

SUMMARY OF CAUCUS DISCUSSION AND MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON, MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024.

The Council of the City of Strongsville met in the Caucus Room at the Mike Kalinich Sr. City Council Chamber, 18688 Royalton Road, on **Monday, April 1, 2024, at 6:45 p.m.**

Present: Council Members: Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Kelly A. Kosek and Brian M. Spring. **Also Present:** Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal Jamison, and Finance Director Eric Dean.

Absent: James E. Carbone, Gordon C. Short, and Thomas M. Clark.

Councilwoman Kelly Kosek called the caucus to order at 6:48 p.m.

The following Council Committees met to review legislation on the agenda:

Planning, Zoning & Engineering Committee:

Ms. Kosek – We only have a few things on the agenda tonight for Planning, Zoning and Engineering, which is my committee. We have Ordinance No. 2024-006, which is the ordinance that we have on public hearing regarding the rezoning of the mall.

Committee of the Whole:

Ms. Kosek – We also have for the Committee of the Whole, Resolutions Nos. 2024-041 and 2024-042, which are the other two public hearings about agricultural districts that were on the agenda, I think on the last meeting, or the meeting before.

Mr. Jamison – We just made note that they had applied.

Ms. Kosek – That they had applied, ok. Those would be the three things that we are going to take up tonight. There is no new legislation. Then, obviously we are a little light on members, so we won't be voting on anything tonight. I don't know if anybody has anything else, but I think caucus could have probably started 5 minutes before today. Is there anything that you need to tell us about, Mayor? Is there anything that you need to tell us about that's going on to make use of our time? Sounds like, not.

Mr. Jamison – He is talking to his finance director. I would just like to...do you have anything that you would like to bring to anyone's attention in caucus?

Mayor Perciak – No ma'am.

Mr. Jamison – I would just like to point out, you said there's a rezoning of the mall. Really all we are doing is we are changing what our permitted use is over there. It's not like we are changing it for a formal change. We're just really changing part of the zoning code about certain things that they can be allowed to do.

Ms. Kosek – Thank you Neal, that absolutely...I recognize the distinction. It's just expanding what is permitted under...

Mr. Jamison – I just thought that would be helpful to anyone who's listening that...what we are doing. It's not a full-blown...going from one category to another. It's really just tweaking what's permitted to be done there.

Ms. Kosek – Yes thank you, I appreciate that.

Mr. Jamison – No problem, thank you.

Ms. Kosek – Then, we will just start at 7:00 p.m., on time.

Ms. Roff – With our little bit of time here, Neal, Mayor, to our service department, building department, and everybody, thank you so much for all the time spent over on Howe Road. Neal already knew what I was going to talk about. I know that they are still working and it's been a long exhausting process; so I appreciate it. The neighbors have noticed though and I have gotten a lot of calls and emails; I appreciate that.

Mr. Jamison – I appreciate it. Mr. Walker, our service director, did a very good job of handling that situation; and we took a lot of stuff out of there. Are we done? No, but it's a process and that was a good first step in addressing what's over there, so thank you. I'll pass it on.

Ms. Roff – It already looks great, yes. I stopped by a couple of times just to give some words of encouragement over there, so yes.

Mr. Jamison – He said you were there one day; so that was very nice of you.

Ms. Roff – A couple of cheeseburgers and coffees. I felt that they had a lot on their hands there, but it looks great...

Mr. Jamison – I'll pass that along.

Ms. Roff - It looks good, thank you and I do appreciate you guys.

Mr. Jamison – Thank you.

*****Please note – The legislation discussed above on tonight's agenda can be viewed in entirety at: <https://www.strongsville.org/government/city-council/minutes-agendas> by clicking on the April 1, 2024 agenda link. *****

MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024 IN THE MIKE KALINICH SR. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

CALL TO ORDER:

Councilwoman Kelly Kosek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING:

The Clerk of Council certified that the meeting had been posted in accordance with Ordinance No. 2023-182.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members: Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Kelly A. Kosek and Brian M. Spring. **Also Present:** Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal Jamison, and Finance Director Eric Dean.

Absent: James E. Carbone, Gordon C. Short and Thomas M. Clark.

Motion made by Councilwoman Roff, second by Mr. Kaminski, to excuse Councilman James A. Carbone for just cause. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion made by Councilwoman Roff, second by Mr. Kaminski, to excuse Councilman Gordon C. Short for just cause. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion made by Councilwoman Roff, second by Mr. Kaminski, to excuse Councilman Thomas M. Clark for just cause. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

COMMENTS ON MINUTES:

The minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on March 18, 2024 were approved as submitted.

