



City of Kent
Wednesday, May 4, 2022
City Council Committee Meetings
320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Garret Ferrara (7:40 p.m.), Mr. John Kuhar, 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. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Mr. Tom Wilke, Economic Development Director; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Michael Lewis, Police Lieutenant, Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

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

Boards and Commission Interviews

Mayor Fiala introduced the first topic of the evening. Clerk Wilkens introduced the first applicant to interview for an appointment to a Board or Commission, Naser Matar, to the microphone.

Naser Matar introduced himself to Council as a Kent resident interested in getting involved. Mayor Fiala asked City Council members if they had any questions for the applicant.

Ms. Shaffer Bish thanked Mr. Matar for applying, and asked if he would also be interested in the Planning Commission instead of the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Sidoti asked what he liked most about the city of Kent. He replied that he likes the summers when it is very quiet around town and when it is winter and gets darker earlier, there are a lot of people out and about. Mr. Sidoti thanked him. Mr. Turner asked if he had a preference on whether he would like to be

either on the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning Commission. Mr. Matar replied "Planning Commission". Mr. Turner clarified they can only serve on one board.

Ms. Debra Redman, who lives on Mantua Street, was the next applicant applying for the Board of Zoning Appeals. She works for Kent City Schools driving a school bus. She said many good things happen in the city and many don't realize what is going on until it happens. She referenced the building currently being built on Franklin Ave. and some other spot zoning that she has concerns about. She would like the Board to look at the zoning code and do what is good for the people.

Ms. Shaffer Bish thanked her for her interest and said the Board has to apply zoning using the law and asked how she handles conflict. Ms. Redman said her job as a bus driver has helped her with conflict management and that she is currently on the labor management committee for Kent City Schools.

Mr. Sidoti said he can attest to her being a great bus driver. He said the points she made tonight are actually the opposite of what the job entails.

Mr. Turner said there will be situations where there may be competing interests and divergence in the application of the law. He asked if she would be able to abide by the law and not necessarily advance the interests of her neighbors and friends. She clarified the question and said she could come to the Community Development department for clarification about the laws in place.

Ms. Michelle Sahr was the next applicant for the Board of Zoning Appeals and said she wanted to be on the Board and give back to the community, hearing there was a need. Ms. Wallach asked about her being a business owner if she would have a hard time recusing herself. She said she would not.

Ms. Rosenberg asked why she selected this board. Ms. Sahr said her husband was on the board and she had an interest. She has read the Kent City Code on her own and finds it interesting.

Ms. Melissa Zullo was called next as an applicant to the Board of Health. She is a professor of epidemiology at Kent State and is from NE Ohio. Last year she moved to Kent and is excited to be a part of the community. She has worked with the COVID response team for Kent and consulted with Summit County. There were no questions from Council members.

Ms. Rose Penix of Edgewood Dr. teaches part time and works for Summa Health systems as their inclusion coordinator, and has also applied for the Board of Health. Her background in diversity and equity would be something she would bring to the table. Her interest in the position would be to benefit the community.

Mr. Sidoti added there are a few open slots and encouraged members of the community to apply.

