City of Kent
City Council Committee Meeting
319 S. Water St., Kent Ohio 44240

May 7, 2025

MINUTES

At 7:00pm, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the City Council Committee meeting to order.

Present: Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Kellie Kapusta; Mr. Glenn Russell; Mr. Scott Swan

Also Present: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Mr. Nick Cecil, IT Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Bridget Susel; Community Development Director; Ms. Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Outreach Coordinator; Ms. Melanie Baker; Service Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Mr. Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Ms. Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council

---

Motion to excuse Mr. Amrhein was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Mr. DeLeone, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF KENT ZONING CODE.

No public comment.

COMMITTEES

Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee-Chair Sidoti/Vice-Chair Clapper

Informational Update on Outdoor Seating Area (OSA)

Motion to relinquish chair of the committee to Mayor Fiala for the purpose of the OSA discussion only was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Ruller explained to Council that approximately twelve of Main Street Kent's member businesses had voiced concerns that the OSA on Franklin Avenue was creating a disadvantage to the businesses not located on Franklin. A suggestion had been made to consider not closing off Franklin Ave for the summer months in order to "even the playing field." Mr. Ruller acknowledged the necessity of bringing the concern to Council, but suggested that, since the OSA was a very popular attraction for downtown Kent, instead of closing it, Council and the administration could focus on adding additional outdoor seating in the downtown area. Ms. Susel further explained the difference between localized OSAs and the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA), which encompasses most of downtown.

Mr. Fred Pierre, a downtown business owner in the audience, congratulated the City on the success of the OSA and the DORA, and expressed support of both, as well as his wish for continued programming and development in the downtown area.

Several council members expressed concern over the misinformation propagated by social media around this issue and acknowledged that better communication may have helped ease some residents' concerns.

Discussion of Heritage Park Dam Replacement Pump

Ms. Baker explained to Council that pump at the Heritage Park dam stopped working last summer, after a few years of ongoing problems. This resulted in algae formation and low oxygen levels in the water. Replacement of the pump would cost about $400,000-$500,000, and necessitate the closing of Main Street during installation. An interim solution would be installing a fountain which would help achieve aeration of the water and reduction in algae. The cost would be $12,000-$15,000.

Staff recommendations are to allow staff to install the fountain, continue to review the effectiveness of the fountain with respect to the algae and dissolved oxygen, and allow Parks and Service staff to continue to analyze the costs of operation of and availability of new pumps, while also developing plans to enhance the entire park area.

> ***Motion to proceed with staff recommendations with the emergency clause*** was made by Ms. Rosenberg, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Haymaker Mural Agreement

Mr. Bowling requested Council's approval of a new agreement between the Haymaker Farmers' Market, Kent State University, and the City for a new public art installation beneath the Haymaker Parkway Bridge. The new installation includes new themed artwork and poetry installation. The City's share of the cost for the project is $5,000.

Motion to authorize the staff to execute the public art agreement for the installation of the new artwork beneath the Haymaker Bridge with the emergency clause was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Water Service Request – 5885 Horning Road

Mr. Bowling reported that City water lines are adjacent to the property located at 5885 Horning Road and the property owner has requested the City to extend water service to their property, at a cost of $5,907.60 to the property owner.

> ***Motion to authorize the extension of City water service to 5885 Horning Road with the emergency clause*** was made by Ms. Rosenberg, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Committee of the Whole – Chair Fiala/Vice Chair Amrhein

Update on Main Street Kent

Heather Malarcik of Main Street Kent provided a PowerPoint presentation of the group's recent activities.

Charter Review Applications

Council reviewed the applications of Todd Milton and Emma Kelly for the Charter Review Commission. The commission has one seat remaining, with two alternate seats available. Mr. Hook motioned to select Ms. Kelly for the remaining commission seat, with Mr. Clapper seconding. During subsequent discussion, Mr. Turner suggested that, since the commission had no African-American members, Mr. Milton would be a better choice. Mr. Hook withdrew his motion; Mr. Clapper withdrew his second.

> ***Motion to appoint Todd Milton to the remaining seat on the Charter Review Commission, and appointing Emma Kelly to an alternate position on the Charter Review Commission with the emergency clause*** was made by Mr. Turner, seconded by Mr. DeLeone and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Community Development Committee-Chair Rosenberg/Vice-Chair Clapper

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 14: Property Maintenance

Ms. Susel requested Council' approval to amend Chapter 14 of the City's Property Maintenance Code to better address concerns with a person living in a tent on a residential yard for an extended period of time.

> ***Motion to amend Chapter 14 of the City's Property Maintenance Code as presented with the emergency clause*** was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Continue Enterprise Zone Agreement with Davey Tree Expert Co.

Ms. Susel presented the recommendation of the Tax increment Review Council (TIRC) for the renewal/continuation of the Davey Tree Enterprise Zone tax incentives.

> ***Motion to accept and approve the recommendation of the TIRC to renew the terms of the Davey Tree Enterprise one Agreement as presented with the emergency clause*** was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Discussion of Warming Center Funding Recommendation

Ms. Susel presented staff recommendations for funding adjustments needed to continue the homeless warming center assistance through the remainder of 2025. After evaluating the information provided by Shepherd's House, Ms. Susel is requesting an additional $4,000, bringing the total for 2025 to $12,000.

> ***Motion to authorize the allocation of an additional $4,000 for the homeless assistance project for 2025 as presented, with the emergency clause*** was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee – Chair DeLeone/Vice-Chair Celko

West Side Fire Levy Notice to Proceed

Ms. Hall requested Council's approval of the official "Notice to Proceed" for the West Side Fire levy. That is the next administrative step for placement on the November 2025 ballot.

> ***Motion to authorize the "Notice to Proceed" for the placement of the renewal of the 2025 West Side Fire Levy (.73 mils) on the November 2025 ballot, with the emergency clause,*** was made by Ms. Rosenberg, seconded by Mr. Sidoti, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

2025 Budget Appropriations Amendment

Ms. Hall requested Council's approval of the budget appropriations amendment.

> ***Motion to approve the 2025 budget appropriations amendment as presented with the emergency clause*** was made by Ms. Rosenberg, seconded by Mr. Hook and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Health & Public Safety Committee-Chair Amrhein/Vice-Chair Sidoti

No report.

Land Use Committee-Chair Shaffer Bish/Vice-Chair Hook

Proposed text amendments to Zoning Code

Ms. Susel presented the Design Guideline criteria that she recommends incorporating directly into the City's Zoning Code. Since the updated Design Guidelines removed the statutory authority of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to issue "certificates of appropriateness," the staff is following up on the consultant recommendations to codify the most pertinent elements of the guidelines into the Zoning Code. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended Council approve the proposed Zoning test changes.

Audience members Doug Fuller and Bridget Tipton expressed concerns over the clarity of some of the criteria. Ms. Susel asked them to provide her with written copies of their concerns/complaints and stated she would review them further with the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57pm.

Kathleen Coleman

Kathleen Coleman, Clerk of Council