



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

**June 3, 2026**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Jack Amrhein called the Committee meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Present: Ms. Melissa Celko; 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; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Outreach Coordinator; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Mr. Eric Helmstedter, Economic Development Director; Mr. Jordan Snyder, IT Technician

**COMMITTEES**

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

**Board/Commission Interview: Ashley D’Angelo, Sustainability Committee**

- Ms. Ashley D’Angelo was interviewed for a position on the Sustainability Committee. She is a Kent native and final-year environmental studies student at Kent State, currently employed at Davey Tree in stream and wetland restoration and invasive species management. She recently purchased a home on East School Street, and stated her intention to remain in the Kent area on a long term basis. She was advised that Council will vote on the appointment at the June 17, 2026 meeting and she would be advised of the outcome.

**City Staff Updates**

- **Ms. Hall** reminded Council to complete the Related Party Questionnaire which she emailed to them the prior week. They are due by the end of the month. She explained that new Council members would not receive them this year, but will get them next year. The forms can be printed, marked up, scanned, or signed electronically.
- **Mr. Ruller** and **Ms. Baker** updated Council on the chlorine gas leak at the Akron Water Treatment Facility in Franklin Township earlier in the day. Ms. Baker stated that there was a leak at a facility using hypochlorite for water disinfection, which formed a gas cloud when it mixed with aluminum; however, there was no contamination of the river or groundwater. The plant was shut down, and after ensuring safety, they began testing surrounding water. Three individuals were hospitalized, but everyone else evacuated safely. Support was offered in the form of diluted hypochlorite to assist temporary operations. Additionally, issues with the interconnect between Akron and Kent were noted, but access remains limited to prevent unsafe water conditions. Overall, community cooperation was vital in managing the situation.

## **Community Development Committee-Chair Shaffer Bish/Vice-Chair Wallach**

### **Amendment to Enterprise Rental Car CRA Agreement**

**Ms. Susel** discussed amending the CRA agreement for Enterprise Rental Car at 1225 West Main. Initially proposed changes included relocating 77 part-time positions; however, this number was revised to 49 part-time and 1 full-time position due to operational adjustments. The annual payroll was reduced from approximately \$1.4 million to \$825,000, aligning with previous CRA agreements. While the economic gain is less than expected, the overall investment is still seen as advantageous, particularly for revitalizing a previously vacant building.

MOTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENT TO THE ENTERPRISE RENTAL CAR CRA AGREEMENT WITH EMERGENCY was made by Ms. Wesley, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

### **Amendment to Sustainability Commission Bylaws**

**Ms. Susel** advised Council that the Sustainability Commission's bylaws were amended following a unanimous vote on May 11, after previous discussions and requests for wording adjustments. Typically, such bylaws are shaped within the boards themselves rather than by the Council. The amendments allow the commission to address sustainability, environment, and natural resource issues, including additions related to the Climate Action Plan. Discussions also covered the need for clarity regarding "city staff" approval for commission members' activities, suggesting the insertion of the Community Development Director's title for better accountability.

MOTION TO APPROVE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION BYLAWS, WITH THE ADDITION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S TITLE FOR APPROVALS, WITH EMERGENCY was made by Mr. Hook, seconded by Ms. Wallach, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

### **Amendment to College Town Kent Land Lease**

**Ms. Susel** discussed the third amendment to the land lease for College Town Kent. The initial amendments focused on adding a fourth building and altering public access to a parking lot. Since 2013, College Town Kent has contributed approximately \$450,000 in maintenance fees, and the proposed amendment will allow costs to reflect actual expenditures rather than fixed fees. The adjustment aims to keep invoicing transparent for shared maintenance tasks, like snow plowing and night sweeping. Discussions also mention the potential to convert some parking spaces for public use without affecting the maintenance fee structure. Overall, the amendment seeks to document investments fairly between the city and College Town Kent while addressing current usage needs.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED MAINTENANCE FEE AMENDMENT WITH EMERGENCY was made by Ms. Wallach, seconded by Ms. Wesley and carried by unanimous voice vote.

## **Finance Committee – Chair Celko/Vice-Chair Tipton**

### **Staffing Funding Option Discussion**

Discussion continued regarding funding options for future staffing and other needs. Key points included:

- The early sunset of the police station tax portion is financially responsible and offers an opportunity to fund several essential city services alongside public safety.
- Approval of the replacement tax in November would maintain the existing tax rate, avoiding a net increase while addressing critical city funding needs.

- Community communication and council unity in advocacy will be pivotal given the election timing and potential voter confusion.
- Legal counsel is finalizing language to clarify and combine ballot questions for a clearer voter presentation.
- The City must ensure neutrality in official communications, but council members can actively support the measure.
- Timing and process transparency remain key concerns, with a preference expressed by some for more public deliberation before final approval.
- Experience indicates that public awareness and engagement peak following official council actions rather than during prolonged discussion phases.
- The adoption of the bond measure is framed as an opportunity for a resource-challenged city to take significant steps forward without increasing the tax burden substantially.

MOTION TO RETIRE THE .25 POLICE STATION BOND AND REPLACE IT WITH A .25 SERVICES BOND FOR THE FALL BALLOT WITH EMERGENCY was made by Ms. Wesley, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish and carried by voice vote, 6-1-0, with Ms. Wallach voting no.

#### **2026 Budget Appropriations Amendment**

- Ms. Hall requested approval of the 2026 budget appropriations amendment.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2026 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AMENDMENT WITH EMERGENCY was made by Mr. Tipton, seconded by Ms. Wesley, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

#### **Land Use Committee – Chair Clapper/Vice-Chair Hook**

##### **Proposed Zoning Text Amendments**

- **Ms. Susel** reviewed proposed amendments to the zoning code. Key points include:
  - The amendments strengthen zoning controls related to occupancy, parking, and property use, anticipating possible changes following the Ohio Supreme Court ruling.
  - Differentiating “single-family rentals” from owner-occupied homes provides clearer regulatory authority and aims to reinforce legal defensibility.
  - Measures target preventing overcrowding, unsafe parking practices, and improper front yard usage.
  - The approach balances regulatory rigor with allowance for pre-existing conditions, avoiding undue hardship while protecting neighborhood character.
  - The zoning code remains a dynamic document requiring ongoing updates in response to court rulings, market conditions, and community feedback.

MOTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO ZONING CODE SECTION 1102:03 DEFINITIONS AND SECTION 1107:15 DRIVEWAYS, WITH EMERGENCY, was made by Ms. Wallach, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO ZONING CODE SECTION 1102:03 DEFINITIONS, CHAPTER 1103: ZONING DISTRICTS, LAND USE, AND ZONING MAP, AND SECTION 1110:07 NONCONFORMING LOT REGULATIONS, WITH EMERGENCY, PENDING OHIO SUPREME

COURT DECISION was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

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

### **Request to Modify the Street Closure for KSU Flashes First Event**

- **Mr. Helmstedter** requested Council's authorization for a change to the street closure for the KSU Flashes First event. On August 21st, Kent State University plans to hold the Flash's first Friday event, requesting a road closure on East Erie Street between Haymaker Parkway and South Water Street from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Joe Robinson, representing the university, explained that the event welcomes first-year students to the downtown community and aims to enhance safety and accessibility by extending the closure to alleviate congestion. The plan includes coordinating student participation and setting up vendor booths along the road.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE CHANGE IN ROAD CLOSURE FOR FLASHES FIRST EVENT was made by Mr. Tipton, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.



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City of Kent Clerk of Council