NAACP Presentation on Proposed Commission

Ms. Renee Romine introduced herself to the City Council and began the presentation by introducing Christie Anderson, of South Blvd. who is before the City Council representing the Kent Interfaith Council. Ms. Anderson began her presentation with a story of a resident in Ravenna who wanted to move, but couldn't until her son graduated high school and moved from home. She said when she was in the process of selecting a house, feeling welcome was not even a consideration. She offered the story to illustrate that, as a white person, she has a different perspective. She thinks with regret of the times she has spoken or thought a racist thought. Thinking about race helps her be the best she can be. She said racial tension will continue to arise and it is more powerful when black and white people work together. She said there is already a division and to disregard this. KIFA has spent six years talking about race and has opened eyes and hearts, strengthening our sense of community. The members of KIFA and the NAACP congratulate the City of Kent for exploring this topic and then, with thoughtful intention, make changes that are useful. She referenced her statistical handout (**Attachment #1**). One of five residents in Kent is a racial minority and highlighted the racial compensation of the City of Kent. She spoke with HR Manager, Suzanne Stemnock, about her desire to increase minority workers. Ms. Anderson said she has ways and targeted steps to reach out to minorities. She suggests the City collect information on the race and ethnicity of job applicants. Her conclusion is that the City is desirous of diversifying its workforce but needs to be more intentional, especially with outreach. She added that evidence exists that there is a need for a more formal inclusion mechanism. This person or group should be charged with five responsibilities: 1. Developing a process to make visible intentional barriers 2. Seek input from those impacted, as well as experts 3. Recommending an implementation strategy for lessons learned and best practices 4. Evaluating progress 5. Ensuring transparency and mandatory reporting for accountability.

Ms. Anderson assured Council that the effort to increase the number of employees of color will become easier over time once the workforce is more inclusive. She concluded by stating that diversity is the starting point, ensuring people are invited and inclusion ensures they are all there and respected for their contributions.

Ms. Renee Romine returned to the podium and stated there are a lot of people in the community that work behind the scenes to do things informally and thanked everyone who worked on putting this presentation together as well as working with the community. She thanked Dr. Hearn, Jen Case, Renee Ruchotzke, Christie Anderson, Dr. Geraldine Nelson, and Professor Gregory King. The goal is to establish a formal process in the form of a commission or a liaison to help build upon previous efforts to build an inclusive community that everyone will value and respect. She restated there are a lot of people working behind the scenes to assist and making it a more formal process would be great. She said the city's population is 78% white and 97% of the City staff is white, and if you are not in the position to have a voice you may miss out on important information. She said we need to improve on ways of getting

information out, as not everyone is getting the same information.

Dr. Geraldine Nelson thanked Ms. Renee Romine and Mr. Ruller's presentation about Heart and Soul. She added that her group went out and talked to the community and listened to people's stories. Many people were fearful of coming before Council in fear of retaliation. She shared her story of coming to Kent as a student at Kent State University. She looked for clues from people to know where she was welcomed and has lived that all her life. She wanted Council to have a glimpse into that type of life. She said we can be the city that others can look to. She asks everyone to take a walk in her shoes. She is not an angry black woman and wants everyone to hear her voice.

Ms. Renee Romine thanked Dr. Nelson and said they wanted to talk next about how the Commission/Liaison would add value and will have Dr. Gregory King shares what that would look like. She said as a City staff member that it would reflect the local community and would provide ways to provide opportunities for those outside looking in, gathering places to network and connect, bridging the disconnect between the City and local minority communities, having a liaison for businesses to contact, providing mentorship, marketing and hiring strategies that target minorities, and tracking applicants.

Dr. Gregory King came to the microphone to discuss how this would add value. Associate Professor, Dr. Gregory King of S. Depeyster Street introduced himself to Council. He said diversity, equity and inclusion has to be more than about race. He said equity is a guiding principal to how he lives his life and challenges everyone to think about equity in those terms. He said that Kent has a uniqueness and a diverse population that adds vibrancy to the community. Not a lot of people in Kent look like him. He respects his neighbors for commonalities. Some are struggling to simply exist and to coexist in a country engulfed in discrimination and turmoil. The scope of a commission to address inclusion could focus on three tenets: Education, Feedback and Ambassadorship. It would work with the City's DEI plan to address systemic barriers to include marginalized people. It could serve as a resource for City Council members and community members, providing education to facilitate better understanding and celebrate differences. It could provide ongoing education for community members and education for business owners on how to address biases, microaggressions, and exclusionary practices. Ambassadorship is the best way to recruit. People want to engage the community as a diverse place, connect to diverse perspectives. Feedback would be provided to Council on ways to address more diverse programs and a safe and inclusive government. It can bring the community together amidst diversity. He concluded by saying we must stop bullying people with disabilities, we must understand that gay rights are human rights, we must realize that women are more than just bodies and collectively affirm that black lives matter.