APPOINTMENTS, CONFIRMATIONS, AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS:

(None)

PUBLIC HEARING:

Ms. Kosek – We will move to the public hearing section and I just want to give a little bit of guidelines. Also, it looks a little sparse up here, so I want to address that issue as well. Due to the Easter holiday, we have three Councilmembers who are absent tonight. These were previously noticed public hearings; so we are going to hold those public hearings. I want to emphasize three things – First, we are not going to vote on any legislation with these three members absent. Second, this meeting is being live streamed. It's also going to be recorded and available to be viewed via video; and it will be transcribed into our minutes. Any Councilmembers who are absent will have the opportunity to either view or read those minutes or the meeting before any vote occurs. Third, as we always do at our regular Council meeting, we always have time for public comment. I expect that on April 15, 2024, when we vote on these three pieces of legislation, we will have public comment. Anyone who would like to be heard at that meeting is welcomed to come and speak at that meeting as well. There is no need to do that because everyone is going to review the comments that are made tonight. I wanted to let everyone know that, that opportunity exists. Finally, I want to lay out the guidelines for our public hearings in case you haven't attended a Council meeting in the past. During the public hearing, I am going to ask if anyone is in favor of the legislation and those folks will be heard first. At that time, when you come up, you will state your name, you will state your address and you will spell your name and your address if it's necessary. Once everyone in favor of the legislation is heard, we will then ask anyone who is opposed to the legislation to speak. They will also give name, address, and have the opportunity to be heard. Finally, during the public comment, this is our opportunity to listen to you. We are not going to take your time by engaging in dialogue.

PUBLIC HEARING (cont'd):

Ms. Kosek (cont'd) - If you have questions, we are happy to talk with you after the meeting or connect you to the appropriate person within the administration to address any of your questions. So, with that, we will go ahead and get started with the public hearing. We are here for three, as I said, public hearings.

Ordinance No. 2024-006 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 1242.07, 1258.04, 1258.11(a), 1258.12 AND 1270.05 OF TITLE SIX OF PART TWELVE OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, CONCERNING PERMITTED USES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING SHOPPING CENTER DISTRICTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. *First reading 01-16-24. Second reading and referred to the Planning Commission 02-05-24. Favorable recommendation by the Planning Commission 02-08-24. Third reading 02-20-24. Public hearing 04-01-24.*

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN FAVOR** of the Ordinance to approach the podium and address Council.*

John Slater, 950 Main Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, Suite 1100: Good evening, my name is John Slater and my address is 950 Main Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, Suite 1100. I am an attorney with the Tucker Ellis Law Firm. I am here on behalf of SouthPark Mall. Our firm represents the ownership and management group of the mall including Spinoso Real Estate Group, which is a national and experienced mall manager and owner. We are here this evening with the SouthPark manager on site, which is Kurt Reddick; and we are requesting approval and support for Ordinance No. 2024-006. The ordinance will provide an opportunity for the mall to expand its current offerings. The mall is extremely important to this community and the region. Just to put things in perspective, the mall, which was developed in the early 90's, was a result of an amendment of your zoning Code to allow shopping center...a shopping center district. That was approved back in 1991, over thirty years ago. There have been very few modifications to that section of your Code. I was actually involved in the mall redevelopment in 2004 for the previous owner, Westfield America, where we added Cinemark. We also added and expanded the food court, and provided the restaurants and other retail at the front of the mall. That was over twenty years ago; in fact, about twenty years ago. There have been again significant changes in the retail industry in terms of competition, the way products and retail is delivered; and overall the way uses coexist. There's many concepts known as mixed-use developments which include uses that were historically separated. This legislation will allow a much needed update to your zoning Code. Again, it is an overall change to the shopping center district. Even though it does impact the mall, it would cover any other applicable type of use. You're not removing the existing Code, you're adding to it and enhancing some of the offerings that currently exist. Specifically, it will allow for hotels which currently are not permitted. There are restrictions and the hotels have to meet a certain classification. Additionally, it would allow for other types of uses such as grocery stores which are typically involved in mixed type of uses and otherwise. There's other uses that are provided. We believe that with these opportunities that would exist in allowing different users to be part of the mall, it would attract new opportunities for the mall so that it can continue to be viable and continue to exist now and in the future. We appreciate the time and effort that the city has gone through. We have been before the Planning Commission on this matter; and we have also worked with the city planner and the law department in going through the proposed amendments and changes. We want to...we don't have any particular user where there is a finalized deal as a result of this. There is not a plan in place; although we do have interested parties. These amendments would allow those potential opportunities to hopefully move forward.

