



City of Kent
Wednesday, March 2, 2022
City Council Committee Meetings
320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

At 07:00 PM, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the City Council Committee Meetings to order.

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Garret Ferrara, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti, Mr. Robin Turner, Ms. Tracy Wallach

Also Present: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council; Ms. Patti Long, Assistant to the City Manager; Ms. Angela Manley, Parks and Recreation Director; Mr. Michael Lewis, Police Sergeant.

Absent: Mr. John Kuhar

Presentation of Certificate to Mr. Stanley Boykin

Mayor Fiala presented a certificate of appreciation to Kent resident, Mr. Stanley Boykin, thanking him for his work clearing snow away from fire hydrants during the two major snow storms that recently occurred. Mayor Fiala said we know people do things like this and we don't hear about it, so he wanted to show appreciation for what he has done. He read the following: Certificate of Appreciation: This certificate is being presented to Mr. Stanley Boykin in appreciation for your dedicated service clearing the snow from around the fire hydrants in your neighborhood during Winter 2022. Thank you for being a caring citizen of Kent, Ohio.

Committee of the Whole (Chair Fiala/ Vice-Chair Amrhein)

Review of City Flag Design

Mayor Fiala reviewed the guidelines from the original 1975 city flag ordinance. Mayor Fiala read his comments regarding the background of the most recent committee. He said this has been a four-year process and the guidelines for the city flag were created in resolution 1975-155, which was passed on October 15, 1975. He said city flags are to be a simple message and not be confusing to the eye. He said it should have the city's founding date as well as some of the city's main characteristics. The original flag was designed by Keith Bauer, a nine-year-old student at Holden School. Mayor Fiala had reached out to local schools but said there wasn't any interest. In July 2021, a small committee was formed to review other city flags and to review the original resolution and its intent and to design a flag for the city of Kent. He thanked that committee for taking on this responsibility. At the July 21, 2021 Council meeting, there was a motion to proceed with the flag design that was presented to Council. Members wished to discuss the flag design further and suggested more input from the community. Mayor Fiala asked if anyone wanted to talk about this.

Mr. DeLeone said he thinks there are some things missing. He said there is a beautiful waterfall, the railroad tracks, etc. He said the City pin is beautiful and would like to see something like that. Mayor Fiala said he brought it up at the Mayor's Meeting and they recommended keeping it simple.

Mr. Turner said he agreed with Mr. DeLeone and that there are things in the downtown that need to be captured. He said there are other aspects of the community you could capture. He likes where Mr. DeLeone is going with it.

Mr. DeLeone said it wasn't a bad design, it just needed more detail. He said, you do not need the words "Kent, Ohio" on the flag. Mayor Fiala said that people say it should say Kent, Ohio with the established date. He said if Council wants to take this concept and go with it to sketch it out.

Mr. Ferrara said he knows the Mayor would like this finalized and asked what is the fastest way to get it done without going another four years. He asked Mayor if he had a suggestion. Mayor Fiala said after four years he is asking for everyone's input.

Ms. Wallach asked if a graphic designer had designed the proposed new flag. Mayor Fiala replied, " Yes". He added that they mentioned the city pin, but he didn't see too many (being worn) around this table. Mr. Ferrara said he doesn't see too many flags either.

Mr. Sidoti said taking it and running with it is one thing. He said, as a high school principal, if people did things arbitrarily, people wouldn't like them and wouldn't have buy in. His greatest fear is that if we don't have the buy in from Council that this flag is important, then he says let's not have a flag. The question is how do we get ownership and buy in. Maybe we need a timeline to have designs and come back to the citizens.

Mayor Fiala suggested a few members get together and design the flag and have some input into this.

Ms. Rosenberg saw an interesting article that came out in Kansas when they redesigned the flag as a community building project. They picked out things that were meaningful and then offered residents, designers, etc to submit a flag. The chosen design was purchased and then made available to the community.

Mr. DeLeone said he looked at the old flag, which was made before the age of computers. He said now any third grader can get on a computer and design a flag. He is not putting that design down, he thinks it needs more.

Mr. Turner said a cavalier approach should not be taken. It has meaning and represents the community. He said Mayor Fiala brought this up because it has meaning. It can help define what we feel as a community. Let's do what's right and come up with the best outcome for the community.

Mayor Fiala suggests the formation of a committee.

Valerie Landis, a Kent resident, approached the microphone and said there was a famous Ted talk about the key elements of a flag. We should take those tips, have a committee, have the community involved. Put them out to the city and get input from the community. It is very important and it does define the city. She referenced the flag of the City of Chicago. It is the pride of the City. She would love to be a part of the committee or group. She will get people there and have a flag that means something.

Kenneth Crookston sent an email and read the following statement:

"I am very interested in participating or at very least being present during the discussion of the city flag. While I am not an expert in any way, I am an avid fan of vexology and design, and have been vocal about the desire for a flag for the city of Kent for quite some time. Flags can be an exciting opportunity for a community- and the chance for unparalleled positive branding for the city. There are excellent examples of cities and towns that have developed fantastic branding and identification through the use of their flag imagery. It is not uncommon to see individuals from Chicago or Washington DC with flag stickers on their cars, patches on their backpacks or t-shirts brandishing their city pride. While Kent may not be the same size as these cities, the sense of community pride is unarguably similar. Kent, Ohio has an incredible sense of community- from those who have come here for university or local businesses, to those who have stayed after college, people who have moved here because they wanted to be a part of our local community, or people who have lived here their entire lives. You can see that pride when you drive around and see the familiar KENT sticker with the black squirrel on the rear of vehicles all over the state. People love this city and are proud to live here and spend time here. We are truly a gem along the Cuyahoga River and a special place; not only in Northeast Ohio, but across the entire state (no, I am not necessarily encouraging the addition of a squirrel on the flag!). It is not very often in this age that we have the opportunity

to start fresh- to develop a new image that can be used to identify ourselves as a community. Flag design is a four- or five-dimensional process. We have a tremendous past, present and future to draw from as well as geographical and social strengths that the people in this city can identify with. It would be incredible to drive through downtown with the storefront businesses and buildings joined together using a flag that represents the city as a whole- something that says active, healthy, fun, educated, welcoming and proud. A flag with colors that represent the community and/or our surroundings. With all of the work that has been done over the past several years to beautify downtown- this is an opportunity to connect- businesses, neighborhoods, schools, students- everyone. I hope that this discussion regarding a potential flag for the city of Kent considers some of these ideas and likely more that I haven't thought of. I would love to participate in any way possible in the development of a flag that can truly represent our community and be something that we can all look towards as a timeless and positive connection. Please feel free to email me or call me if you have any questions or thoughts."

Mr. Ferrara suggested we ask for several concepts that we wanted to see on the flag that represented Kent, items we want to see on the flag and put out as a contest. We could put out to the general population for people to vote on. We can establish guidelines on what they would like to see. It could be fun and provide enthusiasm for the city of Kent.

Mr. Sidoti said it's a wonderful process of bringing the community together. There needs to be a timeframe but let the community run with it. That way we will know it's a worthwhile project.

Mr. Turner said we are committee'd out. It is a chance to bring people together. All the different mindsets of sitting down will bring a better result at the end of the day. Trusting it in the hands of the community is the best way to go and then Council could review and make a decision about it. He is pleased to see the enthusiasm of the community.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said it would be exciting to have a selection process that people can get excited about. Perhaps there could be a contest and bring in a few designers. The process has to be clear. We don't need to put another group of people together to create designs, we've already had that.

Mr. Amrhein said that maybe we could use the Heritage Fest, where we could display the top flags and have the community vote on them.

Dave Ruller said he received a text from a Heart and Soul member that said that would be a great thing for them to work on. A big part of what they are doing is collecting stories of what people love about Kent. He said he threw that out as an idea, that he cannot speak for the Heart and Soul group, as that is a grass routes effort. They have marketing people and a large group of community members. They are trying to reboot after the pandemic, so maybe this is a way for them to get their name out there again.

Mr. Sidoti said that is a good idea and it should be a subcommittee of Heart and Soul. He added he did not want to take ownership away from those who want to engage in this. He said when we unveil the new flag, the old flag should be displayed at the new City Hall.

Ms. Rosenberg said he likes Mr. Ruller's suggestion about including people from Heart and Soul. It sounds like it's a group of people that include a lot of people that are civically engaged and involved in the city already. She added that Heart and Soul would be great at helping coordinate the people that love this city and come with something that is meaningful.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said the people who expressed interest in the room can work with Heart and Soul. She asked if Heart and Soul should be asked if they would be willing to take this on.

