

**Village of Waynesville  
Council Meeting Minutes  
September 16, 2024 at 7:00 pm**

Present: Mayor Earl Isaacs  
Mr. Lyle Anthony  
Mr. Brian Blankenship  
Mr. Chris Colvin  
Mr. Zack Gallagher  
Mrs. Connie Miller  
Absent: Mr. Troy Lauffer

Village Staff Present: Jeff Forbes, Law Director; Jamie Morley, Finance Director and Clerk of Council; Jonathan Denlinger, Sergeant, Waynesville Police Department

*CLERK’S NOTE- This is a summary of the Village Council Meeting held on Monday, September 16, 2024.*

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Mayor Isaacs called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call – 6 present

Mr. Gallagher motioned to excuse Mr. Lauffer from tonight’s meeting and Mr. Blankenship seconded the motion.

Motion – Gallagher  
Second – Blankenship

**Roll Call – 6 years**

**Mayor Acknowledgements**

Mayor Isaacs said it was nice to see all those in attendance for tonight's meeting. He also added that the Village continues to get projects done.

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**Public Hearing**

Mayor Isaacs opened the public hearing for the proposed DORA District at 6:02 p.m.

Kim Gaffey, president of WMA (Waynesville Merchants' Association), whose address is 62 S. Main Street, said he would like to see the Village Council move forward with the approval of the DORA district. He stated that WMA will be responsible for purchasing and placing the signs for the boundaries and are familiar with the rules and regulations. Mr. Gaffey said that WMA has met with concerned merchants and residents and thus adjusted the hours to help address some of the concerns. The hours are Monday through Friday from 5:00-9:00 p.m., Saturday from 12:00-9:00 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00-4:00 p.m. He also addressed the concerns expressed at the previous meeting about individuals being served too many drinks. He said that each time a person wants another drink, they must go to an establishment with a liquor license and purchase another cup. He also stressed that it is the responsibility and liability of the establishments to not over-serve individuals. Mr. Gaffey stated that there are currently about 189 DORA districts in Ohio, and sometimes referred to as economic growth districts. He also said that there had not been increased reports of public drunkenness or a need for extra police. Mr. Gaffey stated that there have been reports of DORA districts bringing in investors and enhancing business environments. To this date there has not been a DORA cancelled. Mr. Gaffey said that WMA has visited several DORA districts and have witnessed what it can do for the businesses and downtowns. Southeast Ohio has the most DORA districts, and WMA is just trying to level the playing field for business. Mr. Gaffey stated that DORAs have been shown to increase foot traffic providing a safe, secure place for social gatherings.

Dave Lamb of 41 Clarksville Road expressed concerns that a DORA District would hurt Waynesville's uniqueness. He asked why Waynesville would join the other towns if it wanted to remain unique and different. Mr. Lamb posed the question of why alcohol has to be on the streets when it is already in restaurants. He also speculated that if more people were aware of the proposed DORA district, there would be more people against it; he does not think they know about the proposed DORA district.

Kelly Miller, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce at 174 S. Main, stated that the Chamber unanimously supports the proposed DORA district. The board has discussed the impact and believes it will positively impact businesses. Ms. Miller said that she has seen many businesses come and go downtown, and there has been a shift in the economy. Nowadays, it is so easy to order something from Amazon. A DORA district would provide a social place to shop. She said it is so important to support small businesses; the downtown has shrunk over time. WMA has done a fantastic job with events and bringing people downtown, but that is just during events. She also added that she has never witnessed any issues at a DORA District.

Norman Levy at 1878 Shaker Road said he was speaking on behalf of Michelle and Robert Heart, owners of the Hammel House. He distributed a letter to Council that they had received through an email. He said that they were very disturbed by the email and wanted to make sure Council was aware of what was going on.

Randy Brown, 346 Fifth St. and pastor of the Corwin Pentecostal Church said he was very upset that this letter was shared. He was under the understanding that this would not be part of the discussion today as the letter was anonymous and not signed. He said he did not say the things in the letter and is very upset that the letter defamed his name and church. Furthermore, his wife,

the owner of Wendy's Treasures, was suspended from WMA based on an untrue letter. He said that he and his wife have attained Counsel.

