

July 3, 2008



Special Council Session

Just a reminder that next Wednesday July 9th Council has scheduled another strategic planning session. Prior to the start of that session however staff has asked for Council authorization of two items:

1. 2009 Tax Budget Public Hearing

Barb Rissland has prepared the draft 2009 County Tax Budget for Council's approval. This budget document is required by the County for notification of any changes to the tax rate in the next budget. Our draft County Tax Budget proposes no changes to the tax rates in the City.



Administration Recommendation

With no proposed changes to the tax rates, approval of the County tax budget is simply a procedural matter and I encourage Council's authorization of the budget. We will get into our annual City budget in September.

Council Action

Authorize submission of the City's 2009 Tax Budget to the County.

2. ODOT Agreement for Road Salt Purchase

Gene Roberts has been working with ODOT and Portage County in a joint road salt purchase for winter operations. The details of the purchase terms have been defined in an Agreement that Gene is bringing to Council for approval and authorization to execute.



Administration Recommendation

As you know, road salt is critical to ensuring public safety in winter conditions and it represents a significant cost item. Gene and I believe that the joint purchase Agreement will enable us to obtain the most economical price so I recommend Council's support of the Agreement.

Council Action

Approve the ODOT road salt purchase Agreement and authorize staff to proceed.

Strategic Planning Session

It was my understanding that Council was going to use this work session to make progress towards defining the top 2-3 priorities of the City by discussing the "make or break" issues facing the City. In June staff provided Council with a list of issues identified by the department heads and Council may use that work to facilitate their own discussions. A significant part of the meeting may also include a discussion of the process Council desires to use to further their strategic efforts. Based on Council's preference, the staff will not be attending the strategic planning work session. I've attached the 2nd quarter Council Activity Report for you to see how we're spending our time as a Council and staff. (attachment)



Information Items

1. Meeting with the Executive Director of the University Park Alliance

Last Friday we had the Executive Director of the University Park Alliance (Ken Stapleton) come speak to a group here in Kent that included City staff, Main Street Kent members, Kent State administrators, the Record Courier and the Mayor. After visiting Spicer Village on Wednesday it was a great opportunity to hear how the Alliance was formed, how it functions, what's working and what's not, as we try to adapt the Akron model to Kent. I've attached Ken's PowerPoint presentation and my notes from the meeting for your information. (attachment)

2. TANK Budget Suggestion to Support the Arts in Kent

I've attached a copy of a letter from Bradley Hart, Co-President TANK – The Artists Network of Kent, requesting the City's consideration for adopting a Percent for Art program. Their proposal is to set aside 1% of all City capital projects over \$100,000 to support public art in Kent. We adopted a similar program in my last City and it had a positive impact in that community so I thought I'd share the request with you to consider as we head into our 2009 City Budget discussion. I realize finances are very tight but when done right public art can have real economic and quality of life benefits. And art also happens to be a unique resource in Kent that we have not utilized to our advantage like many other university cities have done (see attachments from Chapel Hill North Carolina). (attachments)

3. Ricciardi Property Closing

I wanted to let you know that the City's purchase of the Ricciardi property (including the red diner, a small house and the two bars) has been scheduled for July 11, 2008. Originally closing was set for June 30th but the attorneys and bankers needed more time. We were also advised that the blight study that we need to update for the downtown block will take 60 days and we were advised to not remove any structures prior to the completion of the study. The blight designation has fairly significant financial implications so we will likely delay removal of the red diner until that study is completed.

4. Crain Avenue/Fairchild Avenue Bridge Project

I know that with a project the size of this bridge project it's difficult to conceptualize all of the property impacts so in addition to the renderings that he prepared Jim Bowling and his staff have gone ahead and put together a map that shows which buildings will be removed with the completion of the project. I've attached that map for your reference. (attachment)

5. Health Department Materials

John Ferlito has provided copies of the Health Board Meeting Packet for the July 8, 2008 meeting that includes the minutes from the June 10th meeting and the Health Department Statistical Report through the end of June 2008. It appears that the Health Board will be taking a closer look at the epidemiological report of the Chipolte outbreak at the July meeting. (attachment)

6. Kent's Black Squirrel

I have enclosed a copy of an article from today's Akron Beacon Journal that takes a fun look at Kent's Black Squirrel heritage. The Black Squirrel icon has become an unofficial adopted mascot so it's great to see the favorable press coverage as we head into our Heritage Festival weekend.