MOTION TO TO DISCUSS THE GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH A CITIZEN INVOLVED CONTEST TO DESIGN A FLAG MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Ferrara said we need to set parameters for what's important, make it a contest with community involvement, and fast track it to make it happen.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she would really like Heart and Soul to come to Council and say if this is something they would like to take on, instead of assigning it to them. That way we can have a further conversation about the structure and how much time they would need.

Mr. Sidoti said he wanted to make sure there was a connection made and that maybe Mr. Ruller could assign it to someone that they need to know who to contact.

Mr. Ruller said anyone that is interested can reach out to either Amy Wilkens or Patti Long.

Preparation for Consideration of NAACP New Committee Request to Address Race and Diversity in Kent (Ruller)

Mayor Fiala read from a prepared statement for the audience:

" Welcome everyone to tonight's meeting. I've asked for the City Manager's help to give us a refresher as Council considers the NAACP Request for a new "Commission on Racism, Hatred, and Diversity ". As the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, I thought it would help to have a better understanding of the efforts that are already underway so that we can make the most informed decision possible about how a new Commission could best fit with those efforts. I'm asking that tonight's meeting not be a general debate on racism - Council has already had many meetings where Council members, staff, and the public discussed the challenges of racism as a nation - and that led Council to publicly state their opposition to racism. I suggest that tonight we keep focused on what

we are doing so that we can be thoughtful about how a new Committee could fit into those efforts. After many hours of general discussion, we previously agreed that as distressing and disheartening - as national incidents of racism have been -- as Kent City Council, our efforts need to stay focused on actions we can do locally, that respond to the specific needs of our hometown, rather than trying to solve incidents in other cities. We all want the best for our community, so let's keep our focus on where it matters most and where we can have the most impact, here in Kent. We all care deeply about this issue and we want to fix it, but please remember cities legislate and regulate but they aren't equipped to drive cultural change. We are proud to do our part, but having the City mandate dignity and respect won't change hearts, and this issue ultimately rests with each one of us looking at ourselves and our relationships with one another - and that goes far beyond the reach of City Hall. Thank you. "

Mr. Ruller asked the City Council to reference a copy of the presentation that was presented to them tonight (**Attachment #1**). He said when you've been in the community for a long time, a lot has happened in that time. He said it felt like a good time to reflect back on what has been done over the years. There was a sincere request from the NAACP and the City wanted to give them a sincere answer. He added that this is his effort to give a high level overview of what has been going on in regards to this topic, as Council has been very committed to multicultural activities, and also to a broader scope to include seniors, LGBTQ and others.

Slide One: Mr. Ruller stated when he started at Kent, the first item he tackled was to review a stack of plans this community made. Diversity runs deep in the DNA of Kent's foundational principles of what it wants to be as a community.

Slide Two: We've carried this tradition on, having it in our annual goals and objectives and mission/vision statements. Everywhere we go, we say the greatest asset Kent has is its eclectic mix of people and we try to reflect that in our programs and services. In fact, the whole downtown was designed for people and meant to be a mixing bowl. We feel like this is what separates Kent from other places.

Slide Three: Most recently, Council had many public meetings from 2016 through 2018. He referenced the Covid pandemic coming after that. He said there was a lot of public discussion and we had a lot of meetings, conversations and dialogue, very specifically on various forms of racism. It has not been a topic Council has avoided.

Slide Four: He wanted to make sure everyone understood that City Council has been a very vocal advocate for a lot of multicultural values. He referenced a letter sent in response to the Orlando shooting stating we are at our best when we stand together. Some action items that came from this public commitment and from active local community members who spoke to Council with important ideas to be done. Within four to five months, legislation was passed for protective class status for LGBTQ communities.

Slide Five: Immigrant Support, refugee assistance was the topic on the next slide, showing a letter that was sent providing support for refugees. There is a welcoming city designation which was looked at. Like a lot of things, it is supposed to be a local community-led effort, so we took it as far as we could and then asked the community to work on it.

Slide Six: He then showed the Welcoming America website. A lot of their ideas centered around what cities can do to make their communities feel more welcome. We liked this idea because becoming a Welcoming City provided a template for cities to follow.

Slide Seven: He discussed the Refugee Resettlement project. When we started looking into this project, there was a change in the national administration dealing with refugees, and that put a chill on this effort.

Slide Eight: Senior Citizens have also been looked at by Council. When Melissa Long was on Council, she was very vocal about having a Senior Citizens Standing Committee. There were speakers brought in from other communities who gave great ideas. Ms. Long was very interested in getting a senior center in the community, which it does not have. Council declined having a committee on this topic because it felt we could do as much good working directly with seniors. Ms. Susel, Community Development Director, has provided direct assistance for seniors.

Slide Nine and Ten: City Council passed a resolution to become a compassionate city. The city looked into this and some of the steps require a grass roots-led organization, not led by the City.

Slide Eleven: June 2020, the City passed a resolution condemning racism and stating that Black Lives Matter. Chief Shearer has had many meetings with many groups at Kent State and others and continues to have an open dialogue with them. Many conversations that came up were about police training. They have had Diversity Inclusion and Equity and Deescalation and Implicit Bias training. The police have also been equipped with body cameras after Council approved funding for them. He also mentioned the Police's Citizen Academy and urged anyone to attend the next academy in the fall. He added it is a great way to develop a relationship with the police department.

Slide Twelve: Mr. Ruller explained that similarly, a resolution was adopted in regards to health equity in policies in September 2020. It addressed systemic racism and took a look at if it is built into our policies without knowing, built into training, etc. Both the police and fire have used a third party to make sure they have fair and equitable policies, which cost around \$85,000 to do so. There have been changes in City recruitment to try to broaden the efforts and recruit a more diverse workforce and members on Boards and Commissions. Council has had the same challenge on its Boards and Commissions as the City has had with recruitment. There have been a series of internal meetings to see where we can tweak the system to try to broaden the net. The 21st Century Policing Initiative was created and outlined under President Obama, and was adopted in

the State of Ohio, which lists best practices in policing. Chief Shearer reports that Kent Police are meeting 26 out of 28 of the best practices and is working on reaching all 28.

Slide Thirteen: Mr. Ruller then went on to discuss previous efforts to develop a multicultural commission. A subcommittee was formed which was comprised of Mr. Roger Sidoti, Mr. Robin Turner, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and Mr. Ruller. There were a number of meetings and the recommendation was not to develop a commission but to move forward with living our values through our community. This led to the "One Kent Initiative". This was not meant to be a city-led initiative.

Slide Fourteen: Mr. Ruller went around to all of the community and presented these ideas and stated this was not meant to be a city-led initiative but rather one of its residents.

Slide Fifteen: He highlighted a letter that was sent to Congress and stated the commitment is real and that Council has been consistent in its efforts.

Slide Sixteen: We had a lot of energy and didn't really know how to channel it. We came across the Community Heart and Soul group, which is used in over 100 communities, in 19 states, including Ohio. He particularly liked Heart and Soul because he thought it was a good fit for the size of our community.

Slide Seventeen: He lighted a personal story of a Heart and Soul member and how it changed one community.

Slide Eighteen: Council passed a resolution to support Heart and Soul and its coaches training local residents on how to run the initiative.

Slide Nineteen- Twenty two: Mr. Ruller reviewed the Heart and Soul meetings in 2019-2021. He reviewed the Kent Heart and Soul Mission and Vision statements and its progress. They've done countless interviews with the community and narrowed down themes. It is an eleven-step process to go through and Kent is currently collecting stories and distilling them down into themes. We are in the exploration of your community stage, with the next steps are where tough conversations are had. A common base is first established.

Slide Twenty Three: Foundational values throughout time in Council . The majority of what we do is direct communication between the Council, staff and its citizens. As we get into the NAACP request, please understand it would be slightly different. It would be doing something different with this group. He stated he was not trying to lead them in any particular direction, but wanted them to recognize this. It relies more on third party communication with citizens, by relying on folks on the NAACP's proposed commission to interpret what they are hearing. He said we are small enough as a community to get direct feedback from the community.

Slide Twenty Four: In regards to City Boards and Commissions, there is a legal

responsibility and liability. Any committee under Council has to be very careful regarding lawsuits. The best commissions and committees have really well written guard rails and have a really clear mission. An example was given regarding the Fair Housing Citizens Committee, which made rulings on disputes between landlords and tenants. Landlords were challenging these rulings in court and the rulings were against the City, stating you cannot have people without expertise passing regulations and making rulings. As a result, Council eliminated the Committee and uses a third party to handle these cases. There have also been instances on the Architecture Review Board. We also have a challenge of getting Board and Commission applicants, with many of them having vacancies. We have had good success with direct community engagement and asked Council to consider if they say yes to one group, what does that do to the requests others have made.

Slide Twenty Five: Overall, Council has made public commitments with efforts in motion. We have had public engagement, have had areas of progress and a body of work to stand behind. He added that community building is never done and we always have room to improve.

