

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 009

AN ORDINANCE AFFIRMING KENT’S DESIGN & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE’S DESIGNATION OF THE HOMETOWN BANK BUILDING AS A “LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTY” AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, the Hometown Bank Building located at 136 North Water Street is requesting to be designated as a “Local Historic Property”; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 1393, the Committee on Design & Preservation held a meeting on January 14, 2025 and the members voted unanimously to recommend the Hometown Bank Building be designated as a “Local Historic Property”.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Kent, Portage County, Ohio:

SECTION 1. That Kent City Council does hereby affirm the Design and Preservation Committee’s designation of the Hometown Bank Building as a “Local Historic Property”.

SECTION 2. That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council and that all deliberations of this Council, and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

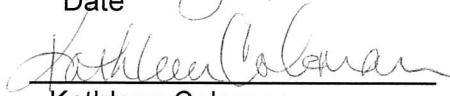
SECTION 3. That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare of the residents of this City, for which reason and other reasons manifest to this Council this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force immediately after passage.

PASSED: February 19, 2025
Date



Jerry T. Fiala
Mayor and President of Council

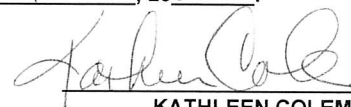
EFFECTIVE: February 19, 2025
Date

ATTEST: 

Kathleen Coleman
Clerk of Council

I, KATHLEEN COLEMAN, CLERK OF COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF KENT, COUNTY OF PORTAGE, AND STATE OF OHIO, AND IN WHOSE CUSTODY THE ORIGINAL FILES AND RECORDS OF SAID COUNCIL ARE REQUIRED TO BE KEPT BY THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF OHIO, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND EXACT COPY OF *ORDINANCE NO. 2025-009*, ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENT ON February 19, 2025.

(SEAL)



KATHLEEN COLEMAN
CLERK OF COUNCIL



CITY OF KENT, OHIO

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: January 22, 2025
TO: Dave Ruller, City Manager
FROM: Bridget Susel, Community Development Director
RE: Designation: Hometown Bank Building

The City of Kent's Committee on Design & Preservation received correspondence from Hometown Bank requesting the Committee consider recommending to Kent City Council that the Hometown Bank Building, located at 136 North Water Street, be designated as a "Local Historic Property," as defined in the City's Historic Preservation Chapter 1393.

Pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 1393, the Committee on Design & Preservation held a meeting on January 14, 2025 to discuss the designation request and the members of the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to Council that the Hometown Bank Building be designated as a "Local Historic Property."

A public hearing has been scheduled to be held at 7:00 p.m., at the start of the February 5, 2025 Committee meeting in order to seek comments from the public on the proposed designation.

I am respectfully requesting time at the February 5th Committee meeting to discuss the designation of the building in greater detail and to request Council affirm the Committee on Design & Preservation recommendation and formally approve designating the Hometown Bank building as a "Local Historic Property."

If you need any additional information in order to add this item to the Committee agenda, please let me know.

Thank you.

Attachment

Cc: Hope Jones, Law Director
Kathy Coleman, Interim Clerk of Council
2025 Hometown Bank Designation File



Bridget Susel
Community Development Director
City of Kent, Ohio
930 Overholt Rd
Kent, OH 44240

Dear Bridget,

This letter and the attached documentation constitute Hometown Bank's formal request to have the property located at 136 North Water Street considered for historical designation.

Designation of the property as a historical building may allow Hometown Bank to be eligible for future grants and tax credits. Having access to these advantages would allow Hometown Bank to continue supporting the community in downtown Kent as it has for over 126 years.

We understand this is a process that will take time and careful consideration, we ask that you keep us abreast of the process as you move through your procedures. If you have any questions regarding our request, please don't hesitate to reach out to either Michael or myself. We look forward to working with you on this project.

Thank you,

Howard T. Boyle II
Chairman of the Board

Michael A. Lewis
President and CEO



Inst # 769341

Request for 136 North Water Street to be Designated as a Historical Building

Built in the winter of 1888-1889 and first occupied in the spring of 1889 the Carver Building, now the Hometown Bank Building, has been a successful commercial asset to our community for the past 135 years. We have been fortunate that the that the building has had excellent owners and stewards the entire time of its existence. The first floor of the building had longtime commercial tenants including Keifel Grocery, Getz Brothers Hardware, Barber Shops and Beauty Shops and several confectionery stores and restaurants. On the Second Floor the Knights of Pythias Hall (K &P) as well as the office of Dr. Emily Widdecombe, Kents first female physician, and two apartments. The K & P Hall took half of the second floor and was once also used by the Elks Club.

The building was built on the site of the Levi Reed Livery Stable that burned in 1887. Betsy Carver and her two sons had the building built to continue the retail and commercial area on North Water Street to enhance their other properties south of the new building. At the time it was very uncommon a town to have a female entrepreneur, but Betsy was a powerhouse and controlled her family business after the death of her husband.

In 1898 the founding of the Home Building and Loan company took place in the offices of the Getz Brothers Hardware store and has evolved into the Hometown Bank of today. Over the last forty years the bank purchased the corner lot parcels on which housed the Kent Building that was built in 1836 by the Kent Family as the Franklin Exchange Building. That building burned in 1972. In 1998 the bank designed and built the Hometown Plaza for use of the people of Kent for entertainment purposes. It gave our community a prominent green venue in the downtown and became the front yard of the Hometown Bank Building.

The building was later sold to the tenants of the building with a loose arrangement of percentage of ownership with the Getz Brothers managing the building. It remained in that configuration until it was purchase in the early 1970's. The building was purchased by the Bank, therefore finally consolidating the ownership into a single entity who still owns it today. We feel we have been good stewards of this fine old commercial building since our ownership as well as the Plaza next door.

The building was originally a late century Gothic design, the front façade being destroyed in a fire in February of 1937. The building was redesigned to a more common commercial design and updated in the restoration of the building after the fire in 1937. The bank has continued to remake the building to the period of its original construction. All the storefronts and as well as the original window openings have been preserved. The inside of the building has the original design of the woodwork as found in the rehab and remodeled to the bank needs in the 1970's, 1983 and 2003 renovation

projects. The building may be 135 years old, but it has been updated to all current codes and is effectively new inside.

From the beginning of its occupancy the building has been occupied by dynamic individuals. Community leaders who have served in many capacities such as Mayor, Councilpersons, Members of the Board of Education, Chamber of Commerce leaders as well as other leading professional leaders in their fields of endeavor. Once occupant served for 16 years as our State Representative in Columbus.

We are asking for this designation so that we may in the future avail ourselves of the possible tax credits or grants that we could obtain to maintain or improve this fine old structure. All old buildings are costly to maintain and any help that this would bring us would be helpful.