

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO  
KENT CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30, 2008**

This work session of Kent City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wed., January 30, 2008 by Wayne Wilson, President Pro Tem, in the absence of John Fender, Mayor & President of Council.

**PRESENT:** MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUCHAR, MS. SHAFFER, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH, AND MR. WILSON

**ALSO PRESENT:** D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER AND J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR

**ABSENT:** JOHN FENDER, MAYOR & LINDA COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

**Dave Ruller, City Manager**, said they had a special guest, who is a Kent resident and one of the people in his field. He said **Don Schjeldahl**, was present to speak to them about economic development. He said the City is facing a lot of issues, and Mr. Schjeldahl was present to explain what other cities were doing to "win the game" of economic development. He said everyone has their own definition of economic development. He said from a practical point of view, it is helpful to have someone like Mr. Schjeldahl give them the framework at ground level. He said Mr. Schjeldahl has been in the field for many years, and wants to help Kent move forward. He said Mr. Schjeldahl came to him and offered his services. He said Mr. Schjeldahl usually charges \$10,000 to \$15,000 for what he has done for the City, but is not charging the City for his services.

Mr. Schjeldahl thanked them for allowing him to speak. He said he graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1972, with a Bachelor's in Economic Geography. He said he went to work for S.S. Kresge (now known as K-Mart), doing retail locations. He said one task, while with K-Mart, was to put smaller stores in smaller towns. He said they are currently surrounded by Wal-Marts.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he moved to Kent in 1981 to go to graduate school, and began working in the industrial side. He said he worked on his Doctorate, and in 1984, took his job with the Austin Company. He said they have a long history of site selection. He said the Austin Company was founded in 1878, with offices all over the United States. He said they have done 25,000 projects, and are now owned by a Tokyo firm. He said their site location group is opening an office in Tokyo. He said the Austin Company has been the cutting edge for one hundred years.

Mr. Schjeldahl said his site location group's mission is to assist corporate clients, to develop/implement strategies for manufacturing, distribution, R & D, and office facilities. He said their primary market niches are food and beverage, aerospace, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and IT.

Mr. Schjeldahl said when he was approached by the City Manager, he told Mr. Ruller that he would pull no punches. He said he has real concerns about Kent and where they are going. He noted that he admires Mr. Ruller, adding he does not work like Mr. Schjeldahl would prefer, but does have the potential. He said Gene Roberts, Mike Weddle, and Dan Smith subjected themselves to his review, adding that takes guts. He said he admired all of them, as the first step to recovery is to recognize their shortcomings.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he has done three hundred projects in about the last twenty-five years. He said their sell rate is about one project for every four projects identified. He said he has worked with approximately 1200 companies. Mr. Schjeldahl said they do about ten to twenty companies annually, and he talks to about sixty companies annually about their location requirements. He said in the course of that time, he has visited forty-nine states and twelve countries. He said the site location process is a well-developed art.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he sees shortcomings when he looks at Kent. He said they are not in line to attract

companies. He said he would not get involved if he thought it would not work. He said there are great resources in Kent. Mr. Schjeldahl said there are communities that would kill for their resources, including the University, a long manufacturing tradition, a distinctive downtown, and ample resources of water and land. He said they must think in a broader scale when thinking of land resources. He said the land resources may not be in their boundaries, but is accessible to them.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they need better paying jobs that are more sustainable. He said they need higher tax revenues, without increasing taxes; improvement of infrastructure; higher property values; and a shortage of good quality housing. He said they need a better quality of life, so as to attract people to living in Kent. He said if they decide they do not want that, they can adjourn the meetings and go to Ray's for a beer.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they are moving in the wrong direction. He said the activities downtown are positive. He said if anyone had any doubts about Main Street that should be off their mind. He said they can see the energy pouring into the downtown. He said he feels positive, but a lot of what happens is being built around volunteers. He said volunteers will burn out and it will go away. Mr. Schjeldahl said they need self-sustaining organizations. He said they need new people and higher paying jobs. He said they need companies who will invest money into Kent. Mr. Schjeldahl said that Main Street is a good start, but they must do more. He said economic development is a matter of leadership and sets the agenda for how they move forward. He said Council is key to that process. Mr. Schjeldahl said they have a responsibility to the community.

