City of Kent

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

City Council Committee Meetings

320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

6:55 Public Hearing- In accordance with Chapter 1111.01(b)(2) of the Kent Codified Ordinances, notice was given on August 30, 2022, that the Kent City Council will conduct a Public Hearing to allow for public comment on proposed text amendments to the City of Kent Zoning Code.

Present:	Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. John Kuhar, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti, Mr. Robin Turner
Also Present:	Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council
Absent:	Mr. Garret Ferrara; Ms. Tracy Wallach

MOTION TO EXCUSE MS. WALLACH MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mayor Fiala called the Public Hearing to order for proposed text amendments to the City of Kent Zoning Code. He introduced the Community Development Director, Ms. Bridget Susel to speak on the topic.

Ms. Susel said there are proposed changes to update the language in the Kent Zoning Code. There were no members of the public who wished to speak on the topic.

The Public Hearing concluded at 6:56 pm.

Board of Control and Council Committee Meetings

At 07:00 PM, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the City Council Committee Meetings to order.

Committee of the Whole

Gail Pavliga, District 75, Ohio House of Representatives

Ms. Pavliga introduced herself to City Council and began with her legislative update. She highlighted funding for Kent in the Capital Budget for the segment of the Bike and Hike Trail. She thanked Mr. Dave Ruller and Jim Bowling for the work they did on this project. She continued by discussing legislative issues at the state level, and stated she tends to continue her focus on mental health issues. She highlighted her work with the

Opioid Settlement. Ms. Pavliga reviewed the work and success she has had with the Court Appointed Advocacy Program, having arranged the initial funding. There are now 30 court-appointed advocates. She is also the joint sponsor of the affordable housing bill, (not low income housing), with tax credits to offer equity in affordable housing. She highlighted the third bill she helped pass- House Bill 25, which designates a memorial highway, designating portions of I-76 as the Corporal Dillon Memorial Highway. She complimented Chief Myers and Chief Shearer and thanked Chief Myers for the experience of the firefighter training she participated in. She thanked Chief Shearer for keeping the Resource Officers in the schools to ensure safety for the community. She thanked everyone for the time and the work that they did.

Mr. Ruller said he wanted to thank Ms. Pavliga publicly for her help with Kent receiving the funding they received from the State of Ohio.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she would like to explore the concept of affordable housing with Ms. Pavliga. Ms. Pavliga encouraged her to reach out to her office.

Action(s) Recommended:

1. Received an informational update from Representative Gail Pavliga and no action was necessary.

Community Engagement Coordinator Revision and Update

Mr. Ruller said he tried to capture the comments that were made in the previous meeting to help further craft the job description. He highlighted the updates, specifically to the required qualifications. He said this was the starting point and we would work from there. He said he wants to cast as wide a net as possible due to the state of the current job market. This position will start in January with the new budget.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said that Mr. Ruller did a really good job and that person coming in will really help develop the job.

Mr. Sidoti asked if when the person starts they would revisit the job description. Mr. Ruller said they will revisit the priorities of the job on an ongoing basis.

Actions Recommended:

1. Receive the staff update on the Community Engagement Coordinator Position. No action is necessary at this time.

City Hall Construction Update

Ms. Melanie Baker said the concrete foundation walls will be completed next week and the waterproofing to begin the week of September 19th. Beginning October 1st, phase 1 of the structural steel will begin. She said it had been two years since looking at the mini samples of flooring and paint. She referenced her handout (Attachment #1) and focused on the council chambers, with carpeting in neutral beige and a green accent wall. She thanked Nick Cecil for his work on all the technology in the Council room.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about the triangular shaded form on the drawing and Ms. Baker explained the layout of the carpeting.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the ceiling in the room and if it was slanted. She said it is not.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about having a living plant wall. Ms. Baker said they are looking at that and it has not been forgotten. She said it would be done after the fact and is still under consideration.

Action Recommended:

1. Receive staff updates on the progress of the City Hall Construction; no action necessary.

Ordinance Replacement Pages

Ms. Hope Jones said this is the annual update to the Codified Ordinances of Kent, Ohio and includes updated State of Ohio laws and legislation passed over the past year in the City of Kent. She said she needed approval from City Council to include these updates in the code book.

MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE REPLACEMENT PAGES MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action Recommended:

1. Authorize the update of the annual replacement pages to the City Ordinance Book with an emergency clause.

Health and Public Safety Committee

University Hospital Med Unit Proposal

Mayor Fiala said this item was not ready to be presented to Council and would not be discussed at this meeting.