Ms. Renee Romine said that in closing, a committee or liaison to address the voices of those that are not carried, heard or noticed is needed. She said everyone does have a voice but some are not carried or heard. She asked City Council what the next steps would be in the process.

Mayor Fiala said when the presentation is over, he will ask the audience if there is anyone else that has input and then Council will discuss it.

Ms. Renee Romine said they have concluded their presentation and Mayor Fiala asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak on this subject.

Ms. Linda Sommers of Kent, Ohio, said she would like to also point out the stigma and disparity of mental health and substance abuse disorders in the community and that it is an area that needs to be addressed further. She said they run a minority owned recovery agency that can help people with that and added that May is Mental Health Awareness month.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she is intrigued by the idea of "growing your own" because that is what we did in Economic Development. She said what we are focused on now is the social infrastructure and developing that. She said she saw that they mention a commission or liaison and if they are looking to connect to a group or if this would be a person that would work in the City or a volunteer.

Ms. Renee Ruchotzke said they are looking for a mechanism that would enable them to create a welcoming atmosphere. It doesn't have to be a commission, but has to be something that would allow a feedback loop as well. Shaffer Bish asked if this could be a staff person, such as a DEI staff member, whose job would be to reach out to the community. Ms. Ruchotzke said a lot of cities have done that but what's most important is that it impacts the whole culture of the city government. It could be a staff person or a point person and that there be a mechanism they are committed to. If it is a staff person, they would need to have the ability to give feedback and have an impact.

Mr. Ferrara asked why doesn't the NAACP act as that liaison and why they haven't been that liaison that comes to the City of Kent and promotes it within their organization and the community. Ms. Renee Romine said they are an informal mechanism working behind the scenes. They would like to work with Kent and want a more formal system that is in place, consistent and ongoing. They are happy to continue with the informal process.

Mr. Ferrara said the work the city is doing is a formal process that is regulated by law. He asks for the same respect and understanding that the City has for their informal process they have for the City. She said all her processes are not informal and she understands there needs to be methods in place for protection and she knows about laws. When considering inclusion, there are not many places that have formal processes, and that's what they are looking at to help change the system.

Ms. Kathy Kearnes of Athena Drive, who is on the NAACP Executive Committee, came to the microphone to speak. She stated that the idea of something formal is for accountability and being able to build in mechanisms that produce good outcomes for everyone. She said we would want a city that has staff that look like us, that would be a place where people from any

background could come here and feel comfortable and welcome to be a part of the community.

Dr. Gregory King said a formal commission says to the people of Kent that the City Council thinks it matters.

Mr. Turner said he was intrigued by the idea of an ombudsman for the community and the community approach. He said the government can be a part of a greater whole. He said, ultimately, on a committee of inclusion, some things can be done by the city government and some things cannot. He thinks it's an undertaking. There are things we don't know. He said if we can get the information then we can act on it. He said the city staff are presented with an issue, and they deal with it. He said the staff and council want to do the right thing for the community. Things presented tonight make sense. If we have a partner, which we do, it is the right thing. He said we can respond to the challenge and can make the community better. Everybody wants to do the right thing to make this community better for everyone. He commended the Mayor for allowing the conversation to move forward in the community. He asked them to continue to give us the information and the data to lift up this community. This is a very positive thing and, however, we end up deciding and thanking Dr. Nelson for bringing back Mr. Turner back to where he needs to be.

Mr. Sidoti thanked everyone and said that at the risk of the difficulties of talking about race, we have to acknowledge the fear of stumbling, or saying the wrong thing. He said the fear is deep on both sides. He was blessed to be around people of color in his formative years. He said we are behind because when it was brought to City Council, it was framed as if Kent was doing something wrong. We can put that behind us because we have to have real conversations. He asked how we get into homes of people of color who do not encourage their children to become police, fire or city employees. How can KIFA help? We've got to get people to get their children to overcome their fear. He said those are the tough conversations. He said the heart is there in Council and has always been there.

