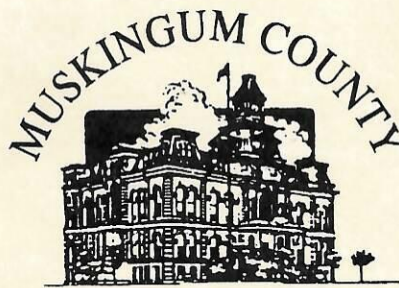


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Executive Summary-Muskingum County Jail Project

October 30, 2023

The Muskingum County Board of Commissioners is constructing a new County Jail. The current jail is overcrowded and is not safe for officers or inmates. Originally designed as an office building, this facility is not equipped to function as a modern jail. While housing criminal offenders, the jail serves as the largest mental health and addiction facility in the County. A new jail will enhance services available to inmates as they rehabilitate their lives. There have been discussions about potentially combining the City and County jails into one. By constructing a jail with approximately 350 beds, we are designing a facility that could make this a reality. It is also important to remember that the construction period for this project is 24-36 months. We would be happy to address concerns and formulate policies that would be beneficial to the neighborhood impacted.

In Ohio, many counties use a sales tax increase, specifically for jail construction, to assist in funding such projects. After many years of fiscal responsibility, the Muskingum County Board of Commissioners feel that funding this project without a sales tax increase is feasible. The project site location exponentially affects the overall project cost. While evaluating sites, the County first identified parcels of land that would be suitable merely on size (fourteen acres minimum) and proximity to the Courthouse (within a ten-minute drive time). Ninety-nine sites were identified. After considering the availability of acquisition and utility service, the list was reduced to fifteen. Sites were then evaluated based on topography, utility development and cost of acquisition.

The former Mosaic Tile property was chosen because of the site's attributes, not because of the neighborhood. The Mosaic Site was determined to be the best site for the following reasons:

- 1.) Topography
 - a. Construction ready
- 2.) Utilities
 - a. Availability at site
- 3.) Acquisition
 - a. Willing seller
- 4.) Zoning
 - a. allows for construction of a jail
- 5.) Environmental
 - a. Meets environmental regulations

6.) Economics

- a. Most efficient with tax-payer dollars for site preparation, utility work and cost of acquisition

The discussion of a new jail began in 2015; the intent to build a jail never wavered. In 2022, the County Land Bank was awarded a \$1.85M grant from Ohio's Brownfield Remediation Program through the Department of Development to remove blighted properties. The specific properties selected were the former Mosaic Tile site and the former Munson School. In the fall of 2022, the demolition of the former Mosaic and Munson buildings commenced. This removal of blight only occurred at a minimal cost to the City and County because of these grant dollars. Once the demolition was under way, legitimacy of this property housing a jail became a reality. In early 2023, the City of Zanesville informed our office that a special use permit would be required to place the jail on this property. Thus, an application was submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a vote in October 2023. The land use permit application was denied on October 12, 2023. Based on the criteria of the application we feel this ruling was incorrect. A notice of appeal has been filed with the City of Zanesville.

It is also important to note the Muskingum County Land Bank, with cooperation from the Port Authority, has established avenues for Woda Cooper Companies, a Columbus based housing developer, to construct housing in the City of Zanesville. Woda Cooper intends to build forty-four workforce housing units on the Munson School property as well as an additional forty-four units on the McKinley School property. Construction on these projects is slated to begin in 2024.

As of today, a site for the jail has not been determined. However, the following facts remain the same, regardless of the location.

- The entire perimeter of the property will be visually mitigated with landscaping and other screening efforts.
- You will not be able to see into the facility, nor will inmates be able to see outside through the walls.
- Today's modern jail design looks like a school or an office building to pedestrians or motorists passing by. This facility will be aesthetically pleasing.
- This is not a prison or regional jail. This is a County jail, that typically houses approximately 80% pretrial detainees.
- There will be no outdoor recreation yard, no guard towers, no razor wire.
- The Sheriff's Office nor the County will profit from this facility. This is intended to increase public safety in Muskingum County.

The Board of Commissioners meet weekly on Monday and Thursday at the Courthouse. If interested, the Commissioners are available to discuss County wide issues during session hours, which are open to the public.