



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Mayor Fiala called the Committee of the Whole of Kent City Council to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Stemnock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilke, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1. Pending List Update

Mayor Fiala introduced the meeting topic of the Pending List Update.

Mr. Ruller referenced his document distributed in the City Manager Communication regarding the current City Council Pending List. Three items were voted to be removed from the Administration and Council Committee Lists as follows:

Administration

- 1) Study of pedestrians and vehicles with consideration of a four way stop sign or a method for making pedestrians cross safer in the downtown area.
 - a. Mr. Kuhar stated he is unsure if it is necessary to keep on the list. The main purpose of this was concerning N. Water Street which is currently a construction project.
 - b. Ms. Shaffer Bish stated there should be an ongoing evaluation of the Erie and Depeyster Street intersections. She still sees confusion at those intersections with cars and pedestrians and would like to keep monitoring.
 - c. This item will remain on the Pending List.
- 2) Sustainability Commission creating ten actions items to fend off global warming.
 - a. Mr. Ruller stated this was completed in different formats. The Sustainability Commission has been busy working on the Climate Action Plan which was a piece of the global warming protections.
 - b. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 3) **REMOVE:** City Checkbook Online
 - a. Mr. Ruller explained this was a priority of a previous administration in the State Auditor's Office and he is not sure if the format is still available. There were many quirks in the system that didn't make it very useful. He said if anyone would want to see any financial reports we would be happy to share and it would be in a more user-friendly format.
 - b. Mr. Sidoti added it is a moot point and should be taken off of the list.

MOTION to remove the City Checkbook Online from the Administration Pending List made by Mr. Sidoti, SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein and CARRIED with a voice vote of 9-0-0.

- 4) **REMOVE:** Possible Sponsorship for Syrian Refugee Families
- a. Mr. Ruller said a lot changed during the last administration and the Akron agency is no longer in existence. He added the Syrian crisis has passed. Kent certainly wants to be a welcoming and immigrant friendly city and he believes Kent has accomplished the mission of this item.

MOTION to remove the Possible Sponsorship for Syrian Refugee Families from the Administration Pending List made by Ms. Wallach SECONDED by Mr. Kuhar and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

- 5) Explore Senior Center Advisory Committee
- a. Mr. Ruller said this was a very active discussion in year's past and suggested possibly integrating into the future Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
 - b. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 6) Conflict of Interest for Boards and Commissions
- a. Mr. Ruller said Ms. Hope Jones was reviewing this prior to when the COVID 19 pandemic hit.
 - b. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 7) Review and Discuss Unattended Vehicle Idling in the City
- a. Mr. Ruller said findings were shared with Council one year ago and Council asked to continue this discussion.
 - b. Mr. Kuhar said there are already State laws in effect for this both for idling unattended vehicles and temperature guidelines.
 - c. Mr. Ruller added for Public Safety reasons you cannot leave your car running while running into the drugstore to shop. This was originally brought forward from an air quality perspective.
 - d. Chief Shearer added there are both city and state laws for vehicles left unattended and is a citable offense.
 - e. Ms. Rosenberg asked if this item could be combined with the Sustainability Commission item.
 - f. Mr. Sidoti added a strategy is needed to get this important information out to residents. Ms. Wallach suggested leaving in Committee to discuss these methods. Ms. Wallach said it would be worth keeping in committee to continue the discussion on education.
 - g. Mr. DeLeone said many people leave their car running while going into businesses and would be hard to educate people not to do this. Many do not care because it is cold outside and they want to keep their cars warm.
 - h. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 8) Sale/Lease of City Parcel off Ivan Drive
- a. This item will remain on the Pending List

Council Committees

- 1) Discussion on proactively dealing with racism and diversity in Kent
- a. Mayor Fiala recommended keeping this item on this list for a future in person discussion
 - b. Ms. Schaffer Bish added we should say we are going to meet on this item until Council meets in person. She added there may be a situation when there may be a time needed to

discuss prior to when Council is able to meet in person. She does not want to make it contingent upon meeting in person.