Dr. King said he sees Chief Shearer walking the streets in the downtown area frequently. He asks what will happen if that approach is taken in the black community. Why not a casual stroll down a street? Chief Shearer said he sees it downtown because that is where we are located. He said people who live in different areas do see police in their neighborhoods. He said there are officers that visit predominately black neighborhoods and this happens more frequently than usual. He just wanted to point out that it does occur. Geraldine Nelson said they want to work with the police department and the NAACP is trying to work on it and it's not about pointing a finger, but working together. Mr. Sidoti stated the example given was aimed towards police behavior, but how does that translate into getting those kids to apply to become a police officer? How do you create energy in the community to move this forward?

Mr. Kuhar said he would like the Council to entertain a motion to put together what was presented, sit down in committee with what we have and what we

want to accomplish and come up with a creative composition to make this happen. This was SECONDED by Mr. Turner. Ms. Shaffer Bish said she is torn between kicking the can down the road, but it is important. She likes the formal process and the idea of the liaison. It can be between city and community leaders, NAACP, Heart and Soul. She thinks this is worth coming back in committee to formalize a mechanism. She supports the motion making sure it gets back into committee soon. We are asking a lot of community members.

Mr. Sidoti said he agrees with Mr. Sidoti. He said six-seven years ago, we were talking about these issues and how to best approach this. We don't want this to become an overburdened process.

Mr. Kuhar likes to see the finished product in his head and in everything he does, needs a diagram and how the pieces can succeed together and how they fail. He said they need to draw it out and develop a plan of action.

Mr. Ferrara said he is voting in favor of the discussion. He would like these discussions to continue and hopes the discussions lead to relationships and help achieve better numbers. A formal committee process may bog things down. He is all for continued discussions.

Mr. Turner said that is why we are putting this into committee, to continue the discussion.

MOTION TO SEND TO COMMITTEE A FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE NAACP PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED COMMISSION OR DIVERSITY LIAISON MADE BY Mr John Kuhar, SECONDED by Mr Robin Turner and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

KSU Town-Gown Update

Dr. Dana Lawless Andric addressed Council, stating she was excited to report on what was going on at Kent State University. She added this is a great way to strengthen the communication between the University and the City of Kent.

Dr. Lawless Andric shared that the May 4th Commemoration took place today, and that it was the first commemoration since 2019 (due to the Covid 19 Pandemic). She noted that this year was special due to the dedication of the bronze markers for the wounded students.

She continued by stating there were zero student conduct referrals from "Fake" Patty's Day, which was a real testimate to the efforts to encourage students to have fun in a safe way.

She said they are excited to partner with the Kent Fire Department on live action fire training.

She said culinary services have had food truck Fridays, an RFP to have a spot on campus as well as dining dollars to invest in the community and focus on

local restaurants. They partnered with Haymaker to bring the Farmer's Market to campus, and each event was very well received by the students and staff.

KSU will be holding an alumni event called "Flashes Forever" on the Esplanade to welcome students, family and friends and then graduate over 5,000 students. She mentioned special graduation events, and also launching a special event group to connect the city with Kent State University. She said there are many events that benefit both and we need to jointly work together.

She ended her talk with updates for the Fall semester. Enrollment is looking strong with deposits being up, trending strong for the Kent campus. This summer the numbers will be a more solid indicator. They are anticipating about 5500 incoming students to campus. She said it is the first fall where we will be more like pre-pandemic with full in-person classes.

