

Village of Gates Mills
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP
September 12, 2023

A special workshop meeting of the Council of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio was held at the Community House on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Schneider presiding.

1. Roll Call

Councilmembers present: Atton, AuWerter, Deacon, Press, Steinbrink, Turner, Welsh.

Other Village officials present were Treasurer Siemborski, Clerk DeCapite, and Finance Administrator Mulh.

2. Mayor's Comments and Introduction

Mayor Schneider welcomed all to the Council Workshop about the Comprehensive Plan (CP). The CP is a guide and resource. Nothing from it has changed anything in our village. There will be no action taken at a workshop. From the CP, we can embrace what we would like now or not. We could plan to use some things or review them in the future as needs arise. The CP reflects the feelings and wants of our Villagers. Her hope at this workshop is for the Council to come together. We should all be working together in the best interests of all our residents. The Mayor introduced Ginny Pippin from Westlake, Ohio. Her bio is attached.

Councilmembers Press and Atton expressed their opinion that this Workshop should be videotaped, and Mayor Schneider responded this is a beginning.

3. Discussion led by Ginny Pippin, BVM Enterprises

Overview: Council received the GMCP in April and as follow-up will be participating in today's workshop. BVM Enterprises has been asked to review the document and guide the discussion.

Goals and Objectives:

- Establish ground rules for discussion.
- Identify key points to frame discussion.
- Identify next steps.
- Move the Village forward in a spirit of collegiality.

Consultant Pippin stated the intention for this evening is to systematically look at the CP together, not individually. It is an opportunity for all of the Council to get on the same page, not necessarily in agreement. Her role is one of impartiality, by intent. She looks at the report for the sake of the report.

As illustrated on Page 5, Introduction to the CP, we will delve into Step 3 - Review Vision and Goals, following what the report has laid out. The common thread throughout the document is in the description of the village - scenic, rural, historic, conservation. Several statistics jump out. From 2000-2020, 35-54-year-olds dropped by 40%. 72% of our residents have 1-2 occupants in their home, not big families. 70% of respondents were aged 55+. Keep this in mind when determining if a view seems slanted in one direction.

Consultant Pippin divided the Council, Mayor, and Treasurer into three groups of three. Each group was assigned two of the six Goals & Objectives detailed in the CP. Each group was to condense their two goals/objectives into two or three bullet points two or three words in length. Then those bullet points were to be further summarized into one. This provided six goals with a reference point. The middle individual selected in each group became the spokesperson for the group.

Group One (Turner, AuWerter (spokesperson), Deacon):

Goal A - Rural Village Character

- preserve rural character
- protect scenic views
- enhance tree canopy

Summary: PRESERVE RURAL SCENIC VIEWS

Goal B - Harmony with Nature

- promote sustainability
- reduce environmental impact

Summary: SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Group Two (Press, Steinbrink (spokesperson), Welsh):

Goal C - Desirable Housing & Neighborhoods

- no changes to zoning without voter approval
- redevelopment vs. new development
- recognize and preserve historic structures

Summary: REDEVELOPMENT NOT NEW DEVELOPMENT

Goal D - Community Pride & Engagement

- increase and improve communication with residents
- neighborhood vs. village

Summary: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBORS

Group Three (Atton, Siemborski (spokesperson), Schneider):

Goal E - Access & Connections

- maintain quality road infrastructure
- increase pedestrian/bike trail facilities

Summary: MAINTAIN & INCREASE ROADWAYS & WALKWAYS

Goal F - Quality Amenities & Service

- maintain excellent safety services
- listen to and evaluate senior services

- improve cell and internet services

Summary: IMPROVE SENIOR, CELL, INTERNET SERVICES
AND MAINTAIN SAFETY SERVICES

Consultant Pippin asked Council to jot brief answers to the following questions for later valuation:

When you read the report for the first time, did anything surprise you?

Anything that didn't rub you the right way?

Anything you were glad to see in writing?

Anything you found to be a challenge to achieve for manpower, timing, or financial reasons?

Councilmember Welsh left the meeting at 7:00 p.m. to attend the Library board meeting after Councilmember Turner asked him to reconsider.

Consultant Pippin guided Council to Page 30 where audience is addressed, and she asked which audience are you making decisions for - the current audience or the future audience of ten years from now. A canvass of hands revealed unanimous agreement that Goals A, B, C, and F are addressed with the current audience in mind. Goal D is addressed with both audiences in mind, and Goal E addresses our future audience.

Consultant Pippin spoke to moving forward in a spirit of collegiality and Councilmember Atton asked for a definition and does it allow disagreement. The reply was it refers to peer, equal, respect and yes, disagreement, in a civil way.

Consultant Pippin offered the following list of statements with blanks to be filled in. Answers can relate to anything at all, not just this Plan. This is your own self-reflection.

I have never _____.

I have always _____.

People will think that I am _____.

I don't want _____.

I don't like _____. (person, place, thing)

Everybody knows that _____ is the right way.

Look at the filled-in list and what do you think of the person that is on that sheet of paper? What do other people think about you? This effort helps to reveal your biases and where they lie. It helps understand how one's biases play into the discussion when arguments and decisions are made. Unless there is a clear reason to doubt a plan, proceed with a plan. Understand the meaning and leaning of the plan. Understand the reasoning behind the opinion. Don't join factions, stay independent. You represent different groups of people. Deal equally with everyone. Speak humbly and acknowledge a better opinion might come along.

In identifying the next steps after this workshop, Consultant Pippin referred to Page 69, Priorities, and the list of 21 objectives ranked as high, medium, or low priority with suggested time periods over ten years to develop strategies for achieving those priorities. The list is a mathematical computation. It doesn't make it right or wrong. Council must decide what to consider and when. Council (now 6 members present),

Mayor, and Treasurer were asked to identify the most important of the six goals. Five chose Goal A and three chose Goal F. All were then asked to identify the second most important of the remaining five goals - six chose Goal C, one chose Goal D, and one chose Goal F. This can be interpreted to mean the majority of the eight individuals have identified Goal A as the most important goal and Goal C as the second most important. This is not consistent with the priority of objectives listed on Page 69. We need to identify how to break this up and what to do when.

Consultant Pippin concluded with some thoughts. Many things in the document speak to maintaining or preserving - which means that the heavy lifting has been done; whereas cell/internet has a lot of heavy lifting to do. The CP showed remedial safety services for seniors is wanted - how do we keep them happy and here? Rocky River has about 300 people go through its senior center in a day. The CP is informative. It can be a reference, put on the shelf until the day something comes up, or looked at in 10 years to see if progress was made.

Treasurer Siemborski asked if it would be worthwhile or too mathematical for the 21 objectives to be ranked individually by the members at the workshop. Consultant Pippin responded look at the priorities to see if they are legitimately important - it may be statistically important, but if we are not hearing from people that it is important, does it need to be addressed? She suggested finding out each person's top five priorities. We have had the opportunity to go through the goals together and synthesize them - how do we want to proceed?

Mayor Schneider likes the idea of re-ranking the objectives and seeing what is at the top. Councilmember Steinbrink doesn't want to discount what residents want based upon the CP information. Treasurer Siemborski doesn't want to discount what over 500 residents took the time to do - spending 45 minutes filling out the survey. Councilmember AuWerter hopes we can rank and look for consensus for the top five. Treasurer Siemborski asked what do we want to be. Councilmember Deacon stated the vision is to continue to be....it says we like the way we are. Councilmember Atton stated we have to work at being the best.

4. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,



Beth DeCapite, Clerk

Approved:



Karen E. Schneider, Mayor