

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
WED., APRIL 9, 2008**

This work session of Kent City Council was called to order at 9:02 p.m. on Wed., April 9, 2008, by John Fender, Mayor & President of Council.

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; AND L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

Mayor Fender said they previously discussed having strategic planning sessions, and discussed dates, sites, and a facilitator. He said the City Manager has worked on those issues, and asked **Dave Ruller, City Manager**, for an update at this time.

Mr. Ruller said he reached out to Dale Helsel at Kent State University, as suggested by some Council members. He said that before the meeting where they discussed Mr. Helsel, he had talked to Yank Heisler from Kent State. He said that Mr. Heisler had been with the corporate sector. Mr. Ruller said done observation he has regarding strategic planning in different cities is that the most successful were facilitated by a private sector person, who brings a different approach and is more business oriented. He said he was in one city that created a long list. He said the business folks understand a long list is not effective to the bottom line. He said that Mr. Heisler was at Key Bank, previously, and recommended Jim Bennett, from Cleveland.

Mr. Ruller said Mr. Heisler called Mr. Bennett, who in turn called Mr. Ruller. He said Mr. Bennett is highly regarded by Mr. Heisler. Mr. Ruller said Mr. Bennett is from Youngstown, went to Cornell University, Harvard Law School, and Harvard Business School. He said Mr. Bennett worked about thirty years at the McKenzie Company, helping companies do strategic planning.

Mr. Ruller said Mr. Bennett was the director of the Cleveland Foundation, the second largest foundation in the country. He said Mr. Bennett stressed he is not a government expert, but felt he could be of some help. Mr Ruller said that Mr. Bennet would do this for free.

Mr. Ruller said Mr. Bennett has a tight schedule, and asked if they could meet on April 16. Mr. Ruller said they have a regular Council meeting and a Public Hearing that evening. He said he and the Clerk discussed this, and are suggesting they could have the Council meeting at 6:30 p.m., with the public hearing at 7:20 p.m. He said the public hearing would probably be done quickly.

Mr. Ruller said that Mr. Bennett suggested meeting outside of the Council Chambers, adding that things change. Mr. Ruller said the University has been touting the Franklin Hall renovations, and he has found they have a few rooms available.

Mr. Ruller said this would allow them to have a better understanding and to appreciate the process. He said that Mr. Bennett has suggested he may not be the person for the "next steps." He said he is not closing the door on them, but just made a suggestion. He said a few of the Council suggested Sy Murray, adding he and Mr. Helsel both agreed to help. Mr. Ruller said both are available in May, also.

Mr. Kuhar asked, with the Sunshine Law, if they can meet outside of the Council Chambers, and the Clerk said they can meet, as long as it is properly posted.

Ms. Wallach suggested inviting the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals. Ms. Shaffer said those in the class at Kent State were privy to a presentation on planning with a professor from Hiram College, who also works for the city of Tallmadge. She said he talked about the Planning Commission's role. Ms. Shaffer said it would be helpful to get together with them, and bring them on board, so their

decisions are not counter to the City's plans. She suggested they need to find a way to present them with Council's strategic plan in order to work with them.

It was agreed that they would meet at 6:30 p.m. for Council and 7:20 p.m. for the public hearing in Council Chambers, going to Franklin Hall for the work session. It was also agreed that the Clerk and senior staff should be present.

Hearing no further business, Mayor Fender adjourned this meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

John Fender, Mayor & President of Council