



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

August 5, 2026

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Ms. Melissa Celko; Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Eric Dreger; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Benjamin Tipton; 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; Mr. Gary Stone, Police Chief; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Eric Helmstedter, Economic Development Director; Mr. Jordan Snyder, IT Technician

COMMITTEES

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

City Staff Updates

- **Ms. Bollenbacher** presented the Neighborhood Beautification Awards to Liz and Kyle Kutinsky of Ward 6, who were in attendance, and to Renee and Randy Ruchotzke of Ward 5. She also reported that there would be a Summer Movie Night on August 6, 2026 at Artemis Park.

Council Pending List

- **Mr. Ruller** reviewed items on the Council Pending List. After discussion, Council voted to update the list as follows, while noting that items may be returned to the list at any time:

REMOVE: Senior Advisory Committee
Downtown Historic District
Role of Architecture Review Board
Arborist and Health Department Used in Rental Inspections
Warming Centers for the Unhoused

KEEP: Discussion with Franklin Twp. re: Sidewalk Snow Upkeep
Noise Ordinance Review
Requirement for In-Person Board Interviews

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

Economic Development Strategy Update

- **Ms. Susel** introduced economic development consultant Randall Gross, who is tasked with developing a tailored economic development strategy for Kent. Mr. Gross outlined his comprehensive, multi-phase process involving stakeholder interviews, site evaluations, socio-economic analyses, benchmarking, target market identification, and formulation of actionable strategies.

Discussion highlighted Kent's unique characteristics as a vibrant college town with a strong sense of community identity, diverse economic sectors, and natural assets such as the nearby river and national park. Key priorities identified include enhancing downtown vibrancy via a mix of experiential retail and recreation, improving infrastructure such as parking, leveraging new opportunities from the removal of a downstream dam for river access, and addressing housing limitations to attract and retain families and professionals. The discussion emphasized the importance of balancing "hard" physical investments with "soft" community-building initiatives that enhance quality of life and economic vitality.

Mr. Gross plans more visits to the city and encouraged Council to contact him with any ideas or concerns.

Proposed Amendment to Fair Housing Board Quorum Definition

- **Ms. Susel** addressed Council regarding the Fair Housing Board's quorum definition. She reported that the housing board has faced challenges in meeting quorum requirements due to a current mandate that requires five members out of seven for a quorum. This has resulted in canceled meetings, and delayed votes on resolutions. The board is seeking to modify the quorum requirement to four members, aligning it with Robert's Rules of Order.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE AMENDMENT TO QUORUM DEFINITION WITH EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Ms. Celko, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee – Chair Celko/Vice-Chair Tipton

Consideration of Certifying Unpaid City Bills to the County for Placement as a Lien

- **Ms. Hall** addressed Council regarding unpaid bills owed to the city of Kent for utility bills, concrete/sidewalk repairs, and non-utility bills, including those from the Health Department and Community Development. She reported that efforts to notify residents about these debts have been made and were unsuccessful in securing payment. There was a discussion about options for residents facing financial hardship, confirming that they can apply for reduced fees. Questions from council members aimed to clarify the payment process for residents using the sidewalk program.

MOTION TO CERTIFY AND AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF UNPAID CONCRETE/SIDEWALK REPAIR BILLS TO THE COUNTY FOR PROPERTY TAX LIENS WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Tipton, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION TO CERTIFY AND AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF UNPAID UTILITY BILLS TO THE COUNTY FOR PROPERTY TAX LIENS WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION TO CERTIFY AND AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF UNPAID NON-UTILITY BILLS TO THE COUNTY FOR PROPERTY TAX LIENS WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Wesley, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

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

Renewal of School Resource Officer Agreement with Kent City Schools

- **Chief Stone** addressed Council regarding the annual renewal of the School Resource Officer Agreement with Kent City Schools. He requested continued collaboration with Kent City Schools, emphasizing the role of Officer Dominic Poe as the school resource officer.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AGREEMENT WITH KENT CITY SCHOOLS WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Ms. Wesley, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

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

N. Manua St. Improvement Project – Right of Way Donation

- **Mr. Bowling** requested Council's approval to accept seven easements from Davey Tree Expert Company for the North Mantua Street project. This includes two permanent highway easements for roads and utilities, two permanent shared-use path easements for walkways, and three temporary easements for construction. Right-of-way is needed from Davey Tree and Kent City School District, both of which have verbally agreed to donate.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE EASEMENTS AND RIGHT OF WAY DONATIONS FOR THE NORTH MANTUA ST. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Request for City Water Service – 5085 SR 43

- **Mr. Bowling** reported a request for city water service at 5085 SR 43 in Brimfield. He anticipated no problems with providing water to that location and requested Council's authorization.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE EXTENSION OF CITY WATER SERVICE TO 5058 STATE ROUTE 43 in BRIMFIELD WITH THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.



City of Kent Clerk of Council