Land Use Committee

Zoning Code Updates

Ms. Susel said when the changes in the zoning code were operationalized last year there was a list of items they were keeping that needed to be cleaned up. These items were taken to the Planning Commission for approval. She said there are six to seven pages of text updates and asked if the Council wanted her to read them all. Mr. Ferrara said she would not have to do that.

There were no questions from the council or the public.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ZONING CODE UPDATES MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Actions Recommended:

1. Authorize the proposed text amendment to the City's Zoning Code, with the emergency clause.

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee

North Mantua Street Improvements Agreement

Mr. Ruller said that he had met with different groups of people, along with Mr. Bowling to come up with a solution to North Mantua Street. Mr. Bowling is moving forward after those discussions and this is the agreement that starts that process.

Mr. Bowling said this has been a long-standing problem and he is very happy with all who came together, which shows how they will work together on the funding and design phase to the changes on North Mantua Street.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said that Coleman's CEO moved to Kent and lives in the Riverbend development and asked if there could be a round about there. Bowling said they are looking at ways to turn out of Riverbend and how to improve it. They are looking at ways to make it easier and a roundabout has been discussed, but they need to talk to everyone to see what the needs are of the community.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if residents would be involved. Mr. Bowling said they will move forward with getting the residents together in the near future.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about the timeline of the project. Mr. Bowling said the planning, public involvement and design phase will be done by October 2023, which is important because that is when they will be applying for grants.

Mr. Ferrara asked if Davey Tree could provide lobbying for the project. Mr. Bowling said this has been started and the conversations and commitments will increase once things are approved. Letters of support from different entities will be solicited from many different offices.

Mr. DeLeone asked if this project would impact the cemetery walls. Mr. Bowling said it would and said they are stuck with limitations.

Mr. Ruller asked Mr. Bowling about the Safe to Schools projects, Mr. Bowling said the first is Safe Roads for All, which competes at the national level. A Safety Plan in needed and AMATS has agreed to do this for the region. The other one is a Safe Routes to School Grant funded program, which is a school travel plan with school districts. ODOT will help with the plan.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if this was going to be a potential gateway to the city. Mr. Bowling said it would definitely create a gateway.

Mr. DeLeone asked if ODOT would have any pushback on reducing the speed limit from 45 to 25.He said as long as it is done in a way that would allow for this to be a transitional period.

Mr. Kuhar asked about traffic backups and what causes them. Mr. Bowling said they did preliminary traffic analysis and that this will be looked at in more detail. He said the signals cause the backups. He said the signal at Kent Roosevelt High School would need to be replaced.

Ms. Shaffer said she thinks this is wonderful.

There were no further questions from the Council and no questions from the public.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NORTH MANTUA STREET IMPROVEMENTS AGREEMENT MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action Recommended:

1. Approve the North Mantua Street Improvements Agreement with the emergency clause.

Finance Committee

Certifying Tax Rates to County

Ms. Rhonda Hall said every year the tax rates and amounts need to be certified to the Portage County Auditor She provided a draft of what the ordinance would look like.

There were no questions from the Council or the audience.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE CERTIFYING TAX RATES TO THE COUNTY MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Mr. John Kuhar and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action(s) Recommended:

1. Authorized the certification of tax rates to the Portage County Auditor's Office, with an emergency clause.

Request for New Utility Billing Software

Ms. Rhonda Hall said the funding for the new utility billing software is in next year's capital plan but she is asking to move to this year. She said they'd received three quotes and demonstrations from three vendors and is here this evening to request Council’s approval of a new Utility Billing Software program – Civica Authority Utility.She said they determined the current billing software is out of date and is difficult and time consuming to extract information from the utility billing, engineering, and other departments. they looked at 3 vendors: MuniLink, Civica Authority Utility and New World Utility Billing. They had all 3 vendors perform demos of their products, and not only did we include Utility Billing and Budget & Finance personnel in those demos, we also included Melanie Baker, Jim Bowling, Rhonda Boyd, Cori Finney and Cathy Wilson in those demos, since they will also be using the program. We collectively felt that New World Utility Billing was not user-friendly and, since we now know that they are no longer taking on new customers, we quickly eliminated them from the running. Once we determined that the two vendors would be Civica Authority Utility and MuniLink, we received quotes from both and I have completed an analysis, attached, to show that Civica Authority Utility is much more cost effective for the City. Another benefit of Civica Authority Utility is that we can expand our services with them to include both the Finance and Payroll programs when and if New World stops supporting our current products. MuniLink is a stand-alone service for Utility Billing only, which is similar to what we currently have and would prefer not to have for our next program. She attached a quote from the Civica Utility Authority that will give information about the project and what is included.

