

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
London City Council

Minutes of

Meeting

Casto & Harris Inc. Form S-301 E1412692LD

January 16, 2025

Held \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

London City Council  
20 S. Walnut Street, London, Ohio 43140  
January 16, 2025 at 6:30pm  
Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Peters at 6:30p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited with a moment of Silent Reflection.

Roll Call

Present – *President Peters, Councilman Eades, Councilman Hays, Councilman Hitt, Councilman McDaniels, Councilman Stahl, Councilman Norman, Councilwoman Treynor*

Minutes – Approval of January 2, 2025 minutes, approved by unanimous vote

Public Hearing

***Motion to move public hearing for ORDINANCE 207-24 from January 16, 2025 to February 20, 2025 by Councilman Hays, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilman Stahl. The motion carried by the following vote***

|              |    |                                              |
|--------------|----|----------------------------------------------|
| Absent:      | 0- |                                              |
| Affirmative: | 6- | Hays, Hitt, McDaniels, Stahl Treynor, Norman |
| Against:     | 1- | Eades                                        |

Councilman Norman asked clarifying question on why the ORDINANCE 207-24 needed moved to a different date. Law Director Hitt clarified about that a specific notice was needed to be sent to property owners which was not done in proper timeframe therefore needs to be moved. She also clarified that the proper notices were sent for ORDINANCE 210-24 so we can move forward with that public hearing tonight

**Motion to move public hearing for ORDINANCE 210-24 from January 16, 2025 to February 20, 2025 by Councilwoman Treynor. Motion did not receive a second.**

**Motion to establish a London Department of Government Efficiency by Councilman McDaniels. Motion did not receive a second**

Mr. McDaniels stated that this could include himself, Mr. Eades and any other council members who wished to participate to oversee these pieces of legislation and any to make sure they don't want to do anything that will backfire on us for these pieces of legislation or any other department.

Law Director Hitt again clarified that going forward with public hearing does not require council to take action on this legislation. This just allows the developers to proceed with their presentation and any questions.

Mr. McDaniels clarified this is to include in the legislation

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President Peters clarified that is something to do during old business and not now

*Motion to exit regular meeting and enter into Public Hearing by Councilman Norman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilman Hitt. The motion carried by the following vote*

Absent: 0-  
Affirmative: 7- Eades, Hays, McDaniels, Hitt, Treynor, Stahl, Norman  
Against: 0-

**RESOLUTION 210-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor, Andrew Hitt and Greg Eades** A RESOLUTION determining that a petition to establish The London Gateway New Community Authority is sufficient and complies with the requirements of Section 349.03 of the Ohio Revised Code in form and substance; setting the time and place for a hearing on the petition and authorizing the notice by publication of such hearing.

*Motion to exit Public Hearing and enter into regular meeting by Councilman Norman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Councilman Stahl. The motion carried by the following vote*

Absent: 0-  
Affirmative: 7- Eades, Hays, McDaniels, Hitt, Treynor, Stahl, Norman  
Against: 0-

Communications/Announcements

**Mayor appointments to historic downtown revitalization committee.** Please see attachment. Voice vote, slate approved

**Mr. Norman:** Asked for clarification on whether the vote was for all appointments or none. He expressed concern about a previous meeting where he did not want Steve Lelonic on the committee.

**President Peters:** Mentioned that the three individuals approached the Mayor about joining the board.

**Mayor Closser:** Stated that if there are any issues, they should be discussed prior to the meeting. He noted that the Tax Board has only met once in 14 years.

**Mr. Norman:** Asked what the procedural steps would be in the future if there is someone on the list they do not want.

**Mayor Closser:** Agreed that discussions can be had, and he can remove an appointee if necessary, as they are his appointments.

**Law Director:** Explained that while the appointments need council approval, they could be handled one at a time if desired. She suggested clarifying this in council rules.

**Mr. Eades:** Could not hear the Law Director and reiterated that if the council wants to break the appointments out one by one, it can be done. He asked for procedural clarification on this matter.

**Law Director:** Confirmed that requests to handle appointments one at a time can be accommodated. There are currently no rules against this, and they can be as a slate or individually. Some appointments require council approval, while others are done as a

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courtesy.

**Mr. Eades:** Appreciated the questions and answers provided to the council prior to the meeting.

**Audience Concerns –**

**Raymond Anthony:** Addressed the council, stating that the January 16 agenda was not posted on the city council website, and the January 2 agenda was posted only an hour and a half before the meeting. He asked for an explanation.

