



City of Kent
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
319 S. Water Street, Kent, Ohio 44240

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

6:00pm

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
 - a. Roll call
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. June 24, 2025 minutes
3. **REVIEW OF PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR REVISED ARTICLES**
 - a. 7.03(E) DIRECTOR OF SAFETY
 - b. CHARTER REVIEW
4. **PREPARATION FOR PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL**
5. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
7. **OLD BUSINESS**
8. **ADJOURNMENT**

City of Kent Charter Review Commission Meeting

319 S. Water St., Kent, Ohio 44240

June 24, 2025

MINUTES

Present: Jason Gartland; Tom Mahon; Dawn Albright; Barb Hipsman-Springer; Julie Hurd-Schmidt; Craig Berger; Jeff Roeger; Don Schjeldahl; Adam Stephens; Brian Bialik; Todd Milton; Darlene Rocco; Emma Kelly

Also Present: Hope Jones, Law Director; Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council; Mayor Jerry Fiala; Angela Manley, Parks & Rec Director; Melissa Celko, Ward 1 Council member

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- Adam called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
 - Motion to approve June 10, 2025 minutes was made by Brian; seconded by Jeff; and carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - Jason pointed out that Kai was left out of the June 17 meeting minutes pertaining to the subcommittee. Kathy will add. Motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2025 meeting as amended was made by Don, seconded by Brian and carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - The commissioners continued to review proposed changes to Articles. Discussion included:
 - **5.01 NUMBER, SELECTION, TERM**
Language has been updated to reflect size of Council and reference to ward boundary changes due to census. Motion to submit amended version to Council was made by Barb, seconded by Craig, and carried 12-1. *Amended.version.will.be.submitted.to.Council.for.approval;*
 - **6.03 ACTING CITY MANAGER**
Language has been updated to replace the word “disability” with “inability to perform duties.” Motion to submit amended version to Council was made by Don, seconded by Todd, and carried 13-0. *Amended.version.will.be.submitted.to.Council.for.approval;*
 - **6.04 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CITY MANAGER**
Language has been added to the list of City Manager duties, to wit: “The City

Manager will annually submit an economic development strategic plan to the council and the public, The plan will outline goals and objectives for achieving and maintaining a sustainable Kent economy, report on performance and metrics and resource needs for strategy implementation, include a 5 year forecast, and include any other section required by City Council.” Motion to submit the amended version to Council was made by Brian, seconded by Don, and carried 13-0. *Amended.version.will.be.submitted.to.Council.for.approval;*

- **7.03(E) DIRECTOR OF SAFETY**

Discussion continued regarding the Director of Safety’s responsibilities. Tom and Jason submitted draft versions; after discussion it was decided to utilize Tom’s version, with the following additions: providing the unique case reference number to the complainant; removing the March 1 date for the annual report to Council; development of two annual reports-one on open complaints and one on closed complaints; and specifying that the report on open cases will be given during executive session of Council which is not open to the public. **Language will be updated and brought back for vote at next meeting.**

- **8.03 PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**

Discussion was held about the structure of the Parks & Recreation department within the City, i.e., the idea of moving the department under the City Manager and limiting the P&R Board to an advisory capacity. Angela Manley, P&R Director, provided information about the operations of P&R, and pointed out that, regardless of how it is organized, the main issue is financial, and that would not be addressed by moving the department under the City Manager. After discussion, it was decided to remove this article from consideration. Motion to remove was made by Jeff, seconded by Brian and carried 13-0.

- **8.07 CHARTER REVIEW**

Language has been updated as previously discussed. Further discussion was held about the wording of Charter Review meetings, including the use of the phrase “town hall meetings” to encourage the public to attend. It was clarified that all meetings of Charter Review are public, but it was felt that using the phrase “town hall” would be more welcoming. **Language will be updated and brought back for vote at next meeting.**

- **9.02 NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS**

Language regarding primary elections has been updated as previously discussed. Motion to submit the amended version to Council was made by

Darlene, seconded by Brian, and carried 13-0. *Amended.version.will.be.
submitted.to.Council.for.approval;*

- **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56pm.