Slide Twenty Six : He asked where a committee fits into this? Committees are best at distilling competing voices and building consensus. Sometimes they are good at regrouping and refocusing. They need a clear mission, goals and tasks and need well-defined expectations, clear ground rules for participation, deliverables, timeframe, guidelines.

Slide Twenty Seven: Mr. Ruller reviewed the list of items he feels need to be clarified before moving forward. He said he does not know enough to provide a recommendation to Council and would need to know more. He said data collection is very important and encouraged them not to rely on anecdotal evidence. Those collecting the data should not be those who review the results to avoid bias.

Mr. Ruller said Council has done a lot already and there is room for more to be done. He thinks it is helpful to take a moment and see how far we've come. He then asked for questions from councilmembers.

Mayor Fiala thanked Mr. Ruller for the time spent in putting together this presentation and educating them again.

Mr. Ferrara said in years past Mr. Ruller was able to quantify the time Council spent on certain items and was wondering what percentage of time Council has spent on this topic.

Mr. Ruller said that since Covid hit, he had not reviewed 2020 and 2021, but a lot of this predates Covid.the pandemic. What we categorize as "social conversation". He said he couldn't remember the exact percentage, but in the years where there were a lot of these conversations, social areas were number one in regards to time in committee.

There were no further questions from Council or the audience.

Mayor Fiala said Council will regroup next month and that there is a letter on file from the NAACP, who made a proposal.

Board and Commission Interviews (Fiala/Wilkens)

Mayor Fiala said there are two openings on the Shade Tree Commission that will be interviewed. He asked Ms. Wilkens to call up the first applicant.

Ms. Rebekkah Berryhill approached the podium and introduced herself to City Council . Ms. Berryhill has been a member of the community since 1991.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked her why she feels it is important to volunteer to develop the urban forest here.

Ms. Berryhill said she received a degree in Education from Kent State University but manages the Grounds Department at Kent State University. She learned as she went, starting with a student position at the University and thought it would just be a summer job. It ended up turning into a full time position where she could finish her degree with no debt. Through the whole process she got a lot of good information from her coworkers and her manager and it's been a constant learning process. One of her biggest takeaways from it all is an appreciation of what trees do for us and what we can do for trees. She just hosted a young tree training seminar at the University, brought in by our former urban forester. She said we have to view trees in our urban forest almost as pets. If you put your pet in a corner and give it food and water and leave it, it may grow a little, but you need to nurture it to develop that symbiotic relationship. We are really putting harsh conditions on our trees, so we have to appreciate them and see what they actually do for us as people and our culture.

Ms. Rosenberg says she has favorite trees in her neighborhood and asked if Ms. Berryhill has any favorite trees or least favorite. Ms. Bwerryhill said we have a lot of oaks throughout the community in the south central area. She loves the oak on Horning Road and the huge oak trees throughout town. She does not like Bradford Pear trees, which are stinky and break easily. There are neighborhoods she walks into that she feels a draw towards. She would like to see a little more diversity, but not crazy ornamental trees, but shade trees appropriate for where they are planted.

Mr. Sidoti said he loved her story and her journey. He asked if she would see her role on the Shade Tree Commission as an educator. Ms. Berryhill said it would be symbiotic. She relies on experts in her position but hopes that she won't be a huge advisor but will ferret out information when needed and rely on the arborists for the big structural items.

Mayor Fiala asked how she would redesign her street (Needham). She said she would purchase a house on the other side of the street where there are no wires. There was laughter from the audience. She added that if she could

dream, it would be to move the wires underground. She would like to see oak trees, which are a keystone due to their longevity and that they provide for animals and insects, and then supplement them with native trees.

Mayor Fiala thanked Ms. Berryhill and Ms. Wilkens called up the next applicant, Mr. Jason Knowles.

Mr. Jason Knowles approached the podium and introduced himself to City Council. He moved to the Kent area 30 years ago, originally living in Stow, right out of school and became employed by ACRT. He fully intended on working there, gaining experience, and moving back to Illinois, but he stayed in the area. He eventually went to work for the Davey Resource Group and now works for himself as Knowles Municipal Forestry. He is a consulting urban forester in NE Ohio. He helps communities manage trees. He has served on many Shade Tree Commissions, many times as a job. It's been thirty years and he would like to be more involved with the community.

Mr. Ferrara asked if his desire to get involved was due to a perceived need. Mr. Knowles said it was more to get involved and that he knows many mayors, council people and city managers in NE Ohio than he does in his own community and would like to change that.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if he had a specific tree or grouping of trees that are his favorite. He said he gets this question a lot, and is constantly asked what to plant in certain areas. He usually answers that question with a series of questions to get at what the right tree would be to plant in an area. His favorite tree is in his yard. He planted a Kentucky Coffee Tree on the back of his deck, which is a large shade tree. He said there is good and bad with the tree, as it drops seed pods and long sticks, but he said he has kids to pick those up.

Mayor Fiala asked what he would do to improve the trees on the street he lives on. He said power lines are always a problem when trying to plant and grow trees under them and said larger tree lawns with no power lines would be ideal. Because of the limitations we have, he prefers to plant smaller trees that would grow under power lines. He added that when you say you are an arborist, you are either a butcher or a tree hugger, and he is somewhere in the middle. Mayor Fiala asked if he taps maple trees for syrup and Mr. Knowles said he does not, but has friends that do this.

Ms. Wilkens said there was a third applicant, Maggie Margalies, but she was not in attendance.

Mayor Fiala said they would vote in two weeks at the March 16, 2022 meeting and thanked the applicants for applying.

Community Development Committee (Chair Kuhar/Vice-Chair Rosenberg)

Celebrate Kent/Diversity Grants Review

Ms. Bridget Susel said this request came from Council to look at ways to shift the focus to supporting grants that promote diversity. She looked at examples that were forwarded to her by Council as well as others. Two ways to support diversity with two existing grant programs that would support the approaches. The Celebrate Kent! grant has a \$15000 allocation. She feels they could do a carve out that would allow them to support an event that was focused on promoting diversity. There would need to be criteria established and we could fund this as we fund other events. A modification of the guidelines would allow us to support a larger group. She encouraged diversity to be looked at broadly and they would need to show how it is being done. Ms. Susel added that there are also smaller grants within the City to support a project or initiative. Funding would be accepted on a year round basis and these funds could be carved out of the Neighborhood Grants Program which actually lines up with an initiative already included in this program. The concept of a grass-based initiative sounds great, but getting it to operationalize is often difficult, so this would be great because there are some educators in the community doing small events out of their own pocket. We put parameters within the existing Neighborhood Grants Program that would allow them to focus on a diverse project. She recommends we look at diversity and apply it broadly to ethnicity, gender, disability, race, socioeconomic status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, and culture. Applicants would need to show they are trying to promote and educate on diversity in any of those broad areas. Guidelines would be established to make sure they are establishing the target. She said we used to have an International Meal but had moved out of Kent. It was challenging to support an event that wasn't held in Kent. This would bring us back to that. She added that with the Neighborhood Grants Program, the typical funding has been very parochial and focused, and thinks it would be great to reach out to neighborhoods to encourage use across all socioeconomic statuses. She said it would also be okay if it was incorporated as a component of a larger event, for example at the Heritage Fest. She would ask it not be provided for political candidates or issues, that we need to make sure we are doing this for the right reasons.

Mr. Sidoti asked about the statement made about the difficulty getting people involved and how we could get the word out. Ms. Susel said the City's website could be used; the Tree City Bulletin, and even get word out through the Portager. She said we would do the best we could. She said we could promote and encourage it, but it's hard to get the initiative going and for people to organize, especially during the Covid Pandemic. Organizations will contact her office with ideas and assume they are going to organize it, but that defeats the whole purpose of the programs. Grass root initiatives need to be driven by the community themselves and it is hoped if they are offered the opportunity, they will do so.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Michael DeLeone and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Sidoti said that this is something we continue to try to do and doesn't think it is the Council's position to organize the efforts but to support and find ways to help those in the community to and appreciate what Ms. Susel has done.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said we really want to see more educational and social activities in Kent.

PY2022 CDBG Proposed Projects

Ms. Susel reported that the City receives annual Block Grant money from HUD. Since we haven't received the formal allocation, we estimate the amount and put it into the report. She went through each item in the report, starting with Walnut Street Reconstruction, then the Neighborhood Policing Program in Franklin Crossings, Furnace Inspection/targeted replacement program, homeless shelter services, and giving Family and Community Services for property work on Silver Meadow properties. Funding will also go to Coleman Health Services, Ohio Small Business Development Center for Small Business Counseling, Community Development Administration and the Fair Housing Consultant- Fair Housing Services.