**Mr. Norman** stated that the clerk sends the minutes to Mr. Norman, who then edits the website, but it has to be approved by the administration. Clarified that the process is the same for the agenda and minutes. He mentioned that he can only change certain things on the website without approval.

**Ms. Breedlove:** Explained that the website has an activity log that tracks all actions. She stated that the January 2 agenda was sent to her at 7:40 AM and approved at 11:10 AM. She noted that no agenda was sent for the January 16 meeting.

**Mr. Norman:** Insisted that he followed the usual process and that the agenda was sent. He questioned why approval is needed for council updates on the website.

**Ms. Breedlove:** Responded that the council would have full access to the website once they successfully learn its operations. She mentioned that there have been numerous errors and missed procedural steps.

**Mr. Norman:** Reiterated that he knows when he posted the requests and suggested that there might be an issue with the website.

**Mr. Peters:** Suggested discussing the matter after the meeting to ensure the agenda is posted on time.

**Mr. Eades:** Recommended involving the clerk in the discussion.

**Raymond Anthony:** Asked about the special assessment for tree maintenance and whether it appeared on property tax receipts.

**Ms. Treynor:** Confirmed that the special assessment for trees is renewed every two years.

**Raymond Anthony:** Inquired about the budget for tree maintenance and whether it includes fixing sidewalks affected by tree roots.

**Mr. Peters:** Stated that the budget is \$40,000 per year.

**Raymond Anthony:** Asked how much of the budget goes towards tree removal.

**Mr. Peters:** Explained that it varies each year based on the needs.

**Mayor Closser:** Added that the budget allocation depends on the specific needs each year, such as dealing with ash borers or planting new trees.

**Mr. Stahl:** Mentioned that many old trees were removed last year due to storms.

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**Raymond Anthony:** Asked if the street department handles tree removal or hires outside contractors.

**Mayor Closser:** Explained that they hire outside contractors for large trees and stump grinding.

**Raymond Anthony:** Inquired if the street department gets bids for hiring contractors.

**Mayor Closser:** Stated that they get bids if the cost hits a certain amount and reach out to local contractors for estimates.

**Raymond Anthony:** Asked who decides on tree planting locations.

**Mayor Closser:** Responded that the tree commission makes those decisions.

**Mr. Hitt:** Added that he and Mr. Stahl are on the tree commission.

**Committee Reports** — *(Department reports are attached to committee meeting minutes.)*

**Councilman Eades:** Announced that the next Finance Committee meeting is on Tuesday, January 21 at 5:30 PM.

**Councilman McDaniels:** Reported that the Public Service and Safety meeting was held on January 14 and gave the parks/recreation and fire/EMS report.

**Councilman Hays:** Provided the minutes from the Public Safety meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11 at 6 PM.

**Councilman Hitt:** Attended the Public Service meeting and discussed the need for a community center. A sanitation department report was given, and sidewalk legislation was discussed. Upcoming event legislation and changes to ODOT requirements for roads and sidewalks were also covered. Right-of-way fees were discussed. The next meeting is on February 11.

**Councilman Stahl:** Gave the police report.

**Councilman Norman:** Provided the street department report.

**City Official Reports**

Mayor report attached

**Mr. Eades:** Asked for clarification on the snow plow schedule.

**Mayor Closser:** Stated that the schedule is to get into residential areas within 24 hours from the first snowfall.

**Mr. Eades:** Inquired about the numbers generated for salt usage.

**Mayor Closser:** Explained that they would need to sit down with current salt prices to come up with an estimate, which includes equipment, manpower, and overtime costs.

**Mr. Eades:** Expressed uncertainty about how to fix the problem and what the solution is for

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residential areas. He also asked about enforcing measures to make it easier for plows to access streets. Additionally, he inquired if any manufacturers are looking at London for job opportunities.

**Mayor Closser:** Mentioned that the Honeywell building is likely to be filled by a cable manufacturing company from Italy. He noted that they continue to have discussions with potential industries. David Kell and Mayor Closser meet frequently to discuss industries looking at Ohio or the area. He stated that they have a better chance of attracting these opportunities now compared to the past due to more active developers.