She is happy to officially announce the approval of Kent Skates, in partnership with the City of Kent, to come back starting November 22, 2022 until February 26, 2023. It was a well received event and she reviewed the flier she passed out **(Attachment #2)**

Mr. Ferrara reminded Dr. Lawless Andric that the KSU Women's Golf Team won the 26th in a row MAC tournament and the Men won the MAC tournament, with both going to the regional tournaments. Dr. Lawless Andric said athletics are doing great things and thanked Mr. Ferrara.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about enrollment numbers and international enrollment. Dr. Lawless Andric said there were approximately 17,000 to 20,000 students on campus, depending on graduate enrollment and undergraduate total. She said the numbers have fluctuated a lot because of the (COVID 19) pandemic and said she could provide updated data after the 15th day of enrollment. She was unsure of the international student enrollment because of all the factors that would take a student to arrive and would know better in the fall. She will return in the fall and provide a report to City Council.

There were no further questions and no action needed.

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

Main Street Kent (MSK) Annual Update

Ms. Heather Malarcik began her presentation by saying it has been a couple of years since she has been able to present in person about Main Street Kent and when she looks back at 2021 it feels like a long time ago. She is going to go back and review events in 2021 and then take a peak at this year.

The January 2021 Story Walk was covered by Fox 8 News and featured an interview with Ms. Malarcik in Acorn Alley. The Food Drive collected a pickup

truck full of food for Kent Social Services. The Board of Directors brought on Collin Boyle from Hometown Bank as the new Treasurer. They developed a subcommittee called "Fundraising Outside the Box", focusing their efforts on new ideas to raise money.

In February, MSK had the Chocolate Walk, which was a big sellout with businesses making above average sales during that event. Kent Goes Red by the American Heart Association also occurred in February, featuring heart healthy food ideas and activities at local businesses and had a giant, red heart projecting on the Mill, lifting spirits throughout the community.

The month of March featured Kent's Women in Business, and in honor of the National Women's History Month, they featured all businesses who wanted to participate on social media.

In April, they did a promotion called "From Our Place to Yours", where businesses put together "take and make" experiences that people could pick up curbside and take home. They also did two walking tours which were very successful.

In May, they did another storywalk and adopt-a-spot and cleaned up Kent.

June brought the kiosk map updates with business turnover information being updated and adding the DORA information. They also did the first ever MSK 5K, which offered a run/walk, a beer glass and a ten dollar gift card. They welcomed a new Board Member, Ed Butch, from Kent State University, who has been instrumental in the Wizardly Weekend Planning and Business Enhancement Planning and Fundraising.

In July, the Wizardly Weekend continued with many events that were very successful. Businesses said this event brings people downtown and they would like it to continue as long as it continues to do so.

In August, MSK participated in Kent Connections, an event on the Esplanade, welcoming new students downtown. A new fundraiser for MSK, called Something's Got to Give at Troppus Projects, hosted over 60 pieces of art up for auction during the month of August.

In September, they had their first "back to normal" event- Octoberfest, with businesses voluntarily stopping selling DORA beverages so they could make money that day and they said they would be doing it again. Main Street Kent put up a Little Box of Kindness outside of Scribbles Coffee, which is a little box for people to take or leave something small for others, such as flower seeds, etc.

October brought the Family Friendly Halloween, which was outside, which went really well. Clean Up Kent happened again in the fall, with lots of volunteers helping out. Heritage Ohio had their annual award celebration in Springfield, Ohio in October and MSK received an award for Best Main Street Community

Event for Kent Rainbow Weekend. They also hosted their annual MSK Awards celebration at Kent Historical Society, celebrating all who support Main Street.

In November, they kicked off the Kent E-Gift Card Program, with Kent State, the City of Kent and Hometown Bank using this for an employee appreciation program. There was also the KENT public art installation on N. Water Street in November, receiving a partial grant to help with installation costs. The design on the front will be rotated on an annual basis.

December brought the Ugly Sweater Tavern Trek, where 170 people attended and raised \$1500 for Kent Social Services. There was one more Story Walk along with the Holiday Decorating Contest, which had the most participants out of all the events.

