



City of Kent
Wednesday, April 6, 2022
City Council Committee Meetings
320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

7:00 P.M. Council Committee Meetings

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

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

City Flag Redesign

Mayor Fiala opened up the discussion by asking City Council how they would like to proceed with the redesign of the City flag.

Ms. Shaffer Bish stated she would like to develop a committee to give them the charge of bringing a flag design to Council. She would like to have a liaison from Council on the committee to make sure it stays on track and to ensure the ideas councilmembers had can be incorporated. She added she would like to nominate Mr. Michael DeLeone because he expressed a strong interest in the flag's design. She would like to invite members of the community who have expressed an interest in this and to keep the group contained, and perhaps add a designer.

Ms. Gwen Rosenberg said she was thinking along the same lines as Ms. Shaffer Bish and would like to keep the symbol for education on the flag, indicating the connection between the city and the university. She suggests making a call for artists and asking for submission from the community and saying that it fits the five principles of good flag design. Ultimately, the Council should have a say in selecting the final flag, after a significant amount of discussion, shown at the Heritage fest and other events.

Mr. DeLeone said he would like to see the previous versions that were designed to at least look at to see what direction they were going and it would be a great start.

Mr. Ruller asked Council about the out of state people that have expressed

interest in developing the flag and how they would like to receive input from them. They were kind enough to express their thoughts and he wished for Council to be aware of them.

Mayor Fiala asked that before the council make a motion they are thinking of the costs to council in regards to bringing in out-of-town guests.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she likes the idea of coming up with designs, but also likes the idea of having public input, so it feels like a community endeavor. The committee would work out the details.

Mr. Ferrara suggested the committee come up with the details but get the public's input on design, maybe a competition. They can request proposals instead of the committee actually designing the flag, they can create the process or contest and perhaps offer 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes.

Mr. DeLeone said when this was designed before, there were no computers. Now, it's simple to do and technology is a little different.

Ms. Shaffer Bish says she likes the idea of the committee being in charge of the return for proposals, and suggested having deadlines to receive suggestions.

Mr. Ferrara said the end of the year could be possible, having the Request for Proposals due at a certain time, and a design chosen by the end of the year.

Mayor Fiala asked if there were any members of the audience who wished to speak on the topic.

Kenny Crookston introduced himself to Council and stated that community involvement is important and parameters would be necessary so it doesn't grind on. Bringing the national head of flag design is a great idea. He expressed an interest in being a part of this process.

Ms. Valerie Landis approached the microphone, adding there should be a committee with one council member on it, that inviting anyone that would like to submit a design would have to do so within the committee's parameters. There would be a timeline which would include showing it at community activities and then voting on a final design. She said there could be a monetary prize. She said there would be meetings in which anyone from the community could attend.

MOTION TO FORM A COMMITTEE TO SET UP GUIDELINES THAT WERE DISCUSSED, COMPOSED OF FIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ONE MEMBER FROM COUNCIL MADE BY Mr. Kuhar and SECONDED by Mr. Ferrara. Before a vote was taken, comments were requested from councilmembers.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said a parameter should be added to the motion that a recommendation should be submitted by the end of the year. Mr. Kuhar said most definitely, and should be part of the parameters the committee establishes.

Ms. Rosenberg asked whether we should state who is voting for the flag. Mr. Kuhar said Council would be the final decision.

Mayor Fiala asked the Council to vote against the motion so it can be restated with all of these variables.

MOTION TO APPROVE MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, SECONDED by Mr. Garret Ferrara and FAILED by a voice vote of 0-9-0.

MOTION TO DEVELOP A FLAG COMMITTEE WITH FIVE MEMBERS AND ONE, BUT NO MORE THAN TWO COUNCIL MEMBERS, TO ACCUMULATE METHODS OF GETTING A FLAG, SELECTING A FEW DESIGNS, PRIOR TO THE END OF THE YEAR, AND SUBMIT IT TO CITY COUNCIL TO VOTE ON MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, SECONDED by Mr. Garret Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Mayor Fiala asked if there should be regular advertising for the committee as we do for other Boards or Commissions. Mr. Kuhar said it should be advertised in the newspaper. Ms. Rosenberg said we can advertise on social media. Ms. Jones said a committee was just approved by Council, so the Clerk of Council, Amy Wilkens, will follow the procedures for advertising that are currently in place.

