Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development Committee of Council
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Monday, March 16, 2026

The Chair, Ward 2 Council Member Anne Marie Etienne, called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present
Ward 3 Council Member Tony Moore
Ward 4 Council Member Scott Radcliffe

Others in Attendance
Ward 1 Council Member Jennifer Demaline; Council Member At-Large Mary Berges; Council Member At-Large Michelle Patton; Mayor Bryan Jensen; Council President Brian Fischer; Planning/Economic Development Coordinator Pam Fechter; Law Director John Gasior; Public Safety/Service Director Duane Streator; Finance Director Steve Presley; City Engineer Ryan Cummins; Clerk of Council Barbara Brooks; Attorney Blake Beachler; and Residents Larry Escalante and Pat Jankowski

CIC – Formation and Potential Uses Discussion
Ms. Etienne invited Mr. Beachler to provide an overview regarding the formation and potential uses of a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). Mr. Beachler explained that a CIC is established by a municipality as a nonprofit corporation, typically organized under a 501(c)(3), and operates with a degree of municipal oversight. He noted that while the CIC functions as a separate legal entity, the City retains control over key actions, including approval of property sales and associated consideration.

Mr. Beachler outlined the statutory authority granted to CICs under the Ohio Revised Code, emphasizing their broad powers to acquire, own, lease, manage, and dispose of both real and personal property. He explained that a CIC may take ownership of a property deemed no longer necessary for municipal purposes and, with Council approval, facilitate its redevelopment or resale. He further stated that one of the primary advantages of a CIC is its ability to transfer property without adherence to traditional competitive bidding and advertising requirements applicable to municipalities, thereby allowing greater flexibility in selecting purchasers based on overall benefit to the community rather than solely on the highest bid.

In addition to property-related functions, Mr. Beachler described the potential role of a CIC as a financing mechanism for economic development. He indicated that a CIC may provide loans or other financial assistance to businesses, including startups or entities that may not qualify for conventional financing. He noted that such activities would require the implementation of appropriate underwriting standards and risk mitigation measures, such as credit analysis, collateralization, and personal guarantees.

Mr. Beachler also discussed additional functions of a CIC, including acting as a marketing and development agent for the municipality. In this capacity, the CIC could maintain an inventory of available properties, assist with site selection for prospective businesses, facilitate land assembly, and support nuisance abatement efforts, such as addressing neglected or underutilized properties. He emphasized that these capabilities provide municipalities with a flexible tool to promote economic development and community revitalization.

Discussion followed regarding potential funding sources for the CIC. Mr. Beachler explained that funding could be derived from a combination of municipal appropriations, proceeds from property transactions, and private donations. He noted that, as a 501(c)(3) organization, the CIC would be eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions, thereby expanding its funding opportunities. Mr. Fischer raised concerns regarding the use of public funds for lending purposes, particularly in situations where private financial institutions had declined to extend credit. He expressed apprehension about the potential risk to taxpayers in the event of loan defaults. Mr. Beachler acknowledged these concerns and reiterated that while lending activities inherently involve risk, such risk could be managed through prudent lending practices and oversight.

Mr. Gasior inquired about the treatment of property appreciation held by the CIC. Mr. Beachler advised that, as a nonprofit entity, the CIC would not be subject to capital gains taxation and that any appreciation in asset value would be reflected as an asset of the corporation rather than as direct taxpayer revenue. Further discussion clarified that while initial acquisitions may involve public funds, subsequent gains would be retained within the CIC for continued use in furthering its economic development mission.

Ms. Patton inquired whether certain revenue streams, including bed tax revenues allocated for economic development purposes, could be utilized to support the CIC. Mr. Beachler indicated that such use would likely be permissible under Article VIII, Section 13 of the Ohio Constitution, which authorizes municipalities to provide financial assistance to private entities for economic development purposes. Ms. Patton further asked whether the CIC could support smaller-scale improvements, such as accessibility enhancements or equipment purchases for local businesses. Mr. Beachler responded that such activities could be appropriate, particularly where they contribute to community improvement, though eligibility may be subject to applicable statutory limitations.

Mayor Jensen expressed caution regarding the extent to which the CIC should engage in lending activities. He emphasized the importance of conducting thorough due diligence, including background and credit evaluations, and noted the potential administrative and reputational challenges associated with loan servicing and collection. The Mayor suggested that the CIC might more appropriately focus on grant programs or façade improvement initiatives that directly enhance the visual and economic vitality of the community while minimizing financial risk.

Mr. Gasior reviewed the proposed Ordinance establishing the CIC and outlined the recommended governance structure. He stated that the Board of Directors would include designated municipal Officials as well as appointed residents. Discussion ensued regarding the composition of the Board, including the method of selecting Council representatives and the inclusion of additional members to ensure balanced representation.

Following deliberation, the Committee agreed to modify the proposed structure to include two Members of Council appointed by the Council President. It was further determined that the Planning and Economic Development Coordinator would serve as a non-voting member of the Board in order to maintain an odd number of voting members and reduce the likelihood of tie votes.

Additional discussion addressed the appointment of resident members, with consensus that three residents would be appointed by the Mayor subject to approval by Council. The Committee also reviewed the proposed Officer structure and agreed to designate the Finance Director in place of a treasurer and to establish a separate Recording Secretary position responsible for maintaining official records and minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Radcliffe and seconded by Ms. Etienne, to include two members of Council appointed by the Council President and to designate the Planning and Economic Development Coordinator as a non-voting member; and the vote was: Mr. Moore, “yes”; Mr. Radcliffe, “yes”; Ms. Etienne, “yes”.

The vote was 3 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Radcliffe and seconded by Ms. Etienne, to provide for the appointment of three resident members by the Mayor subject to Council approval; and the vote was: Mr. Radcliffe, “yes”; Mr. Moore, “yes”; Ms. Etienne, “yes”.

The vote was 3 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Radcliffe and seconded by Ms. Etienne, to substitute “Finance Director” for “Treasurer” and to establish a Recording Secretary position; and the vote was: Mr. Moore, “yes”; Mr. Radcliffe, “yes”; Ms. Etienne, “yes”.

The vote was 3 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

It was confirmed that the Board would consist of seven voting members. Mr. Gasior noted that while any future changes to the Board structure would require an amendment to the establishing Ordinance, the CIC would retain the ability to create internal Committees to address specific operational functions, including property management, marketing, and compliance.

The Economic Development Committee agreed that its recommendations would be forwarded to the full Council for consideration at the next scheduled meeting. Members expressed general support for the establishment of the CIC as a mechanism to advance economic development initiatives, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining transparency, accountability, and prudent financial oversight in its operations.

Adjourn: 7:12 P.M.

Ms. Etienne adjourned the Meeting of the Economic Development Committee of Council

Respectfully submitted by Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

PASSED: ______________________

SIGNED BY: ____
Anne Marie Etienne, Chair of the Economic Development Committee

ATTEST: ____________________________________
Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council