In 2021, they had a total of 2,248 volunteer hours, which is over \$57,000 of volunteer time they gave to Main Street Kent. She said this year's numbers are up as people are desperate to do and be a part of it all this year. Last year, there was an average of 217,000 page views of the website, with the community connection continuing to go.

This year, the Executive Team is looking to do some strategic planning, surveying volunteers on their satisfaction levels, with 9.2/10 and people staying 5 years and 60% wanting to be more involved. She continued by adding that PBS is doing a series called City Centric, with Kent being one of the cities and coming out in the fall. MSK has also developed the Kent Public Art Board which is taking this off of the City and facilitating implementing public art projects and helping the City of Kent with its new ARB Design Guidelines. All of the Main Street Kent events are coming back and they are bringing something new called the Crafty Crawl at the 3 breweries on June 25th. Rainbow week is coming back in October- partnering with the University on workshops and sponsorships. She said they are working harder than ever and have two staff and hundreds of volunteers.

Mr. Ferrara said they have done a great job and wants to know how they can get the big money so they can have a cushion. She said over the last 11 years they have worked very hard and are in good shape. It would be great to have a giant fundraiser but you are competing against many other non-profits. Mr. Ferrara asked that the local businesses work together to have a large fundraiser for them. He said they do so much and such a great job, it would be nice if they had a foundation that could back them up during hard times. He said they do a great job and the city appreciates it.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said the Art and Wine festival was coming up. She said the awards celebration could be a large fundraiser.

Ms. Rosenberg said the volunteer hours are incredible. She added they are doing a fantastic job. She asked if they have membership that businesses and organizations can participate in. Ms. Malarcik said through their website they have "Friends of Main Street" and accept support from individuals and

businesses. Ms. Rosenberg said she thinks they are doing an awesome job.

Mr. Sidoti asked Mr. Ferrara when the shin dig would be and if he would put him down for two tickets.

There were no further questions and no action needed.

Members of Council thanked Ms. Marlacik for her updates and the excellent work her and her staff do.

Continuation of the Davey Tree Expert Co. EZ Agreement

Mr. Tom Wilke presented the next housekeeping item on the continuation of the Davey Tree Expert EZ Agreement, that was approved last year. Once the project is started, even though it's not completed, it has to be reviewed and a recommendation needs to be made about whether to continue with the project. The Tax Incentive Review Council met on March 9, 2022 and made the recommendation to City Council to continue the agreement. He added that Davey Tree has already invested \$6.7 million out of the \$13 million it is required to, created 10 new FT jobs and created \$518,000 in new payroll. It was a pretty easy recommendation to make to City Council. They expect to be completed by late summer and move in early fall of this year.

He is asking for Council to approve the continuation of the EZ Agreement, with the emergency clause.

MOTION TO APPROVE DAVEY TREE EXPERT CO. EZ AGREEMENT MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Garret Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

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

Proposed Updates to City's Noise Ordinance

Ms. Hope Jones started by first apologizing to the Council for taking so long to do this, as this was placed on the to do list last year when a citizen complained. In response to this, Ms. Jones reviewed the new ordinance updating Section V2 where it mentions radios, stereos and music. She proposed deleting the last sentence: If any noises are heard at the property line, then you are in violation of the code. She suggests deleting that. She also referenced section C1 proposing private property between the hours of 9pm and 7 am in residential areas where sound is unreasonably audible past the property line, inserting the word "unreasonably", which gives the police department a little lead way and there will still be situations where people will not be happy. Ms. Jones said she believes this will solve some of what was an unreasonable situation.

Ms. Wallach asked why the time was changed to 7 am, when it used to be 8am. Ms. Jones said if they don't like it, they can put it back to 8 am. When she was looking at other city's ordinances, it seemed as if they were all done from 9 pm to 7 am. Ms. Wallach said she would like it to remain at 8 am.

Ms. Shaffer Bish echoed Ms. Wallach, saying that, especially on the weekend, you hear leaf blowers and lawn mowers and it would be nice to have that time.