Ms. Hall and Brian Huff both liked the software and what it could offer. They are asking to budget this in this year's appropriations and need approval this month to save the rates.

Mr. Ferrara asked if we had budgeted for the new accounting system. She said they have not.

Mr. Sidoti asked if this system is expandable. She said if they purchase the accounting software in the future, it can be interfaced with utility billing software.

There were no further questions from the Council and no questions from the audience.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR NEW UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action(s) Recommended:

1. Authorize the purchase of the proposed utility billing software with an emergency clause.

Budget Appropriations Amendment

Ms. Rhonda Hall referenced her memo and exhibit in the packet requesting current approval of budget appropriations.

There were no questions from the Council or the audience.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AMENDMENT MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action(s) Recommended:

1. Authorize the current budget appropriations as presented, with an emergency clause.

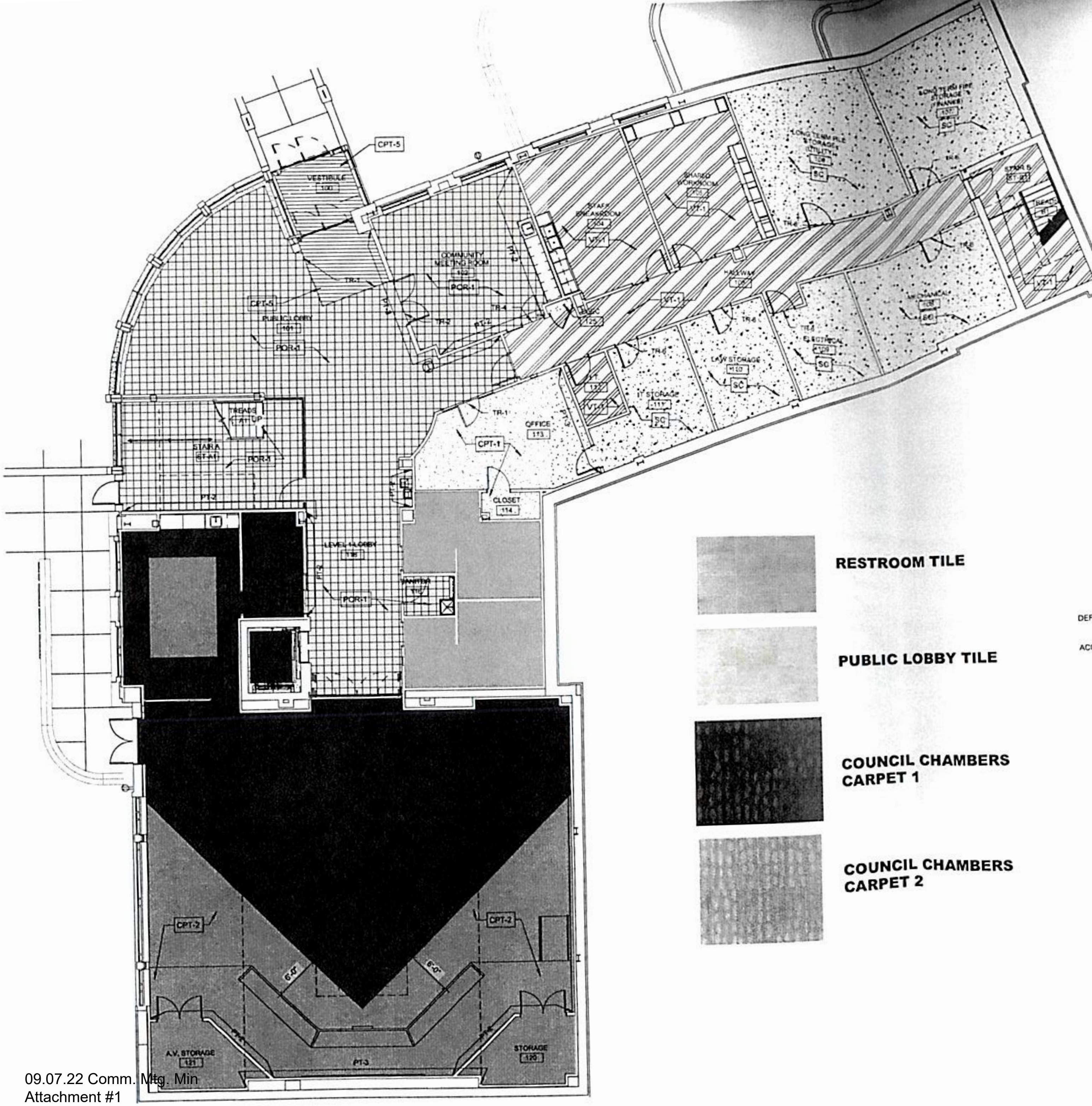
MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Mr. Garret Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO RETURN TO THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Mr. Garret Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