NAACP Proposal to Form a New Commission

Mayor Fiala introduced the topic of the NAACP proposal that was submitted to the City on December 15, 2021. He wanted to first say there were rumors going around (regarding this agenda item) that were misleading and untrue. He said it is hurting the cause more than helping the cause. He added that last month, Mr. Ruller gave an overview of the Heart and Soul group and what they are doing in the community. The next step is to take into consideration the letter from Dr. Geraldine Nelson, who wrote a letter on December 15th, and that is what is going to be addressed tonight. He asked Dr. Nelson to approach the podium to talk about the proposal that was submitted in December.

Dr. Geraldine Nelson and Renee Romine (past NAACP President and current NAACP President) approached the podium to discuss their original letter. Dr. Nelson said that in the original letter to Council, the word racism was used, but wanted to clarify they are not saying the City of Kent is racist, but rather is saying we need to have a commission on inclusion, and those are the words she would like to use to correct the record. She added the current (NAACP) president will be addressing these things as we have made a transition after the City Manager's presentation in March. She added the new president will be speaking on behalf of the NAACP and that there are several members of the Executive Board in the audience who can also address the letter. She does not want to rescind her original letter, but since learning more about what the City has been doing, knows we need to continue the discussion.

Ms. Renee Romine said she would like to take some time with the Executive Board to review the original letter that was sent and why a Commission on Inclusion would add value and would like to have time to present at the next Council Committee Meeting. Mayor Fiala confirmed that what they are asking is to come back with a presentation and they said it was. She said there were a few people in attendance that wanted to share a few things.

Christine Anderson approached the podium and stated she had a few handouts for Council (**Attachment #1**), which Clerk Wilkens distributed to Council. She continued by stating she represents the Kent Interfaith Alliance for Racial Reconciliation and Justice (KIFA) who were a part of the conversation over a year ago when the rock on the KSU campus was painted with some painful language. This is what prompted KIFA to stand up and come to Council and was asking the City to be more proactive, especially in welcoming students of color coming to campus. She would like to follow up on something from the last meeting that was connected to this conversation. This is in regard to the Heart and Soul presentation and thanked the Council for providing the information that was reviewed by them. She added that she personally loves Heart and Soul and has been a member since day one. She said its goal is certainly to celebrate the diversity in Kent and enhance civility. Ideally, a final report will be issued that will be a guide to help the City envision its future. She appreciates that the City is interested in community input and strengthening the democratic process. At that point in time, the group trained volunteers to interview residents. She had stepped back because she did not want to be involved in the collecting of stories, but hopes to be more involved in the analysis end of it. She said she has not gotten any emails about Heart and Soul since the pandemic and is not sure of what the status is of the group and hopes it continues on. She added that the questions that are asked of residents are asked in a very positive way. That is the model used, asking what they like about Kent and not asking what they are concerned with. She wanted to point out that it does not directly ascertain what some of the issues are, but hopefully it will be successful in uncovering that. She added the success that the process relies on is getting representative samples from the community, and referenced her handout. 22% of the people living in Kent are not Caucasian, making one out of five residents in Kent a racial minority. She said when she participated in Heart and Soul, the group was diverse in age, but not in gender, race and economic status. She said that is no one's fault but that some, particularly with low income, are working to survive day to day. It is a concern in gathering intimate information and getting stories from residents if you don't have people doing the interview that reflect the same demographics as the people they are interviewing. She hopes that won't be an obstacle. Christine continued, but stated that assuming it would be a representative sample, she is concerned about how it will be portrayed in the final report, adding that the attention goes to the majority, not the minority. She can see a tension being created in the final report, which will be a challenge. The heart of the discussion tonight is about creating a mechanism that will magnify the voices of the minority. Speaking through KIFA, they are hoping a mechanism can be established to do so. She said there is a disconnect between the city and the black community. She also believes it should guarantee safety and confidentiality. Community meetings were held and some were invited to

come and share their stories, and they all declined. One in particular said she had to worry about her employer. Racial justice commissions exist and she has given a website of a non-profit that serves as a clearing house and they have an online manual for cities that wish to form a commission. The cities she found were big cities and we have the opportunity to be a role model and establish best practices.

Mayor Fiala thanked Ms. Anderson and invited the next audience member to the microphone.

Ms. Renee Ruchotzke introduced herself and said that her profession is organizational development. She realizes what is being asked of the City is a "big lift" for any City Council to do. She appreciates being invited to the meeting where Mr. Ruller presented all the work that had been done, stating it was really good work. The idea of having a mechanism for this reflection is a feedback loop that you are not able to see with the existing feedback loops. They are not asking Council to look for trouble where there is no trouble, but asking them to pay attention to what is happening in the margins. The community conversations this group conducted uncovered heart-wrenching stories from the black, brown and indigenous people. She asked them to dig deep into the possibility of how we can help make Kent a welcoming and inclusive place.