Mr. Turner had a question about the word unreasonable and if perhaps there were some measurable aspects. Chief Shearer said they discussed at length how to measure this and that it became very difficult to enforce. He said the use of the word unreasonable is the language used in the Ohio Revised Code. He said it would be up to the person who signs the complaint. He said disorderly conduct uses the word unreasonable and the police are not able to be the person who makes that determination.

Mr. Kuhar stated if a person is using their leaf blower, which is unaltered and meets Federal specifications that a leaf blower must meet, then its not unreasonable. Ms. Jones said it is reasonable between 8 am and 9 pm and then after that time it would be unreasonable.

Mr. Sidoti asked if there was something in the contract with garbage pickup that says they cannot pick up before 7 a.m.

Mr. Deleone said he thinks 7 a.m. is fine and a lot of communities have that for lawn care services.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said if we want, we can make a distinction between weekends and weekdays, as she gets a lot of complaints when lawn care starts early in the morning.

MOTION TO APPROVE PROPOSED UPDATES TO CITY'S NOISE ORDINANCE MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, **SECONDED** by Ms.Tracy Wallach and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Finance Committee (Chair DeLeone/Vice-Chair Wallach)

Body Camera Grant Acceptance

Chief Shearer came before Council to ask for approval of a grant for a body camera program, which the purchase of was approved in last year's Capital Plan. He was waiting on returns from Federal and State grants, with the Federal Grant coming through. The project cost \$224,000 for the body cameras, and a grant was secured through the Department of Justice called the "Small Rural and Tribal Body Worn Camera" Program, which is for offices under 50. They received \$80,000 and are asking Council to accept it.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if all police officers are wearing body cameras and Chief Shearer replied they are fully rolled out. Part of the project was integrating the body cameras with the cruiser cameras, which has been a very user-friendly process, reducing time and redundancies for court procedures. It has made them more efficient but has also increased the number of public records requests they receive. He said he is in favor of the new program, as everything is recorded and able to be referenced.

MOTION TO APPROVE BODY CAMERA GRANT ACCEPTANCE MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, **SECONDED** by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Executive Session to Discuss Board and Commission Appointments

MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, **SECONDED** by Mr. Michael DeLeone and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Garret Ferrara, Mr. John Kuhar, 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

MOTION TO RETURN TO THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MADE BY Mr. John Kuhar, **SECONDED** by Mr. Roger Sidoti and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

No further action was taken by Council and the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.



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

78.1% White
9.5% Black
5.5% Multi-racial
4.6% Asian
2.6% Hispanic
0.2% Other

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

25.3% White
57.6% Black
41.1% Multi-racial
0 Asian
41.2% Hispanic/Latino
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%

Kent Skates



Kent Skates was the first outdoor ice rink established in Kent, Ohio. The ice rink was located in East Erie Street in downtown Kent between the PARTA parking deck and the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center. It was open from Nov. 20, 2021, through Feb. 28, 2022, Wednesdays through Sundays.

Kent Skates created a family-friendly environment embraced by the whole community—from college students to families from the surrounding areas.

This free seasonal skating experience featured a snack bar, free skate rentals, food trucks, group event reservation options and walkable access to the many restaurants and shops in the downtown.

Several community partners and many other generous donors collaborated to make Kent Skates possible.

