

On Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Council for the Village of Monroeville held a work session at 6:00 PM, in Council Chambers, to discuss the 2024 solar eclipse.

Present were Mayor Joseph Galea; Council Members: Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers, Tammy Schlachter, Mark Miller, Bob Whitacre; Village Administrator Tom Gray; Fiscal Officer Bonnie Beck; Administrative Specialist Heather Alicea; and Chief Gary Lyons.

Also, present were: Lt. Troy Kimball; Ann Beck; Mike Raftery; Craig Franklin; Matt & Julie Tyler from the Village Barn; Andrew & Elisa Brown from Old Soul Woodworking; David Luna from Main Street Maintenance LLC; Molly Doss from American Legion Post 547; Elizabeth Leshner & Lori Siesel from Croghan Colonial Bank; Marcia Adelman from the Beauty Vault; and Anthony Myers from Monroeville Local Schools.

Absent: Councilman Sam Wiley

The Mayor opened the meeting to discuss the solar eclipse set to occur on Monday, 4/8/24. The Mayor said he would like to hear from community members regarding their concerns and find out what their plans are.

Chief said his department has begun contingency plans for the eclipse event. The event is weather dependent. There is a potential of 40,000-50,000 visitors to this area. Parking is an issue that needs to be addressed. Florescent no-parking signs are being created and will be implemented and made available to the businesses and residents. Chief doesn't want to punish the population for the sake of keeping the viewers where they should be. Chief wants to limit parking to the specific areas that parking will be available, which is Marsh Field and Clark Park, perhaps the school parking lot, Great Lakes Trucking, etc. 7-Eleven may be another location, as they plan on trying to reopen by mid-March. The MPD is currently surveying residents and businesses to see who would be open for parking and what stipulations they may have. In speaking with other law enforcement agencies, we should begin to see visitors trickling in on Friday, increasing on Saturday and Sunday, and then the big rush on Monday, 4/8. All part-time and full-time officers will be working 12-hour shifts, with 3-4 officers patrolling different areas. Businesses, residents, campers, infrastructure, traffic flow and parking are a concern. Chief said he wants to see what residents and businesses in the community want. Molly Doss asked Chief where he expects people to camp. Chief said it's been discussed to use Clark Park or Marsh Field, but he doesn't know yet if camping is going to be permitted. Chief needs input from the folks at tonight's meeting to develop the best plan. The MPD will go in whatever direction the community wants. The Mayor said after having a conversation with the Village Administrative heads, they are leaning towards not allowing camping as the Village doesn't have the facilities to accommodate campers. We may see primitive camping, but parking and conditions of grassy and muddy areas that aren't set up for parking may limit that. Right now, the Mayor doesn't expect to see park bathrooms being operational, but a final decision hasn't been made. The fairgrounds in Norwalk will have camping available and there are also private operators that will have camping available. Folks that live in the Township and have land available have the option of offering it to campers. Julie Tyler said the Village Barn has a large parking area and they haven't decided what they are going to do, but asked if the MPD is able to patrol the area if they decide they won't allow parking. Chief said they will do what they can depending on their workload to help with parking issues. The officers will be in different areas to make sure things are covered. Chief said he believes the Fire Department will be open on Monday, 4/8, for first aid. Molly Doss asked about fire truck pre-positioning. Tom said he spoke with Chief Stang and there will be some pre-positioning, but they aren't certain how far out they will go. Molly said in regards to parking, the Legion is scheduled to meet next week and she would also like to see

what the other businesses are doing before any decisions are made about the Legion's parking lot. If the businesses are going to be open, the Legion would like to keep their parking lot open for patrons of the local businesses. If businesses are closed, they won't put up no parking signs. Chief said it appears Pean's Pizza won't be open Sunday or Monday. Bonnie said she spoke with Jeff Pean yesterday and since Jeff is short-staffed, he will be closed Sunday & Monday, and has offered his parking lot to anyone who wants to use it.

Tom spoke and advised his side of the house is in support of the police effort. The Village will maintain normal daily operations and services. Water, wastewater, streets and electric will be on a normal daily schedule. Tom said he will be bringing those individuals into a slightly different work fold for the day, with a couple employees as floaters, should an event take place where we need to support something on the roadside or respond to infrastructure issues. The biggest concern is the amount of traffic, which could range from A to Z. People may park at the parks, out on Farr Road, at the reservoir, etc. Tom will make sure the Village has trash barrels in place. We will try to push as much information to the county website as possible as we formulate our plan and make decisions on parking, as requested by Kevin Rasnick at the Huron County Chamber of Commerce. Tom spoke with Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroads and was told it will be business as usual during the eclipse.

