

**VILLAGE OF ST. BERNARD**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The St. Bernard Village Committee of the Whole was held on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Council Chambers.

Roll call showed six members were present: Mr. Moreton, Mr. Stuchell, Mr. Edwards, Ms. Hausfeld, Mr. Schildmeyer and Mr. Culbertson. Absent: Mr. Estep.

Motion made by Mr. Schildmeyer, seconded by Mr. Moreton, to approve the written minutes of the September 26<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Dan Ferguson, Alloy Development- Good evening, it's a pleasure to be here tonight just wanted to give you guys a brief summary of activities in the village. This is the end of our second year here being an economic development consultant and it's been a pleasure. The first project is the Saint Bernard Square. There was actually a second award grant award given by the county to the project so that totals around \$540,000 this was for demolition and pre development activities on the on the square. The second item here is just talking about sort of focusing on a plan for the rest of vine street the area that's the South of the of the square. We are working on other strategies to revitalize the corridor. We are focusing on inviting outside attractive businesses here and looking to attract additional private investment. The Village does own quite a bit of land so maybe putting some additional consideration about opportunities on those different sites. Just looking at parking and you have a lot of schools. It looks like the school the public school building is almost done but just how that daytime population kind of meshes together in the harmony. Synthia Energy announced a project back in 2022 that they're almost finished with. It's they're on vine street where Spring Grove meets Vine Street. Once completed, it will be the largest food waste digestary in the nation. This is a huge project happening here in St. Bernard. We meet with BASF this past summer and they are working on their expansion project also, which is underway and will be completed sometime next year. They are doubling their square footage to 40,000sq ft. The Emery Chemical project have been meeting their goals for their tax incentives and invested 23 million dollars. We have had several meetings throughout the year with all of these business about retention but I am sure everyone is aware about St. Bernard Soap, which is vacant now. We have stressed that we want to see a business with job creation take over that site. Alloy and Ready Cincinnati have been talking to Kodiak about expanding their headquarters also. Street Pops on Vine Street is looking into franchising. Also, the county just announced some funding available for planning grants. We worked with the Village to put together an application and applied for those grants. We will find out later this month if and how much the Village was awarded. We are also working on a comprehensive plan to see what needs to be worked on or updated. We are asking for public input also to come up with some new ideas. We are showing four business properties are for sale in the Village. The first is St. Bernard Soap, which we talked about earlier, there are two buildings there for sale and/or lease. I know I threw a lot of information at you all, bur does anyone have any comments or questions?

Council Member, Mr. Edwards- Tomorrow, we are losing Wes Banco, and I was wondering if you were able to contact them yet? Any thoughts on retaining them? In the last year we went from three banks down to one bank.

Dan Ferguson, Alloy Development- Tim and I spoke about this last week. Banks usually keep up their properties very well so we usually find business who find those properties attractive. We can reach out to them and see what's possible. We have seen other banks closing in other communities also.

Safety and Service Director, Tim Werdmann- I spoke with a rep from Wes Banco's real estate department about that transaction and I expressed interest. He said they have had a number of people reach out. I did ask if they would consider donating the building to the Village, but he was not willing to do that. They are going to sell it to a quality candidate and they are not going to consider staying in St. Bernard.

Council Member, Mr. Moreton- That you for coming this evening and your presentation is nice to have in one packet here. I am curious how the business retention meetings are started with these businesses. Is this something Alloy initiates?

Dan Ferguson, Alloy Development- Yes, it is primarily Alloy who reached out to initiate those conversations. That first meeting is always the hardest. Once they understand what we do and once we have established a relationship everything gets easier after that.

Catherine Fitzgerald, Alloy Development- Most growth occurs with existing businesses so we use a very proactive approach. We try to reach the larger employer but when it is a fortune 500 company it can be very difficult. We use other pathways like networking events or meet and greets. But again, we are very proactive when it comes to business retention.

Nina Creech, People Working Cooperatively- Thank you for having me. I just wanted to share a little bit about our work and our work in your community and different ways that we can support each other. So, PWC's been around for going to be 50 in February. We employ 125 individuals and we're growing. I brought a flyer to post perhaps somewhere that we're looking for talented people always. We are essentially a nonprofit construction company. We provide emergency home repairs and people can call us and say I've no heat, my toilet doesn't flush, my gutter is falling off the home and depending on where you live and how we're funded we provide the emergency services for those folks. To give you a sense of the scope of our work, we do over about 7,000 services annually and we're in two States and 16 counties and recently we've been awarded additional dollars through the state of Ohio to expand our foot in the community. How we like to do a work is what we consider a whole house model where we try to leverage and bring together different services, I just did a quick peek at what we've done in your community and we have provided 62 services and spent \$138,000 in your community. Those funds come from a variety of different sources. In addition, to our emergency home repair energy conservation and modifications for disabilities we have a robust volunteer involvement program. We will be hosting Prepare a Fair on November 16<sup>th</sup> and we will have over 1,000 volunteers out helping rake leaves, clear gutters and help with fall yard work. So, if anyone have children that need community service hours, please reach out. We also involve the local high schools in the

