

**ERIE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR SESSION**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023**

**ALL PRESENT**

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President Shenigo called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Presentation re proposed Love's Travel Center.** An attendance sheet was signed by those present.

Mr. Chris Davis, Project Manager for 3D Development, thanked the Board for the invitation to speak about the proposed Love's Travel Center project. The proposed location for the new Love's Travel Center would be located South of the Ohio Turnpike on the East Corner of Route 250, occupying 16 acres. The building would be 15,000 square feet with an 11,000 square feet repair shop for the semi's to utilize. This property will create 60 new jobs for Erie County. There are two barriers that still need to be overcome; entrance infrastructure and sewer utility. In discussions from the beginning, the idea was for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund the infrastructure improvements. The TIF would establish the current property value for that property. Love's will purchase their own construction bonds, meaning all financial risk is held with Love's and not the County. These infrastructure improvements will be economically meaningful by providing safe and consolidated access points in and out of Route 250. These improvements will also allow for safe access for development beyond Route 250.

Sewer utility - This is a very important piece of this project for new and future growth of current and new businesses. Love's has agreed to put one mile of 8 inch force main sewer pipe with a lift pump station from the Love's property to Mason Road. The sewer capacity will hold 183,000 gallons per day and is expected to cost an estimated \$2 million.

Mr. Davis mentioned that Love's will use only 7% of this sewer line.

Mr. Shenigo asked why Love's would just not utilize a package plant.

Mr. Davis responded by saying it can be done that way, but Love's will not build with a package plant. There is a strong preference for sewer due to the environmental hazards of package plants and they are not helpful beyond the proposed site, which would not help the community to grow. Love's has the opportunity to build infrastructure without taxpayer generated dollars.

Entrance Infrastructure - ODOT has been contacted to discuss the entrance points on Route 250 to allow for the most ample and safe space for turning in and out of the property.

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Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - Mr. Davis stated that an estimated amount of \$1.7 million will be generated from property taxes of this development. This money will be used to pay down the TIF, which will benefit the Township and Schools. Based off of the County Engineer's configurations, it will cost approximately \$2 million to make road access for the property. The entire infrastructure will be around \$4 million.

Future Economic Growth - This project has the opportunity to create jobs, guarantee income and property tax generation, increase interstate travelers, to name a few. This project will use no taxpayer funds, only business dollars. No growth will take place without the TIF approval, as Love's will not build without the TIF in place. Mr. Davis believes this project is in-line with the county motto: "Commissioners are committed to providing a high quality of life for all who live in, work at, or visit our communities." Not only will this project provide health and welfare for the citizens of Erie County, by extending the sanitary sewers, it will help strengthen the economy by offering a place for travelers to stop and have their truck repaired, get gas and eat. With any new infrastructure that is built in the future, they will be required to tap-in to the sewer system. All existing businesses and properties are given several years to tap-in. Love's will pay for the construction and design improvements for this project. The TIF is for 30 years at 100% with Love's holding the construction bond, putting them at risk. Mr. Davis reminded the Board to not think of this project as just Love's project, it is also for future development, which will help repay the TIF over years, the more infrastructure is built.

Public Comment.

Mr. Lennard Longer, who owns two hotels north of the proposed Love's Travel Center is in favor of this project. He stated that he has owned the Hampton Inn since 1994. Mr. Longer mentioned that years ago, Bob Evans wanted to build within the hotel, but due to be connected to a package plant and not a sewer, the restaurant backed out. He mentioned, if sewer lines are added, he has a chance to be able to bring a restaurant to his hotels.

Mr. Thomas Hickman, Plant Manager of Certainteed, stated Certainteed has been operation with a package plant since 1968. Package Plants are not typically what businesses look for when looking to build in an area. Mr. Hickman has been very impressed with Mr. Davis and how open he has been about this project and he believes it would be good to have the opportunity for growth and also to reduce the environmental hazards of package plants by putting in sewer lines.

Mr. Russell Bobel, Grower's Mineral Corporation, stated that Grower's Mineral Corporation is a small company located in Milan. The land that Love's is considering is owned by Grower's Mineral, who is interested in moving their location from the Village of Milan to a contiguous property to the Love's development. At this new location, Grower's Mineral will expand their business by building a 26,0000 square foot building, estimated at \$8 million. The Owners of Grower's Mineral have spoken to Mr. Davis and quickly established a good relationship. Having sewer lines in place property along Route 250, makes the property a nice place to move to.