Chief said if there is a good crowd of people, the Village can expect internet and cell service to be drastically slower or crash altogether, gas stations may run out of gas, traffic could be gridlocked for miles and business owners may want to stock up a few days earlier than what they normally would. It will be a great event but we need to be prepared.

Tom asked Molly if the Legion will be available for meals. Molly said that is unknown until the Legion meets next week. If the Legion is open, there will be food and beverage sales (non-alcoholic for non-members).

The Mayor said visitors will be coming in Saturday and Sunday, and he would like to know what the businesses are doing to prepare. More meetings will be held between now and the event. Molly asked who the point of contact in the Village. Tom said if anyone has comments or questions, they can get them to anyone at the Village Administrative Office. The Mayor said anyone is free to contact him as well.

Chris Raftery asked Matt and Julie if the Village Barn will be open the weekend of the eclipse. Julie said no one is booked for a rental and they will be out of town until Saturday night. Nothing is planned at this time.

The Mayor asked Elizabeth & Lori if Croghan Bank will be open. Elizabeth said it's business as usual, they plan to be open and haven't been told otherwise. As of right now, both the lobby and the drive-thru will be open. They are attending the meeting tonight to see what everyone's plans are and will report back to Croghan to see if any other decisions will be made. They are concerned about running transactions and the ATM functioning if internet service is disrupted, as well as security issues.

Molly asked if people will be able to park in the lot next to Old School Warehouse. The Mayor said the Village jointly owns the lot with the school and he doesn't believe we've had any conversations with the school about parking. Anthony Myers said that as far as the school goes, he just got confirmation that the school isn't advertising parking and/or preventing parking in any of the school's parking lots. The Mayor asked if that includes the track. Anthony is unaware. The Mayor said the lot next to Old School Warehouse

is a grassy area and not typically used for parking. From a Village standpoint there is no issue, but we would want the school to be on board if parking is permitted and it's also weather dependent.

The Mayor asked Council if they have any information they'd like to add. Chris said there may be issues with internet, trash, lack of porta-potties, etc. Tom said there are no plans to have porta potties in the Village, as they are cost prohibitive. Ann expressed her surprise about the park restrooms being closed with no porta potties being available either. The Mayor said the feasibility of having the park restrooms open is currently being discussed. Matt asked what the downside would be in keeping the park restrooms open. The Mayor said Village staff would have to keep toilet paper stocked, stop overflows, keep the restrooms clean, etc. Matt agreed that those are all issues, but the Village has a full staff to make that happen. The Mayor said porta potties aren't feasible due to lack of availability and cost. A final decision hasn't been made regarding the park restrooms, but another thought with keeping the restrooms closed is to keep people moving and get them out faster. Mark said if these people have no where to go, they will find somewhere to go, like someone's yard. Andrew said if the park restrooms are closed, visitors will overwhelm local businesses with their bathroom needs. When the Village Flea occurred, even with porta potties being available, the bathrooms at the coffee shop and Old Soul Woodworking got pretty beat up. Elisa said if people are parking at the park, it makes sense to have the park restrooms open.

Chris said one thing that hasn't been discussed is activities in the Village. The City of Norwalk has put a lot of emphasis on activities at venues, doing something on the street, etc. Chris said she hasn't heard from anyone in the Village yet about doing something like that here, like the churches doing a dinner, etc. Chris said she thinks this is where the creativity should be and asked if the Village should be made accommodating and welcoming to visitors. Chris doesn't want this to be a lost opportunity for the Village. Elisa agreed that this is a huge opportunity for the Village. The visitors won't spend the entire weekend at a festival in Norwalk, they will want to visit other places in the county. Elisa said from a business perspective, speaking for Old Soul, Mini Main and Simply Monroe, they are waiting to see if the Village is on board with doing something. Old Soul will be open and ready to welcome visitors. The Mayor said based on his opinion in speaking with the Administrative heads, we're in an awkward spot because we want people to visit here and enjoy it, but we are also realistic about what resources we can provide. Norwalk or Bellevue has the ability to put more resources forward. If the churches and business owners want to do things to make it better, the Village will promote that and partner with them to help. Elisa said the girls from the businesses plan to meet and discuss where everyone is with their plans. Molly asked if there's been any interest from food trucks. Heather said she sent emails to several food trucks. Mellow Yellow Pizzeria expressed interest when she spoke with them last year. Heather said she doesn't think food trucks have any interest in coming here if we aren't hosting an event, as they need assurance there will be visitors since they are stocking their trucks with food and supplies. Heather thinks it would be great for the Village to have some kind of event the Friday night or Saturday night before the eclipse, maybe in one of the parks since there will be room for parking and the restrooms could be made available. The Village could partner with the area businesses and help showcase the Village instead of making it a location that people are just driving through. Sue said she would like to see that as well, maybe get a band, give the people something to do on Friday or Saturday night. Elisa said there is space for pop-up shop or bakery where Smash 180 was and we could make it family friendly and advertise as such. Elisa said we could also feature local artists and kids and get people excited for this. Heather said that even if the Village doesn't get as many visitors as what's being predicted, we could still do something for the local community and make it family-friendly. Elisa said when the Village Christmas was held, the Village was bustling and people were so excited to be out and about and that was very encouraging.

