

February 6, 2009



Work Session

1. Town/Gown Neighborhood Presentation

In our continued effort to help stabilize Kent neighborhoods through our Neighborhood Enrichment Initiative we have rescheduled the guest speakers from an architectural/design firm (GBBN Architects, Inc. in Cincinnati) that were referred to us based on their work in other university cities to restore and revitalize "edge" neighborhoods around universities. They will talk about common problems and the types of solutions that they've seen work in cities. I've attached a preliminary copy of their presentation for your information. (attachment)

Administrative Recommendation

Consider the best practices discussed in the presentation for further consideration in Kent and direct staff accordingly.

Council Action

No action necessary

Finance Committee Items

2. Additional Funding For 2009 Events and Festivals

Council had requested Committee time to evaluate the funding available in our budget to support events and festivals in 2009. Since staff will be preparing to advertise the 2009 festival grants in the next month or so we thought it was an appropriate time to discuss whether Council desires to increase the budget allocation. The approved 2009 budget for these events is \$10,000.

Administration Recommendation

If Council wants to increase the budget allocation now is the time to make that decision and I would recommend using reserve funds for that purpose.

Council Action

Discuss and direct staff on the appropriate budget allocation for 2009 festivals and events.

3. 2009 Income Tax Ballot Issue

At the request of a fellow Council Member, the Finance Committee Chair has set aside Committee time at our February 11th meeting for Council to re-consider the previous decision to place a .25 income tax increase on the November 2009 ballot for voter consideration. It is probably worth noting that there are already two existing City levies that expire in 2009 - a general operating levy at 1.16 mills and a recreation levy at .50 mills. The City can place these issues on the ballot at the general election in the last year of the levy (November 2009) or at any election in 2010.

Administration Recommendation

Review and discuss the tax issue.

Council Action

Review and discuss the tax issue.



Finance Committee Items continued

4. New Business Fee Findings

We had originally planned to schedule time in the February 11th Committee meeting for Jim Silver to report his findings into Mr. Kuhar's request to investigate the feasibility a business fee similar to the one that he was familiar with in Florida. However, since he will not be able to attend the meeting on the 11th we have removed it from the agenda and we will reschedule it for a future Committee night.

reschedule

Health & Safety Committee

5. Status of the Proposed Kent Walk n Roll Event

Last Fall Council heard a report from the Director of the Walk-N-Roll organization out of Cleveland regarding the possibility of a Kent Walk-N-Roll event. At that time Council directed staff to refer the matter to Main Street Kent for their consideration. Main Street Kent is completing their 2009 Work Plan and they have recently advised me that they were unable to find volunteers within Main Street Kent to champion and plan a Kent Walk-N-Roll event for 2009 under the auspices of Main Street Kent. However, they said that they think it's a great idea and they would certainly be a contributing partner in any way they could; they just could not be the lead organization. Main Street representatives will join us in Committee to discuss this issue further.



Administration Recommendation

There is strong support for the concept of hosting a Kent Walk-N-Roll event from the City staff and Main Street Kent. If Council wishes to pursue an event in 2009 I would encourage asking the Kent Parks and Recreation Department if they could serve a lead role with the City and Main Street providing a support role.

Council Action

Review the issue and direct staff accordingly.

Information Items

1. Copy of Gene's Trash Bid Powerpoint Slides

I have included a copy of Gene's powerpoint presentation summarizing the results of the trash collection bid. We are planning to hold the first public meeting on the trash hauling proposal on Wednesday, February 25th at 7 pm in Council Chambers. We are considering a second public meeting in March. I have also uploaded Gene's bid information to the Kent360 web site for public review as well. (attachment)

2. Police Statistics

I have included a copy of the latest Police statistics reported by the Police Chief for your information. You will note that calls for service and total arrests for 2008 were 10% higher than 2007. We are in the process of uploading all of our city service measures on-line in graphic form for public information as well. (attachment)

3. Monthly Permit and Zoning Reports

Gary Locke has enclosed a copy of the monthly zoning and permit violations report thru January 2009. As we start 2009 off, total construction permits are down by about 22% for January and fee revenues are down a corresponding 48%. The inspection data shows work on illegal rooming houses complaints. (attachment)

Information Items (continued)

4. City Energy Savings and Conservation Plan

Gene Roberts and I have been researching and interviewing energy conservation experts to work with us to review City operations and facilities in order to identify ways to save money through improved energy efficiency and performance. The City does not have a facility engineer or buildings manager on staff so we lack the expertise needed to develop a comprehensive energy management plan in-house as requested by City Council so we will have to outsource this effort. Based on our initial research and preliminary energy audit work we believe it may be possible to save a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year with no net cost to the City by taking advantage of the terms of House Bill 300. We are in the process of preparing a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit and hire an energy consultant to be our partner in this effort. I anticipate going to bid by March 2009 with a firm selected by April.

5. Sidewalk Snow Removal Continued

There is another meeting planned of the Sidewalk Snow Removal Committee set for 7 pm, Monday February 8, 2009. We are trying to arrange a conference call with the staff from Bowling Green Ohio to discuss their snow removal fines and penalty system prior to that meeting. Troy Loomis, Bridget Susel and I will be discussing these matters with the full Committee. Gene Roberts also reports that on Friday (2/6/09) City crews will be experimenting with the City's bobcat and plow attachment to clear the section of sidewalk from the limited right-of-way fence south of SR261 to the limited right-of-way fence north of SR261. There are large piles of snow in this area and we will use them to test the capabilities of the equipment and measure the time required to clear the walks and ramps. Also on Friday, Gene said that he will be testing a contractor's six foot snow blower on Gougler/Mantua along City property adjacent to the Crain Ave. bridge project. The intent of these tests is to develop some field data on time to clear snow and volume of snow removed in order to report with some accuracy the cost associated with each described method, along with any problems/benefits observed, to the Sidewalk committee.

6. Buildings Demolition Update

As previously reported, the old Red Diner is now officially gone. I have also heard that the owners of the old Kent Motor Inn are planning to demo that structure beginning on Monday, February 9th pending permit approval. Likewise, we are making plans to bring down the blighted houses at the corner of Haymaker and Depeyster when the weather breaks this Spring.