinn who prepared the report, people prefer to live closer to their work and this park, and it is his assessment as well that there is plenty of demand for apartments in this area.

Councilwoman Schneider asked if the entire proposal as it is right now includes the hotel & corporate headquarters in addition to the stadium venue, residential, and mixed-use. Mr. Smyjunas clarified that this proposal currently includes the stadium venue and the mixed-use, but they would like to bring the hotel back and there are one or two hotel operators that they are in discussions with that might want to be within the venue development as well.

In response to Councilman Gath's question about the use of the venue for concerts, Mr. Smyjunas stated that this proposal did not come about without talking to a number of promoters of large concert events, and they assisted in the design process for the access and needs of a large concert event. Councilman Czerwonka inquired as to why the developer would want to compete with the City when there is already a stage at Summit Park. Mr. Smyjunas explained that this venue wouldn't damage the grass or facilities of the park.

Mr. Waltz clarified that the developer did propose a hotel about four or five years ago, and it is still in the concept plan, however the Council at that time felt that the particular hotel the developer was proposing was not the right style for what they envisioned. In other matters, Mr. Waltz noted that the Towne Square construction bids were opened today. Three bids were submitted and based on the preliminary numbers, it seems like they are within the range of what staff was hoping for, but staff will need time to completely review the bids to figure out all the contingencies. Staff anticipates that the bid award legislation will be on the next meeting agenda in February. He addressed some of the comments about the parking concerns during the Towne Square redevelopment project, and stated that Mr. Kruse has been in regular communication with the business owners in the area. He added that the City's goal is for the businesses to be successful through the transition period and ensure everything goes as smoothly as possible, so that the City has a vibrant, healthy downtown.

Ms. Harrington reported that the Citizens of Blue Ash Academy (COBA 101) will be starting soon with 16 participants registered for the program. The first session starts at 5:30 p.m. on February 9<sup>th</sup> in the Recreation Center basement. Dinner will be served and there will be a presentation, followed by the participants attending the Council meeting. All of Council is

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encouraged to attend the sessions. She reported that as discussed at the Council Retreat last year, the City will be doing a citizen satisfaction survey, which will start in the next couple of weeks. The survey will include general satisfaction questions about the community and staff will provide Council with the survey feedback in the future. She stated that with the State of Ohio deregulating energy in 2001, the City has been buying energy for City facilities from an alternate supplier at a savings. The contract is coming up in May 2023, and rates are going up. The City has an opportunity at this time to join the Center for Local Government purchasing collaborative to buy energy in bulk along with 14 other local governments, which should provide some savings. The legislation must be passed in advance authorizing the City Manager to sign those contracts when we get the pricing because not all governments have their meetings on the same night, and just like the stock market, rates are going up and down all the time. If this purchasing collaborative is something Council would be interested in, it should provide the most savings, or the City can certainly do another contract on its own again and Council would then pass that legislation with that contract rate at a future meeting as done in the past. She noted that she inquired about renewables and it would add about 20% more in cost increase, so staff is expecting maybe a 50% increase just on the generation portion and then maybe another 20% which equates to an additional \$35,000 a year if the City wanted to go 100% renewable.

Councilman Czerwonka expressed his compliments to the Service Department for their excellent work clearing the streets during the recent snowstorm.

Councilman Gath reported that the Sycamore School Board has an advisory commission that is seeking at-large members who do not have children to serve on the commission. The commission meets nine times a year, and if anyone is interested in serving, they can reach out to Councilman Gath for more information. He thanked the Public Works staff for a great job during the last snowstorm.

Councilwoman Cole expressed her appreciation to the Public Works staff for keeping the streets clear and safe during the snow earlier this week. She stated that she has been to Sugar n' Spice twice since they opened, and it was exciting to see that each time it has been quite busy. She recognized and thanked Captain Pohlman for taking time to show her around the police station and to the other officers and staff she talked with to help understand the police operations in the City.

Councilman Capell reported on the importance of transparency in government because it allows citizens to be informed, it gives them the information to hold government officials accountable, and it helps elected officials dispel misinformation and distribute good information. He noted that Blue Ash has made a lot of strides over the last few years in improving transparency, including posting the audio recordings of Council meetings online, joining the State's online checkbook program, and most recently implementing video recording of Council meetings. He stated that he is disappointed and feels that the information on the recent agendas and in the minutes is lacking or inaccurate, which is why he voted against approving the agenda and minutes this evening. He stated that at the last meeting, the agenda, and the minutes for that meeting, were inaccurate because it did not mention the legislation he introduced which would have provided a \$100 economic development stimulus to every Blue Ash resident living in the City for the entirety of 2022. He stated that agendas and minutes should reflect accurate information, and anything less is unacceptable. Transparency is an important part of government and Council needs to continue to make sure that it happens. He stated that the City made great progress from 2018 to 2022, and he does not want to see it going backwards.

Mayor Sirkin stated that he wants Council to remain aware of the downtown parking issues and as the Towne Square project gets closer to approval and construction, reach out to the local businesses and try to be as accommodating as possible to take care of them. He stated that tonight's presentation is exactly what Council asked for, which is an update on the Neighborhoods at Summit Park. He stated that he disagrees with almost everything that Councilman Capell said tonight.

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**10. ADJOURNMENT**

All items on the agenda having been acted upon, Councilwoman Cole moved, Vice Mayor Jhaveri seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:07 p.m.

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Marc Sirkin, Mayor

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Julie Kipper, Deputy Clerk of Council

MINUTES RECORDED AND WRITTEN BY:

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Julie Kipper, Deputy Clerk of Council

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