

Pierce Township, Ohio

2023-2024 Board Goals & Objectives

Staff Update – October 2023

Priority One

GOAL - Support and Enhance Public Safety in the Community

Sub-Goal #1

Evaluate and upgrade the Township's public safety facilities.

Objectives:

- Coordinate presentation of findings and recommendations from Fire Study to Board of Trustees by January 31st, 2023. Trustees will evaluate and incorporate recommendations into a long-range plan for the Department including annual budgetary funding developed within the constraints of tax levy revenues.
- Prepare a request for proposals for a comprehensive evaluation of Township facilities, including condition of buildings, functionality, current uses, staffing, and potential future growth of community & public services.
 - RFP will be prepared by Administrator and advertised by January 15th, 2023. Proposals will be due by February 15th. A steering committee will be formed to review proposals, interview consultants, and provide a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
 - The Board of Trustees will select a vendor at the regular March Board meeting.
 - The target date for completion of the analysis, recommendations/report will be May 12th, 2023. The Board will meet in worksession to review the report/recommendations by May 30th, 2023.
- Township staff will prepare a detailed financial analysis of current general, police and fire tax levies and future fund balances and/or revenues to support a building plan. The financial planning will be completed no later than March 1st, 2023.

Sub-Goal #2

Objectives:

- Develop a cost impact analysis for the addition of two full-time and one part-time patrol officers in the Police Department by November 1st. The Police Chief will prepare a staffing

analysis and present to Trustees by November 1st, 2022. Trustees will consider adding the new positions within the 2023 Budget.

- Trustees will consider potential recommendations within the Fire Department report for additional full and part time Firefighters/Medics over the next two budget years. A financial analysis for the Fire Levies, fund balances, and 6-year capital needs will be prepared by Township staff to aid in Board budgeting decisions.

Quarterly Update:

- The Fire Study report was presented to the Board of Trustees at the January regular meeting. Several recommendations have been incorporated by the Department, and others are being considered as time and funding become available. The deficiency in facilities was a key component of the analysis.
- Costs associated with the addition of two full-time and one part-time police patrol officer positions were prepared for the Board of Trustees as part of the 2023-2024 goal setting process. The full-year costs of the new positions will be approximately \$280,000. Following adoption of the plan in December, the new positions were incorporated into the 2023 final budget appropriations. As of September 30th, one full-time position has been filled. The Department is still actively recruiting for the other full-time position. The part-time position is anticipated to be filled with a retiring member of the Department next year.
- A request for proposals for the comprehensive facility analysis was issued in late February and proposals were received March 30th. The Township's ad-hoc Steering Committee interviewed the proposers and recommended to the Board of Trustees retaining Brandstetter Carroll for the project. Since the initiation of the contract in June, Brandstetter Carroll has been busy gathering data, interviewing staff, and conducting tours of related facilities. The project is now in the report generation stage. We anticipate a draft of the report will be delivered and discussed by the Steering Committee in late November or December with a Board of Trustee worksession beginning thereafter.
- The Township Administrator has pulled financial information and built spreadsheets to evaluate the current levy revenues, anticipated future revenues, and future expenditures to develop cost comparisons and analysis. This information will be reviewed by the Budget Committee by the end of the year.

Priority Two

GOAL – Enhance the economic vitality of the community through active Township economic development efforts leading to a robust and broad tax base that will support desired community services/facilities.

Sub-Goals: 1. Prioritize development of industrially zoned properties in the Township.

Objectives:

- Along with economic development partners (Clermont County, REDI Cincinnati, JobsOhio), actively work for the appropriate redevelopment of the Beckjord site on US 52. Consider working with those partners to develop preferred uses of the site, and a possible site development plan with the owners of the land. Meetings will be coordinated between partners and the landowner periodically over the next year.
 - Analyze other potential industrial sites for future development. Develop a written set of goals for properties (types of uses, desired employment, acceptable impacts, etc.) by July 1st, 2023.
 - Evaluate the potential to create a Community Investment Corporation to support land acquisition, underwrite development incentives, and provide expertise in future development.
2. Enhance the State Route 125 (Ohio Pike) corridor and support high quality development within the corridor, especially within key “nodes” on the road.

Objectives:

- Trustees will adopt the SR 125 Corridor Plan by January 31st, 2023.
- In order to pursue “Node” Overlay Districts noted in the plan (and recommended in the Kohlar/Red Tiger study), the Township will work with a Zoning Consultant to develop detailed guidelines for future development/redevelopment in those districts. Planning staff will hold a number of public input meetings during 2023 with property owners, interested residents, and public officials on developing a vision for each Node. A final set of recommendations (zoning text amendments) will be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration by November 15th, 2023.
- A Community Reinvestment Corporation (see above) will be considered by the Trustees to support development along the corridor. Other authorized economic incentives will be evaluated to support development.