PUBLIC HEARING (cont'd):

Mr. Slater (cont'd) - We also have incorporated into the zoning amendment an area in where you have outdoor gathering spaces or otherwise, which is common in these types of mixed-use developments. Again, we want to thank the Mayor, administration, Council and also the community in allowing and considering this opportunity for the mall again to move forward under it's new ownership and new management. Hopefully, with the...be able to further a new type of use and new development. We are here to answer any types of questions or otherwise. Again, we ask for your approval of these amendments this evening, thank you.

Ms. Kosek – Thank you, is there anyone else who would like to speak in favor of Ordinance No. 2024-006?

(No comments)

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN OPPOSITION** of the Ordinance to approach the podium and address Council.*

Sue Krejci, 3365 Sliding Rock Trail, Brunswick, Ohio 44212: Good evening, Sue Krejci, 3365 Sliding Rock Trail in Brunswick. It's exciting to see the potential development of SouthPark Mall. I remember when the mall site was just a big field; and it was fun to see it get built. I know many stores have shuttered over the years as shopping habits have changed; and the potential for hotels, breweries, grocery stores, fitness centers, medical facilities and even outdoor playing fields is really exciting. However, the key piece of the redevelopment plan that I've not heard anything about, and really gives me pause, is infrastructure. Specifically, what plans have the developer and the city discussed to mitigate the traffic congestion along State Route 82 corridor, and especially at the intersection of State Route 82 and Howe Road? Mr. Spring, I realize you were not on Council when Strongsville authorized \$320,000 for Euthenics, a Strongsville firm, to conduct a feasibility study for a potential Boston Road interchange. Unfortunately, despite the Mayor promising that this study would look at "many alternatives", the only site studied for a potential interchange was Boston Road - a road that is half in Strongsville and half in Brunswick. Yes, Strongsville did not study any potential interchange sites located completely within their own city limits, which ODOT has required in order to move forward. To further complicate the issue, Strongsville's Representative, Tom Patton, last year added language to the State Transportation Bill circumventing normal channels and requiring an interchange to be built between State Route 82 in Strongsville and State Route 303 in Brunswick under the guise of improving the safety strictly at the State Route 82 and Howe Road intersection. He told a news outlet on March 30th last year that, "The intersection of Route 82 and Howe Road is in most years the highest or no better than the second highest accident area in the region. There's times when the State Route 82 exit ramp will back up all the way to the turnpike ramp, which is almost a full mile." However, per your own study which is the 20th study that has been done over the years on the potential interchange at the site, none of the proposed configurations at Boston Road would actually improve safety at Howe Road and State Route 82. In fact, on page 195 of your study, it states, "The State Route 82/Howe Road intersection typically resulted in poor/failing level of service throughout each scenario." This will also impact traffic on I-71 itself. Per Appendix K of Strongsville's study, a Boston Road interchange is actually projected to slow traffic on I-71 itself north of State Route 82; the exact area Mr. Patton described as already having backups up to a mile. This interchange would only make that worse, not better. To address the issue, you likely need an interchange north of State Route 82 where the backups begin, not 3 miles south of the congestion.

PUBLIC HEARING (cont'd):