Anthony said as of right now, the school's plans are to keep the parking lot in front of the school open. The new track will be barricaded and the old track will be gated and locked. There is no word on the lot by Old School Warehouse.

The Mayor asked Craig what his plans are with his radio-relay group. Craig said a relay station will be set up at the Fire Department to monitor traffic. Troy Blair, the emergency coordinator for Amateur Radio, will be running a base station from EMA. If cell coverage and internet crashes, amateur radio will not be affected. They will support police, fire and EMA.

The Mayor said there was talk of creating a map to show parking, first aid, etc., and advised Elisa she can feel free to include anything the businesses want on it. It was discussed to hand out packets of information as well. Elisa said it makes sense logistically and for safety purposes to be on the same page. Handouts could be provided at the businesses. Molly said temporary signage showing where parking areas are would be handy. Bonnie said she thinks it's a great idea for the Village to do something, but someone has to take the bull by the horns to plan it. The Mayor said he is happy to be involved and help. Bonnie and Heather both volunteered to help as well. Elisa asked the Mayor when the next meeting is to further discuss plans. The Mayor said the next scheduled Council meeting is Tuesday, 2/13/24 and anyone is welcome to attend and present any plans they have. If they need to get in touch in the meantime, they are welcome to speak with anyone at the Administrative Office. The Mayor anticipates a February work session will be held, although it won't be entirely about the eclipse. Mark suggested holding an event at the park prior to the eclipse, sell food and have volunteers work shifts. Molly said groups at the school may want to be involved in that too. Chris said whatever is decided can be advertised on the Village website and on the Norwalk eclipse Facebook page. Elisa suggested a statement be issued as to what is occurring in the Village, as she doesn't think the general population is aware of what's to come. The Mayor agreed. Food, parking, bathrooms, no camping, businesses being open or closed are all things that visitors need to be aware of. Anthony asked if anyone knew if Twist-n-Shout will be open. Heather said she sent a letter to the owner in October to advise him of the upcoming eclipse event but hasn't heard anything from him. Matt asked what the Village considers as camping. What happens if someone shows up in a van and stays in the park parking lot overnight. Chief said the parks typically close at dark and visitors are supposed to be out at that point. The Mayor said parking overnight is probably a no. The biggest concern and challenge is the flow of traffic and getting people out of town after the eclipse. Elisa suggested lighted signs pointing people where to go and Molly agreed, stating GPS may not work if internet is down. The Mayor asked Tom if we have any lighted signs we can use. Tom said no, but he can check into renting them. Chief said he plans on having an officer at each traffic light and intersection when visitors are leaving town. Sue asked if anyone has spoken with Berry Plastics about shift changes. Tom said Berry hasn't made a determination as far as their staff goes and they are still looking into the logistics with their parking lot. Tom said he will know more within the next 1-2 weeks. Berry may shift their shift changes during the peak period of the eclipse. Chief said it may be a good idea to manipulate the traffic lights to allow traffic to flow easier. Tom will reach out to Norfolk and Southern to see what they are doing in concern to trains blocking the flow of traffic on State Route 99 N. Chief said he's attending a chief's meeting tomorrow and will obtain more information at that time as to what other law enforcement agencies are doing. The Village has mutual aid with Norwalk and with the county, but their enforcement staff will have their hands full as well. There's been mention of troopers patrolling Route 20 to make sure people aren't parking on it. The Mayor asked if Chief knows if Norwalk and Bellevue are also staffing-up on officers for the eclipse. Chief said he isn't sure, but he should know more tomorrow.

The Mayor told Elisa she is welcome to attend the next meeting and present any plans. If the businesses want to hold an event, the Village will support it and make it as easy for everyone as they can with the

Council Work Session, 1/30/24

resources that are available. We are working with a finite amount of human resources and financial resources, but he certainly wants to make it a fun time for everyone. The Mayor gave everyone in attendance the Village Administrative Office email information and advised anyone is welcome to send information and/or ask questions, as well as attend the next Council meeting on 2/13/24. Elisa thanked the Mayor for his communication.

There being no other business to come before them, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist