City of Kent

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Regular City Council Meeting

320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

CDBG Public Hearing

At 07:25 PM, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the CDBG Public Hearing to order.

Present:	Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti
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. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Firefighters; Ethan Murphy, Nate Fabinak, Rob Jacob and Shawn Baynes; Ms. Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Engagement Coordinator; Ms. Jalessa Caples, Accreditation Coordinator; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council
Absent:	Mr. Robin Turner

Ms. Bridget Susel opened the public hearing for the CDBG Program Year 2024 Action Plan. There were no members of the public signed in to speak.

Regular Council Meeting

At 07:30 PM, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the Regular City Council Meeting to order.

Roll call was taken.

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

Mr. Jack Amrhein welcomed everyone to the council meeting and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Dave Ruller opened the meeting by discussing a recent formal swearing-in ceremony for the new FIre Chief, Mr. Jamie Samels. He highlighted the subsequent promotions within the department triggered by the new Chief's appointment. He noted his longstanding presence in the community and discussed Chief Samel's successful completion of testing and acceptance of the Chief position. Mr. Ruller said he was excited about him being a perfect fit for the current state of the department and acknowledged the positive impact expected from Chief Samels and the collective enthusiasm within the fire department.

Chief Samels thanked Mayor Fiala and the City Council for their welcoming atmosphere. He provided a recap of the swearing-in ceremony held on February 12th at the Kent Fire Department, attended by the Mayor, City Manager, friends, and family. He then introduced new hires and promotions following retirements, with a total of four retirements from the 36-member department. He introduced two new firefighter paramedics: Ethan Murphy and Nate Fabinak, providing background information on their hiring dates and assignments. He highlighted promotions, including Rob Jacob's promotion to Lieutenant and Sean Baynes to Captain. Chief Samels commented on his own promotion, providing details on his long-standing service and recent promotion and expressing his gratitude for the support from Council, Administration, and the City of Kent.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE JANUARY 17, 2024, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Communications

Mayor Fiala read the following statement:

"While the law does not require Council to provide time for public comment, we have historically invited the public to make comments and we appreciate their input. This is the time where residents and others can comment on matters that concern them. However, we will not engage in debate, and as President of Council, I reserve the right to end any public communication that is disruptive, embarrassment, harassment or otherwise objectionable. We ask you to give your name and address and limit comments to three (3) minutes."

Mr. Alan Orashan a resident living at 531 South Water Street, addressed the council. He began with his concerns about the city website needing updates and expressed uncertainty about the party responsible for maintenance. He said he was in attendance to respond to the recent City Council discussion on the termination of the Architectural Review Board, urging reconsideration of the decision to terminate the board and emphasizing the importance of maintaining it for planning and advisory purposes. He suggested the creation of a historic district, supporting the idea, but emphasized the need to keep the Architectural Review Board intact, even if in an advisory capacity. He said there is a value for citizen input and the expertise of individuals knowledgeable about design, planning, and historical preservation. He finished by encouraging the council to retain the board to allow residents with expertise to contribute to decision-making.

Ms. Julie Kenworthy, residing at 919 Fieldstone Drive and Director of the Kent Historical Society, addressed the council. Representing the Historical Society, she requested that the City Council considers maintaining the Architectural Review Board (ARB) as an advisory committee, citing its past successful function in this capacity. She advocated for designating the downtown area as a historic district with the support of the City Council, offering the Historical Society's assistance in facilitating this recommendation and cited examples of thriving cities like Delaware, Madina, Willoughby, and Wooster that benefit from preserving historic downtowns. She shared the objectives of the design and review board for Wooster as a model, emphasizing the benefits of preserving the heritage and enhancing the visual and aesthetic character of the city. She outlined the six objectives of Wooster's design and review board, emphasizing the importance of stabilizing property values, fostering civic pride, and promoting the use and preservation of historic sites. She concluded by expressing belief that defining a historic downtown area would benefit everyone in the community, including citizens, business owners, and city officials.

Mr. Doug Fuller, residing at 1431 River Edge Drive, addressed the council. He encouraged a reconsideration of decisions regarding the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and design guidelines and offered to bring people who have been on the ARB to showcase the progress they have enabled through their work with developers. He said that the ARB hasn't been presented in the manner of its actual work and the quality of outcomes achieved and urged against treating the situation as an emergency, emphasizing the prolonged period since Community Development was asked to review the guidelines. He questioned the urgency when serious discussions about the ARB's role only happened five days before the last meeting after 750 days. He said there is a need for mandatory guidelines to prevent undesired architectural outcomes and mentioned the risk of having anything-goes architecture without regulation. He shared the history of the Advisory Board, existing for almost 20 years before guidelines, and its positive interaction with developers. He also argued for maintaining the ARB as an Advisory Board until further discussions can be held, expressing concern about potential negative impacts on downtown aesthetics. He finalized his comment by asking for unanimous support for community design guidelines and suggested waiting for all council members to be present if the vote is close.