Ms. Krejci (cont'd) - Now, we're talking about adding multiple new businesses to the SouthPark Mall site, which is located at the problem intersection of State Route 82 and Howe Road. If things are bad now, how much worse will traffic get with all of these new businesses at ground zero? What I always hear from Strongsville is that the traffic is all of the folks from North Brunswick using the State Route 82 interchange. If that were true, an interchange at Boston Road would be an effective solution. Your own study disproves that theory, showing only 8% of those exiting State Route 82 continue southbound on Howe Road into Brunswick. Yes, just 8% of that traffic is from Brunswick. Not 43% like Mr. Patton stated, and certainly not enough to meaningfully impact Strongsville's traffic issues. Unequivocally, your study showed that Strongsville's traffic issues are much bigger than Brunswick. ODOT Director Marchbanks agreed, writing in September that the study, "Did not provide an obvious solution to reduce congestion and decrease crash frequency. As a result, more detailed modeling of alternatives on the broader network will be necessary to determine if an interchange at Boston Road or another alternative would be preferred. In addition, because of local opposition to an interchange at Boston Road, it will be important to further study other previously studied locations at the same level of detail in order to compare impacts, costs, and benefits." You have successfully developed your city to draw in patrons from the greater regional area, many of whom arrive via I-71 to access the dozens and dozens of retail establishments and restaurants along the State Route 82 corridor, including the mall. To do all of this development, without taking any accountability for the increased traffic these businesses bring to your city, is perplexing. Strongsville's motto over the past decades has been, "If you build it, they will come" - and they have. Your city benefits tremendously from these businesses being built. From the changes that are proposed here, I can only imagine it will be great for you from an economic standpoint. I only ask that you devote as much time to planning for and managing the inevitable other side of that coin. The increase in traffic at an intersection your own representative has deemed so dangerous, that he needed to bypass normal channels and write a state law to address its safety. None of us here are anti-business. Quite honestly, it sounds kind of like a Crocker Park, which sounds lovely. This can't be the wild west, where anyone can build anything regardless of if there is adequate infrastructure to support it. I would love to see SouthPark Mall revitalized; but it's time to work on a solution that addresses the very real traffic problem that this type of development will only amplify tenfold, thank you.

(Applause)

Ms. Kosek - Thank you, is there anyone else who would like to be heard regarding this piece of legislation?

(No comments)

Hearing no further comments in regard to this matter, Council President Pro Tem Kosek closed the Public Hearing on said Ordinance.

PUBLIC HEARING (cont'd):

Resolution No. 2024-041 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF MERYL HOSSFELD AND CYNTHIA HOSSFELD TO PLACE LAND IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN FAVOR** of the Resolution to approach the podium and address Council.*

(No comments)

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN OPPOSITION** of the Resolution to approach the podium and address Council.*

(No comments)

Hearing no further comments in regard to this matter, Council President Pro Tem Kosek closed the Public Hearing on said Resolution.

Resolution No. 2024-042 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF SUSAN LEA SCHNITTKER TO PLACE LAND IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN FAVOR** of the Resolution to approach the podium and address Council.*

Susan Schnittker, 11291 Handle Road, Strongsville, Ohio 44136: Susan Schnittker, 11291 Handle Road in Strongsville. This is our 39th year there; and yes, we are indeed agricultural and we will remain agricultural as far as I can tell for the future, thank you.

Ms. Kosek – Thank you very much, is there anyone else who would like to speak in favor of this resolution?

(No comments)

*Ms. Kosek invited anyone wishing to speak **IN OPPOSITION** of the Resolution to approach the podium and address Council.*

(No comments)

Hearing no further comments in regard to this matter, Council President Pro Tem Kosek closed the Public Hearing on said Resolution.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Mr. Clark:

(No report)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

BUILDING AND UTILITIES – Ms. Roff:

(No report)

PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH – Ms. Roff:

(No report)

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – Mr. Spring:

(No report)

SCHOOL BOARD – Mr. Spring: Thank you Madame President, right now we don't have anything for Recreation and Community Services; but we did have a school board meeting on March 28, 2024; so just going over what happened there. I want to give some recognition out to the National Merit Scholarship Program 2024 Commended Students. I will get you the names for their spellings, but recognized was Carter Estrela, Nathan Fobel, Nehal Jategaonkar, Aayus Keshri, Frederick Micko and Kaye Smith. They were recognized for that. Also, National Merit Scholarship Program 2024 finalist, which is even a higher category, we had two finalists, John Bender and Chloe Mance. They were recognized at the school board. A couple of other things that they did at the school board: They talked about the purchase of an air conditioner - A 400 ton chiller replacement at \$600,000.00, and the middle school track resurfaced. They purchased six mobile classrooms, which amount to two classrooms per mobile unit; so twelve additional classrooms were purchased for the grade schools. They purchased Chrome Books and some PC's (personal computers). Also on this week, in case your noise levels in your homes are a little louder, it's because Strongsville schools are on spring break; and the children are at home. That was the school board meeting.

