

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO  
STREETS, SIDEWALKS & UTILITIES COMMITTEE  
WED, AUGUST 6, 2008**

This meeting of the Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee of Kent City Council was called to order at 8:08 p.m. on Wed., August 6, 2008, by Mike DeLeone, Chair.

**PRESENT:** MR. DeLEONE, MR. HAWKSLEY, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH, AND MR. WILSON

**ALSO PRESENT:** J. FENDER, MAYOR; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; J. IDONE, PARKS & REC. DIRECTOR; G. ROBERTS, SERVICE DIRECTOR; J. BOWLING, CITY ENGINEER; L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

**ABSENT:** MR. AMRHEIN, MR. KUHAR, AND MR. FERRARA

Chair DeLeone said the first issue on the agenda was an update on the Hike and Bike Path. **Dave Ruller, City Manager**, explained that **John Idone, Parks & Recreation Director**, would present a presentation. Mr. Ruller said he will be happy with the connectivity, adding that many in Kent are anxious to see it happen. He said he knows many people who want to be able to ride their bikes to Beckwith's to get apple cider.

Mr. Idone said he has been talking about this, and Mr. Hawksley has been involved with it since 1993, when they did the Riveredge Master Plan. He said it has had many different names, and most recently, has been known as The Portage. He said he has some slides to show some of the paths being built.

Mr. Idone said the Cuyahoga River Segment has involved the engineer for the last two years. He said they are also doing the daily inspections and administering it through ODOT. He said the other is from the Clean Ohio Trail Fund from Crain Avenue to River Bend.

Mr. Idone said the Cuyahoga River segment trail begins (or ends) at the Tompkins property where the river crosses Middlebury Road. He said when the County replaces the bridge, it will extend under the bridge toward Tallmadge. He said up the road is an abandoned rail corridor, near SR 261 and Middlebury. He said that Summit County has funded that for 2012, and is working on continuing it through Tallmadge into downtown Akron.

Mr. Idone said the trail was recently paved at Tompkins and runs on an easement. He said it will be fenced to provide separation from the trail and the yard operations at Tompkins. He said it will then cross city property, through a nice wooded section. He said it is being constructed through the old P & O canal, which had a roadway built in the middle of the canal. He said it is not the traditional towpath. Mr. Idone said the road makes it an easy transition. He said it will pass through several wetland areas, with beautiful views of the river. He said a small retaining wall was constructed to minimize the impact on some of the adjacent wetlands.

Mr. Idone said the trail will continue over the Plum Creek Aqueduct, which was built in 1940, enabling Plum Creek to pass through the structure.

Mr. Idone said they are crossing the Cuyahoga River with a prefabricated bridge, which spans 180 feet, and is in three sections. He said they are driving the steel pilings to build the bridge abutment.

Mr. Idone said once the path crosses the north side of the river, it will pass under the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad that crosses Middlebury Road. He said they recently obtained an easement to cross underneath, and from that point, the path will travel behind the wastewater treatment plant. He said it will consist of a 14-foot wide boardwalk. Mr. Idone said the contractor is ready to drive the thirty-five-foot wood piles that will be the posts for the boardwalk. He said the project will terminate at Fred Fuller Park,

and will be completed by Nov. 15. He said the path will continue to the Tannery Park in 2012, with a grant from AMATS.

Mr. Idone said the next segment is the Crain Avenue Segment, being built with Clean Ohio Trail Funds. He said it starts near the Crain Avenue bridge, and follows the railroad tracks about 1.3 miles. He said there is an existing rail line, with limited train traffic of three to five trains per week. Mr. Idone said there will be a wire fence separation through that section, and then it will go around the rim of the old Atlantic and Great Western Rail Yard.

Mr. Idone said there are nice views, including Standing Rock. He said it crosses the old P & O Canal, adding that the sides are still in place. He said it terminates at the Emergency Access Road in Riverbend. He explained that the Portage Park District will extend it from this point to Lake Rockwell Road, and a trail head has been constructed adjacent to Beckwith's Orchard. He said eventually, it will extend all the way into Ravenna.

Ms. Shaffer asked about the section from Riverbend to Beckwith's, and Mr. Idone said it was put out to bid. He said they received bids on the paving, but none on the rehabilitation. He said they are currently rebidding it at this time, and hope to have it back in a few weeks. He said there is a mid-October deadline.

Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Idone if he meant "Water Reclamation Plant" when he said the "Wastewater Plant," and Mr. Idone said that was correct.

There were no further questions nor audience comment at this time. No action was needed.

Mr. Ruller said the next issue dealt with the NEFCO grant, adding that one of their greatest assets in Kent was the Cuyahoga River. He said that **Gene Roberts, Service Director**, has been working with NEFCO to coordinate their efforts. He said in the area that affects Kent, the parties have agreed to work together, and have a grant request. He asked Mr. Roberts to provide further details at this time.

Mr. Roberts said they attempted to do this a few years earlier when they went after funding to put together a watershed action plan for the Fishcreek section only, adding they were unsuccessful. He said that NEFCO has one already, and they are going thru the Middle Cuyahoga River (just downstream of Rockwell Dam) to include Kent, Stow, Tallmadge, Silver Lake, Munroe Falls, and Cuyahoga Falls. He said that Ravenna is participating. Mr. Roberts said that while they do not adjoin, Breakneck, which is the largest tributary, supplies water for Ravenna. He said this will create a coordinator through NEFCO, and the City has been asked to participate for local share cost of \$2000 with staff participation, in-kind. He said it will take place over four years, for a total of \$8000, subject to funding availability, with staff participation. Ms. Shaffer noted that the University is also on the list, and Mr. Roberts said he did not know the outcome yet.

#### **MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE NEFCO GRANT.**

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 5-0-1, with Mr. DeLeone abstaining.

Chair DeLeone said the next issue dealt with railroad agreements. Mr. Ruller said that **Jim Bowling, City Engineer**, would discuss the process, adding that it is one of the most painful elements of the project for the bridge. He said that Mr. Bowling probably did not anticipate all of the rail issues, but had worked on the project as a consultant previously. Mr. Ruller said they are asking Council's approval for the agreements, adding they hoped it would put closure to these issues.

Mr. Bowling said they need to have legal agreements in place with the Ohio Department of Transportation and the railroads. He said they have one agreement with ABC for the at-grade crossing on Fairchild Avenue. He said one is with CSX, over the CSX tracks and one is for the utilities over the CSX tracks. Mr. Bowling said the agreements include the scope of the work, responsibilities, safety requirements, as well as ownership and maintenance. He said they provide access to the property. Mr. Bowling said they are all standard agreements, utilized by the railroads through ODOT and are based on the Ohio Revised

Code. He said they had similar agreements when they did the Middlebury Road Bridge project. He said they did send comments to ODOT, adding that most were minor except the fact they omitted the inclusion of Portage County as a part owner. He said ODOT agreed, adding it was an oversight. Mr. Bowling said the comments were minor in nature, and they were looking for authorization to execute the agreements.

Mr. Silver said he understands that these will allow them to go through with the project, adding it is a standard agreement. He said some things are left open, which would leave room for discussion after the project is over. He said he wanted to give them a "heads up," adding it does allow them to get the work done.

Mr. Fender asked if there was a time schedule in relationship to the bridge's completion, and Mr. Bowling said they anticipate construction to begin in April 2009. He said they must have all of their plans finalized by early January 2009. He said at that time ODOT gets the plans, the City's money, the County's money, and awards the contract. He said the contractor will work on the utilities, and the process will be complete in three years.

Mr. Silver asked that they include the emergency clause on the three agreements.

There were no further questions, nor audience comment at this time.

**MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE THREE RAILROAD AGREEMENTS FOR THE FAIRCHILD/CRAIN AVENUE BRIDGE, WITH THE INCLUSION OF THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE.**

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 5-0-1, with Mr. DeLeone abstaining.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair DeLeone adjourned this meeting at 8:29 p.m.

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Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

**ACTIONS RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) **UPDATE ON HIKE/BIKE PATH; NO ACTION NEEDED**
- 2) **AUTHORIZATION FOR NEFCO GRANT, WATERSHED COORDINATOR**
- 3) **AUTHORIZATION, RAILROAD AGREEMENTS FOR THE FAIRCHILD/CRAIN AVENUE BRIDGE WITH THE INCLUSION OF THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE.**