Written Communication (All placed on file in the Clerk of Council's office)

1. Email from Dustin A. Holfinger State Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association regarding the Ohio Senate's vote to override Governor Dewine's veto of tobacco preemption was received and forwarded to Council on February 2, 2024.
2. Planning Commission application for Kenneth Crookston was receive on January 22, 2024, and an interview has been scheduled with City Council during the March Committee meeting.
3. An email from the Ohio Ethics Commission with a reminder to elected officials to file a financial disclosure statement was received and forwarded to Council on January 25, 2024.
4. The Standing Rock Cemetery Board of Trustees January Meeting Minutes and February 8, 2024 Meeting Agenda were received on February 6, 2024.
5. The Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Agenda for February 15, 2024 and January meeting minutes was received on February 9, 2024.
6. The Health Board Agenda for it's meeting on February 13, 2024 and the January minutes and statistical report was received on February 9, 2024.
7. Letter from Portage County Board of Commissioners was received on February 14, 2024 and forwarded to Council regarding an initiative titled "Coffee with Commissioners" being held on Tuesday February 27, 2024.
8. The Civil Service Commission meeting agenda for February 26, 2024 was received on February 14, 2024.
9. Three applications for the Board of Zoning Appeals and one application for the Planning Commission were received. Interviews will be scheduled during the March 6, 2024 Committee Meeting and appointments made at the March Regular Council Meeting.

City Manager's Report
The City Manager submitted his report to Council, requesting approval of the following:

1. Authorization to accept a $100 donation towards the Memorial Tree Fund in memory of Gary and Gloria Falstad. authorization to accept a $500 donation towards the Youth Tennis Program in memory of Andy Demeza.

2. Approval to accept and allocate a NOPEC Community Sponsorship grant in the amount of $2,000 to be used to offset the costs of the 2024 eclipse events. {Draft #2024-018)
3. Approval to accept and allocate a NOPEC Energized Community grant in the amount of $48,800 to be used to support City energy improvement projects. (Draft #2024-019)
4. Approval to apply, and if approved accept and allocate, a $15,000 in grant funds for the Water Treatment Plant to prepare an asset management plant. (Draft #2024-020)
5. Approval to apply for an Ohio Office of Justice Services grant in the amount up to $2,870 to reimburse the department for expenses incurred for the recent extradition of the murder suspect back to Ohio. If approved, Nick will follow up with a request and ordinance to accept and allocate the grant funds.
6. Committee of the Whole time for Council to perform interviews of candidates for vacant positions on City Boards and Commissions.
7. Committee of the Whole time to present a suggestion from a Council member to consider changing the start times of City Council meetings.
8. Committee of the Whole time to provide Council with a brief update on the status of the new City Hall construction project.
9. Committee of the Whole time to present the Portage County Board of Elections reply to the question whether changes in the City's Ward Maps would go into effect before or after the November 2024 elections.
10. Community Development Committee time to present the Haymaker's Farmers Market sublease renewal.
11. Community Development Committee time to review the 2024 CDBG program recommendations.
12. Community Development Committee time to share his 2023 Economic Development Update.
13. Health and Safety Committee time to provide an overview of the 2023 Annual Report for the Health Department.
14. Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee time for consideration of the East Main Street Project Construction and Maintenance Agreement.

MOTION TO APPROVE CITY MANAGER'S REPORT MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Standing Committees & Legislation

<u>Committee of the Whole</u> Chair Mayor Fiala/ Vice-Chair Amrhein

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 7, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Ms.Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE ACTION(S) RECOMMENDED MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action(s) Recommended

1. Approve the proposed updates to the City's Ordinance book, with the emergency clause.

DRAFT 2024-011 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE CURRENT REPLACEMENT PAGES TO THE CITY OF KENT CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND DECLARING AN

EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-011 MADE by Ms.Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Ms.Heidi Shaffer Bish. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-011 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Jeff Clapper. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Gwen Rosenberg, Heidi Shaffer Bish, Roger Sidoti. The motion CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024–011 passes.

Community Development Chair Rosenberg/ Vice-Chair Clapper

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 7, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE ACTION ONE MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.
MOTION TO SEND TO COMMITTEE ACTION TWO MADE BY Ms. Melissa Celko, SECONDED by Mr. Chris Hook and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Celko said there may be the potential help of having professionals involved and fostering community engagement in downtown environments.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she would like to discuss the matter further, indicating openness to dialogue and considering potential changes, and agrees with putting the issue back into committee for more thorough discussion.

