



## **Bexley Community Improvement Corporation Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021**

**6:00 PM**

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**1) Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mr. Green.

A) Zoom link for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/962695450>

**2) Roll Call of Members**

Nate Green Chair, Andy Madison, Mayor Ben Kessler, Sarah Gold, Monique Lampke, Bill Harvey, Tod Friedman, Jessica Saad, Jeff Walker, Troy Markham, Marc Fishel and Itzhak Ben-David.

**3) Review Minutes of February 2, 2021**

A) CIC Minutes of February 2, 2021

Motion made by Mr. Harvey to approve the Minutes. Motion was seconded by Ms. Lampke.  
Vote 7-0 APPROVED

**4) Property Updates**

A) Bexley Square Shopping Center

Mr. Green said there is one issue regarding a tenant who is selling their business to another owner. This will be discussed further in Executive Session tonight. One renter is a little behind but they are catching up. We have the roof issue that we will need to discuss along with another estimate. We we have both bids available for our next meeting and can discuss PACE financing as well. Mr. Green said he would contact Lydia regarding the future roof discussion.

Mr. Green said the real estate taxes have been paid on Bexley Square and are all current to date.

B) North Cassady property

i) 458 N Cassady

Mr. Green said he believe the downstairs tenant has moved so there may be a vacancy there. He will check with the property manager and update everyone at the next meeting.

ii) 420 N Cassady

Mr. Green said this project went before the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning. He and Sarah attended to represent the CIC. The major issue is a needed variance on parking. We need 20 spots for parking and had asked for a variance for 17 parking spots. In order to show good faith and let the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning know that we were listening to their recommendations, we reduced the square footage. After making that reduction in square footage, we did receive a favorable vote from the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning to approve our variance. It was another long meeting and certainly is a good example of democracy in action.

Mr. Green said the CIC is moving forward to close on the property next Friday, March 12th. There are some environmental concerns on that property that will run anywhere between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to remedy. We attempted to negotiate to reduce the purchase price based on those findings unsuccessfully. We will be purchasing the property for \$425,000. We do want to go back to the development center to apply for a grant for the old gas station. We may still have a gap in cost that will need to be covered by the CIC. Mr. Madison said we received some information from Clean Title. There are no issues with the title and we are moving forward to close on March 12th. Mr. Green said at one point the Mayor mentioned that maybe Bexley Recreation would be interested in using the property short-term. Mayor Kessler said he is not sure that is still an option since much has changed with the school systems. He needs to circle back with Mr. Price for an update.

Mr. Harvey asked what the number will look like after these additional expense? Mr. Green said we may still have some funds left after the environmental issues are resolved. We still have to negotiate how the leases will look on the property. He and Sarah spoke with an attorney who works with tax credit deals and he would recommend that we bring him in to help us with the negotiations with Community Builders. He thinks it will take longer with the reduction in square footage for the parking lot spaces but it is not a "done deal" yet. Mr. Walker said this is a strategic decision to control the property by CIC but the closing does not affect the negotiations with Community Builders. Mr. Green said that is absolutely correct, this is a strategic asset for us.

C) Ferndale property

Mr. Green said we do not have a firm date on the demolishing of the buildings located at Ferndale and Mayfield. Mayor Kessler said the buildings have been officially "condemned". Mayor Kessler said we have had a conversation with Franklin County Public Health and we reiterated the need for them to move forward with action. We will also be pursuing the EPA for additional action. He said Frank Reed is the attorney helping us with that matter.

Ms. Lampke asked whether the the two doubles are vacant? Mayor Kessler said they are vacant and the residents have been relocated.

**5) Finance Report**

Mayor Kessler said the Finance Department received a determination that the exemption was denied on Ferndale. We are going to refile or appeal with more information and will be working on. Mr. Green said Special Purchase Entity is typical for developers and we should look at that. They are also commenting that there are still buildings on the site.

A) Bank account balances:

Basic Checking: \$5,275.97  
Bexley Square: \$172,451.30  
Cassady: \$2,520.56  
Ferndale Mayfield: \$291,322.51  
Line of Credit: \$0

**6) Old Business / New Business**

There was no Old Business until after the Executive Session. Once members adjourned from the Executive Session, Mr. Green said it was decided to hire the attorney that specializes in Tax Credits to help the CIC with negotiations for leases with The Community Builders. Motion made by Mr. Madison and seconded by Mr. Harvey. Vote 7-0 APPROVED

**7) Public Comments**

Mr. Green said everyone can have three minutes to speak. We will answer all questions at the end.

Tim Madison, 956 Pleasant Ridge Avenue - He referred to his email that he sent to Mr. Green to share with the committee members. He is concerned about the CIC and the City not having any conversations with these two neighborhoods before moving forward with these projects. He urged them to look at the SW Master Plan that was a year's work. That plan calls for high density housing on the other side of Livingston. He said the danger on Livingston with the crime and the traffic. is not a place to encourage family residential housing. He said it makes no sense to put kids in that area. He said put the residential family development on the other side vs. making them cross College and Livingston.

Laurie Katz - 299 S. Roosevelt - She has a couple of questions. Did you say that we were going to "re-coup" the cost from TCB? Are you still in negotiations with TCB? Why are these projects in Bexley's best interest now? Why was there no involvement with the immediate neighbors; how is this keeping in the CIC mission?; how can you say property values will not decrease? If we can assure these neighbors - what kind of insurance do they get that their property value will not go down? Is there any recourse if we see crime increasing? We are already currently bordered by both sides by high crime areas. She assumes that you have gone through this process, but would like to see more transparency so we can trust these decisions. She thinks there is a conflict with Sarah Gold working for Silken and Gold.

Pat James - 865 Francis Ave. - She wants to know why the CIC was interested in putting low income housing on Francis Ave. vs. Ferndale and Mayfield property?

Jessica Willis, S. Cassingham - She wants to say that it has been great to see the inclusiveness come together in Bexley. She said regarding the safety - her mother-in-law has lived across the street in Berwick and has never had issues. It is a great place for any one to live in Bexley, especially those that struggle financially. She appreciates their initiative.

Larry Katz, 299 S. Roosevelt - He wants to ask two questions. Couldn't we have some sort of page on a Bexley website where we can post our questions and have them limited in words and get answers that are posted for everyone to see? Also, on that website, he hopes genuinely that this works out the way everyone wants it to be - proud of the projects but what if it turns into the

opposite and becomes a nightmare? Is there an exit plan or are we stuck for life like till death due us part?

Joel Graf, 834 Francis Ave. - He wanted to reiterate what Pat was saying earlier. In the BZAP meeting, eventually a resolution was made with one of the comments being permit parking by the Chair. There is permit parking on Francis already. He does not know how closely CIC has been involved in looking at this project, how much were you involved? Did you just let TCB do this on their own or were you involved?

Randy Queto - He wants to know how you came about making this decision without speaking to the neighbors? People are moving because they don't want to deal with the upcoming construction issues. We ended up being buried with this gas station in the 90's with people all night using pay phones, noise, etc. People were not consulted before the creation of that project. He likes Mr. Katz's idea about the posting of all questions and answers.

Mr. Green said one thing that we have done on the City website - there is now a frequently asked question section on the website under Boards. There is a link to the CIC which answers a lot of different questions that have been asked. He and the Mayor have tried to address as many of the questions as possible. He understands that we haven't answered all of the questions. He said the CIC is engaged in both projects through an LLC. We have a very minor interest in the overall projects. There is an investor that has the largest interest. You have seen on the CIC Board meetings and how that looks and we have been engaged in conversations with the TCB. The Community Builders took the lead reaching out to the community and neighbors. The CIC has gone through the BZAP issues along with our regular meetings to answer any questions when we can. We are trying to open that up and give people an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Green asked Sarah Gold was not a member of the CIC at the time we put these projects out for bids. He also said that Silken Gold has no current projects with TCB and there are none in the future so there is absolutely no conflict of interest.

Mr. Green said please review the FAQ. CIC is the agent for the City and mixed housing is a big goal of our mission statement. Both of these properties did not become available until December. When it was appropriate to talk about these projects, we did. We have done what we were supposed to do to get it out in the public. As we were negotiating on the purchase of property, we were not able to bring that to the public until we could. We are all stewards of the CIC so anything we do with this project, we have to make sure we are financially prudent and pay off any debts for these projects. Mr. Green said we are trying to get out as much information as we can to the residents but we are all volunteers.

Mayor Kessler said we could easily add questions to the current FAQ as well. Ms. Gold said some questions were asked why it was not on the Mayfield Ferndale property. The CIC is still working on that contamination and remediation, which is one reason we are not actively working on a project for that location as of today. We do plan to continue working on that property and hope to do something with it in the future.

Mellissa, 981 Francis - She thinks traffic will be effected by this project. She said she does not believe this project will help with the dangerous traffic and crime in the area, but make it worse. How is the CIC going to be responsible if a car drives into a house, a shooting in this area, etc.

How is the police department prepared to deal with additional activity in this area? Is there a possibility that we as a community could consider another location for this building.

Mr. Green said the TCB will be involved for at least 15 years - probably up to 30 years. The CIC will be involved with this project forever. We all live in the City and we want everyone to be safe. He cannot speak to crime but that is a function of the police department. This will be a new facility and we will work with the City and safety forces to make sure it is a safe place. Going down the road, we will be involved for a very long time. This will always be on our radar.

Mr. Fishel wants to be clear tonight: it is a very dangerous assumption to think mixed income, affordable or low income housing would bring in more crime. He said we need to be careful as a group that these comments do not have any racial overtones. There has never been a crime not addressed by the City. There were some people opposed of putting more money into the Mayfield and Ferndale area due to assumed added crime based on the low income rentals. He does not want this to become an us vs. them attitude that we are trying to move forward from in the past.

Mayor Kessler said our well managed apartment complexes that run from half-way houses to affordable rentals have not had any problems with an increase in crime. The property owners did not take care of their buildings, apartments, etc. and it has been one area that has been severely neglected. City Council outlawed discrimination on the basis of age or income - but this applies regarding parking questions, vouchers for landlords, etc. It is important that we are talking about the real issues are not based on experience.

He is not saying anyone objecting to the programs is biases. He appreciates everyone's comments.

**8) Executive Session**

**Motion by Mr. Green to move into Executive Session based on the Ohio Revised Code Section 2 (g) 2 . Section was read in full detail by Mr. Green. Mr. Harvey seconded the Motion. Vote 7-0 PASSED**

**9) Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Green. Motion was seconded by Mr. Madison. Vote 7-0 Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.