- c. Mr. Ruller reminded all that just because Council has not had a meeting on this, there is ongoing meetings on this between the police department, local groups; ongoing meetings with the Portage Collaborative, Kent State, and updates from Chief Shearer regarding efforts with diversity and social equity. He does not want anyone to think staff is waiting for Zoom to end and that it is ongoing and a lot of groups have momentum.
 - d. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 2) Senior Housing Discussion
- a. Mr. Ruller said an ongoing project at this time is working with KSU to redevelop Allerton Apartment Complex into a mutigenerational facility. Ms. Susel said there were a couple meetings regarding the sale of land off of (route) 261.
 - b. Mr. Kuhar suggested keeping this on the list.
 - c. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 3) **REMOVE:** Simple Recycling
- a. Mr. Ruller said the timing of this has passed and recommended this be removed from the list.

MOTION to remove Simple Recycling from the Pending List made by Ms. Rosenberg, **SECONDED** by Mr. Ferrara and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 8-1-0 with Ms. Wallach voting **NO**.

Ms. Rosenberg agreed the time has passed but clarified it could be brought back in the future.

Mr. Ferrara agreed it makes sense to take it off at this time and that it could always be looked at in the future.

Mr. Kuhar said in the future there may be new avenues to explore.

- 4) Sidewalk upkeep
- a. Mr. Ruller said much has been done on ways residents can have their sidewalks replaced. He doesn't believe there will ever be a time where sidewalks are not a priority in the community and it should remain on the list.
 - b. Ms. Shaffer Bish said the administration has made great progress on this item but that sidewalk upkeep continues to be a problem in the city. She would like the conversation ongoing.
 - c. This item will remain on the Pending List
- 5) Low Frequency Noise from Business
- a. This item was recently added to the Pending List and will remain on for discussion.

Seeing no further business or questions for this committee, it adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Authorize and amend the pending list.**



Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Mr. Amrhein called the Health and Safety Committee Meeting of Kent City Council to order at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Stemnock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilken, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1. COVID 19 Update

Ms. Joan Seidel said the Health Department now has a Kent State University Master's Epidemiology student as an intern who prepared a portion of her presentation. (**Attachment #1**) The topics discussed included:

- COVID -19 Epidemiologic update
- Waste water monitoring
- COVID-19 vaccination
- Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization

Highlights of her report included the COVID 19 statistics over the past year with cases increasing August through November 2020. As the number of cases increased, the number of people affected were younger with 50% of the cases being in the age bracket 20-29 which might reflect the population of the college aged student. She also reviewed effects of COVID by race with a higher percentage of black people being affected. Cases were reviewed by zip code with the highest number of cases in the Kent zip code in comparison to other zip codes that make up Portage County.

COVID-19 can make its way into the GI tract and if wastewater is tested we can see if there is a rise in the number of particles in the finding. It would give a three to seven day "heads up" to the virus being spread in the community. It does not provide data down to the individual layer but can show certain housing groups. Kent State is working on testing both on campus and off campus housing units that are student related. There are two committees at KSU that look at the data collected and then share it with the State of Ohio. This is a great tool to utilize for containment and control.

Vaccine rollout is still early in Phase 1 with limited supply. Kent Health Department is still working on gaining vaccine providership and are making progress on being able to safely store and provide vaccine to Kent City residents. Portage County Health District is the lead agency in the area providing vaccines. They are not getting as much vaccine as they would like to have.

Mr. Kuhar asked if there is any chance those vaccinated in phase 1 will not have enough vaccine for the second shot.

Ms. Seidel said when the State sends out an allocation for the first dose, they have already stored the allocation for that group's second dose. Everything that ships out will be used at that time and the State is keeping very close record and all doses are being used within the week's allotment.

Mr. Kuhar added they are doing a terrific job.

Mr. Turner asked how outreach is being done to identify people at risk and to make them a priority.

Mr. Seidel said it is a goal to get more vaccine available and easy to access. The Government has set the approach to the most vulnerable and also those to get children back in school. There is a registration form on the Portage County Health District's website and her concern is that we may need to go to some 55+ communities and give vaccine. A lot of elderly stay at home or stay with family in a single dwelling but they are home bound and it makes it very difficult. There is no preservative in the vaccine which limits its distribution.

