

Ontario CIC Minutes

Date: 02.09.26

Duration: 1:54:50

Attending: Amy Hiner, Michael Morton, Nick Turnbaugh, Jennifer Meisse, Josh Bradley, Beth Delaney, Rick Pauley

Absent: Casey Bly, Tony Grimwood

Guests: Jessica Gribben, Hannah – Richland Source, Craig Hunt

Action Items

Amy - **Notify Scott Heimann of board selection** Inform Scott he was selected for the CIC board and invite him to March meeting.

Josh - **Repost board application and set up CIC email** Work with city IT to permanently post board application on website and create forwarding email address (cic@ontarioohio or similar) for applications.

Paul - **Create and send wayfinding sign graphic** Design mockup for welcome sign with 'Welcome to Ontario, Established 1834' or similar text. Send before next meeting for board review and vote.

Josh - **Check council availability for March 16 meet and greet** Coordinate with new council members about attending meet and greet at 5pm on March 16.

Overview

Scott Heimann elected as new board member, bringing grant writing expertise and nonprofit fundraising experience from his roles at OSU Foundation, North Central State Foundation, and Park National Bank

Keith Strickler presented Ontario's **137-page** safe routes to school comprehensive plan that enables the city to apply for up to **\$1 million per year for 5 years** in state grant funding for sidewalks and multiuse paths

Board secured insurance (D&O, general liability, and crime coverage) and accountant (WOB firm in Ontario) to ensure proper protection and compliance

Rick proposed pull tabs/instant bingo as continuous revenue stream that could generate **\$627,000** annually based on similar operations, though board must wait until **2028** due to **2-year** requirement for **501(c)(3)** status before licensing

Board scheduled **March 16, 2026** meeting at **4:00 PM** followed by **5:30 PM** meet and greet with new city council members to build relationships

Board applications will remain open continuously going forward to maintain pool of interested community members

Safe routes to school comprehensive plan

Keith presented comprehensive plan developed through **\$75,000** state grant in partnership with Burton Planning Services consulting firm

Plan required for city to access safe routes to school grant funding of up to **\$1 million annually for 5 years**

Current conditions show **72%** of parents rate walking or biking to school as unsafe or very unsafe, with only **11%** saying it's very safe

Ontario has minimal sidewalk infrastructure, with most existing sidewalks in commercial areas rather than residential neighborhoods where students live

Student population maps show highest concentrations in Shangri La, Rudy Road, Autumn Ridge, and Zimmerman n Acres areas with no safe connectivity to schools or Marshall Park

Plan identifies projects from low-cost short-term needs to long-term infrastructure, with priorities including:

- **10-foot wide** multiuse path through Marshall Park from school to tennis courts (first priority with engineering already completed)
- Sidewalk from high school north to Zimmerman Acres (already funded by ODOT for **2026** construction)
- Critical crosswalk needed across **309** to connect residential areas, though utility pole placement near gas station creates barriers

Marshall Park path serves as school evacuation route for Stingel students who currently walk in the road to reach ball fields during emergencies

City and school split cost on new crosswalk lights at school entrance, with same approach planned for Zimmerman Acres sidewalk

Biggest barrier is lack of safe crosswalk across **309** - state regulations require crosswalks be **200+ feet** from intersections, limiting viable locations

House at corner near gas station creates additional constraints, though its potential removal could open up crosswalk options

Timeline shows grant application in **March 2026**, potential funding in **2026-2027**, with construction likely starting **2027-2028**

City pays **20%** of project costs upfront, then state grant reimburses **80%**

Josh reviewing contract with Burton Planning Services with city law director Andy for grant application

Wayfinding sign update

Paul reported materials secured and connected with Spyder Sign company that created all Mansfield wayfinding signs

Spyder Sign will provide Mansfield design specs including exact sizes and tube dimensions so Ontario can modify for their needs

Paul will use sheet metal for sign centers and can get help with graphics if needed

Board agreed on simple, broad messaging: "Welcome to Ontario" in larger letters with "Established **1834**" in smaller text

Paul committed to creating graphic mockup before next meeting and will email to board for vote prior to **March 16** meeting

Project remains on track for signs in ground by spring **2026**

Revenue generation strategies

Rick proposed pull tabs/instant bingo operation as continuous revenue stream after researching Ohio bingo licensing

Type 3 bingo license costs approximately **\$7,500** for fees and state licensing, allows selling pull tabs at any location with **6%** going to vendor