Mr. Dan Frederick, Milan Township Trustee, stated that Trustees are enthusiastic for the growth in Milan. Currently, there are several additional projects in Milan for consideration, and if sewer lines are constructed, it will create a great opportunity to do away with the package plants, which is pertinent for the future.

Mr. Frederick noted, that only 20 acres out of 80 are being utilized with Love's Travel Center. With the County's approval, the rest of this property can be subdivided into buildable properties, which will make it more suitable for businesses to build in this area.

Ms. Lisa Sortino supplied a letter for the record. She was not able to be at this meeting but wanted her letter read into the record. The following is her letter:

My name is Lisa Sortino and I represented our company LLV Group dba Motel 6 Milan. My apologies for being unable to attend this meeting in person but thank you for taking the time to include our remarks at this gathering of the commission today.

"Our family built both Motel 6 and Days Inn located in Milan at Exit 110 of the Ohio Turnpike. These hotels have welcomed travelers to Erie County for almost 30 years. My sisters and I formed our woman owned company in 2018 and acquired the Motel 6 and have continued to be a partner in good standing of the hospitality industry as well as our community.

We are excited to have Love's Travel Center come to our area. The business will increase traffic from the Turnpike exit that may not have stopped otherwise and moved on. We are in support of their expansion and the benefits they will bring to Erie County through employment and taxes.

With the information we have gathered, it is our understanding Loves plans to improve the infrastructure with the addition of a water/sewer line along Route 250 to their location. While we understand the need, Motel 6 has maintained a treatment plant since the hotels were built. The plant has been efficient and cost effective with the support of our local vendor Woods Environmental. Our plant has never been in default with the EPA and our estimated future improvement plan expenditures are approximately \$30,000.

While we welcome Love's to our neighborhood, we ask the commission to not force our business to connect to the sewer line. Rough estimates for the tap in project to the line from the rear of our property and the removal of our existing plant is approximately \$150,000. The economic impact to our seasonal Motel 6 location would be a financial hardship. Like other hotels, our business has been marginal but we continue to leave the light on for our guests.

Thank you to the Commissioners for this opportunity to have a voice today."

Ms. Abbey Bemis, Executive Director for Erie County Economic Development, stated this is a great opportunity to have some major economic development. If you look at the bigger picture, by having Love's Travel Center in Erie County, it will create an increase in daily freight and help industry grow in Erie County.

Mr. Dan Wood, Woods Environmental, asked about the costs to tie-in to the sewer lines once they are constructed. He stated that the owners of these properties required to tie-in deserve an estimated figure of how much it will cost. Mr. Wood gave an example of Red Roof Inn, he mentioned that the hotel will have pay to bore under Route 250 to get to the other side of the road to tap-in to the sewer. This could lead to massive costs to the hotel.

Mr. Shenigo stated that there are two fees involved with sewer tap-in, a conveyance fee and an equalization fee. He added that the Commissioners will not waive any tap-in fees but stated that the equalization fee will not apply, which will significantly reduce the cost to the customer that taps in.

Mr. Harry Perdue, mentioned that as a business person, he is in favor of this project and believes it will be a good venture for everyone involved. His one concern is, light pollution the Love's Travel Center will produce. Mr. Frederick stated this is a Township zoning issue and they are already taking steps to research what can be done to prevent light pollution.

Mr. Robert Schoen, stated he owns a residential property on Route 250 and owns his own well and does not utilizes county water or sewer. If this project takes place, Mr. Schoen will have to construct a commercial pump station just for his two households, because he cannot use a gravity system in that location. This will be very costly and he will not be able to afford this for his houses.

Mr. John Rufo, Utilities Director, mentioned that he has worked with the Health Department in the past and believes that the Health Department can waive the requirement for home treatment systems, if accessibility criteria is not met. He also clarified that Ohio EPA regulates package plants, not the local Health Department.

Assistant Prosecutor Jason Hinners stated that the next step is for the Commissioners to approve a Resolution of Intent to Proceed with the TIF. Once the Resolution is passed, a notice will be sent to EHOVE, Edison Local School District and Milan Township. They will have a 45 day period to review and make any adjustments they feel are necessary in the TIF. Once comments or recommendations for changes are made and brought back to the Commission, the Commissioners will make their final decision.

There being no further comment, Mr. Old made the motion and Mr. Shoffner seconded it to take a **short recess**; Roll Call: All Aye

On motion of Mr. Shenigo and second of Mr. Old, Board **reconvenes**; Roll Call: All Aye

**Budget Work Session.** County Administrator Hank Solowiej, Deputy Director Adrienne James, and Board Member Lisa Crescimano, were present for this session.

Board of Elections - Based off Monday's Commission Meeting, some items needed to be clarified. Hank added the Board of Elections 2018 budget to show additional numbers of a gubernatorial election vs. non-gubernatorial. There also were some questions on the salaries of the Director and Deputy Director. Mr. Old has heard from two Board members that the base line salaries of Director and Deputy Director were going to increase from \$56,000, what previous Director was making, to \$70,000. The Commissioners are optimistic that the Board of Elections would adhere to the county budget policies. Board member Lisa Crescimano stated that this additional money for the salaries is not in the proposed 2023 budget until the reorganization meeting next Monday. Hank stated he does not want to pre-fund budgets, and anything needed in the future can be adjusted later in the year.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the comp time payout of the staff and recently retired Director. The Commissioners were under the assumption that a partial payout in November of \$25,000 would have been made and then the Director was to use her comp time until she retired. The issue was to be resolved and the Board of Elections would then follow the budget policies going forward. Hank noted that the Compensated Absence Fund could be used to pay the rest of the comp time, so not to use the General Fund. Mr. Old stated that the new Director will have the task of properly managing the Clerks, so this comp time issue will resolve itself. The Board directs the County Administrator to leave the Board of Elections budget as is and things can always be revised later in the year. The Commissioners thanked Hank and all the Officials in cooperating with this year's budget.

On motion of Mr. Shoffner and second of Mr. Old, Board adopts resolution declaring certain Erie County equipment surplus and ordering same to be sold by **internet auction**; Roll call: All aye (#23-68)

Board approves **one-time Children Services Workforce Funding Grant bonus** in the amount of \$1,200 effective in March 17, 2023 paycheck.

Mr. Old noted that the County Engineer has a Travel Request Form for meeting in Toledo including mileage. Hank explained that the employee lives in Fremont and would like to leave straight from home for the meeting. The Commissioners give the employee permission to take a county vehicle home the night before the meeting, requiring no mileage request.

Board **disapproves** Travel Request Form for **Haley Ziemba**, Engineer's Office, attending Concrete 101 seminar in Maumee, Ohio, on 4/5/23 in an estimated amount of \$74.00. (re-submit with no mileage and using a county vehicle)

Board authorizes expenses for **Mike Farrell**, Engineer's Office, attending 2023 Surveyor's Workshop in Ada, Ohio, on 4/20/23 in an estimated amount of \$140.00.

Board authorizes expenses for **Neil Yingling**, ECDJFS, attending Ohio Council on Welfare Fraud Annual Training Conference in Newark, Ohio, on 3/23 and 3/24/23 in an estimated amount of \$418.70. Payment provided through Fraud Prevention and Control Allocation.

Board authorizes expenses for **Laura Uhl**, ECDJFS, attending Ohio Council on Welfare Fraud Annual Training Conference in Newark, Ohio, on 3/23 and 3/24/23 in an estimated amount of \$199.70. Payment provided through Fraud Prevention and Control Allocation.

Board approves Personnel Action Forms for **The Meadows at Osborn Park** re **Shantel Alafita**, part-time STNA, resignation effective 2/24/23; **Elizabeth Jones**, part-time STNA, moving to a seven day line, working 56 hours per pay period effective 3/5/23; **Briana Moore**, part-time LPN, employment effective 2/28/23; **Jamie Roth**, Medical Records Supervisor, rate increase due to completion of probation effective 2/26/23; and **Marcelina Valliant**, from full-time RN to PRN RN effective 3/4/23.

Board approves Request for Recruitment for **Prosecutor's Office** re **Assistant Prosecutor-Criminal Division**. Grant funded position.

Received letter from Lisa Sortino, LLV Group, Ltd, dba Motel 6 Milan, re **in support of Loves Travel Center**.

On motion of Mr. Old and second of Mr. Shoffner, Board **adjourns** at 11:25 a.m.; Roll Call: All Aye

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