The next meeting will be held on July 1, 2025 at 6:00pm at City Hall.

Proposed Charter Amendment — City of Kent, Ohio

Section 7.0.3 (E) (3) – Public Safety Complaint Form Access and Reporting Requirements

(A) Establishment of Complaint Forms

The Director of Public Safety shall be responsible for the creation, maintenance, and public availability of complaint forms for units within the Department of Public Safety, specifically including:

1. The Kent Police Department;
2. The Kent Fire Department including Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
3. Kent Communications Center

Each complaint form shall be made available for download and electronic submission through the official website of the City of Kent. The electronic version shall include functionality to accept electronic signatures consistent with the requirements of Chapter 1306 of the Ohio Revised Code (Ohio's Uniform Electronic Transactions Act). A unique case reference number will be issued for the tracking of said complaints and provided to the complainants.

(B) Physical Access and Submission

Printed versions of the aforementioned form shall be made available at City Hall, at no cost and without inquiry as to the reason for the request, to any person. The City shall accept submission of completed physical forms by:

1. United States Mail; and
2. In-person delivery to City personnel designated by the City who are not directly employed by, or subordinate to, the Kent Police Department, Fire Department, or EMS.

(C) Reporting to Council

The Director of Public Safety shall submit quarterly reports to City Council in Executive Session beginning April 1st of each year and an annual report to City Council no later than April 1st, detailing all public safety complaints received in the preceding calendar year relating to the Police Division, Fire Division including EMS, and Communications Center. The report shall also include updates on any investigations that remain open at the time of reporting.

The annual report shall include, at minimum:

1. A summary of the investigative findings for each closed complaint received;
2. The names, titles, and/or ranks of all personnel identified in each closed complaint;
3. The final disposition or outcome of each closed investigation, including any disciplinary actions taken; and
4. The number of open investigations, listed with the case reference number and date of submission.

City Council shall retain authority to request additional information, records, or supplemental reporting as may be necessary to ensure transparency and accountability within the Department of Public Safety.

Proposed Amendment to 8.07
SECOND DRAFT

8.07 Charter Review

Beginning in 2030 and every five (5) years thereafter, the Council shall appoint a Charter Review Commission to review the provisions of this Charter and make such recommendations to the Council for its amendment as the Commission may deem appropriate. The Commission shall consist of nine (9) residents of the Municipality—not holding any other elected or appointed office in the Municipality. Council shall endeavor to select a Commission that is a diverse cross section of the City keeping in mind age, race, gender, ethnicity, and ensuring each ward is represented. The term of the Commission shall end immediately following Council’s final vote on the Commission’s recommended amendments.

The President Pro-Tem of Council shall be responsible for launching the Charter Review process in the October preceding the year in which the review is to occur. The President Pro-Tem shall direct the Clerk of Council to create and publish an application for prospective Commission members by October 1st of the year preceding the review year with a submission deadline of October 31st; the Clerk of Council shall collect all completed applications and make them available to every member of Council for their review. All nine members of the Commission shall be formally appointed by Council no later than November 30th preceding the review year.

At its initial organizational meeting, the Commission shall elect from among its members a Chair and Vice-Chair, who shall preside over its meetings. Following the Commission’s organizational meeting, the President Pro-Tem of Council shall work with the Chair and Vice-Chair to host an Introductory Meeting by February 1st of the review year that is open to the public and to which members of Council, city employees, and Charter Review Commissioners are invited. This meeting shall minimally provide information about the Charter, its role in governing the City, the Charter Review process, the roles of Commissioners, Council members, city employees, and members of the public throughout the process, and an established timeline. The Introductory Meeting shall be recorded and made publicly available no later than one week following its occurrence.

The Commission shall publicly meet at least once a month and shall provide an interim report of its progress to Council by April of the review year. During the Charter Review process, the Commission shall host at least one Town Hall meeting in addition to the Introductory Meeting to present proposed amendments and collect public feedback. All meetings shall be recorded and made publicly available no later than one week following its occurrence.

