

March 20, 2008



Special Council Meeting

1. On **March 26th** we've requested a short Special Council Meeting to give John Idone a chance to review a grant application that he would like Council's authorization to submit to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The grant application reflects many of the river access improvements that were outlined in the whitewater study. It's important to note that ODNR funds are 100% reimbursable so if we are successful with the grant application the City would front the money for the riverfront improvements and then be reimbursed by the state. The application deadline is April 1 so we needed to ask for Council's consideration of this item quickly. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

The availability of ODNR funds for riverfront improvements provides a great opportunity for the City to leverage state dollars towards many of the project elements contained in the Kent whitewater study. I believe that taking advantage of this opportunity allows us to expand the accessibility and use of the Cuyahoga River which is considered one of our community's greatest assets so I recommend Council's support of this request.

Council Action

Authorize staff to submit that grant application to ODNR.

Exterior Property Maintenance Code

2. Gary Locke

Gary has provided Council (attached) a memorandum that provides a good background behind the staff recommendation to adopt the state approved Property Maintenance Code standards. You may recall that this item first came to Council back in September 2007 and at that time Council asked Gary to solicit more public feedback on it. Gary has since presented it to the Environmental Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Commission. Gary will share the feedback received through this process and he has some questions in his memorandum that he hopes Council will discuss.



It's important to remember that the changes proposed to the Exterior Maintenance Code are just one component of the City's "Neighborhood Enrichment Initiative." For those new Council members I have attached a copy of the packet of information on the Neighborhood Initiative that we provided to City Council in 2007 that should help you see how we are working a multi-faceted strategy to ensure the quality of life in Kent neighborhoods. We continue to work on these neighborhood issues from a number of different angles but with all the attention we've had on economic development issues this year I realize that we haven't really had a chance to present our progress on these areas so I thought this was a good time to reference the framework for our larger commitment to neighborhood enrichment. This material should also be useful in our strategic planning efforts. (attachments)

Planning For Strategic Planning

3. Council Strategic Planning Process

As we discussed with Sy Murray in February, City Council's greatest contribution to the function of the City government comes from defining clear strategic priorities and creating the policies/resources that will enable the staff to be able to achieve those priorities. Staff would like to plan a Strategic Planning Session for Council to review their strategic framework and provide guidance on priorities for 2008.

While strategic planning certainly involves the staff, it is fundamentally a Council function so I am asking for time with Council next week to discuss Council's expectations and preferences in regards to format, facilitation, time, date, logistics, etc. It's been my experience that the most productive strategic planning sessions reflect the expectations of Council so I need to better understand what you want to get out of this process and then we can work to design the process to produce that result.

I've attached some of the materials that we used to set priorities in 2007 for your reference. As you can see most of what we did last year was create a priority listing for different work areas which is fine if that's what Council wants to do again or we can expand that for more discussion and work scheduling. (attachments)

Information Items

1. Town Gown Committee Report of 1996

I understand that David Dix will be speaking at the Bowman Breakfast next week on the topic of town/gown relations. With that in mind I thought it might be helpful to share a copy of the 1996 Town Gown Committee Report with you since it provides an excellent basis for seeing how far we have, or have not come in the last 12 years. (attachment)

2. RFQ Redevelopment

We've scheduled time on April 2nd to allow the RFQ review team to present their recommendation to Council for selection of a developer for the downtown project. I also wanted to let you know that we are busy working on creating a downtown redevelopment strategy that makes sure that this new development, and hopefully the others that will follow it, enhance the vitality of all of downtown Kent. We're preparing a scope of work to hire professional urban planning assistance to work with staff, Council and the community to create a blueprint that translates the larger vision of the Bicentennial Plan into clear redevelopment objectives that we can use to guide both public and private investment in downtown Kent. There's a lot of activity going on downtown and I've asked Suzanne to schedule individual time with each you over the next couple of weeks so that I can update you on the status of these efforts.

3. Justice Department Closes Kent Police Case

I've attached a memo from Bill Lillich that includes a letter from the Justice Department indicating that they have completed their investigation into the complaints of Mr. Sly Parham and they have found no evidence of wrongdoing on the City's behalf. Obviously we take matters like this very seriously so I am relieved to hear that the Justice Department concluded the matter favorably. (attachment)