Mr. Schjeldahl said as he goes around the country, he sees the councils that have taken on tough issues. He said they need to do so, adding Kent has let it slide for about twenty years. He said that no good deed goes unpunished in Kent, adding that anyone with a good idea gets shouted down. Mr. Schjeldahl said they need to stand up to those people. He said there is a lot of positive ground swell. He explained that Kent is not unique, and this happens everywhere. He said it is all about leadership.

Mr. Schjeldahl said economic development is a well-developed profession. He said there are professional organizations, adding he belongs to a few. He said if Kent does not belong, they should belong, as that is where some of the practices are developed. He said they should belong to the International Economic Development Council and the Ohio Economic Development Association. He said they live in a county that is lagging, in a lagging region, in a lagging state, which is not a good formula for success. He said it means they must work harder. He said the Strickland administration is issuing some directives, and there will be monies available. He said Kent should tap into those funds.

Mr. Schjeldahl said that Kent is on the radar screen with the Ohio Department of Development, thanks to Doug Fuller and Jack Crews. He said they should all be up to speed on the B-Tech project, adding it is the one thing that is in Kent that could have the most dramatic impact on redefining Kent's economy. Mr. Schjeldahl said he cannot speak about it, as it is a conflict of interest with one of his clients, but said it is a good thing and urged them to look into it.

Mr. Schjeldahl said another project is the Centennial Park. He said there has been a huge investment of money by the University, but it is not well-defined. He said this is indicative to the way Kent State operates relative to Kent. He said the University, business community, Chamber of Commerce, City Council and City are not engaged with each other. He said everyone has a responsibility, and there is as much blame in the Council Chambers as there is on campus. He said the University does not know what is going on in Kent. He said there are many who would like to be engaged with Kent, and are either afraid nor have the direction. He said there are people from the University getting involved with Main Street, adding it is very exciting.

Mr. Turner asked Mr. Schjeldahl asked how the University can work with Kent to create that type of synergy. He asked how he envisioned that occurring, and Mr. Schjeldahl said there is not an honest dialogue. He said the University needs Kent as badly as Kent depends on them. He said Kent State should be aggressive about Kent being a better place, as it helps them. He said that Kent should tap into the University's resources and should try to offset the negative things. He said they have to create jobs around high technology, innovation, and technology transfer. He said they need to build on the good

aspects of a university town.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he was present because of his wife, who told him to do something or shut up. He said he also got to know Mr. Ferrara, who asked him to serve on the Charter Review Commission. He said he knew no one, and called everyone preceding the meeting. He said he sat next to Mr. Turner, adding Mr. Turner was a great guy to sit by. He said Mr. Turner was fair minded and community focused. He told Council they made the right choice when they appointed Mr. Turner.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he wanted to review what drives a market, how companies make decisions, and the basics about community preparedness. He said he will also do a report card on Kent and Portage County. Ms. Wallach asked if he would be giving them directions, and Mr. Schjeldahl said he has some suggestions. He said that 95% of his work is for corporate clients, and work on the government side is somewhat of a conflict of interest. He said he felt he could offer some good insights. He said he would normally produce a report, but did not do so, since he was not being paid. He said he would be willing to give them recommendations. Ms. Shaffer noted his payment would be the improvement of his quality of life. Mr. Schjeldahl said he lives in Kent, and is not going anywhere. He said he loves urban environments, and has decided he needs to make Kent better to raise it to his level of requirements.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he would review the steps in a location process. He said that regardless of what they are speaking about, everyone goes through the same process and traverses the same path. He said they start out with an idea and a strategy. He said when McKay Bricker realized they had to vacate their location, they looked at other cities and developed their strategy. He said once a location is picked, they implement the project. He said the services offered by his consulting group tracks that process, including the supply chain, strategic analysis, community screening, and site identification. He said they conduct the due diligence, prior to making their recommendations to a client to buy property.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they have to keep their community in the game. He said if they do not know what they are trying to attract, no one else will know that this a good place. He said they need to get on the radar. Mr. Ferrara asked if that is where they unite with the University, and Mr. Schjeldahl said the University has people who are to be working with the University. Mr. Ferrara said he is not looking for who is not doing their job, but instead, what they can do, adding there should be a "push and a pull." Mr. Schjeldahl said Stark County is doing that, between the Kent State branch and the Stark college. He said they do industry work and training. Mr. Schjeldahl said there are three places that do economic development right in northeastern Ohio, and they are Stark County, Medina County, and Wayne County.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they must demonstrate the community is the right place for a business. He said if an area looks good, they do due diligence. He said communities have to be able to deliver what they promised, adding it does not always work out. He said as they go through the process, it is a funnel. He said people who do site selections are cynical and negative, adding they are always probing and poking. He said once they find something bad, they are removed from the process. He said to survive the process, they must do everything right, as only one community wins.