- ARC (HB 377) grant funding will be pursued by staff in 2023 for enhancement of SR 125, including the preparation of grant applications with other government partners including Batavia and Union Townships.
 - A plan will be formulated with Township partners to bring resolution to the failed Premier Site in 2023. Working with Clermont County, the State of Ohio, and possibly private attorneys, the Township will pursue eradication of weeds and other nuisances on the site and a long-term goal of demolition or effective reuse (meeting the development goals of the Township) of the structures on the site.
3. A greater focus will be placed on internal staff capacity to pursue economic development and grant income.
- Staff will develop budgetary targets for the addition of a new staff position within the Planning and Zoning Department. The budget impact analysis will be completed by November 15th, 2022 for Trustee consideration within the 2023 budget.
 - Reorganization of the Department will be considered by the Trustees to begin January 1st, 2023. The new organization will include a Director of Economic Development and Planning, a Planning Manager (new position), and a Code Enforcement Officer. This will provide staff capacity to focus more time on economic development and grant applications, as well as completing a list (see below) of Zoning initiatives in 2023.
 - Township communications and marketing will be improved through the addition of a part-time role in 2023 within administration. This will provide a more timely and frequent social media presence for the Township and aid in the overall administration of a fourteen-million-dollar organization.

- **Quarterly Update:**

- The Township has focused extensively on the Beckjord site, fielding questions, and engaging with the new owner of the EPA cleared property. The Township staff has engaged Clermont County Economic Development Staff, REDI Cincinnati, and JobsOhio on the industrial site. Initial discussions have been held with the new property owner regarding a possible master plan for the site. The Township staff continues to study possible redevelopment funding sources for brownfield sites. The site was recently selected by JobsOhio for the WAVE5 program, analyzing the site's benefits and deficiencies and preparing a roadmap for future recruitment and site enhancements.
- Township legal staff has researched Township options for forming either a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) or a Community Investment Corporation (CIC). Several internal meetings have been held to discuss next steps. The Board will revisit the issue at a Board Goals & Objectives worksession in December.
- The Kohlar/Red Tiger State Route 125 corridor study was presented to the Board of Trustees in February. The study was not formally adopted, and the Board

determined further discussion was necessary with property owners and the public. Follow-up discussions will be planned as time and funding becomes available for engagement with key stakeholders.

- Township staff has been active in the funding process for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) special funding program (HB377). Two projects were selected from the Township for State funded planners; creation of a farmstand to support local growers, and funding to conduct a needs assessment for the creation of a multi-purpose path along Old 52. Both projects are currently in progress with the State funded planner (CT Consultants).
- Township efforts to enforce nuisance and building safety codes on the partially constructed Premier Site on S.R. 125 continues. A new court appointed receiver was appointed in April to kick-start the marketing of the property with eventual redevelopment. The Township continues to communicate with the Receiver's commercial broker to entertain possible projects. In addition, the Board of Trustees adopted a planning document for this area of the Township that further refines and identifies elements from the adopted Land Use Plan.
- Township staff has been very active throughout 2023 in identifying deficient properties with code violations and working with property owners to clean-up sites on the SR 125 Corridor. This includes removal of abandoned signs, mowing of high weeds and grass, removal of junk vehicles and debris, and identifying potential properties for State-funded demolition.
- The proposed restructuring of the planning department has been partially completed. The Board approved the new position of Director of Community Development and Planning and the role was filled in March. An existing position of Planning Administrator was vacated. The additional restructuring, including appointing a new Planner has not been approved. Staff capacity on economic development and planning initiatives will be limited until the restructuring is complete. A restructuring within Administrative and Services departments will take place over the next few months resulting in a greater focus on Township communications and special events coordination.

Priority Three

GOAL – Sustain the quality of life in Pierce Township by ensuring that new development or redevelopment and adherence to quality zoning codes protects and enhances the public's health, safety, and welfare.

Sub-Goals: 1. Complete and adopt the new Land Use Plan.

Objectives:

- Planning Department will finalize the public input period in October, and working with the Land Use Committee, begin compiling and reviewing the sections of the plan in November and December. If no complications, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Planning Commission in March 2023 for consideration.
 - The Board of Trustees will adopt the new Land Use Plan by the regular April meeting. This document will lay the foundation for updates to the Township Zoning Code over the next two years.
2. Update via text amendment, several existing and new sections of the of the Pierce Township Zoning Code during 2023 and into the first six months of 2024.
- A text amendment will be developed by staff by/before December 31st defining Medical Cannabis dispensaries and determining approved zones and other site development requirements. The new Zoning Text will be presented to the Board of Trustees no later than the regular March meeting for consideration.
 - A text amendment will be developed by staff no later than May 1st to define solar farms, residential solar installation, and windmills in the Township. Regulations on appropriate zones, building restrictions, and acceptable screening will be incorporated into the new zoning code.
 - A Short-Term rental definition will be developed along with allowable zones for operation of rentals and incorporated within the Township Zoning Code. The new text will be developed by staff and sent to the Planning Commission for review by June 15th, 2023.
 - Beginning in July of 2023, staff will (possibly with the assistance of a zoning consultant) begin a redraft of the Conservation Subdivision zoning text. The process will include public focus meetings, particularly with residents that currently own property in the more rural areas of the Township. This process will likely take 6 to 9 months and should result in recommendations to the Planning Commission by early 2024.
 - Beginning in November 2023, staff will begin the process of evaluating all the sections of the current Pierce Township zoning code. This analysis and subsequent zoning code text amendments will be completed by November 1st, 2024.
3. The Township Property Maintenance Code will be evaluated and through public participation, the maintenance standards may be altered, with locally specific language, within the rural, rural residential, and rural suburban, and suburban Township districts.

- Township staff will research the International Property Maintenance Code as well as property maintenance codes in surrounding suburban/rural communities and prepare a survey of residents gauging interest in amendments to the current code standards. This survey, plus focus group meetings, will provide the basis for possible new requirements to reflect the different areas of the Township. This project will be completed by June 1st, 2024.

- **Quarterly Update:**

- A new Land Use Plan was adopted for the Township after an extensive development process by the Land Use Plan Committee and staff. The Land Use plan will provide the roadmap for all future development of the Community.
- Planning staff has conducted preliminary work on refining Township zoning regulations for solar and other alternate green energy options. Due to staff limitations and other projects, this text amendment will likely be sent to the Zoning Commission in early 2024. The Medical cannabis zoning has been placed on hold at this time. Other text amendments will be prioritized in 2024.
- Researching, preparing, and proposing a general property maintenance code for the community is a high priority of the Community Development and Planning Department. The effort will involve community engagement and likely assistance from outside consultant to complete in a timely fashion if no additional staffing is approved for the Department. Staff hopes to begin the process by the end of 2023, within completion sometime in 2024.
- Updates were approved by the Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees to the Township's Zoning Resolution in 2023 redefining certain uses within the General Business Zone and requiring more review and approvals. This change mirrors community input gathered during the Land Use Plan process.

Priority Four

GOAL – Provide quality greenspace and recreational opportunities for the residents of Pierce Township

Sub-Goals: 1. Evaluate the Parks Master Plan recommendations considering available funding.

Objectives:

- Prepare a survey of residents in the community exploring satisfaction with existing open space and recreational opportunities, and gauging desire for additional facilities/programs and support for tax revenues to support an active parks and greenspace system. The survey will be conducted in the fall of 2023.
2. Evaluate current maintenance of parks and greenspace standards and condition of facilities considering funding constraints.

Objectives:

- A staff analysis will be conducted of allocated costs for parks maintenance within the Services Department. The analysis will consider condition of park space and facilities, and estimate the necessary additional staffing and equipment, if warranted, for a desired level of maintenance. The analysis will be completed by April 1st, 2023 and forwarded to the Trustees for review.
3. Improve support for and coordination with the Township's Parks and Greenspace Committee.
- Provide additional measures within the Township operations to assist the Parks and Greenspace Committee in coordinating projects and special events. The Township Administrator will meet with the Parks and Greenspace Committee by February 15th, 2023 to discuss communication channels and desired staff support.

• **Quarterly Update:**

- The Township Administrator met with the Chair of the Parks and Greenspace Committee in February to discuss programing, funding, and staff support. A primary point person within the Township to assist this Committee would be helpful for

communication and advance the mission of the Committee. Funding for the Committee's activities were discussed and the limits of current Township revenues were discussed, along with ideas for developing future new revenues to support the parks system.

- An analysis of parks maintenance operations has not begun as of this report. Due to other pressing projects and limited staff capacity, the analysis and report will hopefully be initiated in early 2024.
- The restructuring of the Services and Administrative departments will provide more time to support the Parks & Greenspace Committee and provide a central point of contact for special event coordination. It will also enhance ongoing communication with the community, and provide a mechanism to engage citizens in their thoughts on future facilities, programming, and funding within the Township.
- The Township is in the closing stages of significant renovations to Groh and Locust Corner Parks. The enhanced facilities will include upgraded playground equipment at Groh Park. At Locust Corner Park, the improvements include expansion and upgrade to the basketball court, new fencing at the Tennis Court, and relocation and upgrades to the baseball/softball field to game standards. The Township plans to continue seeking grant funding for parks and greenspace acquisition.