She added that there is no motion needed on this item tonight, as there needs to be a 30-day comment period and a second public hearing, which is scheduled for May 18, 2022.

Mr. John Thomas, a Kent resident, came up to the microphone and asked how much money was stipulated to Family and Community Services for the maintenance of their five to six duplexes and triplexes they manage. Ms. Susel replied they are anticipating \$50,000 that will be allocated for the three duplexes and the triplexes.

Land Use Committee (Chair Ferrara/Vice- Chair Shaffer Bish)

Acknowledgement and Correction of Parcels Excluded in 1917 Annexation

The Law Department received a request from a homeowner in regards to this agenda item. Ms. Susel reported that this was based on a 1917 annexation petition with the language in the petition stating the southern most point of the parcel is in the center of the Cuyahoga River and that the land should be included in the tax map in the jurisdiction in the city of Kent. Ms. Susel said she talked to Franklin Twp. who had also received a letter from the owner as well. They approved the change at their meeting last week. The city of Kent will be affirming that the land in those two parcels (that are underwater and unbuildable) will be changed.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if this would be us in a situation where any refunds

would need to be given. Ms. Susel said, no, and that this was reviewed by Ms. Hope Jones, the Law Director.

MOTION TO AFFIRM THE AGREEMENT AND THE TWO PARCELS ARE INCLUDED, WITH EMERGENCY MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Ms Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee (Chair Sidoti/ Vice-Chair Wallach)

Main Street Kent Art and Wine Festival (Bridget Susel)

Main Street Kent's annual fundraiser, which is its largest and most heavily attended event, is being relocated to North Water Street because of the closure of Franklin for the outdoor seating area. Signatures were obtained by tenants on North Water on the West and East sides and included in the permit application submitted to the City Manager's office.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE LOCATION CHANGE OF THE MAIN STREET KENT ART AND WINE FESTIVAL MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Water Service Request (Jim Bowling)

Mr. Bowling addressed City Council in regards to a request received from a new commercial establishment looking to locate in the Franklin JEDD just in front of the ACME Supermarket, just west of Pizza Hut. They are requesting water service from the City.

MOTION TO APPROVE WATER SERVICE REQUEST WITH AN EMERGENCY CLAUSE MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Shaffer said she just read this company had signed the JEDD agreement, so she is very supportive of this motion.

Finance Committee (Chair DeLeone/Vice-Chair Wallach)

Surplus Fitness Equipment to Auction

Ms. Angela Manley said she is requesting permission to put several fitness equipment items up for auction due to the closing of the Parks and Recreation Fitness Center that was located at 1205 W. Main Street. The Parks Board voted to close that facility at the end of 2021. It is a leased property and the City needs to vacate the property, which will occur by April 30th. They are looking to auction off items in the building so they can move the items and turn over the lease.

Ms. Wallach asked if it was not a very successful endeavor. Ms. Manley said when she was coming to the Department, it was one area she was concerned about. She had previously managed a 55,000 square foot recreation and fitness center for fourteen years and looking at this space, it had a lot working against it. It was very limited on space and Parks and Recreation did not own the building, so there was a high lease payment. It wasn't attractive to the community due to Planet Fitness and the Kent Barbell Club being located down the street, as well as the KSU Student Recreation Center. She added it was losing about \$65,000 a year since its inception in 2013. So, the decision was made by the Board to close it.

Mr. Sidoti asked if there would be an online auction. Ms. Manley replied it would be listed on govdeals.net. Any profits will go back into the Parks and Recreation Department's budget.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if they would consider putting the proceeds into Pickle Ball courts. Ms. Manley replied, "Possibly", and referenced the Master Plan study that is currently being done. They will need to take a look at where that would rank in the community. The intent right now is to use any proceeds from this auction to pay down the debt the Department owes the City for the trail project.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SURPLUS FITNESS EQUIPMENT AUCTION
MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. DeLeone and CARRIED
by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Hope Jones asked Ms. Angela Manley, if any of the items listed to be auctioned, might not sell. Ms. Manley said that is possible. Ms. Jones asked if it would be a good idea to include in the ordinance, if approved, that Council authorizes the Parks and Recreation Department to donate or dispose of any items not sold, as they see fit. Ms. Manley said that would be a very good idea and greatly appreciated it.

IT Support Contract Renewal

Mr. Ruller introduced the new IT Manager, Mr. Nick Cecil. He said Mr. Cecil was instrumental with the new police station, doing a lot of the work needed to help get the station up and running. He is back as the Manager of IT.

Mr. Nick Cecil approached the podium and thanked Mr. Ruller, adding he is excited to be here with the City. He said the initial three-year contract that was signed with Quality IP had ended and this is a single year renewal of the original contract, with no cost increase.

Mr. Ferrara asked if we would need to bid out next year. Mr. Cecil said they are reviewing the options for what it would be after one year, but for the time being it is just a single-year contract. He said right now, many of the contracts that are coming up for renewal are only being renewed for a single year in order to give

him the opportunity to see where the City stands.

Mr. Sidoti asked if the administration was happy with Quality IP. Mr. Ruller said it is and that it gives continuity with the staff. Mr. Cecil knows a lot already, but it helps having people working with him during his transition.

MOTION TO APPROVE IT SUPPORT CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH AN EMERGENCY CLAUSE MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Tracy Wallach and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Cecil thanked City Council.

Budget Amendment

Ms. Rhonda Hall came before Council to ask for approval for the appropriation amendments requested in a memo dated February 23, 2022.

MOTION TO APPROVE BUDGET AMENDMENTS MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

There were no further items on the Finance Committee agenda and the meeting adjourned.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION to Discuss Board and Commission Applicants MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Mr. DeLeone. Roll call was taken:

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Michael DeLeone, Garret Ferrara, Gwen Rosenberg, Heidi Shaffer Bish, Roger Sidoti, Robin Turner, Tracy Wallach

Absent: John Kuhar

MOTION TO EXCUSE MR. KUHAR MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Mr. Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO RETURN TO THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING made by Ms. Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

The City Council Committee Meetings adjourned at 9:15 pm.



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

*City Council
Multi-Cultural
Review*



March 2, 2022

"To become a city that celebrates its diversity with opportunities to play together and involve citizens in the betterment of the community."

1993 Kent Vision Plan



• Kent •

"The most important element in the city is its people...with a social vitality that form a community...living in dignity."

2003 Bicentennial Plan



Kent's Mission Statement

To make Kent the city of choice in northeast Ohio for residents, businesses, visitors and students seeking to connect to their community in a personally meaningful and enriching way.



Strategic Goal

Communities Within the City

"to strengthen social bonds and enhance the value of people & City neighborhoods"

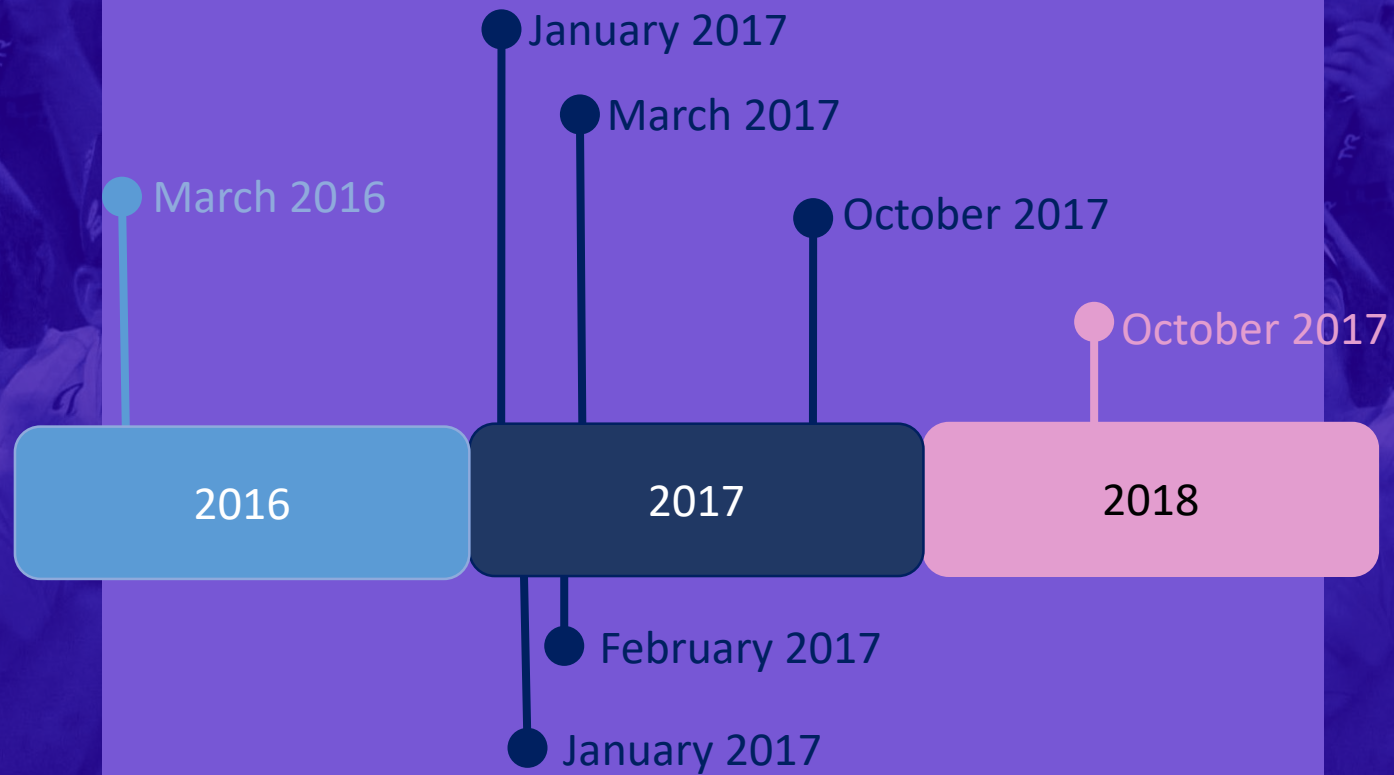
Objectives:

- Strengthen and build effective partnerships with the City's diverse community; celebrate and capitalize on Kent's diversity.
- Provide services and programs for a multi-cultural audience.
- Enhance neighborhood identity and neighborhood pride.
- Develop programs that encourage neighborhood based initiatives and planning.
- Increase awareness, participation and compliance with neighborhood code issues.
- Promote rehabilitation and sustainable infill development.
- Partner with Kent State University to revitalize campus border neighborhoods.
- Pursue more senior housing options and expand senior living resources in Kent.
- Strive to improve the rate of home ownership in Kent.



"Kent's greatest asset is the eclectic mix of people that call Kent home."

Council Multi-Cultural Meetings



LGBTQ+ Community

- Added Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation to “Protected Class” Status
- Unlawful to Discriminate in Employment
- Unlawful to Discriminate in Housing
- Unlawful to Discriminate in Public Accommodations (e.g., businesses)*

July 2016

Council Public Commitments

OPEN LETTER: Standing Up for Orlando and One Another

In the aftermath of the tragic shooting on June 12th in Orlando, Florida, the Honorable Mayor and members of the Kent City Council join the nation in disbelief, sorrow, and anger over the latest act of senseless violence motivated by prejudice and intolerance.

As Kent’s City leaders we chose to serve on City Council to help make our hometown a better place and although Orlando is over 1,000 miles outside of Kent’s City limits, we still felt inspired to do something, say something, to stand-up for people separated from us in miles but connected in spirit.

The Kent community knows that bad things can happen in good places and we offer this letter to show our support for the people of Orlando -- and we hope that by taking a public stand for universal acceptance we can in our own small way, diminish the hatred that leads to inexplicable acts of violence.

As Council men and women we know how hard it is to legislate civil behavior but the profound loss experienced in Orlando should be a wake-up call to community leaders everywhere to not let their hometowns be held hostage to the worn out political rhetoric that serves no public good in tearing us apart. Instead, let’s champion our common ground, our shared humanity, and the fundamental rights of each and every one of us to live without fear because of where we came from, what we look like, or what we choose to believe in.

That’s America at its best and that’s what inspired our Founding Fathers over 200 years ago. That’s more than our civic duty, it’s a promise we make to each other every day. It’s our turn to make sure we’re all living up to that promise.

As a college town that celebrates its eclectic mix of residents, the Mayor and Members of Kent City Council are profoundly saddened by the acts of mass violence that have taken so many from friends and families, far too soon. Council mourns for those who have lost loved ones and for those who have been injured in body or mind by this tragedy.

Our greatest strength as a community is rooted in the diversity of the people who call Kent home, and as public officials, we stand united in rejecting intolerance. We hope our stance will influence the decision-makers at the State and Federal levels to examine policies that will protect all populations, but more importantly, we hope our comments will remind everyone that we are at our best as small towns, big cities, and as a nation, when we stand together.

“taking a public stand for universal acceptance”

“we are at our best, when we stand together.”

Immigrant Support

- Welcoming City Designation
- International Institute of Akron

March 2017

Council Public Commitments

OPEN LETTER: We were all strangers once.

Over the course of the last year the Mayor and Members of the Kent City Council have watched with growing concern as the debate over immigration laws has taken on undertones of a nationally sanctioned intolerance policy in the name of public safety.

Public safety will always be paramount to the City's mission but it's to protect and serve all equally, not a select few -- and never at the expense of the rights and liberties of those people that may not fit a particular profile for who they are, what they believe, what they look like, or where they're from.

Throughout history that's proven to be bad public policy and a prescription for failure. Kent endured a tragedy in 1970 to learn that lesson in the hardest way possible and we will not let it be forgotten.

This emotionally charged issue has become a flashpoint, testing the very foundation of what it means to be a community. For Kent, community is found in the coming together of our differences in a shared hometown. Those differences are our most valued and vital attributes, not a series of dividing lines.

Many faces, names and cultures have shaped Kent through the years, making the community stronger and more resilient thanks to a diversified population that contributes its own unique blend of skills, insights and resources to meet the endless challenges of serving the public good.

Our ability to rise to the next challenge is rooted in a belief that whatever we do, we do it better when we do it together. Kent has relied on talented and caring people to step up to support their community in times of need, and Kent's leadership is returning the favor, rallying the community behind its people now when they need it most.

As home to Kent State University, the small town of Kent Ohio is blessed with an abundant mix of people. Kent's story is about people living, learning, connecting and growing together, celebrating our most interesting differences with just as much enthusiasm as our common bonds.

Not everyone can speak all of the languages heard in Kent but shared backyards and buffet lines have proven to be a great teacher, revealing the universality of a smile, a wave, a nod of appreciation, or a laugh. It turns out that no translation is necessary to make a personal connection, and personal connections lead strangers to become neighbors, and neighbors into a community.

From its early pioneer days through to May 4, 1970, Kent has been a small community with a big impact. Whether it's changing the course of a war or working to change the world, Kent has a reputation as a place that makes a difference. The difference maker in Kent has always been its people. That will never change.

As the national debate rages, the Mayor and Members of Kent City Council promise to keep working for all people in Kent Ohio, in the hope of making the world a better place because it is the best hometown of all.

“to protect and
serve all
equally”

“personal connections
lead strangers to
become neighbors,
and neighbors into a
community”

WELCOMING
AMERICA



Contact

Store

DONATE



WELCOMING NETWORK

INITIATIVES

NEWS & RESOURCES

ABOUT

What is Welcoming?