Ms. Wallach asked if you need to be a resident of Portage County to receive the vaccine through them.

Ms. Seidel said the Governor said if you are an Ohioan or even living on the border you can come and get a vaccine here. Right now, because of the limited supply, Portage County is watching to make sure you are a Portage County resident and it is a part of the registration process.

Mr. Kuhar asked about a news report regarding possible "tainted" doses and if you have to get multiple shots what that would do to your health.

Ms. Seidel thanked Mr. Kuhar for asking this question and clarified those doses were not tainted in any way, they were just stored improperly with the cold chain not maintained which lowered its effectiveness. They were able to identify the locations where this occurred.

Ms. Seidel reviewed in detail the tiers of Phase 1a and 1b.

Ms. Wallach asked if when the age groups open up, if you are older that the group getting vaccinated if you would go to the head of the line or if it is first come first served.

Ms. Seidel said it depends on the agency and she is not familiar with each distribution site. She does know that as the weeks go on, if you did not get an appointment you can continue to try.

Ms. Seidel continued her presentation by reviewing part of the multifaceted approach to safety being used, the needlepoint bipolar ionization. Kudos to Chief Tosko who worked closely with Kent State University who used these units for their quarantine units on campus to help to try to purify the air. This has been around for a while, several decades ago trying to help restaurants with Norovirus outbreaks. These units are now running and keeping staff safe.

Mr. Kuhar asked if the ionization units are dangerous if the virus is trapped in there. Ms. Seidel replied they destroy the Covid virus protein outer layer and it would no longer be transmissible from the filter.

Ms. Wallach asked about current safety methods being used (mask wearing, social distancing, etc.) and what behavior should occur after the more contagious versions appear. Ms. Seidel replied that one thing that has shown to be effective is to continue doing everything currently being done and to use a double mask (using a surgical mask and a cloth mask over top).

Mr. Sidoti thanked Ms. Seidel for her presentation and asked about reinfection chances. Ms. Seidel said right now the rule of thumb is 90 days. If you have had Covid infection you would still want to be careful and get the vaccine.

Seeing no further business or questions for this committee, it adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) N/A



Streets and Sidewalks Committee Meeting Minutes
The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Chair Sidoti called the Streets and Sidewalks Committee of Kent City Council to order at 8:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Sternock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilken, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1. Consideration of a Request for Water Line Tie-In

Mr. Bowling introduced the request to tie into City water behind Raising Cane's for a car wash. They are required to come to Council and seek approval. Unfortunately, they are declining to participate in the JEDD and will be paying 50% surcharge on their water usage.

MOTION to approved the consideration for a water line tie-in made by Mr. Kuhar, SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0.

Mr. Kuhar said he would do anything to get more customers and help the City. He thinks it's a good thing.

Seeing no further business or questions for this committee, it adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) **Authorize the water extension and tie-in for the new Express Wash Concepts.**



Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes
The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Chair Ferrara called the Land Use Committee of Kent City Council to order at 8:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Stemnock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilke, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1. Request to Accept the Riverbend East Dedication

Ms. Bridget Susel said this is the acceptance and dedication of Phase 5 of the Riverbend Subdivision. Jenn (Barone) shared the map and the punch list that will finish up the project. She offered to take any questions. She also added this is Ms. Barone's official last memo to Council as she is retiring effective March 5, 2021. (Ms. Barone) is fortunate to retire at age sixty and already has travel plans in the coming months. She said she will be missed greatly and has done a majority of the phases in this project and managed the whole process.

MOTION to accept the Riverbend East Dedication made by Mr. Amrhein SECONDED by Ms. Wallach and CARRIED with a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Amrhein added that Ms. Barone is a great employee, as he has worked with her on many things and she will be greatly missed.