Mayor Fiala clarified that they are asking for time to make a presentation and asked if there was anything further on the subject. There was no reply. Mayor Fiala added that he asks that comments and gossip be kept to a minimum and asked everyone to be truthful.

Jen Case rose to speak to Council saying she took issue with saying that no one in the NAACP was untruthful. She is the Secretary of the NAACP and stated they were invited to speak at tonight's meeting, and that's not untruthful. She said there may have been a miscommunication along the way, but we were invited and prepared for weeks and hours. She doesn't want comments to be heard by the public and cast mistrust upon a group like the NAACP. This is a group that is the largest and oldest organization in our country, since 1909 and has birthed and run the civil rights movement. The Portage County branch of the NAACP is extremely trustworthy and does the work to make Portage County and Kent a safe place for all.

Mayor Fiala said he just said it as a general comment and asked them to go to their source of the comments to see if it was true. Ms. Case said she was unsure of what that meant and asked if he was referring to her. He said it was a general comment that everyone in the room heard. Mayor Fiala said there was misinformation going around, saying he altered the agenda tonight. He said a month ago, Council stated they would address the letter from the NAACP and tonight clarified they would hear their presentation next month. Ms. Case said they were invited to speak tonight. Mayor Fiala said the agenda set tonight was to address the NAACP letter that was proposed on December 15, 2021. When we met last month and went over Heart and Soul, we said the next step was to address the proposal that was submitted.

Mr. Ferrara stated the Mayor never said the NAACP was being dishonest and that confusion may be a better word. He said it's obvious it's on the agenda. He is happy to have the presentation next month. Ms. Case said a conversation about the previous letter from the NAACP is different than NAACP leading the conversation. That is what they believed they were invited to do. She added she is not arguing that point anymore, but saying when you look over to the group and say rumors aren't true, that makes a statement. Mayor Fiala added that we are all in it for the same reasons and said it will be addressed next month.

Sharlene Ramos-Chesnes approached the podium and introduced herself, stating she is the Chair of Education for the NAACP and the previous ambassador for DEI at Kent State University under Dr. Beverly Warren. She didn't want to leave everyone tonight, with the last thought being contentious or negative, and wanted everyone to leave looking forward to next month's conversation. We are in a college town talking to students and we want them to leave here with a positive feeling about the town. Her goal is to continue to bring positivity to Kent and ask everyone to leave tonight, looking forward to the conversation on May 4, 2022 about the value that this would bring to Kent, not only in equity and inclusion. Today, the university is a part of the city and it brings commerce to the city. It is very important to be inclusive to our students who come here and the folks that live here. She asked everyone to think positively. Mayor Fiala said the key word is "positive".

There were no further comments from the audience or from City Council members.

Sensible Marihauna Ordinance

Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director, reminded Council of their passing of the Sensible Kent Marihuana ordinance for the petitions that were presented to Council to be placed on the November ballot. The ordinance was sent in to the Board of Elections and they did not like the form we sent it in, so they sent us back a sample of what they'd approved in the past. Council now needs to pass an ordinance in the form that the BOE will accept.

Mr. DeLeone asked about the deadline to submit. Ms. Hope Jones replied "August" and said Council previously chose the November election to get the most voters.

Mr. Kuhar asked if she was looking for a motion. Ms. Jones said they need a motion to bring the ordinance to you for approval, with emergency, at the next council meeting.

Mr. Ferrara asked Ms. Jones to review what the ordinance is about.

Ms. Jones said the petition, if it passes at the November election, would take Kent's drug abuse ordinance and if a person was charged with drug abuse and

were found guilty under a city ordinance, the court could not assess a fine or court costs.

Mr. Ruller said their obligation is to move this forward.

Mr. Kuhar asked if, even though it is passed that there is a state law that supersedes that.

Ms. Jones added it does not necessarily supersede our ordinance, that they can live together, but the police would have the discretion on which he would like to use. She directed Mr. Kuhar to review her confidential and privileged communication that was sent to council on this topic for further questions and added that the city's attorney is asking them to please move this forward.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE SENSIBLE MARIHUANA ORDINANCE MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

There were no questions from the audience and no further questions from council.

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Community Development Committee (Chair Kuhar/ Vice Chair Rosenberg)

Amendment to Park Fee

Ms. Bridget Susel approached Council to discuss a change in how the park fee is assessed. This fee is in place to ensure the City replaces valuable park land as the city grows. They looked at revamping the City's match and looked at various other cities, and are presenting those changes to Council this evening.