Mr. Sidoti suggests expanding the conversation to explore the implications of designating the overlay district as a historical district and evaluating the need for any board within that context. He advocates an open and honest conversation without divisiveness, encouraging a more comprehensive discussion rather than specific public sentiments. He also called for an end to personal attacks on city workers.

Action(s) Recommended

1. Approve two sign variances, as presented, with an emergency clause.
2. Refer the discussion of the future of the Architecture Review Board back to Council Committee for further discussion.

DRAFT 2024-012 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE STAFF OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO ADMINISTER THE REVIEW OF ZONING AND BUILDING PERMITS IN THE OVERLAY DISTRICT WHILE THE CITY TRANSITIONS TO THE NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-012 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti The motion FAILED by a roll call vote of 6-2-0. Mr. Amrhein and Ms. Celko voted 'No'.

MOTION TO FIRST READING OF DRAFT 2024-012 MADE by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jeff Clapper, Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Gwen Rosenberg, Heidi Shaffer Bish, Roger Sidoti. The motion CARRIED by a roll call vote of 6-2-0.

First reading of 2024-012 passes.

<u>Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities</u> Chair Sidoti/ Vice-Chair Clapper

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 7, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr.Michael DeLeone and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE ACTION(S) RECOMMENDED MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action(s) Recommended

1. Authorize the changes in the street closure for the Craft Beer Festival, with the emergency clause.
2. Approve the Kent/Akron Lake Rockweel Trail agreement, with the emergency clause.
3. Approve the East Main Street Project Right of Way acquisition and authorize staff to manage future East Main Street Project Right of Way purchases administratively, with the emergency clause.

DRAFT 2024-013 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO APPROVE A NEW SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FROM THE KENT JAYCEES KNOWN AS "KENT CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL" TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024, AND THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF NORTH WATER STREET BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND PORTAGE, AND MAIN STREET BETWEEN GOUGLER AND WATER STREET AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-013 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-013 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-014 AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO, BUYING AN INTEREST IN 0.153 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY FROM THE MOST REVEREND DAVID J. BONNAR, BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN, AND WITH THE CITY OBTAINING A TEMPORARY EASEMENT, FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY PURPOSE, TO INSTALL, CONSTRUCT AND RECONSTRUCT THE ROADWAY FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS EAST MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-014 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-014 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-014 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-015 AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN SLIGHTLY TOASTED, LLC, AND THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO, WITH THE CITY OBTAINING A TEMPORARY EASEMENT, FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY PURPOSE, TO INSTALL, CONSTRUCT AND RECONSTRUCT THE ROADWAY FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS EAST MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FROM SLIGHTLY TOASTED, LLC; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY (Authorized) was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-015 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Chris Hook. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-015 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0

Ordinance 2024-015 has passed.

<u>Finance Committee</u> Chair DeLeone/ Vice-Chair Celko

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 7, 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Jeff Clapper and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE ACTION(S) RECOMMENDED MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Actions Recommended:

1. Approve the proposed sub-recipient grant agreement and if the grant is approved, authorize the demo of the outdated building located at 331 Elm Street and 266 N. Water Street as presented, with the emergency clause.
2. Approve the 2024 budget appropriation amendments, with the emergency clause.

DRAFT 2024-016 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO SUBMIT THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO THE PORTAGE COUNTY LAND REVITILIZATION CORPORATION (PCLRC) TO SECURE DEMOLITION FUNDING ASSISTANCE PRIOR TO THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

(ODOD) PROGRAM SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND ENTER INTO A SUBRECIPIENT AGREEMENT WITH PCLRC; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-016 MADE by Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-016 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-016 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-017 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2023-97, THE CURRENT APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE, PASSED DECEMBER 20, 2023; SO AS TO ADJUST APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS AND ADVANCES FROM THE VARIOUS FUNDS OF THE CITY OF KENT TO INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE CITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-017 MADE by Ms. Melissa Celko, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-017 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-017 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-018 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ACCEPT THE NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL (NOPEC) 2024 COMMUNITY EVENT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM AWARD IN THE AMOUNT OF $2,000.00, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-018 MADE by Ms. Melissa Celko, SECONDED by MR. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-018 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Jeff Clapper. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0

Ordinance 2024-018 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-019 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ACCEPT THE NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL (NOPEC)

ENERGIZED COMMUNITY GRANT AWARD IN THE AMOUNT OF $48,800.00 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-019 MADE by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-019 MADE by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Chris Hook. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-019 has passed.