FINANCE – Mr. Short:

(No report)

SOUTHWEST GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM – Mr. Short:

(No report)

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY – Mr. Kaminski:

(No report)

PLANNING, ZONING AND ENGINEERING – Ms. Kosek: Planning, Zoning and Engineering and Public Service and Conservation, that is me. There is nothing on the agenda for Public Service and Conservation, but for Planning, Zoning and Engineering we do have the ordinance that we had the public hearing for tonight. This will be the fourth reading. We will not vote on this tonight, as I said earlier. We will be voting on this at the next meeting. Unless anybody has any questions, we had the public hearing and so, I will go ahead and close that committee.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

PUBLIC SERVICE AND CONSERVATION – Ms. Kosek:

(No report)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Mr. Carbone:

Ms. Kosek – That leaves us with the Committee of the Whole which I will cover in Mr. Carbone's absence. We have Resolution Nos. 2024-041 and 2024-042, which we also had during the public hearing, regarding agricultural districts. On both of those, we are not going to vote because we don't have a full body tonight. We will vote on those on the next meeting on April 15, 2024.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS:

MAYOR PERCIAK: Thank you Madame Council President, no reports tonight other than next Monday is the Eclipse; and we will be closing city hall at 12 noon to get everybody out and get them home. Of course, the police and fire are always open. The recreation center, we are doing a survey as to what recreation centers are open and what are not. Our schools are closed; and because our schools are closed, our recreation center will be open, maybe unlimited hours, but it will be open.

Ms. Kosek – Mayor, on that, have you heard from the safety forces? I know that I am seeing stories online of people saying that the roads are going to be really crowded and people should really try and avoid...

Mayor Perciak – Our safety forces have been involved in all the talks throughout the county, the surrounding areas, with the state, and both of our chiefs. They are prepared for anything that may happen here; but we are not expecting anywhere near the issues that they are going to have along the lake from Lake County all the way through the Lorain County area. It doesn't appear that the weather is cooperating either. We will see what happens; but it should be...well, let's face it, I guess the next one is in 200 years.

Ms. Kosek – I have some kids at home that are going to be really disappointed if we have clouds and they can't see it.

Mayor Perciak – That's correct.

Ms. Kosek – Hopefully the weather....

Ms. Roff – I feel like you should be able to do something about that, Mayor.

Mayor Perciak – Well, you know what...I prayed a lot in church this week. My wife is a church organist so her husband was her bag boy this past week. Yes, I asked the Good Lord on four different occasions.

Ms. Kosek – We appreciate all of the prayers on clear skies, thank you.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT – Mr. Dean: Thank you Madame President, I have no report tonight.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS (cont'd):

LAW DEPARTMENT – Mr. Jamison: All ordinances and resolutions are in proper legal form; that concludes my report.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Leslie Hohenfeld, 18183 Howe Road, Strongsville, Ohio 44136: Hi, I'm Leslie Hohenfeld, 18183 Howe Road in Strongsville, Ohio and I have a question. How will the revenue of the city be positively affected if the ordinance passes regarding the mall? Or if it does not pass, how will it be affecting our schools, our services, and have there been any projections on that? I was just wondering.

Ms. Kosek – Typically during this time we are here to hear your questions, and we can provide feedback or we can talk to the appropriate administration. We will take note of your question and get back to you.

Ms. Hohenfeld – (Unintelligible) anywhere...if that's been reviewed or not, just curious.

Ms. Kosek – I appreciate it, thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to speak during public audience participation?

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance No. 2024-006 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 1242.07, 1258.04, 1258.11(a), 1258.12 AND 1270.05 OF TITLE SIX OF PART TWELVE OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, CONCERNING PERMITTED USES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING SHOPPING CENTER DISTRICTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. *First reading 01-16-24. Second reading and referred to the Planning Commission 02-05-24. Favorable recommendation by the Planning Commission 02-08-24. Third reading 02-20-24. Public hearing 04-01-24.*

Placed on fourth reading and referred back to the committee.

Resolution No. 2024-041 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF MERYL HOSSFELD AND CYNTHIA HOSSFELD TO PLACE LAND IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

Placed on first reading and referred back to the committee.

Resolution No. 2024-042 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF SUSAN LEA SCHNITTKKE TO PLACE LAND IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

Placed on first reading and referred back to the committee.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND CLAIMS:

(None)

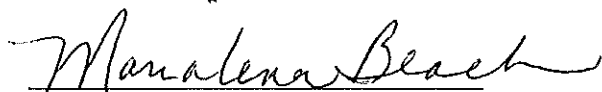
MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Ms. Roff – Just again for the record, I would like to thank our administration, the Mayor, Neal and our service department, especially, Mr. Walker, for all the hard work for a home on Howe Road that they have been addressing, going over and helping fix up, and pull things out of the yard making it look a lot better. I appreciate that.

Mr. Jamison – Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before this Councilwoman Kelly Kosek adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.



Marialena Beach
Council Secretary

04-15-24
Date