

March 7, 2008



Unauthorized Items

1. Selection of Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals

Council will need to select the candidates to fill the vacancies on the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.

Administration Recommendation

Council interviewed candidates in Committee last week and you now need to select your preferred candidates.

Council Action

Select the candidates to fill the vacancies on the PC and BZA.

2. Agricultural District Notification

City Council needs to approve, deny, or approve with modifications the request for placement of farmland in an agricultural district from Newcomer Development Group, LLC for property owned at Newcomer Road and Johnson Road. This was previously approved by City Council in 2007 when Bob Heimann owned the property but it will now have to be re-approved for the new owner/applicant.

Administration Recommendation

Approve the agricultural district request.

Council Action

Approve the agricultural district request.

Information Items

1. Snow Emergency Preparation

With the forecast for up to a foot of snow to arrive in Kent over the next 24 hours, Gene Roberts has been making preparations of equipment, personnel and procedures. Gene advised me this morning that he did receive 150 tons of salt out of his order of 1,700 tons. Obviously he would have preferred the full shipment but Gene feels that we have adequate salt supplies to manage this weekend's storm. Gene has already gone ahead and notified the media that we will likely declare a snow emergency once this storm arrives which will put a parking ban into effect so if you get any questions, please advise your residents that during the snow emergency they must remove their cars from the streets so that we can have full access to plow.

2. Kent Main Street Evaluation Report

Councilmember Wallach requested a copy of the Heritage Ohio evaluation of the Kent Main Street program so I thought I'd go ahead and share a copy with all the members of Council. Mary also advised me that she is working on her first quarter monthly reports which are due to the state office in mid-April. As soon as those are completed I will forward those to Council as well. (attached)

Information Items

3. Update on the RFQ Review Process

I wanted to let you know that the stakeholder committee has completed the interviews of each development firm and we have a committee meeting scheduled for March 11th to review our individual evaluations as a group. It is my expectation that we will use that meeting to reach a consensus recommendation for Council's consideration pending the findings of the financial due diligence report which should be completed by March 14th. It is premature to make any definitive statements about the developers yet but I believe we'll be able to bring a recommendation back to City Council that will rank the developers in order of preference so that we will identify who we think is the best fit for Kent based on experience and expertise, followed by the next best and so on. If the recommendation evolves in this manner, we'll be able to negotiate from a position of strength with our top pick knowing that we have very good second and third choices if we are unsuccessful with the top ranked firm. I'm optimistic that we'll bring our recommendation to you this month so that we can then move into the design phases of the project which will require Council and community input as we work towards preparing a development agreement.

4. Buxton Retail Powerpoint Presentation

We've included a copy of the slides from Joe Fackel's presentation on the Kent retail market. Dan Smith, Gary Locke, Mary Gilbert and I had a conference call with Joe this week to review the materials in more detail and to develop our path forward with how to maximize the use of this data. As a result of that discussion, Dan is working on contacting the best retail matches for Kent and he's begun taking the most pertinent data and compiling it with sites available in Kent to create effective marketing materials to send to retail prospects. Dan and Gary are also planning to attend the national retail conference this May and they are beginning to send out letters to retailers requesting time at the conference to meet and discuss Kent's retail opportunities. Joe made the observation that retail is a fiercely competitive business so we're really trying to gear up and go after redevelopment with everything we've got. (attachment)

5. Whitewater Powerpoint Presentation

Mike Harvey sent me an electronic copy of his whitewater presentation but it was in a format that we can't open so he's working on reformatting for us. As soon as we get it we'll be sure to send it out to you.

6. Council Representative to the Portage County Solid Waste District

The Portage County Solid Waste Director advised us that Kent has a vacancy on their Policy Committee that had been filled by Councilman Bill Schultz. I've attached a memo from Gene that explains the function of the Committee and lists the current membership. I plan to request Council Committee time for Council's recommendation of a replacement. (attachment)

7. Dominion East Ohio

I've attached a letter from Dominion East Ohio that advises the City of their intent to seek the approval of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to proceed with a major pipeline replacement project that will cost in excess of \$2.6 billion and will likely raise customer rates \$1.12 per month effective November 2009. Our staff will track the prospective impacts of this repair work in Kent but I wanted to let you know about the project in the event that you wanted the staff to file any comments on the proposal. (attachment)

Information Items (continued)

8. Monthly Permit and Zoning Staff Report

Gary Locke has enclosed a copy of the monthly zoning and permit violations report thru February 2008. You will note in his report that city building permits are down 10% from last year, but the associated development fees are actually up 28% due to a spate of recent bond activity. On a related note, I would also like to let you know that Civil Service is completing their list of applicants for the new Code Enforcement position and the HR Manager reports that we have received 50 applications so we're anticipating being able to hire a first rate candidate from such a large pool. (attachment)

9. Council Strategic Planning Session

The staff have tentatively been trying to schedule a strategic planning session with City Council for sometime this spring, possibly as early as the week of March 24th. It's been my experience that the most successful strategic planning sessions are led by a facilitator who has experience in strategic decision making. However, before trying to find a possible facilitator I need better direction from City Council as to your expectations and interest in a strategic retreat. I'd like to know if you want a facilitator? How much time do you want to set aside for a retreat? What format would you prefer? Do you want public input? Do you want staff input? Most of the strategic planning sessions I've participated in have been multiple days at an off-site location under the direction of a facilitator but I don't want to presume to know the process you want to use. I don't think we'll be prepared to line up a full strategic planning session for our March 27th meeting date but perhaps we could use that time to plan for your strategic planning session. I will ask for Council's approval to meet on March 27th in my communication next week for that purpose.

11. Income Tax Report

Barb has provided a summary of income tax collections thru February 2008. At two months into the fiscal year it's hard to draw many conclusions from the data but we seem to be off to a good start with the figures up 4.29% for the same period from last year. The income tax receipts from Kent State are also up 5.2%. Some of these figures may be impacted by the extra work day in February 2008. (attachment)

12. NOPEC Information

Gene Roberts reports that NOPEC is in the process of sending notices out to City residents advising them of the opt-out clause that they are required by law to advise the customers of. NOPEC has sent a short email (attached) explaining the mailing and offering phone numbers for customers to call in case they have questions or are confused. I wanted to share that information with you in the event that some of our residents ask you about it. Plus, Gene notes that NOPEC is also providing natural gas and residents have three options to select from for gas service. (attachment)