What We Do

WHAT WE DO

HISTORY

EDUCATION SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES

IMMIGRATION LEGAL
SERVICES

INTEGRATION

INTERPRETING &
TRANSLATION

**REFUGEE
RESETTLEMENT**

SOCIAL SERVICES



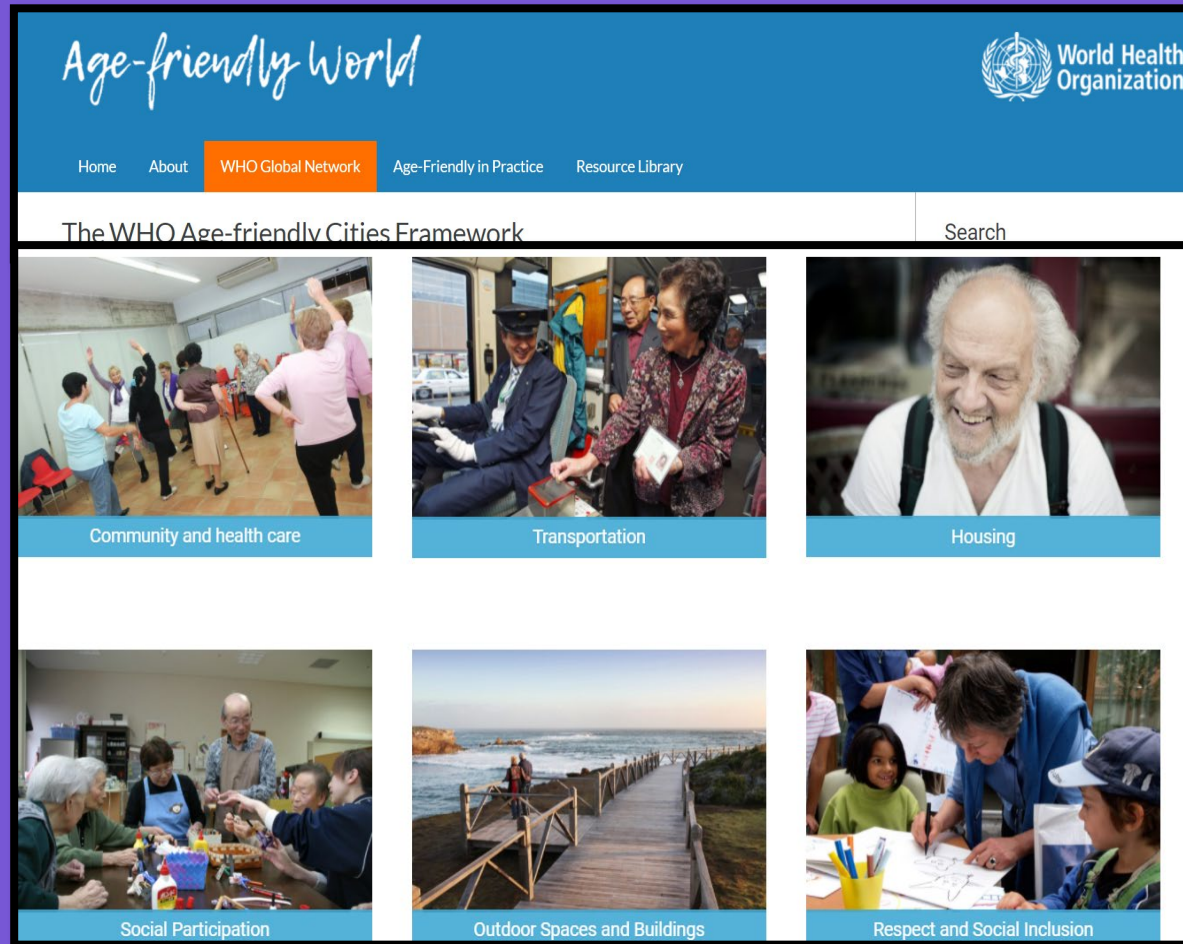
Refugee Resettlement

Senior Citizens

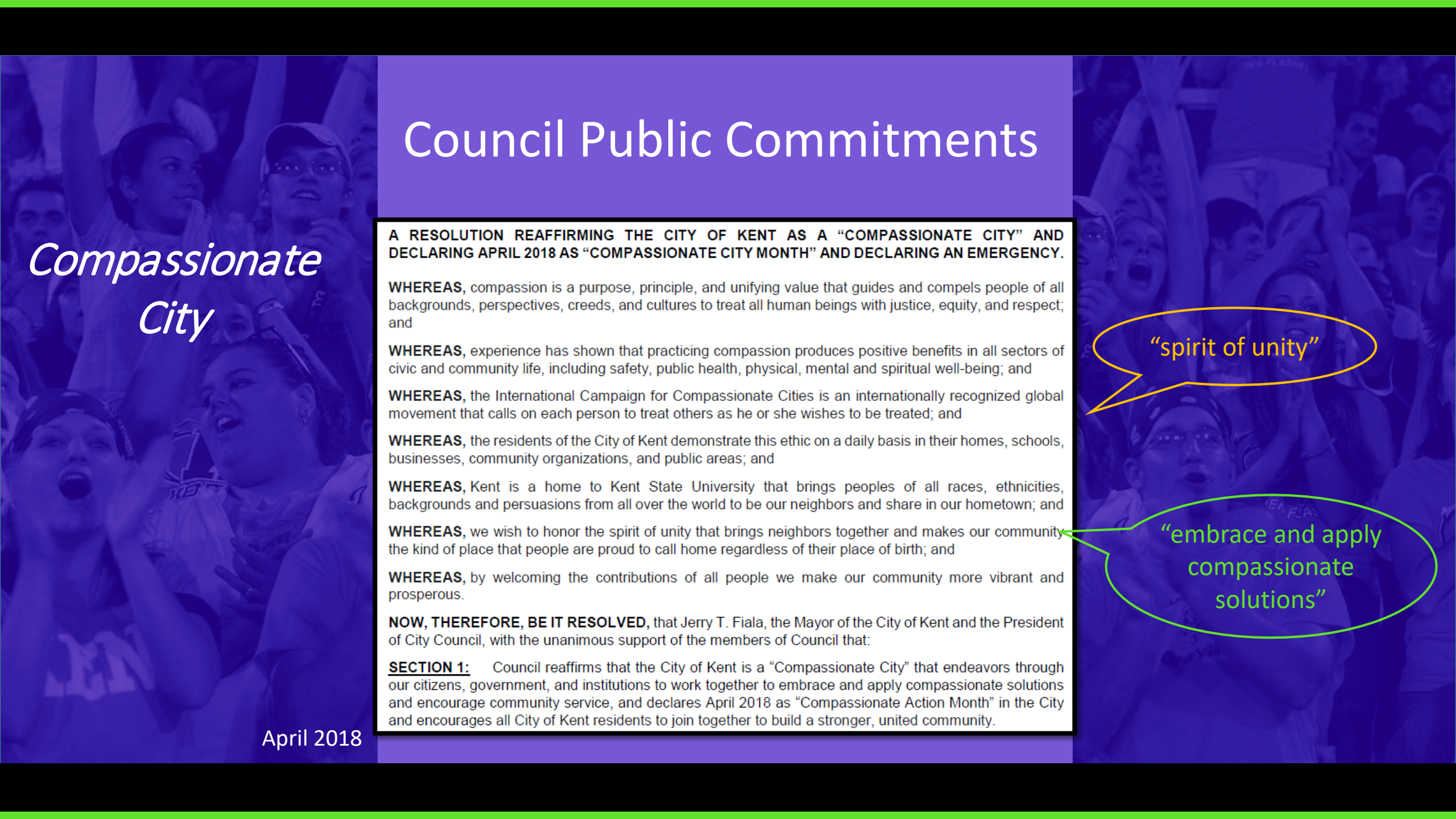
- Senior Center Presentations
- Motion to Form a Senior Citizens Standing Committee

Oct 2017

Council Public Commitments



“to consider the budgetary and administrative requirements of forming a Committee for senior citizens.”



Compassionate City

April 2018

Council Public Commitments

A RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING THE CITY OF KENT AS A “COMPASSIONATE CITY” AND DECLARING APRIL 2018 AS “COMPASSIONATE CITY MONTH” AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, compassion is a purpose, principle, and unifying value that guides and compels people of all backgrounds, perspectives, creeds, and cultures to treat all human beings with justice, equity, and respect; and

WHEREAS, experience has shown that practicing compassion produces positive benefits in all sectors of civic and community life, including safety, public health, physical, mental and spiritual well-being; and

WHEREAS, the International Campaign for Compassionate Cities is an internationally recognized global movement that calls on each person to treat others as he or she wishes to be treated; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the City of Kent demonstrate this ethic on a daily basis in their homes, schools, businesses, community organizations, and public areas; and

WHEREAS, Kent is a home to Kent State University that brings peoples of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds and persuasions from all over the world to be our neighbors and share in our hometown; and

WHEREAS, we wish to honor the spirit of unity that brings neighbors together and makes our community the kind of place that people are proud to call home regardless of their place of birth; and

WHEREAS, by welcoming the contributions of all people we make our community more vibrant and prosperous.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Jerry T. Fiala, the Mayor of the City of Kent and the President of City Council, with the unanimous support of the members of Council that:

SECTION 1: Council reaffirms that the City of Kent is a “Compassionate City” that endeavors through our citizens, government, and institutions to work together to embrace and apply compassionate solutions and encourage community service, and declares April 2018 as “Compassionate Action Month” in the City and encourages all City of Kent residents to join together to build a stronger, united community.

“spirit of unity”

“embrace and apply
compassionate
solutions”

[HOME](#)[CHARTER▼](#)[COMMUNITIES▼](#)[SECTORS▼](#)[PROGRAMS▼](#)[ABOUT▼](#)[BLOG](#)[Store](#)[DONATE](#)

OBSERVE THE 40 DAYS OF PEACE CAMPAIGN

Join millions affirming and acting on the Charter for Compassion while leading a more compassionate life.

**COMMIT TO
COMPASSION**

Black Lives Matter

- **Community Dialogues**
KSU Black United Students, KSU Undergraduate Student Government, Collaborative Community Committee, NAACP, Kent InterFaith Alliance
- **Police Department Training**
Ohio "Diversity, Inclusion, Equity" (new)
De-escalation Training (ongoing)
Implicit Bias Training
- **Police Body Cameras**
- **Citizens Police Academy**
11 Years
180 Citizen Graduates

June 2020

Council Public Commitments

DRAFT No. 2020-60

A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THAT BLACK LIVES MATTER AND THAT THE CITY OF KENT IS COMMITTED TO CONDEMNING RACISM AND ENCOURAGING A COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL.