Mr. DeLeone asked about land. Ms. Susel said in the past, the developer would propose park land. In this situation, the Parks and Recreation Director will consult with the Park Board and use the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan to determine if the offer of a donation or land was something to be accepted. Previously, areas were offered and not wanted because of the size, but now it allows for it. If the donation does not comply with the comprehensive plan, they have the ability to deny the donation and require a park fee. The City will determine whether the donation of land would be acceptable, instead of the developer.

MOTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENT TO PARK FEE MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

There were no further questions from Council and the Community Development Committee meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Health and Public Safety Committee (Chair Amrhein/ Vice-Chair Sidoti)

Chair Amrhein called the Health and Public Safety Committee Meetings to order.

Wells Sherman House Donation to Health Department

Ms. Joan Seidel, Kent City Health Commissioner, came forward to discuss the first item on this committee's agenda. Rental space at the Wells Sherman house had closed and they had some items they did not know what to do with and were in good condition. They are donating to the Health Department three folding tables, fifteen to eighteen folding chairs and one monitor screen. She said they could use these items and are coming before council asking for permission to accept them.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE WELLS SHERMAN HOUSE DONATION MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

Ohio EPA Grant Award notice to Kent City Health Department

Ms. Joan Seidel continued with the second item on the agenda, stating they have been made aware the Health Department has received an Ohio EPA Grant. In the past, the Health Department has not come forward to acknowledge this, they just received and accepted it in the general fund and then moved those funds over. She thought with the experience they have had with the multiple COVID grants, it would be a good idea to call this grant out. It is the same grant we have been receiving for years to treat mosquitos, so we will continue to run the program as we have in the past. It is for \$25,000 that enables us to purchase more eco-friendly, waterbased chemicals that are not detrimental to pollinators and to also hire interns from Kent State University. She respectfully asked that we be able to receive this grant.

MOTION TO APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF THE OHIO EPA GRANT AWARD TO THE KENT CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

Ms. Rosenberg said, as a former beekeeper, she appreciates trying to balance the need to protect public health with the need to protect our pollinators and insects. She added that in the past, she believed you could call the Health Department and ask them not to spray in your area, so that's an option. She thanked the Health Department for that, stating it takes a little more effort on their part but is much appreciated.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said that was well said and that we all have bees we have to protect.

With no further comments from Council and no comments from the audience, the Health and Public Safety Committee Meeting adjourned.

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

Chair Ferrara called the Land Use Committee Meeting to order.

Type 1 Expedited Annexation Request From Davey Tree

Mr. Ferrara introduced Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director, to speak on the first item on the Land Use Committee's Agenda.

Ms. Susel thanked Mr. Ferrara. She stated that Davey Tree purchased the former Oak Knolls Golf Course in 2017, which was part of their efforts to expand their east campus, which will support a science and learning center and a community arboretum. They also have purchased the former Franklin Elementary, which is in the City's jurisdiction of Oak Knolls Golf Course in Franklin Twp. After evaluating the costs of developing the parcel into the east campus, there are costs associated with utility extension as well as safety services. Davey Tree approached the City and Franklin Twp. with the desire to submit a petition for annexation. The ORC allows for five types of annexation and the first one is called a Type 1 Expedited Annexation. It is called that because the owner of the parcel has to agree to the annexation and both the township and the municipality that would be accepting it have to agree on an annexation. She added that through outside council and the Law Department, Community Development and City Manager have worked up options and the terms were accepted by Franklin Twp, who adopted a resolution on March 22nd. The terms were outlined in the memo as well as in the agreement. Once the annexation is finalized and once the paperwork is completed and filed with the County, they will redraw the boundaries. The City will reimburse the Township for what they would have received in real property taxes if but for the annexation. She added that they will reimburse Franklin Twp. during the time Davey will be developing their master plan and once they have the site operational with active payroll, we will switch to an income tax share with Franklin Twp. for ten years. They would receive 45% of the income taxes collected, and the City would keep 55%. That would be approximately \$27,500 received by the City and about \$22,500 for the Township. At the end of the ten year income tax share period, all obligations of the City would end and the parcel would be part of the City like any other parcel. She asked Council if they had any questions.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if the City would be providing water services. Ms. Susel said there is water available on the former Franklin Elementary site and that the connection at the site will be a significant cost savings for Davey.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE DAVEY TREE ANNEXATION REQUEST MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

With no further agenda items, the Land Use Committee adjourned.