DRAFT 2024-020 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF KENT TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION REQUEST FOR $15,000 TO THE OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM GRANT) AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT, IF AWARDED, AND EXECUTE THE SUBSEQUENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH CORRESPONDING APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read by title only by Clerk Wilkens per Mayor Fiala's request.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2024-020 MADE by Mr. Michael DeLeone, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2024-020 MADE by Mr. Jeff Clapper, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone. On Roll Call Voting "Yes" Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti. The motion was CARRIED by a roll call vote of 8-0-0.

Ordinance 2024-020 has passed.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

MOTION TO SEND TO COMMITTEE A DISCUSSION OF A HISTORIC DISTRICT DOWNTOWN MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-1-0. Ms. Rosenberg voted 'No'.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said the city has outgrown the current aspect of the ARB and said something new needs to be explored. She highlighted the idea of revisiting the idea of creating a historic district, acknowledging the city's history of bringing diverse groups to the table for discussions, citing the example of the dam removal project. She said she sees this issue as an economic development opportunity and suggests that creating a historic district could be another draw to downtown Kent, advocating for discussions that involve all stakeholders, including business owners, building owners, historic preservationists, and those with different design preferences. Ms. Shaffer Bish proposes a process for determining the suitability of a historic district for downtown Kent.

Mr. Sidoti emphasized the importance of collaboration in decision-making, advocating for a collaborative effort involving all voices rather than a directed effort by a small group.He also acknowledged the hardworking individuals in the Administration and the city who want to do the right thing for the people. He stressed the need for collaboration, open conversation, and a give-and-take approach to avoid the process becoming mere noise.

Ms. Rosenberg voices her dissent, expressing skepticism about the level of support from building owners for the proposed path. She oints out that she has not heard from building owners or business owners in favor of the historic district idea and Believes that downtown Kent has a more eclectic character with buildings from different time periods, and thus, she doesn't see the need for a historic district.
Ms. Rosenberg said she opposes the idea of a historic district due to the diversity of buildings and prefers discussions about the Architectural Review Board (ARB) being advisory or potentially combining it with the planning commission. She is concerned about additional regulations on businesses and buildings, suggesting that unclear regulations might have contributed to the current situation. Ultimately, Ms. Rosenberg expresses her disagreement with the concept of a historic district, stating her position as a "no."

MOTION TO SEND TO COMMITTEE TO INVITE THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD ALONG WITH THE DIRECTOR TO AN OPEN MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, LIKELY IN APRIL TO DISCUSS THE OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD, LEARN ABOUT THEIR MASTER PLAN, UNDERSTAND HOW THE CITY COUNCIL CAN PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, AND GAIN INSIGHT INTO THEIR FINANCIAL STATUS MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Michael DeLeone and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Sidoti said he was reflecting on the evolving understanding of the role of City Council in relation to Parks and Recreation over the past year and noted the apparent design of the Charter that doesn't place Parks and Recreation under the oversight of the city manager. He describes the de facto situation where City Council is responsible for Parks and Recreation, and they are accountable to the Council according to the Charter, adding that there may have been a tendency to assume that Parks and Recreation doesn't want to hear from the Council and vice versa. He added that there may have been a disservice over the years by not maintaining a more open and collaborative communication channel between City Council and Parks and Recreation.

Mr. DeLeone expresses a desire to discuss aligning the times for City Council meetings and committee meetings. Mr. Ruller mentions that this topic is already in the city manager's report, and City Council has already voted on it. The Mayor acknowledges the discussion in the city manager's report and clarifies that it doesn't need a separate motion as it is already addressed in the standing rules.

MOTION TO CHANGE THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING TIME TO 7:00 PM TO ALIGN WITH THE COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING TIME MADE BY Mr. DeLeon, SECONDED by Ms. Celko and carried by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. DeLeone said that the topic of aligning the City Council and committee meeting times has been under discussion for years. Ms. Celko said that she thinks it would be easier for everyone, reducing confusion and potentially increasing community participation.

Councilmembers' Comments: None

Mayor's Report

Mayor Fiala announced he and his wife were celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary. Everyone wished them well and congratulated them.

MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR CONFERENCES WITH AN ATTORNEY FOR THE PUBLIC BODY CONCERNING DISPUTES INVOLVING THE PUBLIC BODY THAT ARE THE SUBJECT OF PENDING OR IMMINENT COURT ACTION MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Jack Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Amy Wilkens
Amy Wilkens , CMC
Clerk of Council

Fiala
Jerry T. Fiala
Mayor & President of Council

Any person who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a modification of policies and procedures to participate in any City or City Council public meeting or event should contact the Clerk of Council at 330-676-7555 or councilclerk@kent-ohio.org. Any request for auxiliary aid or other accommodation should be made as soon as possible, but no later than forty-eight hours prior to the event.