**Old Business**

**4<sup>th</sup> Reading**

**ORDINANCE 207-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor, Andrew Hitt and Greg Eades** An ORDINANCE creating nineteen incentive districts and declaring improvements to certain real property within the incentive districts to be a public purpose, and exempt from Real Property taxation; Identifying certain public infrastructure improvements that, once made, will benefit or serve the parcels in the incentive districts; Requiring the owners of those parcels to make service payments in lieu of taxes; establishing an incentive district public improvement tax increment equivalent fund for the deposit of such service payments; Authorizing payments to the London City School District and Tolles Career and Technical Centers; and approving and authorizing the execution and delivery of a tax increment financing agreement with Tom Cat, LLC.

**Ms. Treynor:** Okay, so spend some time reading through this, Wes or Paul. I don't know if you guys would entertain a couple of questions about these various proposals. The proposed duration of this is, well, it's 100% of valuation for the improvement over the base value over potentially 30 years from the commencement date. I guess my question is, do you anticipate the repayment period extending to 30 years from the commencement date, or is there any possibility that it could be a shorter duration?

**Mr. Gross:** There's absolutely a chance that the infrastructure cost will be covered prior to that 30-year period. The difficult thing at this point is not knowing what kind of infrastructure or what the costs are going to be. For instance, extending Eagleton from 42 to 142 is a big project, and we don't have a single cost estimate yet. We would probably take Eagleton partway and see what kind of development comes in. It's quite common that when you have a TIF, the money gets recouped in less than 30 years, sometimes in 18 years. Then the council has full discretion over what happens with those funds.

**Ms. Treynor:** Okay, so in the first of the two TIFs, the payment obligation from the city, if I'm understanding this correctly, the first tax year following improvements to the infrastructure that collectively value at least a million dollars would trigger the payment obligation. Am I correct?

**Mr. Smith:** Yes, once there is over a million dollars worth of improvements within each incentive district, that's when the revenues start getting collected by the TIF fund. Each incentive district stands by itself.

**Ms. Treynor:** And once the revenue starts generating, the city's obligation to repay the cost of the infrastructure is also triggered. Correct?

**Mr. Smith:** It's not the city's obligation; it's real estate taxes that go into the TIF fund.

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**Mr. Gross:** For clarity, if there's no activity in a district for 10 years, the TIF just sits idle. If someone comes in and builds a \$40 million factory, that's when the TIF revenue starts generating.

**Ms. Treynor:** So, the bookkeeping aspect of keeping all of those TIF payments separate will be based on district to district. We will have 19 separate TIF accounts?

**Mr. Smith:** Yes, our attorney will work with the county auditor to set those up so they are very clean.

**Ms. Treynor:** Does the million dollars include roads, sewer systems, and water?

**Mr. Smith:** It is a million dollars in appraised value, based on the actual home value.

**Ms. Treynor:** So, you have an alternate schedule of either hitting that assessed improved value of a million dollars per district or tax year 2034. This means improvements need to happen within that district by then. Regarding the sufficiency of the funds coming in and the city's obligation to make those payments back to the developers, would it be possible to have a projection or an amortization schedule to ensure the TIF funds will have sufficient monies?

**Mr. Gross:** The city is not obligated to anything. If the development doesn't come, the developer doesn't get paid back. The city's balance sheet is not at risk.

**Mr. Smith:** When the revenue is collected by the county, it goes into a TIF fund, and the city is required to pay out of that TIF fund to reimburse for public infrastructure.

**Ms. Treynor:** If there's insufficient funds, where are those monies supposed to come from?

**Mr. Gross:** If one district meets its obligations and another doesn't, funds from one can be used to pay the obligations of the other.

**Ms. Treynor:** There seems to be a typographical error regarding the commencement and completion dates of the projects.

**Mr. Smith:** I'll check with our attorney on that.

**Ms. Treynor:** Regarding the company's collection of interest on the reimbursement payments, the interest should be calculated at the higher rate of either 8% or the rate on revenue bonds. Currently, revenue bonds are at 4.45%. Just a quick review of other municipalities that have approved residential TIF agreements. In their agreements, they didn't have this sort of alternative structure but rather just stated a fixed percentage, which wasn't nearly as high as 8%. Both Pataskala and Summit County TIFs were set at 5%. I guess my question to you as the developers is if that's something that we might be able to negotiate.

**Mr. Gross:** The problem is, you mentioned the bond for the police department a minute ago. The bond for the police department is backed and secured by the credit rating of the City of London. The city's well-established credit rating allows it to borrow money at lower rates. However, for this TIF, we're not using the city's credit rating. When we first put this infrastructure in and try to get a bond, there's no tax revenue yet because it's an empty farm field. We have to carry the capital at what commercial banks are charging today, which is around 8.7-8.8%. It would make no sense to have a rate lower than what it costs

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to borrow the capital. Once there are houses and a tax base, people will buy the bonds. But right now, we're starting from an infantile state and have to look at the cost of capital in the market today.