Mr. Schjeldahl said when he started with Austin in 1984, he reviewed all of the projects they did. He said between 1950 and 1980, fifty companies were moved to the south. He said the reasons included unions, high labor costs, and high utility costs. He said it was a cost issue and a management control issue. Mr. Schjeldahl said post 1980, wages have equalized. He said there is a fading influence of organized labor, and a much improved management process. He said they have seen the deregulation of gas and the transportation of electricity also. Mr. Schjeldahl said it is not based on warm bodies, but instead, more skills.

Mr. Turner asked if another reason is the decrease in manufacturing, and Mr. Schjeldahl said that is correct. He said there were companies that went south, moved to Mexico, and are now in China. He said there is a whole section of their industrial base that they must let go, because of labor costs. He said they must redefine themselves.

Mr. Schjeldahl said traditional economic development was built around land, transportation access, low-

cost labor and zoning issues. He said it is now about bringing in the University, training people, etc. Mr. Schjeldahl said the focus is around work force. He said they need to make Kent a more inviting place. He said he came to Kent and stayed. He said many people would like to stay, but do not stay. He said they need to embrace everyone. Mr. Hawksley said that tattoos are not the end of the world. Mr. Schjeldahl commented he just wished they were not at the main intersection in Kent.

Mr. Schjeldahl said the projects used to be straightforward, but now the world is more complex. He said their reports are thicker, with more detail. He said they look at places all over the world. He said in this area, there is a "Kent-Ravenna" thing. He said they should be together. Mr. Kuhar quipped, it is "Kent Brimfield" now.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they have advanced with technology. He said the new way to do business is through the internet. He said they need tools and functionality on their website. Mr. Schjeldahl said Kent should be crawling with students from the university doing things for them, such as building websites, doing archaeological studies, and design standards. He said the University pays lip service to the City. Mr. Ferrara asked if it is because they do not know that there are opportunities, and Mr. Schjeldahl said there are roadblocks. Mr. Hawksley agreed, adding when he taught there in the 1980s, they discouraged volunteering.

Mr. Kuhar asked where they send people for internships, and Mr. Schjeldahl said they are not sending them to Kent. He said the University is not doing that well of a job.

Mr. Turner asked if the City needs to press them to engage with the community, adding he is on a board that has cooperation when they request the University's assistance. He said it is a two-sided coin, adding the City has to ask for help.

Mr. Ruller said he has three interns working in his office, a few days a week. He said that Ms. Robertsen was an intern, and is now permanent. He said he has a list for student project ideas. He said Kent does not have a communication officer, and the University has a communication school. He said the City tries. Ms. Shaffer asked if he was looking for a PR person, and Mr. Ruller said he had one that was terrific. He said he is waiting for another one, adding he has asked the University. Mr. Schjeldahl said they need coordination at a high level. He said he made a proposal to the Charter Review Commission for someone who would be responsible for maintaining those high level relationships. Mr. Kuhar said instead of the internet, they need an "IntraKent," and Mr. Schjeldahl agreed.

Mr. Schjeldahl said that projects destined to stay domestic are the ones they should make provisions for, acknowledging that some may be low paying jobs. He said in Kent, there is a whole stratum of people, and they need provisions for everyone.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they break the market into four segments. He said those include the Fortune 500 companies, mid-size companies, entrepreneurs, and foreign projects. He said if they take away those companies destined to be local, there are not that many projects looking for a place to go. He said they must be ready, or the project will fly right over them. He said his company does twenty projects annually, giving them 1.38% of the market. He said the Austin Company is one of the best-known companies. He said they need to be keenly aware of what they have and how to transfer the information, so as to influence decisions.

Mr. Schjeldahl reminded them that he told them not think about the boundaries. He said their first priority is to get the investment into Northeastern Ohio. He said the next goal is to get it into Portage County, regardless of where it goes. He said they help other cities attract companies. He said the Mayor of Akron is probably one of the most loathed people in Portage County, but they still have to admire the job he has done revitalizing Akron and Summit County. He said those that he favors benefit, and those he does not like will suffer. He said Portage County suffers. Mr. Schjeldahl said they need to be friends with the Mayor of Akron.

