



City of Kent

Regular City Council Meeting

319 S. Water Street, Kent, Ohio 44240

May 20, 2026

MINUTES

At 7:01pm, Mayor Amrhein called the Regular City Council meeting to order.

Present: Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Eric Dreger; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Benjamin Tipton; Ms. Tracy Wallach; Ms. Sarah Wesley

Also Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mayor and President of Council; Ms. Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Jordan Snyder, IT Technician

Motion to excuse Mr. Turner and Ms. Celko was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING: Community Development Block Grant PY 2026 Action Plan

Ms. Susel advised Council that this was the second of two required public hearings regarding the CDBG PY 2026 action plan. She reported that the City, classified as an entitlement community, receives annual funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. This year's action plan allocates 100% of its funds to benefit low to moderate income households, focusing on infrastructure improvements, housing enhancements, and public services. The current allocation is \$257,510, which is approximately \$20,000 less than last year. There were no public comments.

OPENING REMARKS and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Clapper wished everyone a happy Memorial Day and led Council in the pledge of allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public Comment

- There were no public comments

Written Communication

- On April 13, 2026, the Clerk's office received notice that the April 21st Planning Commission meeting had been cancelled due to lack of agenda items.
- On April 21, 2026, the Clerk's office received notice that the May 5th Planning Commission meeting had been cancelled due to lack of agenda items. A meeting is planned for May 19, 2026.
- On April 30, 2026, the April minutes and May agenda for the Standing Rock Cemetery Board of Trustees was received and posted online.
- On May 5, 2026, an email from Joseph Crihfield was received in the Clerk's office. The email expressed displeasure with Kent State University installing Flock cameras. The email was shared with Council.
- On May 7, 2026, a letter addressed to Council and the City Manager was received from Lee Brooker of Wilson Ave., expressing displeasure with gas-powered lawn equipment, and requesting a ban on their use in residential neighborhoods. Mr. Ruller responded to the letter and the letter and his response was shared with Council.
- On May 11, 2026 the agenda for the May 18th meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was received in the Clerk's office.
- On May 12, 2026, the agenda and staff report for the May 19th meeting of the Planning Commission was received in the Clerk's office.

RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA PUBLICATION: Notice from the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Liquor Control advising of a transfer of ownership from Kent Overstuffed Inc. to The Nut House, located at 295 S. Water St., Kent.

MOTION TO RETURN THE NOTICE WITH NO HEARING REQUESTED was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook and carried by unanimous voice vote.

City Manager's Report

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CITY MANAGER'S REPORT was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Wallach, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Wallach requested that the April regular Council meeting minutes be removed from the Consent agenda.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THREE READINGS OF DRAFTS 2026-42 through 2026-51 was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0-0.

- Approval of May Council Committee Meeting minutes
- Approval of May Special Committee Meeting minutes
- **DRAFT 2026-42** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR, UPON THE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, TO PAY CERTAIN PURCHASE ORDERS MADE THAT EXCEED \$3000.00; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-43** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE TO DISPOSE OF SURPLUS COMPUTER EQUIPMENT ON THE BASIS THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER NEEDED OR IN SERVICE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-44** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL 2026 RECOMMENDATION, TO CONTINUE THE ENTERPRISE ZONE AGREEMENT WITH THE DAVEY TREE EXPERT COMPANY AND THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENTS WITH KMPH REAL ESTATE (MAZDA) AND KLABEN PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, LLC FOR TWO DIFFERENT PROJECTS PROVIDING FOR-REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION, AS SPECIFIED IN THE SEPARATE AGREEMENTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-45** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SALE BY ONLINE AUCTION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY LOCATED AT 500 MIDDLEBURY ROAD THAT THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT NO LONGER HAS ANY LONG-TERM PLANS TO USE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-46** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 915, 921, 1193, 1199 AND 1203 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF KENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-47** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF KENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000.00 FROM THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-48** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 353.02 “PARKING REGULATION AUTHORIZATION” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF KENT TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE ON NEEDHAM AVENUE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-49** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SR59 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT,

PARTA AND FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP WHICH WAS EXECUTED ON OCTOBER 5, 2023 TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) AS A PROJECT PARTNER AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **DRAFT 2026-50** AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ASSISTANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 UNDER TITLE I OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974, AS AMENDED, INCLUDING THE PY2026 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND FILING OF THE PY2026 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, INCLUDING RELATED CERTIFICATIONS, AND UPON AWARDING OF THE GRANT, AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-51** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO A LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT AND OHIO EPA FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY (WRF) INFLUENT HEADWORKS BUILDING PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

STANDING COMMITTEES AND LEGISLATION

Committee of the Whole – Chair Amrhein /Vice–Chair Clapper

MOTION TO APPROVE APRIL REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by roll call vote 6-0-1, with Ms. Wallach abstaining.

Community Development Committee – Chair Shaffer Bish/Vice-Chair Wallach

No action.

Finance Committee – Chair Celko/Vice-Chair Tipton

No action.

Health & Safety Committee – Chair Hook/Vice-Chair Clapper

No action.

Land Use Committee – Chair Clapper/Vice-Chair Hook

No action

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee – Chair Wallach/Vice-Chair Tipton

No action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Shaffer Bish reported that a constituent expressed frustration regarding the state of housing in their neighborhood, leading to their decision to move out of Kent. She reflected on efforts to improve property conditions through a property maintenance code, which has had mixed

success, identifying issues like sidewalk upkeep and general tidiness. One notable problem is the presence of an unused beer pong table in a front yard, which seems to have become a permanent fixture. This raises questions about existing regulations for maintaining neighborhood aesthetics, prompting a proposal to explore legislation to address such issues in local housing. Ms. Shaffer Bish made a motion to move this topic to committee; the motion was seconded by Ms. Wesley and carried by voice vote 6-1-0, with Mr. Hook voting no.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS


Mr. Tipton encouraged Council to participate in a Clean Up Kent session downtown on May 30, 2026.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Amrhein reported that he engaged in various community and educational events in Kent and Portage County, emphasizing civic pride. Highlights included attending an environmental lecture by Doug Talamy, participating in a tree planting ceremony for the nation's 250th anniversary, and celebrating business growth at ribbon-cutting events for local companies. He also met with third graders from Kent State Child Development Center and participated in the annual mayor's challenge for food donations. He attended a remembrance ceremony at Thomas Anderson Memorial Gardens, and will be part of the upcoming Memorial Day parade.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:16pm, and was followed by a Council Planning Workshop.



Kathleen Coleman
Clerk of Council



Jack Amrhein
Mayor and President of Council