WHEREAS, the City of Kent, Ohio, its Mayor and City Council are deeply saddened by the tragic events that continue to occur across our country between police and people of color; and

WHEREAS, racism and hate have no place in Kent, and we are committed to working actively against all forms of racism and injustice. We are committed to ensuring that the Constitutional rights of every person who lives, works, and visits our great City are protected; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council vow to work with and support the Kent Police Department in its continuing commitment to fight against racism and treat everyone with respect and dignity regardless of race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or color; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of Kent, Portage County, State of Ohio, that:

Section 1. The Mayor and City Council of the City of Kent, Ohio stand steadfast with all citizens of Kent against racism and reaffirm the City's commitment to fighting for racial justice and human and civil rights for all.

Section 2. The Mayor, and City Council are committed to engaging in continuing communication and dialog with the community to address issues of systemic racism and intolerance and their impact on individuals and on the community as a whole.

Section 3. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 4. This Resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

"racism and hate have no place in Kent."

"continuing communication and dialogue"

Health Equity

- Fire and Police Policy Updates
3rd Party Independent Review
Procedures and Policy Updates (\$84,000)
- Changes in City Recruitment
- 21st Century Policing &
The Ohio Collaborative
26 of 28 Best Practices in place in Kent

Sept 2020

Council Public Commitments

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-80

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A “HEALTH EQUITY IN ALL POLICIES” (HEIAP) APPROACH TO PUBLIC POLICY THAT INTENTIONALLY CONSIDERS THE HEALTH IMPACT OF ALL PROPOSED LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS PRIOR TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, the HEIAP approach takes a broader view of what creates positive health outcomes, e.g. zoning, transportation, housing, education, public safety or environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, Racism has been declared a public crisis by the Kent City Health Department Board of Health. Acknowledging Racism may be intentional or unintentional, is both systemic and institutional, and weakens our community instead of strengthening it; and

WHEREAS, the Social Determinants of Health which are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age are impacted negatively by Racism and racist practices; and

WHEREAS, Racism is a multifactorial problem requiring the combined efforts of many agencies and departments to address the injustices that have been entrenched for decades; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kent is committed to actions to improve disparities, inequalities, and injustices in a thoughtful and methodical approach. A foundation of this work will be “Health Equity in all Policies” Policy. This will focus a lens on all legislation, ordinances, programs and projects to look for and root out unintended consequences which could perpetuate or worsen disparities and correct them to equalize and improve principles and practices allowing for the greater health and well-being of all our community members.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Kent, Portage County, Ohio, at least three-fourths (3/4) of all members elected thereto concurring:

“consider the health impact of all proposed legislation”

“to improve disparities, inequalities, injustices in a thoughtful... approach”

Council Public Commitments

Multi Cultural Commission

MOTION TO REFER TO ADMINISTRATION TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A MULTI-CULTURAL COMMISSION made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Mr. Ferrara.

Mr. Sidoti stated he'd like to see the City meet the criteria for a Compassionate City, build a community with a capacity for eclecticism, utilize research based tools and find out "what gives life to our community". He'd also like to look at the Sustainability Commission, recruitment for private and public sector employees which go much deeper than "race".

Mr. Ferrara agreed with Mr. Sidoti and prefers the term "multi-dimensional" v. "multi-cultural". He would like to find out what defines the community and focus on the positive. Mr. Ferrara would love to see the City use the KSU resources and come together on this project.

Mr. Turner would like to see more than just talk, and see policies of "uplift". A Compassionate City would make everybody better. The University is a tremendous asset full of knowledgeable experts. He says "Go for it" and would like to see consensus of Council to take on new challenges.

"build community with a capacity for eclecticism...that goes deeper than race"

"do more than just talk...see policies of uplift"

Sept 2016

Community Engagement

Immigration

Neighborhoods

Social Equity

Cultural Diversity

Senior Living

Trans-Gender

Community Pride

*Living our values
through community*



building community for all the right reasons.

"One Kent" Initiative



*Small town,
global village*





“Within each child awaits the future of our communities. Please join us in recognizing the enormity of that responsibility and be an agent for change with us.”

Kent City Council letter to Congress.



Heart & Soul

— Community —
Heart & Soul[®]

Home

About Us ▾



Used in over
100
communities

In 19 States,
including
Ohio



Building Next Generation Leadership

Heart & Soul

Star Poole

*Community Heart & Soul Volunteer
School Board Member*

— Community —
Heart & Soul



Kent Heart & Soul

June 2018

Council Public Commitments

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-69

A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE CITY OF KENT'S COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNITY HEART & SOUL PROJECT IN KENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, the City of Kent, while a desirable place to live with a long history of welcoming all, sees an opportunity for an even stronger future for its culture, economy and residents through participation in a Community Heart & Soul project; and

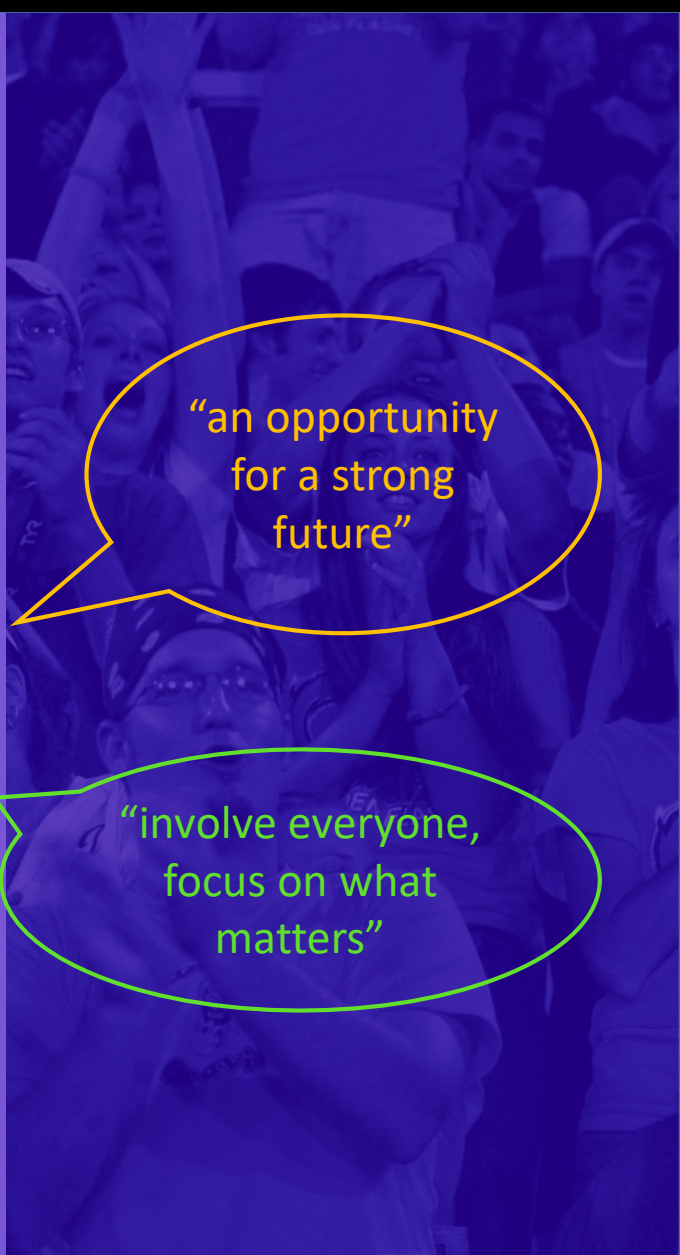
WHEREAS, Community Heart & Soul is a community-wide effort to promote community conversations that will help City leadership understand what matters most to all residents of the City; and

WHEREAS, the three guiding principles of Community Heart & Soul mirror the desires of City leadership when developing future plans for the Kent community: Involve Everyone, Focus on What Matters, Play the Long Game; and

WHEREAS, Community Heart & Soul has been successfully used in other communities to distill what matters most to residents into Heart & Soul Statements that provide guidance for future plans, decisions, and actions affecting the Kent community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kent is preparing to launch the OneKent Initiative, revise its Comprehensive Master Plan, and update the City Zoning Code, Kent City leaders value involvement from a broad cross-section of residents that will result in a better alignment of the City's plans with the aspirations of the members of the community.