No further action was taken and the meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

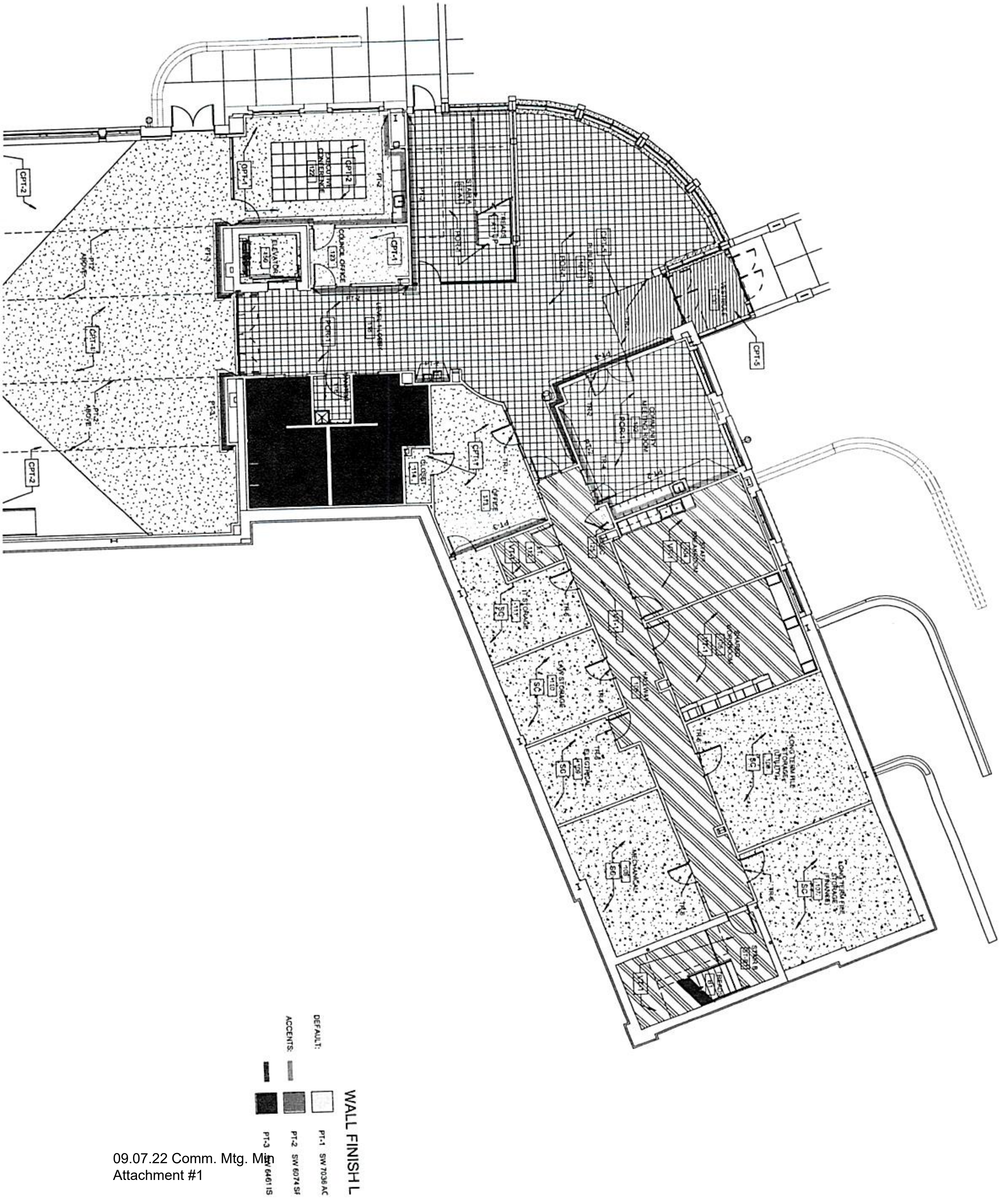
Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council



WALL FINISH LEGEND

DEFAULT:	PT-1	SW 7036 ACCESSIBLE BEIGE
ACCENTS:	PT-2	SW 6074 SPALDING GRAY
	PT-3	SW 6461 ISLE OF PINES

09.07.22 Comm. Mtg. Min
Attachment #1



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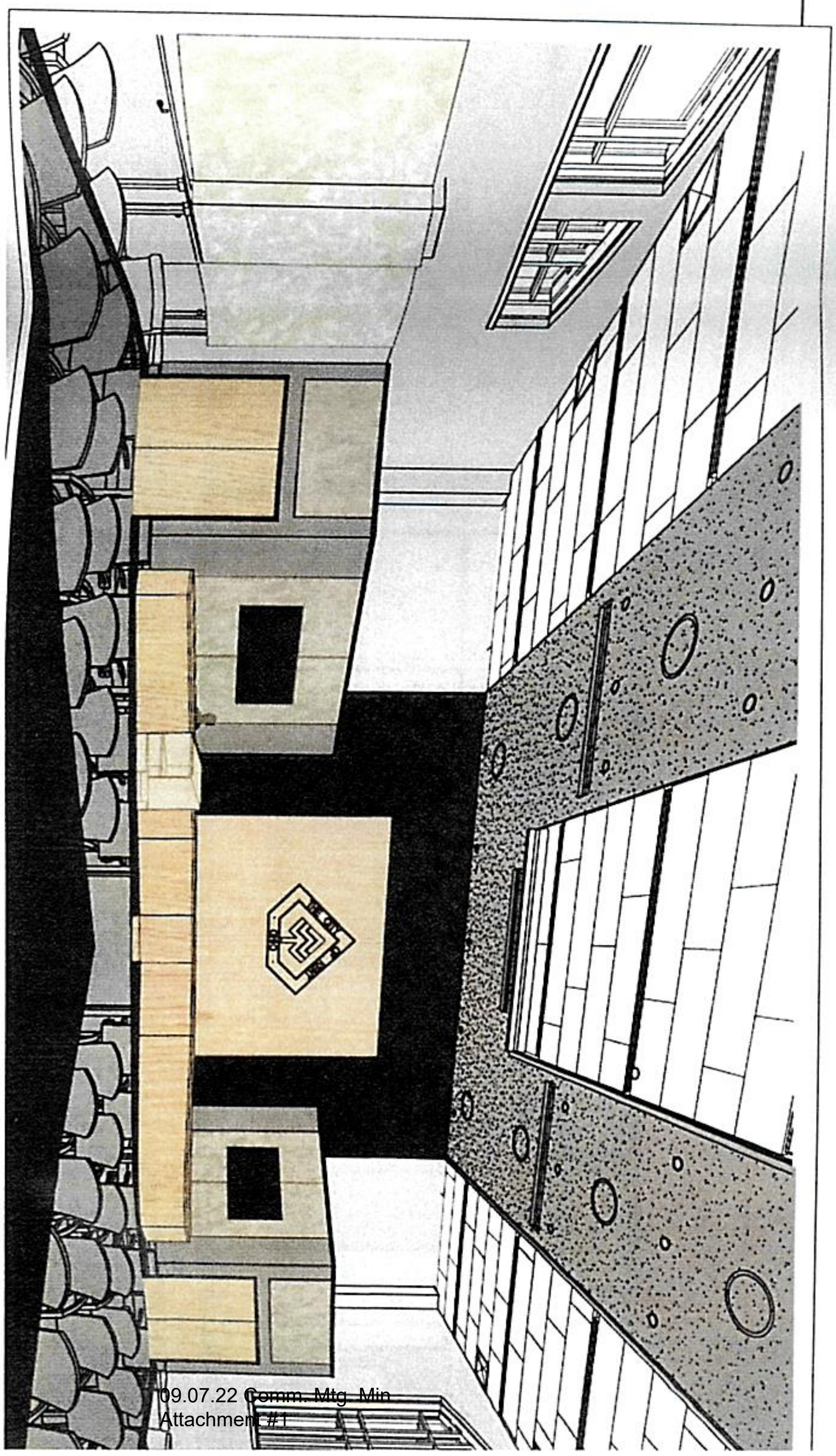
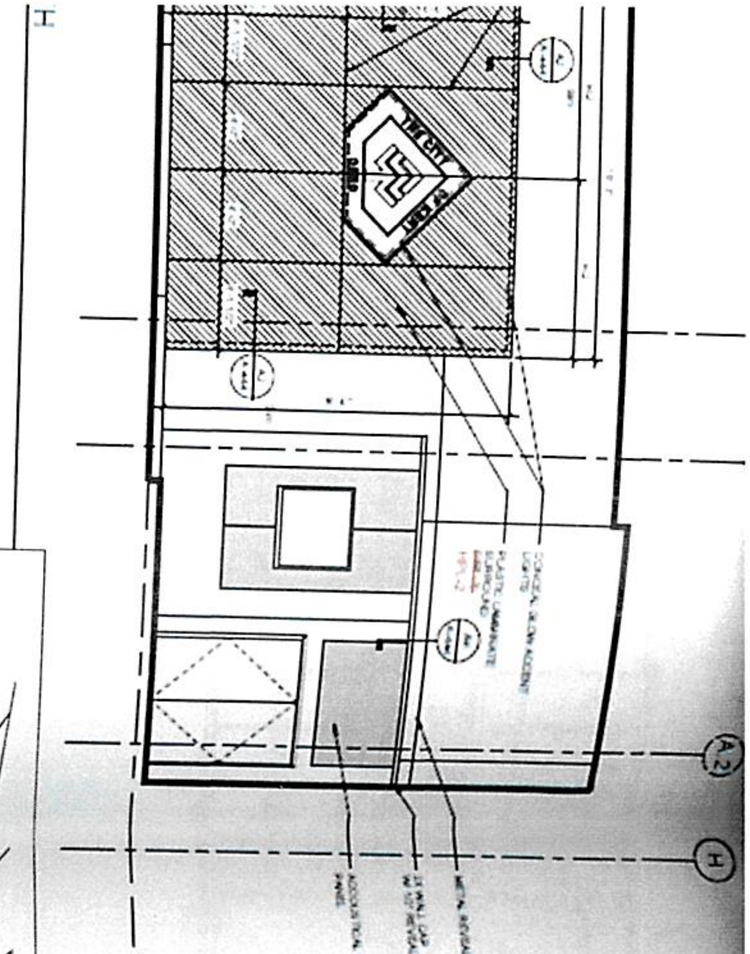
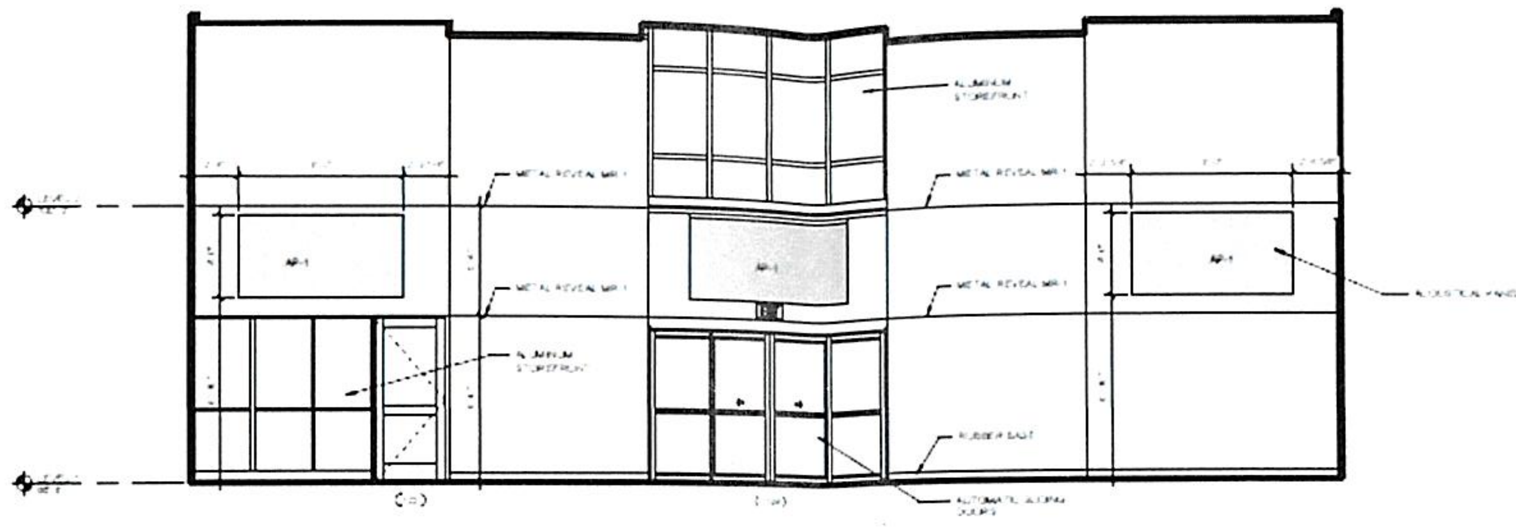
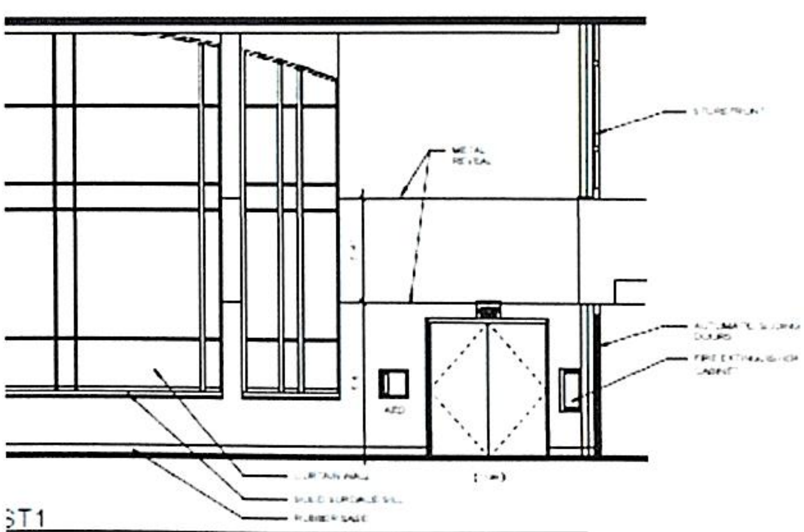




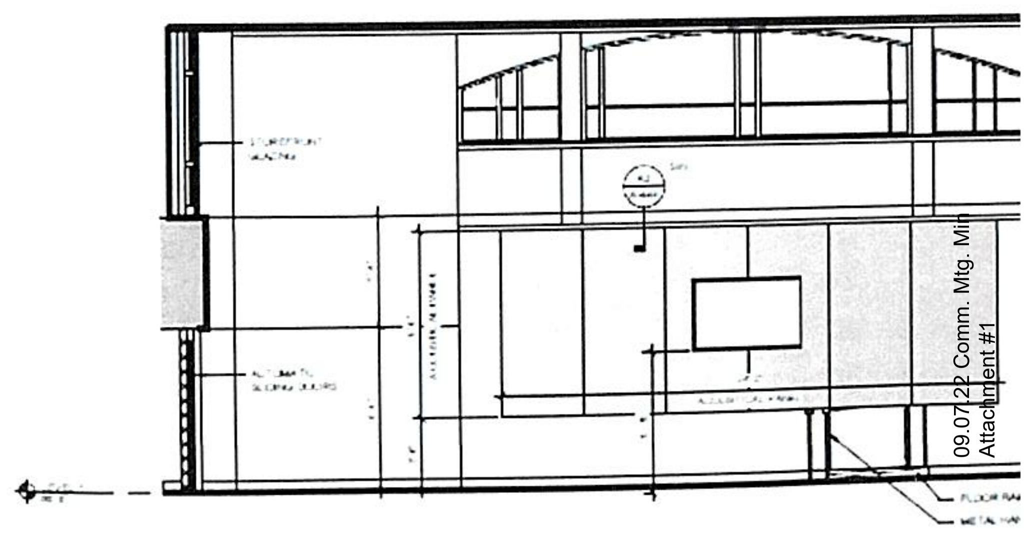
09.07.22 Comm. Mtg. Min
Attachment #1



#119 COUNCIL CHAMBER NORTH



ST1



#119 COUNCIL CHAMBER EAST

09.07.22 Comm. Mtg. Min
Attachment #1