



Finance Committee

1. Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA)

Barb Rissland, Finance Director, has requested Committee time to review the tax services offered by RITA with City Council. RITA is a not for profit agency that has signed-up 139 of our peer cities in Ohio (including Hudson, Twinsburg, Streetsboro and Aurora locally) and Barb would like a chance to review the opportunity to use RITA to improve customer service and enhance our tax collection capabilities in Kent. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

In various areas of the City we have had success in outsourcing certain functions and in this case RITA offers more services than we are capable of providing (including on-line tax filing), they are fully automated (whereas we process all the bills and tax records by hand which is very labor intensive) and they have access to federal tax records that would improve our ability to ensure higher compliance rates with tax collections. Plus, with the City Tax Commissioner position vacant now is a good time to look at alternative income tax options.

Council Action

Review and discuss the tax services available through RITA.

2. Summit Street Incubator Policy

Mike Weddle has been working with Jim Silver to clarify some of the language in our existing incubator policy and Mike is ready to present those changes for Council's approval. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

As we have gained experience managing the incubator space we've identified areas in the policy that need better clarification or need to be changed to enable the incubator to run more smoothly and I support Mike's recommended changes.

Council Action

Review and approve the proposed modifications to the City's Incubator Policy.

3. Ohio Excellence Improvement Process

I wanted a chance to update City Council on our efforts to use the Ohio Partnership for Excellence Awards to drive more innovation in our City services and programs. The Ohio Awards program will require us to demonstrate how we set our goals, manage our resources, and measure our progress to be the most efficient and productive organization we can be in serving the Kent community. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

Discuss and review the City organization's commitment to continuous improvement.

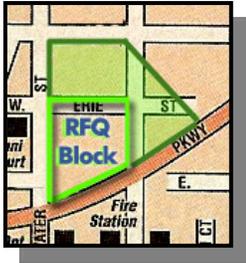
Council Action

No action necessary.



Community Development Committee

4. Economic Development Strategy Incentives Policy



Gary Locke has been working on developing policy guidelines for the use of incentives in economic development projects that he would like to bring to Council for discussion. With a number of pending development projects on our horizon, Gary thought it was an appropriate time to begin to work with Council to define the parameters and/or the process for staff to use to guide the development negotiations. The more clarity Council can provide to staff in terms of the Council's expectations for possible City investments and other economic incentives the more effective staff can be in expediting the negotiations and preventing unnecessary delays from derailing projects that have limited windows of opportunity. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

Gary has provided a good start to creating a policy framework for staff to use to guide economic development initiatives. The purpose of Gary's draft is to begin addressing the critical elements of our economic development packages and establishing parameters before we are in active negotiations on any major projects so that when project opportunities emerge we can act quickly and decisively to close the deals.

Council Action

Discuss the incentive policy concept and provide staff direction on creating the policy framework.

5. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan

Mike Weddle and Gary Locke have completed the 2008 CDBG Action Plan and they have requested Committee time to review the Plan with City Council for approval. It's important to note that the Federal dollars available to Kent through the CDBG program for 2008 were reduced by \$12,000 but Gary and Mike were still able to put together a good program plan and they've done their best to keep the program elements whole.

Administration Recommendation

With successive years of reduced Federal contributions it is becoming increasingly difficult to fully fund all the requests received but I think Gary and Mike have provided a thoughtful review of each request and have outlined a program for 2008 that reflects the Council's priorities so I would recommend adoption of the Plan.

Council Action

Review and adopt the 2008 CDBG Action Plan

6. Summa/Robinson Partnership Project at Devon Place

The partnership between Summa and Robinson Memorial to construct a new wellness facility at the Devon Place campus is far enough along that the parties felt it was an appropriate time to come discuss the project with City Council. The staff have been meeting with the developer's engineers for over a year working through infrastructure details and the project appears to be ready to move forward. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

Receive and discuss the project.

Council Action

No action necessary.





Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee

7. NOPEC Update

You may recall that County Commissioner Chuck Keiper was unable to attend our February meeting due to illness but he plans to join us on March 5th to provide an overview on the status of the NOPEC agreement and the current programs and plans for NOPEC in 2008.

Administration Recommendation

I support renewal of the NOPEC agreement.

Council Action

Review and discuss NOPEC issues.

8. St. Patrick's Day Parking Proposal

On behalf of the Kent Licensed Beverage Association Mike Beder (owner of the Water Street Tavern) has requested Council's consideration of a proposal to suspend the 2 hour parking restrictions in downtown Kent on St. Patrick's Day. Mike indicates that St. Patrick's Day is one of the biggest business days of the year for downtown bar owners and he is concerned that the parking restrictions are problematic for bar customers. The request will be considered by the Parking Action Committee but their recommendation was not available in time for this mailing but we'll be sure to share it with Council in Committee.



Administration Recommendation

While we certainly want to work with the bar owners, I am concerned that lifting the 2 hour restrictions for all of downtown Kent could have a detrimental impact on the non-bar businesses downtown that will still be open for business on St. Patrick's Day and rely on parking being available for their customers. I would recommend authorizing staff to work with the bar owners and the other downtown businesses to find a compromise that would lift the parking restriction only for those streets where the bars are concentrated, e.g., Franklin Avenue, Erie Street.

Council Action

Review the request and provide direction for staff.

Information Items

1. Clearing City Sidewalks

With the record snow fall this month we've had a lot of opportunity to push, plow and shovel snow. I wasn't sure if you noticed that our crews have been using an ATV four wheeled vehicle with a plow attached to clear designated city sidewalks. I had received a couple of complements from residents expressing how much they appreciated the sidewalk clearing so I wanted to make sure you were aware of it as well. Our crews have cleared sidewalks before but the ATV allows us to do it much faster and more effectively and I think that's why more people are noticing. I've attached the memo that Gene prepared proposing the purchase of the ATV which I authorized. In the memo Gene predicts the unit will pay for itself in labor saving after 21 hours of use - and with all the snow we've had this month I bet were getting close to having it pay for itself already. (attachment)