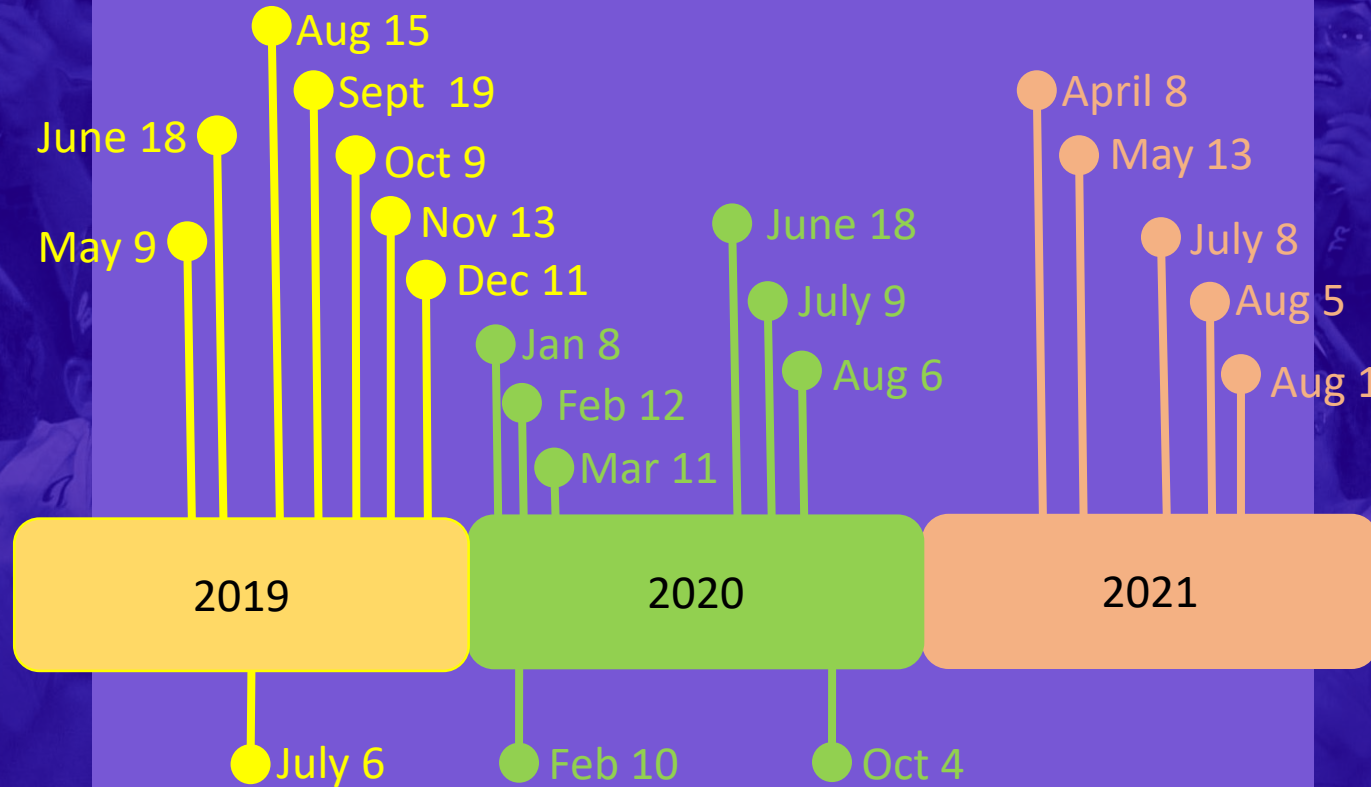
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Kent, Portage County, Ohio, at least three-fourths (3/4) of all members elected thereto concurring:



“an opportunity
for a strong
future”

“involve everyone,
focus on what
matters”

Kent Heart & Soul Meetings



Over 700
Hours of
Volunteer
Time



@kentheartandsoul · ★ 5 (2 reviews) · Community

 Follow



Kent Community Heart and Soul added an event.

January 22, 2020 · 🌐

...

A NIGHT TO UNITE



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



Kent Heart & Soul Mission and Vision Statements

To create and implement our project from a place of caring, inclusion and kindness, while recognizing and encouraging the unique talents and potential for participation that every person in our community possesses

To become a city that celebrates its diversity with opportunities to come together and involve citizens in the betterment of the community



Kent Heart & Soul Progress

4 Phases, 11 Step Process

Phases 1-3
1-2 Years

Phase 4
Ongoing



COVID19

Multi-Cultural Framework

*Multi
Cultural
Support*

People
with
Disabilities

Low
Income

Senior
Citizens

Race &
Social
Equity

LGBTQ+

Non
Native
Born

**Kent
Heart &
Soul**

Direct Communication with citizens and citizen groups

NAACP
"Racism,
Hatred &
Diversity"
Commission
Request

3rd party communication with citizens

City Boards & Commissions

Designated Functional Roles
Statutory ↔ Quasi ↔ Advisory



LESSONS LEARNED

lack of content expertise
lawsuits “arbitrary and capricious”

need for a clear mission
disputes over roles and actions

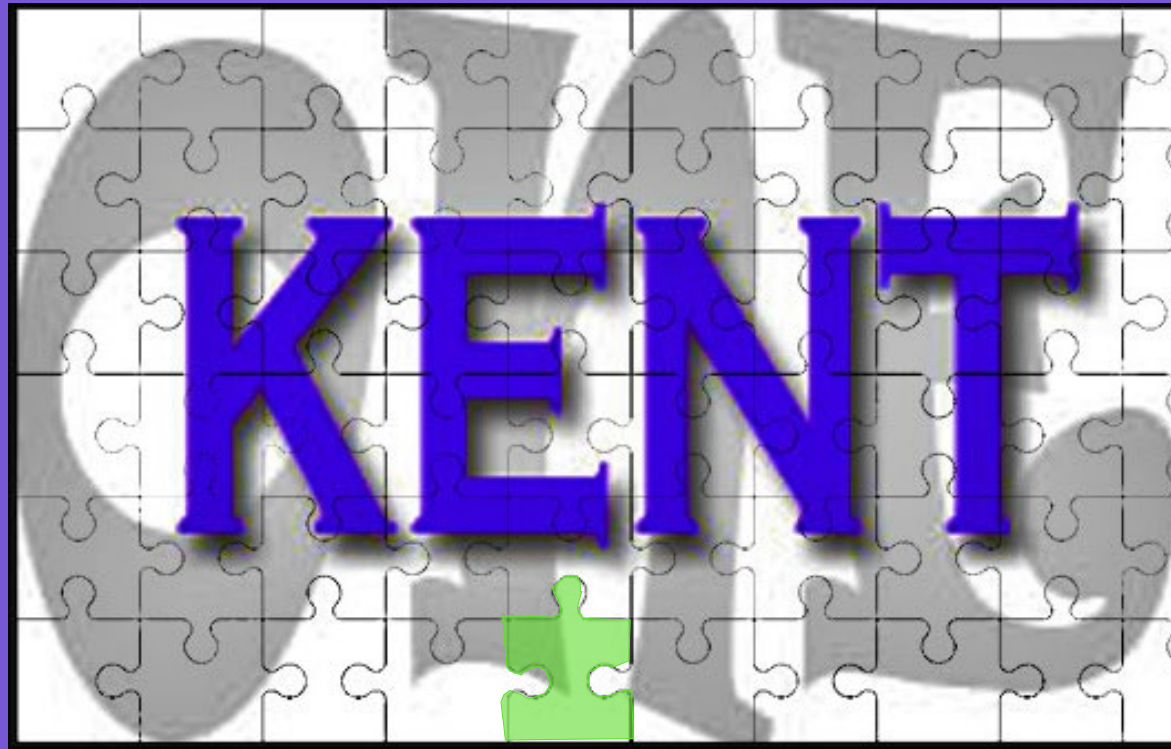
availability of applicants
challenge to fill vacant positions

direct engagement success
LGBTQ+ example

declined seniors committee
special committee for every group?

Committee Context

Public Commitments
Collection Actions
Efforts in Motion



Committee?

Public Engagement
Areas of Progress
Body of Work

The work of building community is never done.

Committee Success

Committees are best at:

Distilling competing voices

Building consensus

Slowing down,
regroup, refocus

Stuck, generating new
ideas



Committees work best:

Clear mission, goals, tasks

Well defined expectations

Clear ground rules for
participation and
engagement

Set deliverables,
timeframe, guidelines



To Answer Fit

Clarification

Data

Definition

Experience

Need Committee Logistics

- ☐ Goals and Objectives
- ☐ Mission, Purpose, Vision and Values
- ☐ Tasks Timeline and Milestones
- ☐ Staffing, Funding, and Training
- ☐ Membership and Outreach
- ☐ Process and Public Engagement
- ☐ Actions and Outcomes
- ☐ Data Collection Methods and Reporting
- ☐ Data Focus: past, present, future?
- ☐ Data Assessment, Analysis, and Verification
- ☐ Examples/Results of Previous Committee Work
- ☐ Role of City Staff and City Council

Questions?



March 2, 2022