Mr. Brown stated that Waynesville is not Mason or Springboro, so why is the town trying to compete with them? He believes a DORA district would mean more taxes for residents for the additional police officers and resources. He also stated he was disappointed the minutes from the last meeting did not include where Ms. Dytko said that she had hosted tours and there were incidents where participants were drunk, and she did not report it because she did not want to trouble the police. Mr. Brown asked why the proposed DORA district has to go up Miami Street. There are parked cars there. He suggested it stay on Main Street. He also wanted to know who would be accountable for the trash that the DORA district would create. He believes there needs to be a better plan than WMA saying they will be responsible. He also asked who would be accountable to pay for the extra police required during larger events. He said that when the Village Restaurant has its beer garden, the proprietors pay the police. He does not think that should fall back on the taxpayers. Mr. Brown also suggested increasing the sales tax to help offset the costs he believes DORA would cause. He said the sales tax is 6.5%; 6% goes to the state, and .5% goes to the county.

At this time, Mr. Gallagher stated that Mr. Brown's 5-minute time had elapsed and asked if Council wanted to grant him more time. Mr. Forbes said that this is a public hearing, and there is no time limit like during public recognition.

Mr. Brown concluded that he hopes Council will consider whether the rewards of a DORA district outweigh the consequences for the town.

Dave Nuscher, 9125 Ferry and owner of the Scarlet Barn at 229 High Street, has sold antiques in Waynesville for over thirty years. He provided several quick facts on DORA districts. See attached.

Mr. Nuscher further stated that the common thread to all of the DORA districts was the positive economic growth it had on the communities. Downtown businesses need foot traffic, and he believes that this will help bring people to town.

Ryan Brown, 596 Royston, pastor for a Sharonville church, stated that his church is the end of a DORA district in Sharonville. Since the district was established, he said there has been an increase in trash in his parking lot. One of his congregates witnessed a man relieving himself in the parking lot. Mr. Brown said he had seen several people drinking in their cars. He concluded that trash was not an issue until the DORA district was established.

Linda Keiffer, 258 S. Main, said she is a business owner downtown and agrees that business has changed and Waynesville needs to keep up with the times. She also pleaded with everyone to stop being hateful towards one another. Ms. Keiffer said the letter was hateful and she is disappointed. She also added that if people do not want to be part of the DORA district, they can opt out. She shares a parking lot with Stone House Tavern and has seen drunks. She understands people's concerns but does not think a DORA district would be any worse. Ms. Keiffer asked for people to remain kind.

Gary Kauffman, 3254 Old State Route 122, expressed concerns about kids being on Main Street and exposed to alcohol. He also stated that there are many residents on Main Street and that he does not think they would want a DORA district.

Jonathan Osborne, 711 Miami St., asked where the resources would come from to pay for extra litter and police forces. He said he counted 12 trash cans within the proposed district and did not think that would be adequate as they were already full from a regular weekend. Mr. Osborne asked if a DORA district would infringe on his right to conceal carry. He suggested that WMA consider smaller DORAs around the restaurants and not include all of Main St. He said he went to Loveland this weekend to see what to expect of a DORA, and he saw full trash cans and benches littered with used DORA cups. Mr. Osborne said he does not think the proposed DORA district would be good for Waynesville and asked Council to find a common ground that people could agree on.

Dan Apolito, 1615 Old Haley, is the owner of Stone House. He said he is in full support of a DORA district. He said he obtained the first liquor license issued in Waynesville for a long time. The establishments selling alcohol assume all liability. He said there has been no evidence of increased crimes or DUIs since the implementation of the DORA districts. DORA districts have been proven to draw people. The restaurant is struggling, and there needs to be a draw for people to visit the town. Mr. Apolito said times have changed; people no longer go to the malls but are looking for events. He also stated there has been a lot of rhetoric with “what ifs,” but the police have said there has been no crime increase. There have also been discussions about littering beer and liquor bottles. The Dora district would not cause this kind of trash as each drink is poured into a special cup. He further asked for people not to create problems that do not exist. He also said that if the DORA district becomes a nuisance, it can be removed, but this has not happened in any other town. Dora districts have been proven to bring in foot traffic and increase business. Waynesville needs to keep up with the times.

Mathew McKeever, 750 Preston, said he is against a DORA district. He said he has not seen the data that a DORA district brings in business. In his line of work, a cost analysis is done before a decision is made. He asked where the data is. Mr. McKeever also expressed concerns over the sanitation of a DORA district. He does not think a sufficient plan is in place to maintain the increase in litter. He also said that the Council has heard from business owners, but what about the residents on Main Street? He said that most shops are not open past 5:00. Mr. McKeever said that he believes a DORA district would jeopardize Waynesville’s uniqueness because he does not want the town to become a Springboro or Centerville. He asked Council to consider the long-term impact on the town and think of the town as a whole when deciding.

Nick Veradis, 77 S. Main St., is a resident on Main Street and lives in the middle of the proposed DORA district. He is in full support of the DORA. He said he likes to come home to a quiet house and likes his sleep. He does not think the DORA district would impact either of these things. Mr. Veradis said there have been no issues since Ellis, Bentinos, or Stone House received their liquor licenses. As far as litter, there is always litter on Main Street after big events like the parade or Christmas in the Village. He does not think DORA would cause any major impact.

Tina Manning, 4917 E. Old State Route 73, loves Waynesville for its uniqueness and small-town values. She said she used to live in Middletown and enjoyed several DORA events downtown. She attended an annual women and chocolate event several times and enjoyed it tremendously, and she supported the stores downtown during the event. Ms. Manning said she sees the DORA district as an economic advantage.

Melanie Elam, 8839 Wilson Road, said she works at the Hammel House and understands everyone's perspective. However, those serving alcohol are trained not to over-serve because they could be held responsible. She said she and her staff take this very seriously. She pointed out that the majority of DUIs are between the ages of 19-39. She said this is not the average age of the clientele of Hammel House. Ms. Elam noted that several residents say they do not support the DORA district, but most of the guests at Hammel House are from out of town. She said businesses are struggling, and Hammel House has started to turn a corner since receiving its liquor license. She added that something needs to be done to help the businesses downtown.

Cindy Menth lives at 155 S. Main Street, in the middle of the proposed DORA district. She asked Council to visit a DORA district before making the decision. She has witnessed how this can help turn around failing downtowns and bring in business. Ms. Menth used Miamisburg as an example. She stated that things have changed for Waynesville shops, and the foot traffic on the weekends is no longer there. She said Council should consider this before businesses leave and Main Street becomes a street of plumbers and lawyers instead of the current unique storefronts. She said the DORA district is proposed for responsible adults to come to town, enjoy a drink, and shop. It is not there to encourage bad behavior. She asked Council to support local businesses and support the proposed DORA district.

Jona Powell, 260 High Street, said this is her residence and shop. She said she loves this small town. She said that downtown has a foot traffic problem; people are not coming, impacting retail stores. She claimed people are looking to shop at places with ambiance and events. They are looking for experiences, which is why so many DORA districts have had positive economic impacts on areas. Ms. Powell said Waynesville is a tourist town and needs to offer more to attract the people. She further said that other towns had recruited her to move her business there. She asked Council to consider what downtown would look like without all the unique storefronts. She would love to see Waynesville prosper and become a premiere destination. She also added that WMA has made concessions to agree to no DORA during Sauerkraut and change the hours out of respect for shops being open during the week that do not want to participate in DORA.

Robin Stinson, 398 Old Stage Road, asked Council to take the emotions out of their decision and consider the proposed DORA district a business decision. She asked Council to serve the town on a fiduciary responsibility, not because of family ties. She feels that the Council should strive to keep the unique businesses and support entrepreneurship. Ms. Stinson said that Waynesville has an active, strong police force and does not believe the DORA district will cause issues they cannot handle. She asked that Council consider everyone's point of view when making their decision.

Mayor Isaacs said that this is the best Council he has ever had to work with. He said that the Village is improving drinking water, has a great police force, and improving the roads. Projects

that had been ignored for so long are finally getting done. He believes Council is focused on what is good for Waynesville.

Gerald Livingston, 1986 Fiesta Dr. Lebanon, Ohio, said he has heard many good things on both sides but does not think a DORA district would be good for Waynesville. He said he has a friend who has a shop in Lebanon, and they see no reason to stay open during DORA hours. They have not seen an increase in shoppers. He asked that the Council think hard about their decision because it is rare when something is voted in and then reversed. He asked them to think about the impact this would have on the community.

Jorge James, 10 N. Main St, is the owner of Mami Finas. He has seen a dramatic increase in sales since receiving his liquor license. He said that the majority of his customers are from out of town. He added that people are not coming to Waynesville to party but are responsible adults who may want to have a drink while enjoying downtown. He said that Waynesville is a lovely, great town and feels a DORA district will help keep it that way.