community each year for this event. If you do not qualify for our services, don't worry, we can still help you. We have learned we are making a health impact over the years. We are focused on three major issues, which are lead paint which we see is prevalent in our community. We have grants and programs that can help with that. The others are asthma, which is Children's Hospital number one emergency room visit and aging in place. Falls cost the state of Ohio a tremendous amount of funds and 1 out of 4 people that fall do not leave the hospital. Falls are avoidable. We offer a class called Stepping On which includes 7 weeks of classes and we do an in-home assessment on where people can make improvements. We created a virtual house to show people what they can do in their homes to improve while they are aging. We offer this to anyone in the community. We would love for you to come visit us. We are 1.2 miles up the road. Does anyone have any questions about that we do? That you very much for thus opportunity.

President of Council, Mr. Asbach- I wanted to bring to everyone's attention the council meeting for November should take place November 21<sup>st</sup> due to Thanksgiving. Also, we may need to discuss moving December meetings also due to Christmas. Please keep this in mind that we would do back-to-back Thursdays.

## **REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS**

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- First off I'd like to thank the service department for their great response to the recent storm damage that we had. I don't think there could have been any other community that could compare as far as how quickly any debris or damage would be dealt with in such a quick manner so again thank you for that quick response and taking care of us again. I also wanted to thank the Saint Bernard senior citizens club for allowing us to provide their annual cookout for them. I want to thank the fire department for their assistance on the grill and I did also mention in the newsletter that I actually apologized for putting some smoke in the building and I tested the fire department's quick response with a little bubbling over of baked macaroni and cheese in the oven. It was a it was a fun day. Just a reminder that Saint Bernard senior citizens club meets on Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. It's a great group of people what a great resource and anyone that's interested in the senior citizens club is welcome to call the president Brenda Hensley at 513-535-1672 if you're interested or if you'd like to attend. Also, I want to thank the police and fire departments for putting on another great safety day. I know they had some last minute cancellations but they still did a great event. They're looking at maybe changing venue a little bit for next year maybe even creating more of like a National Night Out type of a venue, maybe around City Hall. I appreciate their efforts and it was another great event. That concludes my report.

Auditor, Ms. Brickweg- Just to piggyback on what you said, this time of year mostly what I do is just get ready for the end of the year and the beginning of the next year. So, I do not have any appropriation changes at this point. What I will do is wait till after payroll goes in next week and after we pay a bulk of more bills and look at it then. So, it's kind of going to be on a weekly basis but I will e-mail people if I see something. We do our best not to do additional appropriations we actually like to decrease the appropriations but also if anything happened throughout the year a lot of times we'll go let's just wait and see hopefully we don't need additional so from here on out I'll be letting you know that via e-mail but pretty much that's all we're working on right now thank you.

Law Director, Ms. Van Valkenburg- You have before you have proposed ordinance #30 which deals with the adoption of a new chapter in title 3. We're calling it registration vacant residential commercial and industrial buildings. We would add that to the codified ordinances. Miss Helmes brought to our attention that we have a number of vacant properties in Saint Bernard that have been vacant for about 45 days and that some of them have been vacant for years and years sometimes as much as 10 years. So, we've looked at this and we based it off the one City of Hamilton has but we also included residential properties. It provides for a mechanism for registration and for inspections especially created by the fire department and bringing in the building department if the fire department feels those are necessary. It's really a safety issue. We want to make sure that these are not just abandoned but they're secured. We don't have transients moving in and that provides a way for public safety police and fire to get in in case of an emergency.

You have before you ordinance #31 which deals with the adoption of a number of revisions to chapter 13.35 which has to deal with the property maintenance code. We've talked off and on through the year about dealing with short term rental properties. Some of the changes within 13.35 proposed deal with short term rental properties and some other changes dealing with institutional kind of properties here in town. I gave it to you all as 13.35 because as we were looking at it and we're going back and forth looking at different parts of it and as I was looking through those, I had found some typos. So, I had kind of incorporated those as we were going throughout 13.35 and reviewing it but the majority of the changes are found in the document I handed out this evening or that that you put in your box this evening. If you would rather have them broken up in smaller ordinances or into smaller sections I can do that as well. Please let me know. Thank you.

Treasurer, Mr. Ungruhe- We received the Star Ohio statement for the villages funds that they maintain for us. At the end of September our account total was \$12,003,545.69. Copies have been distributed to the clerk and to council and that concludes my report.