**Ms. Treynor:** Follow-up to that, you have the residential TIF and the other one for the farm ground between 42 and 142. For the residential TIF, you're proposing an interest rate of 8% per year, or the alternative is the reimbursement rate of the revenue bond. For the other TIF, your proposal is 8.99% per year. Is there some difference in risk to you to have a point percentage difference between the residential TIF and the non-residential TIF insofar as the interest rate?

**Mr. Gross:** There is a difference in risk. All of them should have been at 8.99% because that's where our findings came back from the banks. The residential TIF has less risk because we're seeing residential homes in London sell. Commercial properties, like the warehouse near Ag Pro, have been empty for two years. Residential properties generate revenue more consistently. We're taking a barren farm field and trying to make something happen. Once there are 100 homes built, we can go out and bond the debt because we have a tax base. Initially, we have to find a commercial lender willing to take the risk.

**Ms. Treynor:** Once there are structures putting funding into those TIF funds and reimbursement payments due to the company, with regard to the residential TIF, the schools will get paid first and be held harmless as to any value of improvements. The next schedule of payment would be to reimburse the company for all accrued and unpaid interest until that has been paid in full. Is it possible that once this project gets more firm in its projections and deadlines, we could see a projection or an amortization schedule? We don't want the TIF fund to be unable to make even an interest payment to the developer and have the next payment still only applying to interest and not attacking the principal.

**Mr. Gross:** I don't want to see that scenario either because the only person that gets hurt in that scenario is me, the developer. If there aren't funds to pay it, then I'm out. This ties to why people won't bond it. We can give some projections based on who's going to be buying these homes. For instance, DR Horton is doing the development underway today. They're going to take 49 lots to start with and build 49 homes. Their average home will sell for \$450,000. We can speculate on how many homes they'll sell per month, but they will sell 49 homes. We can extrapolate the household income needed to buy a \$450,000 home, which is around \$150,000. This will drive the income tax number. We can estimate the new property value in the community. For areas like Spring Valley Road, we don't have any interest yet, so we can't provide projections. With respect to Johnson's Creek, we can give a good indication. It will probably take seven years to build out entirely. If the market implodes like in 2008, the developer bears the risk. If it goes well, I'll make a lot of money, but there's a lot of risk. You're going to put \$4 million worth of roads in before selling one house. It's a daunting proposal, which is why you don't see ambitious plans every day.

**Ms. Treynor:** We have an appointment scheduled for Monday to consult with someone more well-versed in these agreements. Thank you for answering my questions. We'll probably reach out to your counsel if we have anything else.

**Mr. Gross:** Thank you all very much. I know it's complicated. When talking to outside counsel, ask them about how someone could get a bond on this before there's any development. Maybe there's a path I don't know about.

*Leave for a 5<sup>th</sup> Reading*

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**ORDINANCE 208-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor, Andrew Hitt and Greg Eades** An ORDINANCE authorizing the City of London, Ohio to accept title to certain real property located within the city and immediately transfer title back to the current owner for the purpose of implementing tax increment financing pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code Section 5709.41; and Dispensing with the requirement that this resolution must be read on three different days pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 731.17(A)

**Ms. Treynor:** This is a statutory requirement in regard to non-residential TIF and fulfilling statutory requirements.

*Leave for a 5<sup>th</sup> Reading*

**ORDINANCE 209-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor, Andrew Hitt and Greg Eades** An ORDINANCE declaring the improvement of certain real property located in the City of London, Madison County, Ohio to be a public purpose pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5709.41; Declaring such property to be exempt Real Property taxation; Designating improvements that, once made, will directly benefit the parcels for which improvement is declared to be a public purpose; Requiring annual service payments in lieu of taxes; Establishing an urban redevelopment tax increment equivalent fund; authorizing the execution of a tax increment financing TIF agreement; and providing related authorizations pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections 5709.41, 5709.42, 5709.43, 5709.832 and 5709.85

**Ms. Treynor:** Most of my questions regarding residential TIF are the same as for non-residential TIF. I understand that TIF follows zoning and, since it's not currently residential, it can't be a residential TIF.