Sally Hite, 98 S Main Street, said she has to attend other events to try to drum up business. She believes a DORA district would help bring more foot traffic to town. Once the foot traffic increases, it is up to the shopkeepers to ensure they have the products to sell. Ms. Hite said that WMA members have no problem maintaining Main Street and picking up the litter. It was voted upon unanimously to take care of the trash. Currently, each business has a section that takes care of sanitation.

At this time, there was a five-minute recess.

Julian Able, 685 Preston, noted that there has been a lot of productive discussion on the proposed DORA district. She said there was a recent Facebook post on the DORA district, and she was surprised that most of the comments favored the district. She asked why Waynesville is so scared of change. She said that she feels people should have the right to choose, and hopefully, with a DORA district, they will choose to keep their money in Waynesville. She believes a DORA district would bring in more foot traffic and be good for Waynesville.

Mayor Isaacs added that years ago, people were very upset when restaurants and stores wanted to sell liquor and beer. Each time a liquor license comes up for renewal, there has been no reason not to renew it. It is the job of the Council to protect everyone, including businesses. He said that this is a great Council, and they take their responsibility very seriously.

Jeff Stinson, 398 Old Stage Road, said he has heard a lot of negative things about the DORA district from lifelong residents, but he does not think they are lifelong shoppers. He said that unless people shop the town, it will become unique as the smallest town without shops. He believes that rejecting the proposed DORA district will be a missed opportunity. He said WMA does do litter collection after events.

Mayor Isaacs closed the public hearing at 7:48 p.m.

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**Disposition of Previous Minutes**

Mrs. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting as written and Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion.

Motion – Miller  
Second – Gallagher

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

Mr. Colvin stated that in the minutes, there was a discussion of passing an ordinance to reduce the water rates for the new Mary L. Cook Library Park. He asked if Council needed to take any current action. Mrs. Miller said that it was not needed until the park was fully funded and they moved forward with the project.

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**Public Recognition/visitor’s comments**

Robin Stinson, 398 Old Stage Road, expressed her disappointment in Council and felt they had missed an opportunity for Design Homes to develop the land across the street. She stated when business-minded people come with million-dollar opportunities, Council is more respectful. The proposed development would have brought in a lot of revenue and job opportunities. She understands it was bad timing with other issues, but she heard Design Homes speaking outside, and they felt like they were shut down.

Mr. Gallagher said that he felt Council was never disrespectful. He agrees and would like to see a place for the growing aging population to move to. He added that his issues were that they had yet to talk with the Township or the school. Mr. Gallagher said they have spoken with the school, and they explained that there is no room for growth.

Mayor Isaacs explained that the land they proposed to develop was not within the Village. They would have to annex the property first.

Mr. Colvin added that a contractor’s timeline often does not mesh with the government’s. The Village should not change the process because of a contractor’s lack of planning. He said that due diligence must be abided by.

Mrs. Miller said she was the one that said it looked like a “no go.” She said this because she could see the faces in the audience. Mrs. Miller elaborated that she was not dismissive of Design Homes but had met with them previously and felt it was best to be upfront with them.

Ms. Stinson said she felt the communication with Design Homes could have been handled better.

Mr. Forbes said that staff and Council have accommodated Design Homes but the proposed development is not currently within Village limits. The land is subject to Wayne Township zoning regulations. The developer did not like these zoning regulations. Whenever land is adjacent to the Village, there are rules outlined when and how to annex the property. The developer wanted smaller lots than outlined in the zoning codes on the annexed property. They wanted the land rezoned. The Village spent considerable time with the developers, but they

needed to build x number of houses to make it economically feasible. Council was not interested in that dense of lots.

Mr. Blankenship said on that night there were two huge issues on the agenda. He agreed that things could have been said better, and the Council offered to meet with them at a later date.

**Old Business**

Mr. Forbes stated that there was a vacancy on the BZA and Planning Commission, and a resident expressed an interest and was appointed to the BZA, but he really wanted to be on the Planning Commission. Since then, Council has received another application for the Planning Commission. Mr. Forbes stated that there are no rules on how the Council appoints residents to boards and commissions, and this is an appointed position, not an elected one.

