

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
WORK SESSION
WED., SEPTEMBER 7, 2016**

This work session of Kent City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7, 2016 by Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor & President of Council. Mayor Fiala explained they would be conducting interviews for vacancies on City boards and commissions. He said they would be making the appointments on September 21, 2016 during the regular Council meeting.

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DeLEONE, MR. KUHAR, MS. LONG, MS. SHAFFER, MR. SIDOTI, MR. TURNER (ARRIVED AT 7:11 P.M.), AND MS. WALLACH

ALSO PRESENT: J. FIALA, MAYOR & PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; AND L. SEEFRIED, INTERIM CLERK OF COUNCIL

ABSENT: MR. FERRARA

William Willoughby, incumbent, applicant for Architectural Review Board, was not present.

Michelle Frederick, applicant for Board of Health, was not present.

Miriam Jackson, applicant for Sustainability Commission:

Ms. Jackson gave her address as 424 E. Summit Street. She said she has been a Kent resident off and on since when her parent moved here in 1959, so she has seen a lot of changes. She stated she has had the opportunity to live both here and in other parts of the country and for a long time she has been extremely interested in the issue of sustainability and was quite delighted to find out that the commission had a vacancy. She added that back in the fall of 1970 when she was an undergraduate on campus, there was a course given called Great Contemporary Issues and that particular quarter was on pollution, which was an incredible eye-opener, and that issue has really never gone far from her consciousness. She commented that Kent is changing a lot right now with all the construction and the University is getting bigger. She said they have the good fortune to have a commission on sustainability to try to figure out what is good in terms for our overall environment to have and perhaps not have in the city. She stated she has never had the opportunity to volunteer before for the city and so she welcomes this opportunity.

Ms. Shaffer asked Ms. Jackson if there is an issue in particular that she cares a lot about regarding the environment. Ms. Jackson replied that one of them is overbuilding to the point where she sees that yet another building is being put up where we could, for instance, have a neighborhood park, but it doesn't get put in because people doing the building decide that that should take priority. She said she thinks that since Kent is just about out of space, she feels it is particularly important right now that the people on the commission start thinking about whether this particular project is going to be sustainable and be good for the environment. She said one claim to fame that Kent has had for a long time, which she used to boast about when she was living in northeastern Arizona and which did not have that to boast about, was the best drinking water in the nation and she would certainly want to keep it that way and feels that is part of the whole issue of sustainability.

Ms. Wallach asked Ms. Jackson what kind of car she drives. Ms. Jackson stated she has a very old Grand Caravan.

Hearing no further questions, Mayor Fiala thanked Ms. Jackson for applying.

Steve Balazs, applicant for Sustainability Commission; second choice - Architectural Review Board:

Mr. Balazs gave his address as 223 N. Water Street. He stated he has a couple reasons for applying for these positions. He said he served on the BZA for eight years and he saw some good plans come through, but some of the things didn't come to fruition, such as solar panels on property parking, and he feels if we had a more proactive stance on sustainability we could maybe set an example for other communities and help ourselves. He said that personally he is big on sustainability with his properties in town and he is always insulating the houses, putting water saving type devices on the plumbing systems, and using the newest devices for electrical, such as smart switches. He just recently had a solar audit done on four of his houses, so he is looking forward to if it is financially feasible to get that done and perhaps set an example. He further stated he has done numerous - 2000+ energy audits back in the eighties when the gas program came through and before that he had designed all kind of properties, so there are a lot of reasons for his applying. He stated that is the reason he applied for the Sustainability Commission first; the Architectural Review Board is kind of a slam dunk for him, as he does a lot of that kind of work already within his own business. Mr. Fiala asked him if he has a background in architecture. Mr. Balazs answered he is in building construction; he has a Bachelor's degree in construction from Akron University and a Masters degree in education.

Ms. Shaffer asked if there were some 'easy pickin's' in the city for sustainability, what would those be for Mr. Balazs. Mr. Balazs asked what she meant by 'easy pickin's' and Ms. Shaffer replied something that could be implemented pretty quickly that isn't being done. She said she liked the example of the solar

panels on the parking deck, and she believes that was a question of cost. Mr. Balazs responded that we could have, for example, some kind of incentive programs; going LED isn't all that hard today and it saves the consumer money; also, water savings would be big, in his opinion, only for the consumer, not for us a city; those are two that come to mind. Mr. Balazs added that he drives a Prius.

Ms. Wallach stated she is intrigued that Mr. Balazs has an education degree because a lot of sustainability efforts are focused on education.

Hearing no further questions, Mayor Fiala thanked Mr. Balazs for applying.