**Mr. Smith:** The parcels are zoned PUD and a few other manufacturing zones.

**Ms. Treynor:** You have potential mixed-use and multifamily properties. In regards to multifamily...

**Mr. Smith:** Well, PUD and multifamily are considered commercially taxed, so they fall under commercial TIF.

**Ms. Treynor:** Asked about the impact on schools and the resolution for exemption.

**Mr. Smith:** That would be part of the notices that go out.

**Ms. Treynor:** Mentioned that the schools must have passed a resolution to waive their rights to receive compensation.

**Law Director Hitt:** Confirmed that the schools have been notified.

**Ms. Treynor:** Inquired about the different interest rate structures between residential and non-residential TIF and suggested that an amendment might be needed to keep them the same.

*Leave for a 5<sup>th</sup> Reading*

**RESOLUTION 210-24 Sponsored by: Shannon Treynor, Andrew Hitt and Greg Eades** A RESOLUTION determining that a petition to establish The London Gateway New Community Authority is sufficient and complies with the requirements of Section 349.03 of the Ohio Revised Code in form and substance; setting the time and place for a hearing on the petition and authorizing the notice by publication of such hearing.

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**Ms. Treynor:** This creates an NCA (New Community Authority) and encompasses both TIF (Tax Increment Financing) for all acres. Once the TIF has satisfied obligations and reimbursement to the developer, what do you see as the income stream from the authority to make a difference?

**Mr. Smith:** Basically, all those economic development tools will be used to pay off public infrastructure, and then the money goes to the city for public infrastructure funds. There has to be public infrastructure that backs the NCA. Once the public infrastructure is paid off, we can't keep that money; it has to pay off that public infrastructure.

**Ms. Treynor:** Once the infrastructure is paid off, would those properties then pay normal property taxes?

**Mr. Smith:** The NCA board will decide that. The NCA board can also decide to use those funds for things like maintenance of roads or other necessary reimbursements. They might need to make some sort of improvement and be reimbursed for those improvements. It has to benefit the district. There are ways to work that; it doesn't have to be in that district but must benefit that district.

**Ms. Treynor:** It's only incremental financing that they pass on to property owners that will be passed on to the city.

**Mr. Smith:** 80% goes to reimburse public infrastructure, and 20% goes to safety services for the City of London.

**Mr. Eades:** The NCA is a group that has the authority to issue bonds.

**Mr. Smith:** Yes, it does. But at this point in time, there is nothing to bond, but it has the ability to do so once revenue comes in.

*Leave for a 5<sup>th</sup> Reading*

3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

**ORDINANCE 212-24 Sponsored by: Michael Norman** An ORDINANCE amending Section 660 of the Codified Ordinances

**Mr. Norman:** This amendment specifies enforcement for sidewalks. It's the first step for fixing sidewalks and outlines what homeowners need to fix.

**Mr. Hays:** Asked what happens if property owners don't fix the sidewalk as instructed. Who is liable to pay, and whose property tax will it be added to?

**Ms. Treynor:** It would be added to the property tax.

**Ms. Hitt:** If we send them a bill and they don't pay, the council would approve an assessment to property taxes. The city can recoup the costs in arrears.

**Mr. Hays:** What if they skip out and don't pay?

**Mr. Hitt:** Asked for clarification, wondering if Mr. Hays meant if the property is sold.

**Mr. Norman:** They have to settle up property taxes before selling. Questioned what

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happens if they sell before the assessment.

**Ms. Hitt:** It's a possibility, though probably rare. Reassessing the property could be an option, but it might not be fair to the new owner. The council would have to vote on it.

**Mr. Hays:** Emphasized not wanting taxpayers to be double-billed for this, as it would be unfair.

**Mayor:** Mentioned that there have been two instances with mowing where this has happened.

**Ms. Hitt:** Expressed concern about homeowners struggling to pay for sidewalk repairs. The city needs to consider the impact of sending bills for thousands of dollars to homeowners.

***Motion to adopt RESOLUTION by Councilman Norman, 2nd Councilman Eades. The motion carried by the following vote:***

|                     |           |                                                      |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Absent:</b>      | <b>0-</b> |                                                      |
| <b>Affirmative:</b> | <b>6-</b> | <b>Hitt, Hays, Eades, McDaniels, Norman, Treynor</b> |
| <b>Against:</b>     | <b>1-</b> | <b>Stahl</b>                                         |

**RESOLUTION 101-25 Sponsored by: Greg Eades** A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The Council would like to purchase Civic Plus

**Mr. Eades:** Discussed the process of using Civic Plus software to speed up and streamline council operations. The cost is \$5,200, including a \$1,000 setup fee, with a 10% discount. He mentioned that the executive assistant had input on this, although it is a council decision. He invited her to speak.

