

June 4, 2008



Work Session

1. Site Visit to Spicer Village

Councilman Ferrara has been working with Phil Maynard, CEO of the ASW Properties Development Company, to arrange a site visit to Spicer Village. Spicer Village is a public-private redevelopment project that has involved the University Park Alliance, the City of Akron, Akron University and private developers to transform the area in and around the Akron University campus. In many respects we have tried to model our redevelopment efforts after the University Park Alliance so Councilman Ferrara thought it would be useful to visit the property to gain insights for managing our projects. The site visit is scheduled for June 25th at 5 pm.

Councilman Ferrara requested a short Council discussion on the trip Wednesday night. I've also attached slides from a powerpoint presentation that provides an excellent summary of the University Park Alliance and the Spicer Village project.

While you have your calendars out I wanted to let you know that we've scheduled a meeting with the Executive Director of the University Park Alliance (Ken Stapleton) for June 27th at 8 am in Council Chambers. You are welcome to join the City staff and Kent State administrators who want to learn more about this successful partnership.

Strategic Planning Report

2. Staff Report

As requested, the staff has compiled the relevant strategic planning documents that have been developed by staff, citizens and City Council over the last 25 years in order to help us pick up our strategic planning efforts where those left off rather than trying to start from scratch. As you can see by flipping through the pages of your strategic planning notebook there is a lot of good work that has gone into defining city goals, soliciting public input, and establishing community priorities. It is also interesting to note that most of the projects that we are working on today have been on city priority lists for years so it is encouraging to see that we are actually making good progress in recent months on some long-standing goals.

In our work session next week I'll try to go quickly through the notebook contents with you and lead us into a discussion of what the City staff and I consider the make or break decisions that we think we are facing. We'll certainly answer any questions but our goal for the meeting is to present the information to you so that you can then decide what you want the next steps to be for Council deliberation.

I have also uploaded all of this strategic planning information on to the Kent360 web site so that residents can see the significant investment that the City has made through the years to manage our way to community prosperity. There's a new strategic planning link in the upper right hand column of the Kent360 site or you can access the information directly at: <http://www.kent360.com/?type=cc&id=3571>



Finance Committee

3. Relocation Policy Revisions

Jim Silver has requested Council's consideration to revise the City's current relocation policy in order to distinguish right-of-way projects better. Jim has noted some areas that need to be changed but the Development staff also suggested Council revisit the policy overall to be sure it is consistent with their intentions.

Administration Recommendation

The City's relocation policy is very generous in its provisions to help pay for business relocation costs above and beyond what is typically offered. The staff has pointed out that fulfilling some of these terms has proven difficult and expensive in practice. I am not necessarily recommending any specific changes (other than Jim's) but I do think that this policy is worthy of review at this time. (attachment)

Council Action

Receive the staff report and recommend revisions as appropriate.

4. Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations

As requested by Council the staff has scheduled time in Committee to revisit the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel and discuss next steps. Two of the citizen panel members have offered to come to Council to review their recommendation and answer any questions that Council may have in regards to how they arrived at their recommendations. I've included a copy of the Panel's final report and we also thought it might help set the context for a productive discussion if we sent out the budget balancing worksheet that we handed out 2 years ago. I've included it in this packet and I'll be happy to explain it during our Committee time. (attachments)

Administration Recommendation

As I discussed during Barb's financial status report last month in Committee we've been very fortunate during the last two years to have been able to freeze vacancies as long as possible in order to save money. As a result, we've enabled the fund balance to rise back to 2005 levels. However, Council and citizen surveys completed over the last year indicated that restoring service levels was a top priority so we've been gradually filling positions which means we are likely going to face a \$2 million deficit within the next year. We have implemented the license fee as recommended by the Panel but to date we have not taken action on any of the other revenue options so I would recommend serious consideration of our options.

Council Action

Discuss the Blue Ribbon Panel report and recommend implementation steps.

5. Appropriations Amendment Request

As we have been actively working on our redevelopment projects we have had a number of professional service needs that will require more funds than originally budgeted. I have previously mentioned that given the flurry of development activity that we are working on right now we will need consulting services similar to what was discussed during the Normal Illinois presentation for their project. Obviously we are trying to be sensitive to our financial challenges but given the significance of the redevelopment projects we thought it was critical to hire the expertise needed to make sure the development projects work and our investments are done wisely. (attachment)

Administration Recommendation

Staff has compiled a redevelopment budget estimate (attached) that would re-allocate unspent funds from prior years that are in fund balance.

Council Action

Council authorization of the appropriations amendments.



Information Items

1. Health Department Board Report

For your information I have included a copy of the agenda and staff report for last month's Health Board. It includes a statistical summary for the month of April and year to date of health related activities that is also broken down by Ward. The data indicates that health department revenues are consistent with budget expectations but service incidents for 2008 are up over 2007 levels in nearly every category. (attachment)

2. Letter From Jim Silver to State Representative Kathleen Chandler

I have included a copy of a letter from Jim Silver to Ms. Chandler requesting an update on her progress on a number of financial initiatives that Council had asked for her assistance on including the possibility of a "sin" tax on alcohol sold in the City. (attachment)

3. Annual Fire Hydrant Flushing Schedule

Gene Roberts crews will begin the annual hydrant flushing program on June 2nd, 2008. Flushing will take place Tuesday through Friday, from 2:00AM to 7:00AM through the end of June. Hydrants are flushed each year to clean and maintain the quality of the water lines, to inspect fire hydrants, and to maintain water pressure. This year Central Maintenance crews will conduct flow tests on the entire system during the flushing program. I have attached a listing of the dates and locations of the flushing for your reference. (attachment)

4. Traffic and Safety Letter Regarding Lakes of Franklin Mills

The staff has continued to work on responding to the concerns of the residents in the Lakes of Franklin Mills regarding their interest in a new traffic signal installation at Fairchild Avenue. I have included a copy of Bill Lillich's reply to the homeowner association. Bill and I will keep you posted of the progress of this work. (attachment)