Seeing no further business or questions for this committee, it adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) **Authorize the acceptance of the dedication for Phase 5 of Riverbend East.**



Community Development Meeting Minutes
The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Chair Kuhar called the Community Development Committee of Kent City Council to order at 8:04 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Stemnock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilken, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1. Economic Development Projects Update

Mr. Kuhar introduced Mr. Tom Wilke, Economic Development Director, who shared his presentation regarding the Economic Development Update. He mentioned he did not want to seem callous as he will not be discussing the human suffering this past year due to COVID but will be focusing on its economic impact. He discussed the following topics:

- Completion of Last Year's Projects
- New Dining and Shopping Options
- Projects on the Horizon
- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Economic Measures

Completion of Projects: Completion of The Battleground Restaurant, The River Merchant, Pho King, Coyotes Mexican Grill, Akron Children's Hospital, the Crystal Clinic Expansion and the Pita Pit opened in Acorn Alley. North Water Brewing company opened on 100 Crain Ave. and is exceeding. The Tropical Smoothly Café opened next to Starbucks on East Main and offers much more than tropical smoothies, they also offer sandwiches, wraps and lunch items. The Twin Lakes Tavern opened under new ownership.

Ms. Wallach asked if when the DORA is revisited in June, if it can be expanded. Mr. Wilke said that is correct.

The Fruit Stand is opening where Popped! was previously located. Their business is strong, in fact they ran out of product during the first week of operation

Closures:

Longhitano's Gallery Pub and Grill; Peace, Love and Little Donuts; Carnaby Street Style and Gracy Lane (not Covid related); Rush; Cheese monger; and Burger King on E. Main Street all closed in the year 2020. The District Manager of the Burger King said they have been in discussion for years about closing one of the two locations in Kent, with the one located on S. Water Street outperforming the one on E. Main Street. There have already been several national chains asking about the property.

New Dining Options:

Kwench Juice Café, Barrio expansion; Uncle Maddio's Pizza have all been added to the dining scene for 2021.

The Hasawi Building construction at the corner of Erie Street and Franklin Avenue has begun. It will be a six-story building with a coffee/wine bar on the first floor, a restaurant on the second floor and sixteen upscale apartments on the top four floors. Next door where the BW-3 used to be will be the Kent West Apartments which will be purely residential and have a total of 47 units, seven which are micro-units, 30 one bedroom and 10 two-bedroom apartments.

Mayor Fiala asked about parking for the two complexes. Dedicated parking spots for the second building will be provided once combined with the City parking lot, and the residents in the Hasawi Building will park in the parking garage. Mr. Bowling explained there will be more efficient parking with a net gain of parking spots. Alleys 8 and 10 will also be fixed.

The building located at 257 N. Water Street will house a beer and pizza place with an arcade format.

Dunkin Donuts will be opening on S. Water Street across from the Marc's plaza.

The Bell Tower Brewing Company will be opening on Gougler Ave. and the Montrose Mazda expansion is well under way.

The Davey Tree Expansion is moving forward and plan to break ground in late February or March (2021).

Two car washes will be built in Franklin Township at the city limit.

COVID-19 Impact

Mr. Wilke reviewed the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impact, which really affected the 2nd quarter with a 12% unemployment rate and a 17% decrease in income tax collections. He also discussed the indefinite closure of the Kent Stage, the cancellation of all special events, and the extraordinary impact on the hospitality business.

Mr. Wilke concluded his presentation by highlighting the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2nd quarter crater, the devastation to small business, the disproportionate impact on low-income workers, selective impact on manufacturing, the KSU downsizing and still much to be determined. He is hopeful the second half of the year will be more positive and will be reflective of what is going to happen in 2022 going forward.

Ms. Wallach asked if the Escape Room was still open. Mr. Wilke said it was still in business but is not currently open due to the State of Ohio restrictions.

Mr. Sidoti asked if the Klaben property has a SOLD sign on the property. Mr. Wilke said that reflects the fact that Klaben purchased the property.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if anyone is inquiring about the Longhitano's property and also what is going on with the Record Courier property. Mr. Wilke confirmed there has been some interest in the Longhitano's property but the biggest issue is the liquor license which requires 75% of revenue come from food. He said the Record Publishing Building is still for sale and there has been a little bit of interest. The good news is it is owned by Gannet Publishing and they plan to maintain a presence in the building and lease the rest out.

Mr. Kuhar asked about the Wendy's construction. Mr. Wilke said they are going through a total remodel and will have a driveway installed on Lincoln Street which will improve accessibility.