Rick studied existing operation (Movap in Belleville) that generated **\$627,000** in **2025** with operator paying himself **\$150,000** salary, leaving **\$60,000** for charity

CIC could eliminate middleman administrative costs and direct more revenue to Ontario projects

Major barrier: Ohio requires **501(c)(3)** status for **2 years** before granting Type 3 license, meaning CIC cannot pursue until **2028** (filing in March **2026** plus **2 years**)

Rick already identified multiple bar and restaurant owners interested in switching from current provider to CIC once eligible

Rick knows expert who helped make pull tabs legal in Ohio after being indicted in **88 counties**, can provide guidance on setup

Board discussed alternative of approaching existing charitable gaming organizations (Eagles, Moose Lodge, American Legion) to get on their charitable giving lists before CIC is eligible for own license

Nick proposed business wiffle ball or softball tournament partnering with Ontario Community Events, including food trucks and vendors with team entry fees

Nick suggested bourbon or wine tasting fundraising dinner with auction, selling couples tickets and tables to businesses, seeking bottle donations and sponsorships

Nick recommended pop-up retail events and seasonal markets in parks or parking lots to fill gap in Ontario's current offerings

Beth mentioned Shelby Bicycle Days sponsorship model where businesses pay to compete in events, suggested similar competition for Ontario Festival

Board discussed obstacle course competition in Marshall Park with company teams competing, similar to former Snow Trails corporate challenge

Jessica noted Ontario Athletic Boosters already runs weekly bingo at fairgrounds, could be partnership opportunity

Amy highlighted need for events that bring business community together since economic development and connectivity were top priorities in strategic plan

Board agreed to select specific revenue project(s) to pursue at **March 2026** meeting

Insurance and accounting setup

Executive team met with **2** insurance companies and voted via email to select provider

Board secured D&O (directors and officers), general liability, and crime coverage

Board agreed to pay insurance premium annually rather than monthly

Board selected WOB accounting firm located in Ontario near Texas Roadhouse

Accountant will provide services in-kind (donated)

Jim at WOB firm agreed to delay filing certain forms until March-April **2026** after all board member positions filled and previous resignations processed

First year accounting should be straightforward with minimal expenditures to report

Social media launch prep

Amy created social media content using Canva with neighbor Kylie Hendrix (new chamber intern and Heidelberg graduate getting master's degree)

Content pulls from comprehensive plan and uses Richland County branding elements including sunburst logo

Planned posts cover: what is the CIC, Richland County branding project history, Ontario history (platted December **1834** by Hiram Cook), and timeline of Ontario development

Amy taking photos of local developments like CNG building new facility to highlight local business activity

Strategy blends history, comprehensive plan education, and current business highlights

Social media launch delayed until wayfinding signs completed and installed so board has tangible accomplishments to showcase

Amy scheduling posts in advance and invited board members to text photos of Ontario developments for content

Jessica praised approach, noting Shelby's weekly "Municipal Momentum" email with progress photos successfully built community excitement and knowledge

Community hub location

Beth emphasized Keith's safe routes presentation clearly identified community hub location within the **1-2 mile** radius where most students live

Beth noted Marshall Park already has substantial parking (except during soccer season) and walkability improvements would activate this area as natural hub

Beth believes establishing hub with walkability will attract investor interest in surrounding businesses

Nick asked about status of parcels purchased in Old Ontario near **309** for proposed garage project

Amy called new owner Alex twice (Friday and day of meeting) but has not received callback

Nick noted property looks appealing with trees cleared, sees potential for community hub space at that **309** and Lexington-Ontario intersection

Board agreed Old Ontario area remains focus based on comprehensive plan priorities

Amy committed to meeting with Alex and Josh by March meeting to understand his plans for the property

Mister Hunt (public attendee) urged board to push hard on fixing corner by gas station, removing house, widening area, and adding sidewalks through that corridor

March council meet and greet

Board scheduled **Monday, March 16, 2026** meeting at City Building (returning to original location)

Board meeting runs **4:00-5:30 PM** followed by meet and greet with new council members **5:30-6:00/6:15 PM**

Purpose is building relationships since many new council members don't know CIC board and vice versa

Amy and Josh will present on behalf of their respective organizations

Board plans to share projects including wayfinding sign mockup (should be ready by then)

Most council members work during day and need evening meeting time

Josh will check if council members can arrive at **5:00 PM** instead of **5:30 PM** to accommodate Beth's granddaughter's birthday

Meet and greet important for future funding requests and project collaboration between CIC and city council

Board Voted to go into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition at 1:54:50

Came out of executive session and closed meeting.