**Ms. Breedlove:** Fully supports the council clerk having the necessary tools. She suggested that what the council wants to accomplish can be done with Zoom and Adobe, which are more cost-effective. She explained the current process and how Civic Plus would not significantly change it. Adobe costs \$25 a month, while Civic Plus would be about \$300 a month. Adobe allows live typing on the agenda during meetings, which Civic Plus does not. Zoom provides transcripts that can be used for meeting minutes, which Civic Plus does not offer.

**Mr. Eades:** Acknowledged the input and mentioned that the clerk had also emailed council members with thoughts and opinions. He asked if there would be a comparison with Adobe and Zoom.

**Mr. Clerk:** Stated that he does not own the program and is willing to do whatever the council wishes. He mentioned that Civic Plus videos showed features like clerk-controlled voting and roll call, which could save time.

**Ms. Breedlove:** Clarified that some features shown in the videos are optional enhancements that require a Civic Plus website.

**Mr. Norman:** Asked about the prices of the add-ons and whether they function without a Civic Plus website. He suggested considering the cost of a separate council website and the clerk's salary.

**Mr. Hitt:** Asked the clerk how much time he spends on preparing for meetings and doing minutes.

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**Mr. Clerk** stated that it depends on length of meeting or amount of items on agenda

**Mayor Closser:** Clarified again about how much time that the Clerk spends a month on council minutes and agendas

**Mr. Clerk** estimated it takes a couple of hours for minutes and a couple of hours for agenda preparation per meeting. Rough estimate of 6 hours per meeting. He then mentioned that some cities use Civic Plus without a website by embedding a code into their existing website.

**Ms. Breedlove** noted that this would not work with their current website. She also suggested using Zoom transcripts to cut down on the time spent on minutes. She mentioned that Zoom transcripts are constantly being updated and are already paid for by the council.

**Mr. Norman:** Discussed the time that it takes posting agendas, and minutes to the website.

**Mr. Eades:** Suggested that the clerk and Ms. Breedlove get together to determine if the current software can meet their needs, thus saving money. He mentioned that there wasn't a discussion about buying a new website, but Ms. Breedlove believes it might be necessary to use Civic Plus. He wouldn't favor a new website but acknowledged that they are past that point. He proposed that the clerk and Ms. Breedlove work together over the next couple of weeks to decide if the current solution is workable. If the clerk still prefers Civic Plus, he would support that decision. Ms. Breedlove has expressed willingness to work with them either way.

**Mr. Clerk:** Agreed to meet with Ms. Breedlove.

**Ms. Breedlove:** Confirmed she can work around the clerk's schedule.

*Leave for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading*

**RESOLUTION 102-25 Sponsored by: Michael Norman** A RESOLUTION increasing appropriations. The Council would like to enter into a contract with StreetScan for sidewalk assessment.

**Mr. Norman:** This is legislation to enter into a contract with Street Scan for sidewalk assessment. So yes, this is a request to appropriate money to enter into a contract with Street Scan for sidewalk assessment. I think "sidewalk assessment" is kind of an understatement on what this program will do, and maybe I need to clarify. I'm just kind of glad that the administration of nine years that's done nothing about sidewalks is really interested in learning about this, so I'll try to explain it. The way it works is it's not backwards. We're not going backwards right now. We don't know how bad our sidewalks are or what it's going to cost to fix them. We have no clue. We have no clue because, one, we didn't have ordinances. The ordinance was not in place, so our zoning guy couldn't go out and actually evaluate because he had nothing to evaluate with. It just said, "Your sidewalks are wrong. You got to fix them." So part of this plan we've already addressed in Ordinance 212-24. This one, what it does is it is an assessment of all of our sidewalks, and it's a sidewalk repairing program. So let me specify that because I watched a little bit of the Public Service meeting, and one of the questions by, I think, Mr. Long was, "Well, what if they don't have a sidewalk?" Well, if you don't have a sidewalk, then you don't need to repair it, right? It doesn't need repair because you don't have one. Now, I say that not excluding the person who may not have a sidewalk now because they've let it degrade

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down to now it's just a bunch of rubble with grass growing through it. That's different. There was a sidewalk there. It was supposed to be there. It should be there. So it needs repair. So I just want to clarify that. The other question was, "What's to stop the guy that has this degrading sidewalk from getting a backhoe and just pulling out the sidewalk and putting down grass?" Well, we have ordinances and codes that say the sidewalk has to be, it's like four foot, and there are things so your neighbor can't just go out there and destroy it and do that. So that's kind of a non-issue too. But the way this program works is they come in, they assess. They do tell us which streets are bad and how bad they are, and they rate them, just like we did with our street assessment. But what also comes with this program is the ability to, if we decide as a city we're going to spend \$500,000 that year, you put in that \$500,000 budget, and based on the data that was collected, it will give you a suggested plan. It kind of takes it out of our hands. So instead of us picking and choosing, it tells us, "Here's the bad ones." And you can also put within that, "Okay, if it's an F, let's say it's rated from A to F. If you want to work this year strictly on F's, you can put in the percentage like, out of that \$500,000, we want to spend 50% on F's." It will generate a report that shows you, "Okay, if you're going to spend \$500,000, 50% of it goes here." It'll show you that. And then if you want to go to the next level, next one. So you can do it by percentages. And it'll tell you based on that. It's not based on who lives there. It's not based on preferential treatment. It's based on just the data that it collects. So it does that for you. It also keeps track of the maintenance that you do on those properties, so the city will have that on file. It'll also have pictures, so that if you are the enforcer and you need to see, "Okay, I need to see this spot," it'll take you directly to that spot, just like the current road assessment that we have, where you can go and look. And then you have the opportunity, when that property or those sidewalks are updated and they're fixed, you have the opportunity to download that picture to replace the field picture, so you have the opportunity to keep it up to date. So it does that for you.

**Mr. Peters:** What's the \$500,000 for?

**Mr. Norman:** Say we, as a city, decide we're going to put \$500,000 into fixing sidewalks.

**Mr. Peters:** Then would you be reimbursed by the owner?

**Mr. Norman:** Well, that's the next step, but we don't know what that number is right now.

**Mr. Peters:** Yeah, it could have been \$100,000. But what you're saying is, any budget is \$100,000.

**Mr. Norman:** Right, city budget \$100,000.

**Mr. Peters:** And then the next selected sidewalks. But the plan is to get reimbursed by the owner.

**Mr. Norman:** The eventual plan is either to be reimbursed by the owners.

**Mr. Peters:** Okay, so let's say somebody's sidewalk is rated F. Do we have somebody to approach the owner? So a sidewalk is in violation.

**Mr. Norman:** So I'm going to tell you the city I'm kind of modeling after is Hilliard. So what Hilliard did is they went through the same process. They had to go through and fix their ordinances first, then they had Street Scan come in, do the assessments, and then, as a council or city, they said, "Okay, we're going to give you, we're going to notify." Well, what I feel we should do that's different from Hilliard is this is going to take us a year to get everything set up to do this. During that time, we can use the software to prepare our own

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city property sidewalks. So while we're doing that, then when the next year this program, we can put them in zones. And then we can decide during that time. You know, do we send out? The way it works over there is they send, they warn you, they give you a year's notice. Next year we're going to be in Zone One. The notices are sent out, and they tell them, "Okay, you're in Zone One. You have until August, whatever, to either fix it yourself, or after that point, we will come in and fix it. If we fix it, you can either pay us up front for fixing it, or it'll be assessed to your taxes."

**Mayor Closser:** I think that's where my questions came from. And the meeting the other day was, you know, and why I was saying backwards is it's being explained now. So I think there's a couple of things. First thing is, I think there's two different programs that we're talking about. Is it Street Scan and Street Logic?

**Mr. Norman:** They're both, well, it's, yeah, the program that we picked is the one that has both of them, Street Scan and Street Logic.

**Mayor Closser:** And so City Council's plan is, we do this, and then we grade them, and then we're going to budget money. I just want to be clear, we're going to budget money out of our budget and tell people that they need to fix them. If they don't fix them, then we're going to go fix them, and then we're going to send them a bill, and if they don't pay, we're going to assess their taxes.

**Mr. Norman:** That is one way you could do it.

**Mayor Closser:** That's why I'm saying that. You say that's one way to do it.

**Mr. Norman:** Wasn't that currently what we do?

**Mayor Closser:** Well, we haven't really leaned on people about sidewalks, and that's why I was saying I think we need to try to figure out what we want to do. There's a lot of people in town. You send them a \$5,000 bill, they're not going to be able to pay it. They're not going to be able to pay it. And that's where I think we need to come together and figure out how to move forward with this before we pay \$50,000 to have all these things done and then go, "Well, how are we going to fix them? Who's going to pay for it?" Like, that's the plan that I'm asking for. After we get this back and they're graded, and we say, "Okay, we're going to start with the F's," there we go. We're moving. Who's paying for it?