Following the second **Town Hall** meeting and no later than June 15th, the Commission shall report its final findings and recommendations to the Council. Upon receiving the Commission's report, Council shall publish it and consider its recommendations. Council may submit any proposed amendments to the electors in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the State of Ohio; should it submit proposed amendments to the electors, Council will appropriate the requisite funds for associated ballot expenses. The Council shall appropriate sufficient funds to the Commission for staff help, costs related to copying, meeting space, or other related administrative expenses.

FINALIZED CHARTER AMENDMENTS

GENERAL: Removal of all references to residency requirements to comply with the laws of the State of Ohio.

PREAMBLE: Removal of the phrase “to Almighty God” to reflect separation of church and state, and avoid possible offense to residents. Amended to read:

We, the people of the City of Kent, Ohio, grateful for the freedoms we enjoy, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of the State of Ohio, extending to municipalities the privilege of “Home-rule” in order to secure for ourselves and posterity practical and efficient methods in administering the affairs of the City, to protect the interests and insure the continued welfare of the community and to enjoy all the privileges of local self-government, do adopt this Charter.

5.01 COUNCIL & MAYOR – Number, Selection, Term: Updates to reflect size of Council and reference to ward boundaries. Amended to read:

Until enlarged by the procedures established by the general laws of the State of Ohio, the Council shall be composed of [nine](#) members, three of whom shall be elected at large and [six](#) of whom shall be elected from wards.

During the years 1964 and 1965, the Council shall be composed of the seven members elected to Council at the November 5, 1963, regular municipal election, or any successor appointed to fill a vacancy.

At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965, four members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for a two-year term expiring December 31, 1967. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965 and every fourth year thereafter, members elected at large shall be elected for four-year terms. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1967 and every fourth year thereafter, members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for four-year terms.

All members of Council shall assume office on the first day of January next following their election.

[If the city changes ward lines following a decennial census or by ordinance for another reason, a council member who was elected from one ward, but now resides in another, shall complete the remainder of their council term. In the election following the member’s four-year term, said member must run in the newly drawn ward in which they reside.](#)

6.03 CITY MANAGER – Acting City Manager: Replacement of the word “disability” to reflect modern awareness. Amended to read:

By letter filed with the Clerk of Council, the Manager shall, within sixty (60) days of appointment, designate, subject to approval of the Council, a qualified City Administrative officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of Manager during any absence or inability to perform such duties. During such absence or inability to perform relevant duties, the Council may revoke such designation at any time and appoint another qualified City administrative officer to serve until the Manager shall return, is able to perform relevant duties, or a new manager is appointed.

6.04 CITY MANAGER – Powers and Duties: Addition of a requirement to provide an annual economic development strategic plan. Amended to read:

L) The City Manager will annually submit an economic development strategic plan to the council and the public, The plan will outline goals and objectives for achieving and maintaining a sustainable Kent economy, report on performance and metrics and resource needs for strategy implementation, include a 5 year forecast, and include any other section required by City Council.”

9.02 ELECTIONS – General Laws to Apply: Replacement in entirety with the following:

9.02 Nonpartisan Elections

All elections for the office of Mayor and members of City Council shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis. No political party designation or affiliation shall appear on any nominating petition or ballot for any City elective office.

A primary election shall be held when more than two persons have filed valid nominating petitions for the office of Mayor or for a City Council ward seat. In such cases, all qualified candidates shall appear on a single, nonpartisan primary ballot, and the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be certified to the general election ballot, regardless of political affiliation.

A primary election shall also be held when more than six persons have filed valid nominating petitions for the three at-large City Council seats up for election. In such cases, all qualified candidates shall appear on a single, nonpartisan primary ballot, and the names of the six candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be certified to the general election ballot, regardless of political affiliation.

If two or fewer candidates qualify for an elective office for which only one seat is to be filled, or six or fewer candidates qualify for the three at-large City Council seats, no primary election shall be held for that office or offices, and the names of all qualified candidates shall appear on the general election ballot.

The procedures for the conduct of such nonpartisan elections, including filing deadlines, ballot preparation, and canvassing of results, shall be in accordance with the general laws of the State of Ohio, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.