

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
STREETS, SIDEWALKS & UTILITIES COMMITTEE
WED., JAN. 21, 2009**

This meeting of the Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee of Kent City Council was called to order by Michael DeLeone, Chair, at 8:31 p.m. on Wed., Jan. 21, 2009. Chair DeLeone explained the only item on the agenda was the "Shovel Ready" list of projects for the Economic Stimulus program

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DeLEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUHAR, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH, AND MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL; AND D. SMITH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

DAVE RULLER, City Manager, said they have heard a lot of interesting news about a lot of federal dollars becoming available. He said it is somewhat mind-boggling when they hear the amounts being thrown around. Mr. Ruller said the staff wanted to do anything they can to take advantage of the dollars, and they had a request from some regional and state officials to put together a list. Mr. Ruller said it probably does not amount to much more than a wish list, but they had to get it in quickly. He said they did not have a chance to run it through Council first, and stressed they were not committing to anything. He said there are no surprises, adding that they have discussed many of the projects, but do not have enough money for them. He said they hope that when this "shovel ready" source becomes available, that they will be at the table to be considered. He said that was the spirit in which they submitted the list, and did not want them to think this was their capital plan. He said, again, it is just the wish list. At this time, he introduced **Dan Smith, Economic Development Director**, explaining that Mr. Smith would review the list.

Mr. Smith said they have heard a lot about the stimulus package, adding that one part may be infrastructure. Mr. Smith said there are no guidelines and no problems, adding they do not know if the money is coming from an agency or going directly to the municipalities. He said they were asked to put together this package, with no guidelines whatsoever. He said if the monies come through the EDA, there is an economic component, such as job creation. Mr. Smith said another component deals with infrastructure, and he likened this to the WPA projects in 1930. He said the Beacon Journal reported, recently, that the mayor of Akron submitted 470 projects, and is hoping to get \$60 to \$100 million. He said if Kent did not submit a list, they would not be considered.

Mr. Smith said the Multi-Modal project is the proposed downtown transportation hub. He said it is proposed to complement the revitalization project, so it appeals to both the infrastructure and economic side of the proposed stimulus package.

Mr. Smith said Ametek is one of their big corporate companies. He said they used to have two hundred employees, and now have about one hundred employees. He said there is a chance they could use some of the land. He said it is the same situation with Gougler Industries on Lake Street. He said that one building is vacant, where they used to manufacture. He said money could be used to bring it up to current standards or for remediation.

Mr. Smith said RB&W is along Mogadore Road, and the City lost the company in 2008. He said they are currently going through the EPA guidelines to remediate the property, and are looking to remove the buildings. He said this fits in with some of the other projects along the industrial corridor, adding that one of the projects on the other side of the street is the B-Tech project.

Mr. Smith said there is a need to extend water and sanitary sewer along the Golden Pond Site, along SR 261. He said there is a need to extend water and sewer, adding there would be several prospects if they did the extension.

Mr. Smith said the downtown site is on the list, adding it is no mystery, as they have talked about it for

several years. He said that a lot of the projects usually have a gap in financing.

Mr. Smith said the former Tops plaza has numerous traffic conditions, adding it is a large vacant retail site.

Mr. Smith said the Atlantic and Great Western Project did not get the JRS funding. He said that the State did talk to them, and told them the project had been graded "extraordinary" in all concepts. He said there were two weak areas, adding one was corrected with the stroke of the pen. He said the other dealt with a better relationship with Kent State University. He said they have been asked to resubmit the project.

Mr. Smith said the Lake Street Industrial Park goes behind the Ametek site, and is the location of the former rail yards. He said the area has been empty since the 1970s. Mr. Smith said they did a project with Smithers to increase the truck traffic in that area. He said that could be done all of the way back.

Mr. Smith said the mall site is also listed. He said approximately one year earlier, they looked at a housing component with EQK, adding they are now off the table. He said he, personally, was never wild about housing in that location. He said it would be a good office, light industrial park, adding that is where they get money. Mr. Smith said they need to run water and sewer together.

Mr. Smith said Turf Trimmers is off Fairchild, near the E-Check building and King Automotive. He said if there were sewers extended, there is some interest for more businesses.

Mr. Smith said he listed the old Hotel, adding that there are obviously gap issues in financing. He said he did not want to leave the project out.

Mr. Smith said another project listed is the safety facility with KSU and Kent City police departments, with the courthouse. Mr. Smith said this is a major revitalization project that could be a great critical mass builder for downtown.

Mr. Smith said they listed the extension of sanitary sewer and water down State Route 43, extending through their JEDD toward I-76. He said this could attract more business in this highly traveled road coming into Kent.

Mr. Smith said the ASW site is the former Inn of Kent. He said they have had discussions with this group, who did the Greek housing recently. He said ASW wants to work with the City and Kent State.

Mr. Smith another project is the White Water Park project, adding they are going for another round of funding. He said this participates in the infrastructure component as well as the economic component, as a traffic generator.

Mr. Smith said he worked on this project with Mr. Roberts, Mr. Lillich, Mr. Locke, and Mr. Bowling. He said that NEFCO prioritizes economic development projects for the federal Economic Development Administration in Chicago. He said the B-Tech project and Lake Street improvements for the old rail yard are already on their list. He said the State of Ohio submitted all JRS projects to the Chicago EDA as well. Mr. Smith said they reviewed the criteria as they went through all of the projects. He said if they could get funding for one or two, it would be great. He said that the four main projects that would have the most impact are the B-Tech, Mall site, downtown site, and multi-modal site. He said these are the furthest along to increase the revenues.

Mr. Smith said they are hearing rumors that some projects will be 100% grants. He said he felt that "Team Kent" has done a good job putting the projects out. He said he hoped they were in the position to attract good investment.

Mr. Ruller said it is still unclear if the money would come through typical channels or directly to the cities. He said that the Mayor of Akron has made a case why the monies should not be funneled through any

agency, adding he can understand why the Mayor would do that. He said he is unsure which way is more beneficial to Kent. He said they have seen with their grant applications that big cities have big needs, and tend to dwarf Kent's needs. He said part of him recognizes the thought of direct funding, but noted it puts the City in competition with cities of all sizes. Mr. Ruller said they already have a few projects on the priority list, and wanted to note they are still waiting to see how it plays out and how they position themselves.

At this time, there were no questions from the committee, nor comments from the audience.

Chair DeLeone recessed this meeting at 8:49 p.m. for a previously authorized executive session. Following Executive Session, Chair DeLeone reconvened this meeting at 9:00 p.m. Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair DeLeone adjourned this meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council