**Mr. McDaniels:** I think, with a \$20 million budget, the city can do it a little bit at a time.

**Mayor Closser:** Well, no, we don't have a \$20 million budget.

**Mr. Norman:** Let's try to stay focused. The way, like I said, the way it works is, yeah, we don't necessarily have to wait. There is going to be money up front that the city will have to have set aside, but it's mainly for those who won't be able to afford it. Those are the ones that we're going to actually...

**Mayor Closser:** Well, that's not... So who do you pick, who can afford it and who can't, and how are we going to figure that out?

**Mr. Norman:** That will be part of the process that we have to continue on. This isn't a catch-all situation. The first step, like I said, is putting in the guidelines of what is a bad sidewalk with the ordinance.

**Mayor Closser:** Appreciate you guys doing that. That made it a lot easier.

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**Mr. Norman:** Emphasized that the program won't happen overnight and suggested looking at Hilliard's SAFE Sidewalk Program as a model. He mentioned that other communities face similar issues and are successfully implementing such programs.

**Ms. Treynor:** Noted that everyone complains about sidewalk repairs and that property owners are responsible for maintaining them.

**Mr. Norman:** Acknowledged that other communities have the same problems with people on fixed incomes but are still getting the repairs done. He believes the program will be beneficial.

**Mayor Closser:** Agreed that the program is a good idea but stressed the need for a clear plan on how to proceed, including grants for low to moderate-income residents, administration, application processes, and budgeting.

**Mr. Norman:** Stated that they need to know the extent of the problem and the costs before answering those questions. The software will provide the necessary information to start the program.

**Mayor Closser:** Expressed concern about not having a plan in place for residents who can't afford repairs. He suggested waiting until they have a process before grading the sidewalks.

**Mr. Norman:** Clarified that the software provides information to start the program and that they will need to figure out how to address the issues once they have the data.

**Mr. Eades:** Mentioned that the letters won't go out immediately and that the grading will give them a better idea of the extent of the problem.

**Mr. Hitt:** Asked how the city decides who needs to have a sidewalk and who doesn't.

**Mayor Closser:** Explained that older properties may not have had the same codes requiring sidewalks, but current codes require them for new residential properties.

**Mr. Norman:** Mentioned that Hilliard requires properties to be upgraded to current standards, including adding sidewalks when properties are sold. This could be an option for their city as well.

*Leave for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading*

**New Business**

none

**Round Table**

**Mr. Norman:** Apologized to Ms. Breedlove for inappropriate speaking, acknowledging he got caught up in emotion. He promised to catch up with her about posting and admitted it was uncalled for. He also apologized to Mr. Anthony for a transparency issue, stating he might have hit the wrong button on his computer. He emphasized the importance of transparency and apologized for failing in that regard. He thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Gross for their contributions and appreciated the city workers, especially during storms. He stressed the need for better street clearing and thanked everyone who works with and for the city. He wished everyone a nice weekend and looked forward to the next meeting.

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**Mr. Stahl:** Thanked Ms. Treynor and Wes for the great discussion and wished good luck to the Buckeyes.

**Mr. Hitt:** Found the night very informative and thanked everyone.

**Mr. Hays:** Thanked Ms. Treynor and Wes, everyone who attended, and all city employees. He mentioned the sanitation department had a truck break down and acknowledged the cold weather challenges. He thanked the police, fire, EMS, and everyone for their hard work. He expressed optimism about the new President and the future, hoping for common sense to prevail and things to improve. He reminded everyone of the next safety-service meeting on February 11.

**Mr. McDaniels:** Thanked everyone for coming out and encouraged them to stay safe.

**Mr. Eades:** Appreciated the conversations, including those about sidewalks. He emphasized the need for discussions to get on the same page and make things happen. He reminded everyone of the finance meeting on Tuesday, January 21, and challenged his fellow council members to contribute cash to buy lunch for the sanitation and street departments.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 9:00pm

**Attestation:** Minutes approved, filed in Auditor's Office, and posted on City of London website for public review.

  
Matthew Edgington, Council Clerk

2/20/2025  
Date

  
Joshua Peters, Council President

2/20/2025  
Date