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

Mayor Fiala chaired the Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair. The meeting was called to order and the first speaker on the agenda was called to the microphone.

Update on New KSU Bike/Scooter Program

Mr. Jim Bowling promised his presentation would not be long but wanted to share a few things with Council. Representatives from SPIN brought in two of their vehicles to show Council, a bike and a scooter. Mr. Bowling stated SPIN began operating a low speed micro-mobility sharing program on March 7, 2022, as part of the City of Kent and Kent State University's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote traffic management. In the first twelve days, they had fourteen thousand trips, and according to the North America Bike and Scooter Share program, they estimate that 36% of trips taken on their units eliminate approximately 5,000 vehicle trips in those twelve days. The previous dockless program struggled with parking and other misuse of vehicles. SPIN has a much better business model to promote organized parking of their vehicles. He referenced the map displayed in chambers, showing a geo-fenced area that provides parking for vehicles and that they are not just free to park anywhere they wish in the city. (**Attachment #2**). Users cannot end their rides unless they are in one of the geo-fenced areas. It is \$1 to unlock the vehicle and .29 per minute to use it. If they do not park in a geo-fenced area, they will continue to be charged by the minute. From the initial setup, we are seeing a much more organized parking of vehicles. He said it doesn't stop people from knocking them over and some of the parking areas have been tweaked. They also have the ability to create no ride zones so people cannot ride in a certain area, such as the downtown parking deck. SPIN has been very good at addressing issues during the rollout.

Mr. Bowling introduced Mike and Josh from SPIN and Chris Lucas, who is with Kent State University's Rec Center to answer any questions.

Mr. Ruller asked Mr. Bowling to talk about the vehicle's speed variability.

Mr. Michael Beck, General Manager for the Great Lakes Region of SPIN, introduced himself to Council. He pointed out Josh Stolls who is the Lead for Kent and Akron and is here on a daily basis. The bikes can go up to 20 MPH and are pedal assist bikes. The scooters will go 15 MPH. There are different areas where they consider speed to be an issue and they can geo-fence those areas. The dark area in the center of campus is a speed fenced zone where they don't want scooters zipping through in a crowded area. Speed is reduced by a geo-fence that brought it down to 8 mph in that area.

Mr. Kuhar asked how many watts and volts the scooters have.

Mr. Beck said that was a very technical question and would follow up with an answer for him.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if usership has remained high since the rollout and what the trend is.

Mr. Beck said whenever a program is launched, there is great interest and a peak in usership. We did see it settle out when students left for spring break and did also see a lower demand for weather. Otherwise, the demand has remained very high.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if they are planning on doing something to roll it out to the community so that when the student population does drop, the community is aware.

Mr. Beck said they like to do tabling and plan on attending the Farmer's Market. Before they rolled it out, they had Josh and members of his team going door to door handing out pamphlets and riding the scooters, answering any questions. As the weather gets better and they are able to do more outdoor activities, they will be out talking to people.

Mr. Bowling added they have also reached out to Main Street Kent and the Chamber of Commerce and are on their email updates.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if there was an age limit. Mr. Beck replied the age limit is 18, and an ID is required to be uploaded to rent.

Mr. Kuhar asked if there was a weight limit. Mr. Beck said the limit is 300 lbs. However, he added that they had a gentleman who worked for them who weighed more than that, and was still able to ride one.

Mr. DeLeone asked if the red areas on the map were parking lots. Mr. Beck said they are and are also no ride zones. Those are the geo-fenced area which will alert the rider on the vehicle and the app that they are in a no-ride zone and disable the throttle.

Mr. Kuhar said he saw three units parked on N. Water and Columbus, which were not in a red area. Mr. Beck said the large areas on the map were parking lots they want to keep vehicles out of, and the smaller red dots are the parking.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if scooters were allowed to ride on the streets. Mr. Bowling said that a couple of years ago, the state passed an amendment to the traffic laws which says they may be operated on public streets.

Mayor Fiala asked if any members of the audience had any questions.

An unidentified person asked about the use of helmets. Mr. Beck said they firmly recommend wearing a helmet. When they do tabling events, they distribute helmets and have given out over 300 so far. The other thing is, they assume the

risk and we are all adults. He has seen plenty of people on motorcycles on the highway without helmets, so it would be up to the user to do so. They absolutely recommend wearing a helmet.