Seeing no further business, the Community Development Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) N/A



Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

The City of Kent, Ohio
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using the Zoom platform and was live streamed on the City of Kent YouTube Channel.

Chair DeLeone called the Finance Committee of Kent City Council to order at 8:42 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Administration Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Mr. John Tosko, Fire Chief; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Suzanne Sternock, Human Resource Manager; Mr. Tom Wilken, Economic Development Director and Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council.

There were two (2) items on the Agenda.

1. 2021 Budget Appropriations Amendment

Ms. Rhonda Hall submitted a memo for a budget amendment for the appropriations to the City Manager dated January 26, 2021 and was asking for Council to approve this amendment.

MOTION was made by Mr. Kuhar to approve the budget amendment, SECONDED by Mr. Turner and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0.

2. Chimney Swift Nesting Habitat Grants

Mr. Bowling introduced the topic stating this is new and something really different and they are very excited about it. In looking at the demolition of the former police station, that building's chimney was used as a habitat for these birds. The 4H Club would come in the fall and the spring and watch the swifts swarm into and out of the chimney. They have been investigating stand alone towers. They will be placed on the hike and bike trail between the University and the Police Station. There has been research done on the swifts by a Kent State Professor in the past. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has provided a small \$1,000 grant and they are looking to submit a grant application to the Kent Environmental Council for another \$1,000. It is an exciting, small project but would be great addition to the community.

Ms. Wallach asked if there will be more planned to be built around the city. Mr. Bowling said there has been some discussions about this and will depend on the success of the first chimney.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about the time table and coordination with the demolition of the police station. Mr. Bowling confirmed they are looking to be built Spring 2021. They are going to try to make sure the existing chimney is capped off before nesting season this year.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if these birds are a threatened species and have federal protection. Mr. Bowling said they are an international threatened species since it migrates from South American all the way up to Canada. She also said their habitat is near the waterways because the consume

a large number of insects, so we would need to make sure the Health Department does not spray near this nest. Ms. Rosenberg is very excited about this project and she understands there are people in Mr. Bowling's department that have worked very hard to see this come to fruition and asked if there are other communities that have unique and special animals that are celebrated.

Mr. Bowling said yes and this is one of the driving factors.

Ms. Rosenberg added this may make us cooler than Austin with their bats and Hinkley with the buzzards.

MOTION to authorize the request of the grant money for the Swift Chimney Project made by Ms. Rosenberg SECONDED by Ms. Wallach and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Ms. Rosenberg added there are studies that have looked at the economic impact of bird watching on the community and that Kent has a special opportunity with this threatened species to provide a habitat and protect the survival of their species, but also create a driver for tourism dollars. This is a rare occurring phenomenon where these birds form a huge "tornado" and it dovetails nicely with some event plans for downtown, having chimney swifts flying around at dusk as people are out enjoying their DORA drinks during the summer months and perhaps privately-owned towers on some of the downtown businesses would be really exciting.

Ms. Shaffer Bish added they have had experiences enjoying the DORA and the chimney swifts and it is really quite magical and delightful. She was surprised to learn there is a swift on the Kent State Seal.

MOTION to move into an Executive Session made by Mr. Amrhein SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg and roll call was taken. Voting "Yes": Mr. Amrhein, Mr. DeLeone, Mr. Turner, Mr. Kuhar, Ms. Shaffer Bish, Ms. Wallach, Mr. Turner and Ms. Wallach. The motion CARRIED.

MOTION to move back into Committee was made at 9:08 pm by Mr. Kuhar SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0.

MOTION to accept the recommendation made by the City Manager to grant all City employees five personal days to be used in the year 2021 was made by Mr. Sidoti SECONDED by Ms. Wallach and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Seeing no further business or questions for this committee, it adjourned at 9:09 P.M.



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Approve the 2021 budget appropriations amendment.**
- 2) Authorize the acceptance and allocation of a \$1,000 grant from ODNR and authorize the staff to submit a \$1,000 grant to the KEC (and if approved, authorize the acceptance and allocation of KEC grant funds).**
- 3) Authorize the approval of five personal days for City employees to use in the year 2021**