Mr. Colvin moved to appoint Mr. Palser to the Planning Commission, and Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Motion – Colvin  
Second – Miller

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

Ms. Morley will contact Mr. Powell to see if he is interested in the BZA vacancy.

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**Reports**

**Finance**

The Finance Committee did not meet tonight because of the public hearing. The next meeting will be October 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Works Report**

Public Works will be October 7 at 6 p.m.

**Special Committee Report**

MOMS met this evening and discussed replacing the pavers on Main Street with concrete, replacing the lampposts, electric work, and current trees. It was also discussed how to improve the property where the gazebo is located on Main Street. They also made plans for greenery and decorating Main Street for Hearthwarming.

Parks and Rec will meet on October 21, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

**Village Manager Report**



Report provided.

## **Police Report**

Report provided

## **Financial Director Report**

Ms. Morley said reports were provided for review and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Colvin asked about several voided payments and then reentered. Ms. Morley explained that she had to exit the program to add a new vendor, and when she entered the rest of the payments, she accidentally selected electronic payments. These had to be voided and re-entered.

## **Law Report**

Mr. Forbes said he did not have anything to report but would not be at the October 7th meeting. Mayor Isaacs asked if anyone would replace him. Mr. Forbes stated that his usual replacement has another meeting they have to attend.

## **New Business**

None.

## **Legislation**

### **First Reading of Ordinances and Resolutions**

#### **Ordinance 2024 - 031**

Creating a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area and Establishing Requirements to Ensure Public Health and Safety within Such Area

Mr. Colvin moved to have the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-031, and Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Motion – Colvin

Second – Miller

### **Roll Call – 6 yeas**

Mr. Gallagher explained that this is just the first reading, and amendments and changes can still be made to the ordinance. This does not mean that it will be adopted as is.

Mr. Colvin asked what happens if a merchant chooses not to participate; nothing addresses this in the application. Mr. Forbes explained that the ORC outlines this. It is the business's prerogative not to allow alcohol on its premises. Usually, stickers are provided for merchants' doors.

Sgt. Denlinger said that if someone does not abide by the business owner's decision they can be charged with open container, trespassed off the property, or charged with disorderly intoxication. He also shared with Council sample DORA cups from other DORA districts.

There was a discussion about the map provided that goes across properties. Mr. Forbes said there was street numbers, and a sign would need to be placed at every intersection.

**Ordinance No. 2024-032**

Authorizing the Village Manager to Enter into a Contract with Choice One Engineering for Professional Services Related to the Well 10 Water Line Extension Project as an Emergency

Mr. Gallagher moved to waive the two-reading rule for Ordinance No. 2024-032, and Mr. Blankenship seconded the motion.

Motion – Gallagher  
Second – Blankenship

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

Mr. Gallagher moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-032 as an emergency, and Mr. Colvin seconded the motion.

Motion – Gallagher  
Second – Colvin

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

**Ordinance No. 2024-033**

An Ordinance Authorizing the Waiver of the Water Meter Connection Fee Related to the Waynesville Community Church

Mrs. Miller moved to have the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-033, and Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion.

Motion – Miller  
Second – Gallagher

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

**Resolution 2024-034**

Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying them to the County Auditor and Declaring an Emergency

Mrs. Miller moved to waive the two-reading rule for Resolution No. 2024-034, and Mr. Anthony seconded the motion.

Motion – Miller  
Second – Anthony

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

Mr. Colvin asked about the format of the resolution as it is different from previous years. Ms. Morley responded that Ms. Crockett used a form that was at least 30 years old and she was not sure where she kept them. She had contacted Warren County Auditor who provided sample resolutions which she modeled the current one from.

Mr. Colvin moved to adopt Resolution No. 2024-034 as an emergency, and Mr. Blankenship seconded the motion.

Motion – Colvin  
Second – Blankenship

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

**Second Reading of Ordinances and Resolution**

**Ordinance No. 2024-029**

Adopting Various Sections of the Zoning Code for the Village of Waynesville Regarding Solar Energy Systems

Mr. Gallagher moved to table Ordinance 2024-029 until after the public hearing, and Mr. Anthony seconded the motion.

Motion – Gallagher  
Second – Anthony

**Roll Call – 6 yeas**

**Executive Session**

None

Mr. Colvin reminded Council that evaluations of the Village Manager and Finance Director will need to be done soon.

All were in favor of adjourning at 8:41 p.m.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jamie Morley, Clerk of Council