Ms. Valerie Landis, a Kent resident, asked how many people are managing the bikes that are being put in no-park zones. She said they are seeing them around the city and asked how this is being managed. Mr. Beck said they have a team of Josh, a mechanic back at the shop, and four other personnel on a rotation to maintain as much of a continuous operation as they can. They want to remain responsive to the community and people out walking their dogs, as they don't want to block the sidewalks. Every scooter has a phone number to call and report where they are and they will come out and pick it up. Typically, they can expect a 15-20 minute response time. He said they really want to make this work and have been adjusting points so they are not cluttering up areas. They want this to work for the community, not making them a nuisance, but rather a partner.

Mr. Kuhar asked if they had any figures on the run time of batteries and the average distance traveled before the charge goes down. Mr. Beck replied they have swappable batteries, enabling them to remove the battery. The run time is approximately 3-4 days of riding with 2-5 trips per day for about 35 miles.

Mr. John Thomas, a Kent resident, asked if SPIN was publicly or privately owned and where the home office is located. Mr. Beck replied they are privately owned and were recently acquired by a German company in Europe, which is the largest scooter company in Europe, with April 1st being the official transition date. The company is based out of San Francisco, but they are located in the state. What is important is having people locally in the city and living here, which is their operating model.

Chief Myers complimented Josh and Amber who came out to the Fire Department so they could examine the batteries in case of any issues and that they already have a mechanism in place in case there is a battery fire. It was very educational and they appreciated the interaction.

Ms. Landis asked about their data collection methods and what is shown in regards to usage. Mr. Beck said he believes there is room to grow with the number of vehicles. They are seeing 2.5 to 7 trips per vehicle, which fluctuates due to weather and timing, but they don't throw a large number out and let them sit. They have a dynamic fleet. In the fall and spring, the population in Kent grows, so the numbers of vehicles will increase to meet demand. Over the summer, the demand will go down as students go home and the fleet will be lowered. It is to no advantage to the company to have excess vehicles out there because they are exposed to the weather and wear and tear. It is a delicate balance. Chris Lucas, from Kent State University, said they took a conservative approach with the roll out to ensure a safe and successful launch. They are in constant contact with SPIN to monitor and make changes as they see are necessary.

There were no further questions from Council or the public.

Road Closure for Craft Beer Festival

Ms. Bridget Susel started by saying the Kent Jaycees have their annual Craft Beer Festival, which is typically held on Franklin Ave. With OverEasy taking over the depot space, there were some concerns about their access to the parking lot, so the Kent Jaycees agreed to locate the event to N. Water Street between East Main and Portage Street. Because of its new location, it is treated as a new event and we are asking for permission to approve the event application and road closure.

Mayor Fiala said he didn't see a map and Ms. Susel replied one was supplied but was of poor quality, so it was not included in the packet.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if Hometown Plaza would be available for use by people, at least informally.

Andrew Medonia from Kent Jaycees approached the podium and said one of the advantages of having Colin Boyle as one of its members is having the use of Hometown Plaza. It is actually going to be the VIP area. The street will be used for the thirty breweries and four or five food trucks and the bank area for the VIP area and restrooms. Anyone who purchases a VIP ticket will have access to it.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about where the proceeds from the event were going to charity. Mr. Medonia said all of the proceeds go either towards charity or toward leadership training for its members. It all goes back to the community in one way or another. Ms. Rosenberg asked if they are still seeking volunteers and he confirmed they are.

Mr. Kuhar asked how this would affect the drive-thru bank on Columbus Street. Mr. Medonia stated it would be closed. He added that the bank has been a good partner to work with and they have received signatures from all of the businesses on N. Water. They are glad to be back in this area and it will be better for all involved.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE FOR CRAFT BEER

FEST MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

With no further business to conduct, the Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee Meeting adjourned.

Finance Committee (Chair DeLeone/Vice-Chair Wallach)

Chair DeLeone called to order the Finance Committee Meeting of April 6, 2022.

NOPEC Energized Grant

Ms. Melanie Baker came before Council with the annual request to accept the funds from NOPEC, which is the energy provider for the City of Kent. She said it is an annual grant that has always been made available and this year the grant is for \$47,861. She is asking that Council accept the grant and allow it to be put into escrow to be used in the future when there is a project that meets the criteria for the grant. In the past, we've used it on the Reclamation Facility and replaced boiler motors. This year they will be working on a LED energy conversion program doing a study on the street lights.

