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Beth Clodfelter, At Large, discusses the energy efficiency upgrades to be incorporated into the Lostro building. Photo credit to Athens City Council.

### **City Council passes ordinance, plans for energy efficiency upgrades**

Athens City Council passed an ordinance to petition, plan and incorporate energy efficiency upgrades in the production of the Lostro building at the corner of South Court Street and West Union. The ordinance works to approve the decision plan and improve aspects of incorporating this building with the OHIO PACE Energy Program.

The OHIO PACE Energy Program uses a financing method that provides investments in energy efficiency to commercial properties. The Lostro building is currently under construction to implement a hotel on the upper levels and a retail space on the lower levels.

Alan Swank, 4th Ward, introduces the ordinance for a third reading detailing the upgrades PACE Energy plans to implement in the construction of the building. “What we’re doing in [ordinance] 77-24 is approving the decision and the articles of incorporation for this building so that they can participate in what's called a PACE Energy Program, where, through special assessments, they can do things such as solar, new windows, HVAC, to bring that building that's well over 100 years old up to speed...” said Swank. Swank moved to approve the ordinance.

Beth Clodfelter, At-Large, spoke to publicly clarify that the PACE program would allow investors to borrow money to make energy efficiency upgrades in the Lostro building. This allows for expensive changes to be made and guarantees they are paid over a long period and at a reasonable interest rate. Clodfelter includes that this efficiency program can apply to business owners in the city.

“...It can be applicable to any building within the city limits of Athens. So if there are any building owners out there who are applying this...and might be wanting to make some really significant energy efficiency improvements, there's going to be a board established to consider applications for this,” said Clodfelter.

Clodfelter proceeds by explaining that the process of providing energy efficiency upgrades is new to the city of Athens and that the board, used for approving the energy upgrades, is still being appointed.

James Blackwell, a resident of Athens, questioned whether the PACE program could be used for residential buildings or if it was strictly for commercial buildings.

Clodfelter responded to clarify. “When the people in charge of this project were here, they came and spoke to us a couple of weeks ago, and there was a representative who was an expert on the PACE, the federal program for energy efficiency, and he said that typically, the projects are seven, like, the cost of them is in the seven digits, but they have a minimum of \$100,000.”

The council moved to approve the ordinance after a third reading.

In other business:

- Mayor Steve Patterson spoke to present a recent news release detailing an organized gathering of bipartisan national and state associations in Springfield Ohio to support Mayor Rob Rue. The meeting transpired following a wave of bomb threats in Springfield brought on by false and inflammatory statements amplified by national public figures.
- An ordinance for a second reading regarding designated outdoor refreshment area (DORA) hours of operation is authorized. Micah McCarey, At Large, asked Mayor Steve Patterson to address the change of hours. Mayor Patterson specified that DORA is inactive during Homecoming weekend and Mom's weekend but will be active during Graduation weekend at it's normal hours of operation.
- Davey McNelly, a resident of Athens and chairmember of the disability commission spoke on the failure of accessible public roads and sidewalks in Athens. McNelly includes photo evidence of city pathways failing to be within Americans with Disabilities

Act (ADA) regulations. McNelly asks that the council works to provide a 10 year plan to improve city accessibility.