

Council busy with zoning, growth

By [GARY BUDZAK](#) August 26, 2023



The Galena Village Council meeting of April 24 began with the emergency passage of an amendment to the zoning code adopted in 2021 and repealing any inconsistent legislation. Zach Hopper cast the lone no vote.

Mayor Jill Love "reported that \$60,000 has been donated to the Galena Foundation for an Economic Development Planner," the meeting minutes said. "Mayor Love mentioned she has been gathering information about a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area and will be talking to the businesses about whether there is interest in pursuing this idea."

A financial commission was formed regarding the sewer plant. Councilman Chris Durrence will lead the commission, and Hopper and Councilman Mike Fry will serve. Durrence will also join Hopper on the renamed Special Events Committee.

Administrator Jean Sylvester said Joe Walker Road repairs would be done June 7-8. Maintenance said crack sealing was completed on Harrison Street.

Councilman Todd Musacchio said the BST&G Fire Board raised part-time wages by \$3 an hour to \$15-\$18 per hour. "They are also working on their ten-year plan and expansion plan," meeting minutes said.

Council's next meeting was on May 22. Playground Committee head Gillian Doucette said, "There could be a significant cost savings of \$40,000-\$62,00 if the village or volunteers could remove the (old) equipment." No vendor will repair the existing equipment.

"The proposed equipment is \$300,000, and the equipment comes from Play World," minutes at the time said. Mid-State would install the equipment but is booked until August. It was noted that there was an irrigation system under the playground, and Kiwanis may do a pavilion in the park.

Sylvester's report said Big Walnut Middle School students did a great job on Service Day. "They weeded, edged, and put down mulch at the Village Square and Village offices."

Council President Kathy Krupa "asked about petitioners on the square," minutes said. "Solicitor Ken Molnar will look at the statutes, to see if any restrictions can be made, and that we may need outside counsel to look at the situation and advise the village as to what we can and can't do."

Mark Rufenor was introduced as an engineering consultant at the village's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on April 19. At the meeting, he gave a presentation of "The Galena Development Overview highlighting the future financial outlook," the meeting minutes said. "One of Mark's many points was to maintain healthy economic funds, the village will need to raise the current sewer rates."

Also at the meeting, there was a hearing on a variance to development plans of 99 N. Walnut St., which was approved. There was also discussion of the Miller Farm development.

Next, there was a "reading of the amendment to the zoning ordinance Section 5.15 regarding requirements of when and how amendments become adopted by the Village Council," the meeting minutes read. "Village Solicitor, Ken Molnar, reviewed the verbiage and found that the recommendations by the Planning and Zoning Commission may not follow the Ohio Revised Code requirements. Further review is recommended..."

P&Z's next meeting was on June 21. An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance was approved after a public hearing.

There was also a hearing regarding Lot Grading, explained by Rufenor.

"Builders/developers had been managing lot grading within developments without any governance or requirements to do so by the village until recently," meeting minutes said. "Due to delays occurring in current developments the village is seeking to amend the Subdivision Codes to include additional requirements for Lot Grading. Lot Grading plans would need to be submitted along with a request for Building Permit which in turn allows the building department to withhold occupancy permits until a builder addresses any lot grading issues."

P&Z unanimously approved recommending the lot grading proposals to Village Council.

In other business, there was discussion about Plain City.

"They are experiencing explosive growth with 1,489 approved units currently under construction, with a total of 4,080 units planned in the next 12 months," the minutes said. "Many cities and villages are looking to employ economic development planners to assist in the added work that large growth will place on each municipality."

Galena's P&Z consists of Love, Alison Cherubini-Hillyer, Tim Erb and Fry. Nick Pezzutti is stepping down due to his schedule but was replaced by Pete Casuccio. Also present at the P&Z meetings is Village Zoning Inspector Levi Koehler, who spoke with Rufenor regarding the lot grading.

On March 20, Casuccio was among the applicants for an open council position, which went to Christopher Durrence. Also at that Council meeting, the Playground Committee was formalized as a Council Committee. Gillian Doucette heads the Playground Committee.

Also on March 20, Koehler said in the minutes, "the condo association at the Retreat at Dustin is in the process of taking control of the infrastructure. There are no remaining lots at Arrowhead Lake Estates... There are no remaining lots at Blackhawk Phase D. M/I (Homes) is in talks with Homewood about Miller Farm. At 1811 S. Galena Road phase 1 construction is underway and the sewer force main has been run. There have been preliminary talks with Berkshire Campground about future expansion and the lift station pumps have been repaired."

Finally, it was noted that the BST&G Fire District would get its new rescue truck in August; and there was storm damage to the gazebo in Miller Park.

The Galena Village Council consists of Durrence, Fry, Hopper, Krupa, Musacchio and Josh Porter. Love leads the meetings. Michelle Dearth is the fiscal officer.