Mr. Kuhar asked about the energy-efficient upgrade of the street lights. Ms. Baker clarified it will be a study done on this. Ms. Baker said there are several different programs throughout the city but the majority of its downtown lights are owned and operated by the City, therefore we are charged for them. The cost and return of these lights will be looked at.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOPEC ENERGIZED GRANT APPLICATION
MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and
CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

Kent Police Department Computer Disposal

Chief Nick Shearer requested permission from Council to dispose of thirteen Panasonic laptop computers previously used in police cruisers. They were purchased and put into service in 2015 and have a life expectancy of five years. Chief Shearer confirmed with the IT Manager that these laptops have no value to the City. He does not want them to get into anyone else's hands and for security reasons is asking them to be destroyed. A third party will be used to do so, who will provide certificates of destruction.

Ms. Shaffer Bish suggested a more ecologically friendly disposal by using the Kent State collection and asked if another method would be used. Chief Shearer responded that the company works in collaboration with Quality IP and is unaware of the exact procedure that is used to destroy them. He asks just that they be destroyed due to the security aspects of the data on the machines.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT COMPUTER DISPOSAL MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Mr. John Kuhar and
CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

E Main Street Area Improvements - RAISE Grant Application

Mr. Jim Bowling addressed Council about the last item on the agenda. The RAISE program is a nationally competitive program with a minimum ask of \$5 million, so they will be asking for \$5.25 million to finish up the funding for East Main Street. The project fits well with their criteria and, if awarded, would be placing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations to make it more palatable for

them to select us.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the EV stations would include a Tesla station. Mr. Bowling said these would probably not be, as Kent State is looking at bulk power that would run multiple stations. He added that this is early on and things may change.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said we are asking for exactly what we need and asked about inflation and if there is a risk it may not be enough. Mr. Bowling said they tried to minimize the risk as much as possible.

Mr. DeLeone asked if there were questions from the audience.

Mr. John Thomas asked if any of the funds would be targeted toward making that corridor more pedestrian-friendly and safe and also more bicycle-friendly. Mr. Bowling replied "yes".

Mr. Ferrerra stated that Mr. Bowling does a great job of collecting grants and keeping up the good work.

Ms. Rosenberg added as a side note that Mr. Bowling received an award from the Ohio Environmental Council and congratulated him.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE RAISE GRANT APPLICATION MADE BY Mr. Garret Ferrara, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-0-0.

Seeing no further business, the Finance Committee adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Adjourn



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

Heart and Soul

Goals (from Community Heart and Soul website)

- Enhance respect and civility
- Prompt citizens to be more engaged in govt and civic groups
- Build upon city's assets
- Create a community vision to guide/evaluate future City plans

Process

- Trained citizens ask residents questions about what they like about Kent and what they want to see in future.
- Following standard procedures, survey does not directly inquire about concerns

Successful results

Having data that represents all demographics of Kent population.

Includes opinions from those those less civically engaged, like lower-income

Use of volunteers who represent demographics of community

A final report that includes views of the majority but also cites those of minority

Ultimate dilemma for elected officials – Attentive to wishes of majority, yet represent all

Some minority groups lack advantages held by the majority to convey needs to policy makers

Need an intentional mechanism that:

- is readily known to users and accessible
- assures safety (guarantees confidentiality to prevent retribution)
- credible and accountable (sanctioned by the City)
- has capacity to analyze and identify patterns and research solutions
- has a relationship to the entities that can implement suggested solutions

Possible Model (Based on best practices from other cities at www.racialequityalliance.org)

a) Identifying issues of concern:

- Truth-telling (input from Black residents including KSU students)
- Fact-finding (data from institutions, Heart and Soul analysis and recommendations)

b) Moving forward in reconciliation:

- Investing in people and community (such as jobs, health resources, skill enhancement, education, housing, business development)
- Transforming institutional practices that hinder groups of people (such as job hiring/recruitment, financial lending, education)

Kent City Demographic Stats

2020 Census for City, Quick Facts, US Census

Population 28,215

Racial categories

2019 Poverty rates within racial groups from citydata.com/poverty/kent-ohio

78.1% White

25.3% White

9.5% Black

57.6% Black

5.5% Multi-racial

41.1% Multi-racial

4.6% Asian

0 Asian

2.6% Hispanic

41.2% Hispanic/Latino

0.2% Other

16.2% Other races

Housing condition and affordability, 2020—2024 Consolidation Plan

“The CHAS data shows that Asian, Black/African American and Hispanic populations have a disproportionately greater need than the City’s population as a whole.” pg 30