Safety & Service Director, Mr. Werdmann- The June St. repaving was supposed to be finished today. I did not have an opportunity to go out and look but I believe JK Mueller finished with the final course of asphalt on there today. They will be following up with the lane markings. As everyone has noticed the speed bumps have been going in on vine street that's scheduled to be finished this week. The new sweeper is out in front of the building, Finally I did want to thank the Mill Creek alliance. I signed up and did a paddle from Carthage to Solway Park and got to go on a canoe through the Mill Creek through Ivorydale and that was pretty cool to see it from that perspective. A different way to see Saint Bernard so the Mill Creek alliance I wanted to thank them for that opportunity that was pretty cool and that concludes my report.

Tax Administrator, Ms. Helmes- September 2024 end of month receipts

Tax collections for September 2024: \$1,631,176.00.

September 2024 is up 96.0 % or \$798,951 from September 2023.

Refunds for September: -\$19214.42. (9382.00 was a refund back to the state for the Municipal Net Portal).

Delinquent tax collected with Capital Recovery: \$1075.96.

Delinquent tax collected with the Ohio Attorney General's Office: \$5954.28.

## **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Finance, Mr. Moreton- The Finance Committee meeting scheduled for next week has been canceled due to no agenda topics warranting a meeting at this time. Thank you to those who have been attending the monthly Community Connects. October's Community Connect is scheduled for Thursday, November 7th, from 5-6PM at Five Star Mediterranean. On a more personal note, I want to thank everyone around the Village for being so supportive of our local small businesses. It's heartwarming to see over 100 comments on Facebook about the amazing food Wok Inn has provided to our community for decades. And folks stepping up to support Five Star Mediterranean's owner, Ahmed, and his family during this difficult time has made me so proud to call this place my home. We truly walk-the-walk of the saying "it takes a Village". Thank you. That concludes my report.

Service, Mr. Stuchell- The Service Department will commence leaf collection services starting next Monday, October 14th, continuing through December 6th. Residents are reminded to place leaf piles at the curb, taking care not to extend them into the street or obstruct sidewalks. Additionally, I am pleased to announce that the Service Department has received its new street sweeper. This long-awaited equipment will be out on our streets in the coming days, enhancing our neighborhood's cleanliness and appearance.

Public Improvements, Mr. Edwards- I have scheduled a public improvement committee meeting on October 16th from 5:00 to 6:00 PM at the Centennial Hall. The subject will be energy aggregation. Anyone interested in the subject should feel free to bring their thoughts as well as any information. The committee is there primarily to listen but any member is welcome to bring any information they have. Also, as always everyone is encouraged to bring their ideas to council such as energy aggregation with the hope of making our village a better place for all. I would also like to add Kate Krause of the Public Library to our agenda for October 24th council meeting. She has offered an update on the programs currently being provided at our Saint Bernard library branch at this time. We have a beautiful library the very helpful employees and as always good to call attention to such a great resource and once again I'd like to thank Nina Creech of People Working Cooperatively for speaking to council tonight thank you Mr. president this concludes my report.

Safety, Ms. Hausfeld- Tonight I have the fire prevention week report from the fire department from October 6th to the 12<sup>th</sup>. This year's campaign is smoke alarms, make them work for you. Here are some safety tips for your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. Smoke alarm basics: install smoke alarms in every bedroom outside each separate sleeping area like a hallway, and on each level of your home, including the basement. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month. Replace smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or they stop responding when tested. A single chirp means the battery is low and needs to be replaced. If the chirping continues, the smoke alarm is at the end of its life and it needs to be replaced. If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the St. Bernard Fire Department at 513-242-9555. Also, I'd like to thank

the police and fire for their Safety Day event. I also want to thank the Service Department for their help with the storm from Helene. Thank you.

Laws, Contracts and Claims, Mr. Schildmeyer- No report.

Marketing, Mr. Culbertson- There will be a Fresh Market at the pavilion on Sunday October 20th from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Emmanuel United Church of Christ will be hosting a family fall festival on Sunday October 27th from noon to 5:00 PM. There will be games, food and raffle baskets. Lastly the next Historical Society program will take place on Monday October 21st from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the upper level of the municipal building. That concludes my report.

Business and Industry, Mr. Estep- Absent.

Mayor, Mr. Stuchell- The annual Halloween Camp Out is being held on Friday, October 11th and Saturday, October 12 at Lower Ross Park. Activities will be the annual Halloween costume contest on Saturday evening, trunk or treating, fire pit and more. Costume contest will be held at 7:00pm on Saturday night. Again, this is open to everyone.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer, to excuse the absent member. Motion passes 6-0.

The next council meeting will be held Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in council chambers.

The next committee of the whole will be held Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in council chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Culbertson, seconded by Mr. Edwards, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned.