



# City of Fort Wright

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## City of Fort Wright Caucus Meeting Wednesday, June 16, 2021 – 6:00 PM

### CALL TO ORDER

The Caucus Meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM by Mayor Dave Hatter following the conclusion of the Special Council Meeting.

### CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

There were no citizen comments.

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

**South Hills Civic Club** – Mayor Hatter said the South Hills Civic Club [SHCC] was shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said there is still interest in using it by the community, but there needs to be a review of the fee structure. He also asked Council if this is something that they want to keep operating long-term. Mayor Hatter suggested incorporating SHCC into a more comprehensive park plan.

Ms. Bailey said that SHCC was closed at the beginning of the pandemic and per the Mayor's request at the last Council Meeting, it has been reopened and rentals are proceeding. She suggested looking at the long-term operation of the Club and how it plays a part in the James A. Ramage Civil War Museum review. Mayor Hatter said information on SHCC had been provided to each Council member, but the crux is where to go with it, as it is better than nothing but there needs to be a long-term plan for continuing to invest in the space or putting those funds elsewhere.

Councilwoman Witt said it is important to have places like this available to the community. She suggested creating a trail from the SHCC parking lot, past Bluegrass Swim Club, up to Battery Hooper Park, which could be an interesting way to attract people to the area and give more opportunities to residents.

Councilman Wessels said at the last meeting, Council decided to hire a consultant to look at the Museum and Park so he reached out to Jim Kaiser with PCA Architecture to have an informal conversation about his company's ability to do three proposals. He said one would be for the Museum, with a complete assessment on the building and what it would take to repair the facility, another would look at the Park and work with the City's engineers, and the third would be to design a new facility for the Park. Ms. Bailey said she has begun emailing with Mr. Kaiser to set up a meeting.

Mayor Hatter said there was a good-faith effort by SHCC to sell to the City for \$1.00 with the intent the City would use the facility for residents. He asked Council how the City can prevent undercutting private organizations, like Fort Wright Civic Club and Lookout Heights Civic Club, as it is not fair for the City to compete with them with essentially unlimited funds available. He said the objective was never for SHCC to be a profit-making entity, just a nice thing available to residents with the hope that it would be self-sufficient.

Mayor Hatter said there are some items that need to be addressed at SHCC, including remodeling the bathrooms and upgrading the kitchen. Ms. Bailey added additional items, including the key system and adding internet capabilities.

Councilwoman Witt suggested creating a different structure that would incorporate the Museum and items but updating it to be a Fort Wright history museum, with a broader scope on the history of the community instead of one single subject. Mayor Hatter said he thinks if the scope were broad then more people would go, and he liked the idea of calling it a “history center”.

Councilman Wessels said he does not want to stifle creativity, but if the City builds a new facility or venue it must be able to pay for itself and cannot be designed around volunteer support or the existing Museum. He said he liked the idea of incorporating display cases to the City’s history. Councilman Wessels said the Museum Board puts a lot of emphasis on the Storer House, but it was not part of the Civil War.

There was discussion about how the Park could be used if the building must be torn down, and suggestions included flea markets, craft fairs, and disc golf. Mayor Hatter and Council agreed that they want to maintain the Park but are willing to consider redesigning it or adding more, including a potential event center. Mayor Hatter emphasized that the planning will not be for the Museum specifically, but if there is a way for it to coexist in the plan then that is okay, but no special exceptions will be made to incorporate it.

Discussion continued about what Councilmembers would like to see in an event space if the City were to build new. Councilman Wessels said he has drawings for a pole-barn-like structure that would work for the Park space. Mayor Hatter said an event center may take up too much usable park space, and he is less interested in seeing something like Drees Pavilion than he is in something smaller that fits in the Park setting.

Councilman Abeln and Ms. Bailey redirected back to the discussion about SHCC and rent prices. Mayor Hatter said he is in favor of increasing the pricing as it has never changed since fees were incorporated. He said that the prices will maintain for now until formal action can be taken at a future Council Meeting. He also approved Ms. Bailey to upgrade the key system, add internet capability, and get a proposal for ongoing cleaning so that renters do not have to take that on.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

There were no Council comments.

Mr. Bethell provided a brief update on the Amsterdam Road project, saying there are some residents upset with the parking situation. He said he has urged those who are upset to attend a Council Meeting to discuss the matter. He also said that Amsterdam Road paving should be complete, and the road should reopen by Monday, pending weather.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an Executive Session.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilman Feinauer made a motion to adjourn the Caucus Meeting. Councilman Wall made a second. City Clerk Maura Russell called the roll.

Councilman Abeln	Yes
Councilman Wall	Yes
Councilman Weber	Yes
Councilman Wessels	Yes
Councilwoman Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

The Caucus Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hatter, Mayor

Attest:



Maura Russell  
City Clerk