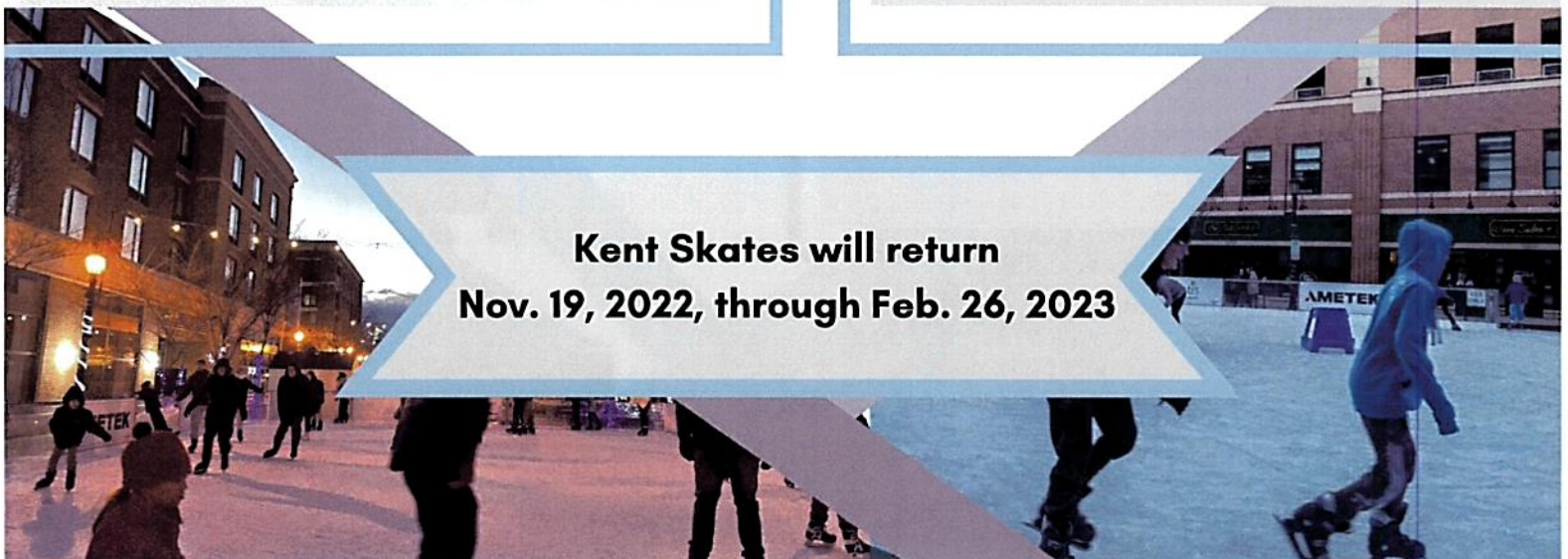
Community partners

- Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center
- Kent State University
- Kent Area Chamber of Commerce
- The city of Kent
- Main Street Kent

Our sponsors

- AMETEK
- Brimfield Insurance Group
- Destination Kent
- Hometown Bank
- Metis Construction Services
- Portage Community Bank
- Kent Sportswear
- Davey Tree Expert Co.

**Kent Skates will return
Nov. 19, 2022, through Feb. 26, 2023**



EVENT RESULTS

- **15,000+** ice rink visitors (1/3 attending after the holidays).
- **57** private group reservations.
- **9,662** visits to kent.edu/kentskates.
- **39,429** social media impressions.
- **182,000** impressions on WKSU radio.
- **687,000** media impressions through channels 5, 8, 19; print; and web.
- **48,000** impressions from 5-minute live segment on FOX 8.

"We noticed a lot of families coming into Kent from out of town for the ice rink this last winter.

In addition to the ice rink, they explored the stores and ate at the local restaurants. I think this was an excellent activity for bringing people into Kent, especially during a slow time of the year in January and February. I would love to see the ice rink return this upcoming season."

- Michelle Sahr, Owner
Off the Wagon and Red Letter Days

"In addition to strengthening our continued partnership with the city of Kent and Kent State University, the response from our guests was overwhelmingly positive. Guests would request rooms overlooking the ice rink to watch the skaters and several have made plans to return next winter to enjoy the rink again. Seeing Erie Street activated during the winter months left a positive impression not only with our guests, but our friendship and connection to our community."

- David Schoeffler, General Manager
Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center

"I cannot tell you how much our family LOVED it this winter. And I saw so many of my non-Kent friends coming into town to try it out as well..."

- Amy Mucha, mother of 3
Owner and Chief Pop Artist, Daisy Pops