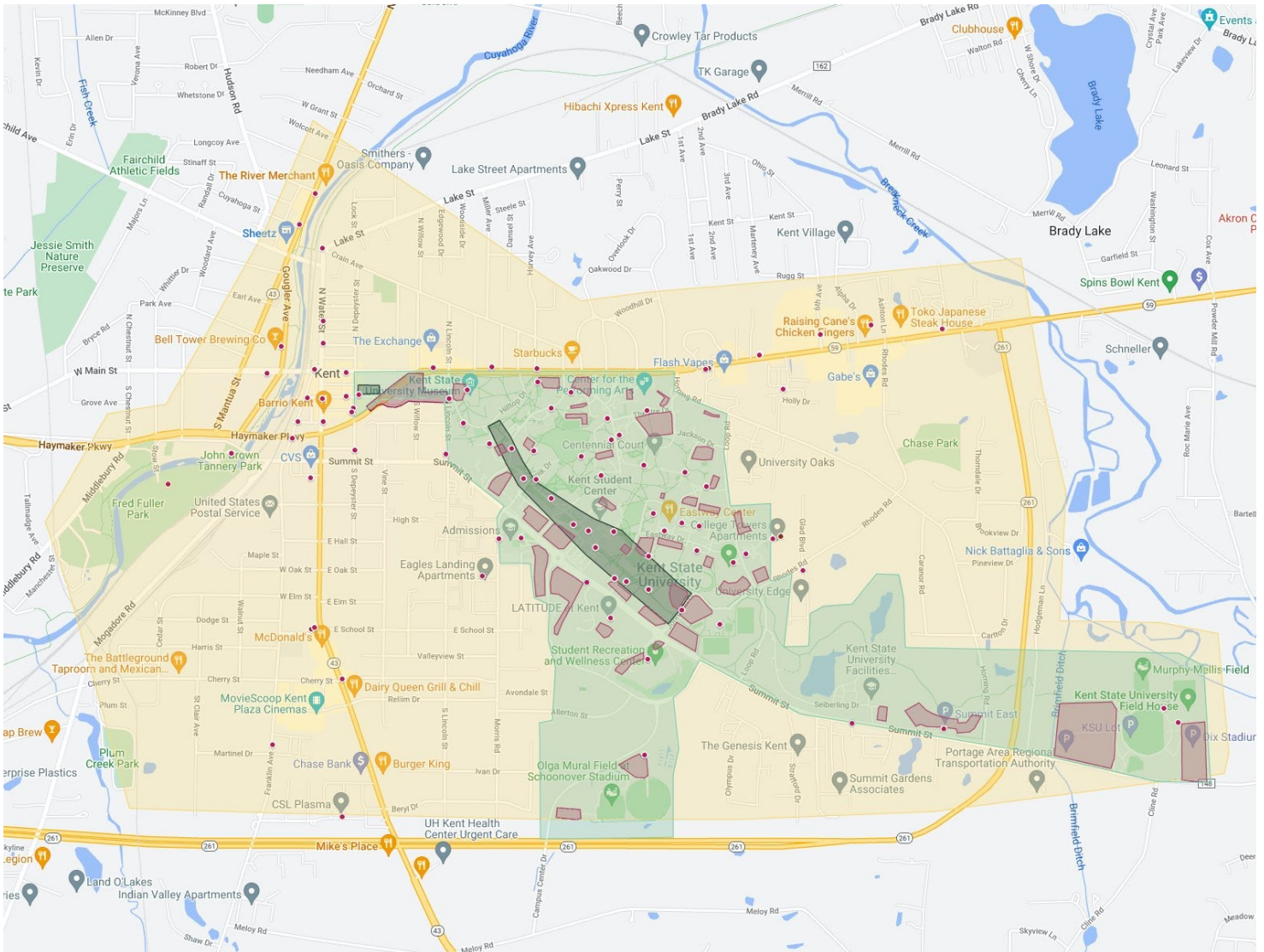
Homeless population

“As the table shows, 29.4% of the homeless population counted during the PIT classify themselves as minorities. These figures show that minorities are more likely to experience homeless when compared to the population as a whole .” pg 40

Kent City Government, FY 2021 Employees

2021 EEO Report for 256 Employees

Job Function	White	Black	Asian	Multi-racial	Other race
Financial admin	8				
Streets	40				
Police	64	2		1	
Fire	38			2	
Parks and Rec	40	2			
Health	6				
Community Dev	11				
Utilities	10				
Sanitation	12				
Other	19	1			
Total	248	5		3	
Percentage	96.80%	2.00%	0	1.20%	0
City residents	78.8%	9.5%	4.6%	5.5%	2.8%



4.6.22 Committee Meeting Minutes
Attachment #2