Andrew Scholl, applicant for Sustainability Commission; second choice - Shade Tree Commission:

Mr. Scholl gave his address as 804 S. Depeyster Street and stated he has only been living in Kent for three years, but he grew up in northeastern Ohio in the greater Cleveland area. Mr. Scholl stated he teaches at the Kent State Stark Campus classes in forestry, natural resource conservation and sustainability issues and he's been teaching those courses for about ten years and working with students on a lot of issues. He said his interest with Kent is he started doing stuff with the students in the Canton community and before he moved here he was in Springfield, Ohio and he really enjoyed working with students, getting them out and trying to study some sustainability issues and really trying to quantify and measure things because a lot of things people had tried to implement, they wouldn't know how effective they were and so they actually helped the city when they were doing a combined sewer overflow assessment; they also helped the city develop a "green fair" to try to bring people knowledge and information about improvements they could do to their house and giving information on the then-federal tax rebates for energy efficiency improvements. He continued that since he is not teaching at the main campus, he wants to get involved in the Kent area with some of the issues and he thought this would be a great way to do it. He said one of the things he is really interested in is trying to understand how effective some of these changes are – what is the return on the cost that goes into some of these different projects that potentially could be undertaken for the residents of our city.

Mayor Fiala asked Mr. Scholl if he wanted to say something about the Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Scholl said he has been doing forestry research for about 10-12 years now and teaching forestry classes, so his original background is in forestry and that's where he's done a lot of early work before he went to Springfield and then came up here where, not having the resources to go out west where he did a lot of fire ecology and regeneration management in forests, he focused locally and that's when he really turned toward the sustainability issues.

Ms. Shaffer asked Mr. Scholl what he would do for Kent; what he would propose for the Sustainability Commission to look at. He replied that a big focus he had was trying to – again, by evaluating some of this information, seeing how effective it was - being able to educate people to pitch the reasons or justifications for making some of these improvements and encouraging homeowners in doing some of those things. He said when Springfield was doing the combined sewer overflow they actually looked at issues of trying to evaluate impervious surfaces people had and can now actually give people a credit versus a fee that was being charged for overhauling the whole system in the city, so part of that went to the city, but part of it was going out and being able to have that information and present to the residents of how they can implement these things that are a fraction of the cost that might be going on in terms of to improve your situation and your water bill and it also improves that fee that you were assessed for the storm water. He would like to look at some of the things that, by educating people to improve their situation and also can benefit the city as a bigger community. He said one of his big things recently is community walkability.

Ms. Wallach asked what kind of car he drives. Mr. Scholl said a Prius.

Hearing no further questions, Mayor Fiala thanked Mr. Scholl for applying.

Judy Nelson, applicant for Sustainability Commission:

Ms. Nelson stated she lives at 330 Whetstone Drive and she drives a 2003 Honda Civic Hybrid, manual transmission, and it was stopped at the red light and the engine was off and she was not emitting fumes. Ms. Nelson said she has lived in Kent for eleven years; prior to that she lived in Stow and served on the Solid Waste Task Force, a 9-10 month service of weekly meetings, during which time they met with Portage County Solid Waste task and management people, as well as other communities that had various systems set up, and their purpose was to advise council on what they felt the city should do as far as solid waste. More recently, for the University of Akron she wrote an article about some of the recycling programs and their "Game Day Challenge" where universities throughout the nation participate to create as little waste during football games as possible, and where the University of Akron managed to place very high the past of couple of years in particular with regards to the composting portion of it. She added that she was there on-site sorting through trash in order to separate the paper, the food scraps and the aluminum cans – literally, they were at a table sorting through trash bags, that is how much she believes in the sustainability aspect of life in general. She commented that sustainability permeates her entire life; everything she and her husband do, they look at it from a sustainable perspective – what can they do in their own personal lives to be sustainable -- from composting their own food scraps, to having a small organic garden, to going to the farmer's market to support local farmers who are also trying to grow food organically, to utilizing a co-op, to bicycling when they need to get around at times. She said she and her husband are big Chipotle fans; she told of how they had gone into Chipotle in February and the trash was overflowing and they asked the manager if they recycled and he said no. She said she had in the past been out to Chipotle Corporate in Denver and she had a contact person there that she emailed about the Kent store not recycling and

added that she felt it was very important. Kent Corporate agreed and said that they are not able to do that in all communities, so she contacted Portage County Solid Waste and asked them what businesses can do and they responded that they were happy to come and do an assessment. Ms. Nelson then informed her contact at Chipotle that this was possible and gave him the phone number. About a month or so later, she and her husband were at Chipotle and the manager they had spoken to recognized them and said they now have recycling, that it's not working that great yet, but they are working on the system. Ms. Nelson commented that as far as she can see that could happen here in the city is that businesses could be talked to or approached about whether they are recycling, whether they are doing as much as they can to be sustainable and what can we do to help.

Ms. Shaffer asked Ms. Nelson if she is willing to take on the bars because she has heard that many of them do not recycle. Ms. Nelson said sure, she would be happy to and stated that she is quite certain they produce lots of recyclable products.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Fiala thanked Ms. Nelson for applying. Mayor Fiala thanked everyone who applied. He said they all have some good ideas and they all seem like good people. He commented that each of the boards/commissions they applied for only has one vacancy at this time and encouraged them to keep trying. He reminded them that Council would make the appointments at its regular meeting on September 21, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

Hearing no further business before this Council, Mayor Fiala adjourned this work session at 7:20 p.m.

Leslie J. Seefried, Interim Clerk of Council

Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor & President of Council