Mr. Kuhar said he heard one reason Land O' Lakes came to Kent was because of the uniqueness of the

water reclamation plant, and asked how they can recruit businesses in need of that facility. He asked how they get on their radar, and Mr. Schjeldahl said they have to develop a strategy and brand themselves. He questioned how good they are in terms of the sewage plant, adding it does not have a lot of capacity. He said Mr. Kuhar was discussing the process of BOD, COD, and TSS. He said he works with a lot of projects that deal with food, and one million gallons of day is not a lot. He said Kent could never accommodate one million gallons. He said they would have to invest a huge amount of money in equipment to overcome that shortcoming. He said they are on the right track, and have to figure out their strengths, building the message around those strengths.

Mr. Schjeldahl said that Cleveland Plus does a great job branding Northeastern Ohio. He said they have to demonstrate they are the right place. He said they need appropriate utilities, a labor force that is ready, and training is in place. He said in Kent, both tattoos and music stores are industries. He said he is not just talking about manufacturing, adding it can be a host of things.

Mr. Kuhar said they stress the importance of infrastructure, and asked the importance of it being in tip top shape when looking for people to come to Kent. Mr. Schjeldahl said it is important. He said fifteen or twenty years ago, they would look at sites and see where the road and utilities were to be. He said that is not the case now, adding that the infrastructure must be in place. He said they have to have inventory to sell. He said without sites and buildings, no one will come. He said Kent does not have that.

Mr. Ruller asked if the location of R.B. & W is an example of a ready site, and Mr. Schjeldahl said those are not ready. He said someone may find use in the building, but he cannot think of one company that he has worked with that would use the building. He said it is old, run down, and dirty. He said it is not even good for storage. He suggested they tear it down, and clean up the site, with updated infrastructure and an improved road. He said it is not an asset to Kent. Mr. Schjeldahl said the AMETEK building is a fortress. He said they do not want to develop more dirty industry. He said they do not need to drag Lake Street further down. He said there are some nice structures, adding it could be a new incubator or laboratory. He said it is not a ready site.

Mr. Ferrara said they do not own either building, nor are they for sale. He asked how far out they plan, adding it would take a lot of man hours. He asked how much time they spend on the twenty-year plan, likening it to elephant hunting. Mr. Schjeldahl said they should work on strategy. He said a long debate on parking in a gravel lot is not a good use of their time. He said that was the "old Council," adding they had people who dragged them in that direction. He said with the new Council, they need to create strategies and set goals. He said if Mr. Ruller does not follow what they set, they should get rid of him. He said Mr. Ruller needs the authority to give it to others. He said everyone needs more responsibility and authority, and Mr. Ferrara noted they need more accountability.

Mr. Kuhar said there are a few locations in Brimfield that had poor roads. He said someone put in some okay roads and industrial parks that were adequate. He said they are all filling up. He asked what Mr. Schjeldahl thought of Kent developing a high tech small industrial park, and he said it was a great idea. He said the idea of linking the University to the downtown is not an issue to debate, adding it must happen if Kent is to survive. He said it will be a symbolic and physical connection. He said they have the Main Street redevelopment occurring, adding they have done a good job assembling land. He said if the hotel happens and the link occurs, they will have good paying jobs in the downtown. He said with the B-Tech, they will have incubation and the creation of jobs. He said the RB & W and the old rail shed could be a great incubator and/or industrial park. He said in the area from SR 261 to the freeway should belong to Kent, adding it is probably too late to annex it. He said that area should be their industrial park. Mr. Kuhar said he believed they owned some of the land from Mogadore Road to Sunnybrook Road. Mr. Schjeldahl said they let Tallmadge come into Kent and take land, adding it is hard to understand how that could happen. He said that area is Kent's future to solidify their industrial base.

Mr. Turner said the State has a stake in something like that, where there is land not properly utilized. He said they should partner with the State and other subdivisions for the best use of available land around their cities. He said this would benefit an incubator. He said it would be important to have them at the table in these types of discussions. He said they should be collaborating with the surrounding entities, so

they can all come from the same play book. Mr. Schjeldahl suggested they go through a step process for the strategy development, moving into implementation. He said economic development is a well-developed field, with standardized ways to do it. He agreed that many others should be at the table, including the County.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they need property ready to go, including sheds up to larger industrial properties and office space. He said they are in a real need for design standards. He said companies want low risk, and want to operate successfully. Mr. Schjeldahl said they need good transportation and good utilities. He said they need access to good, reliable electric power, adding it is critical. He said they need dual feeds coming into a property. He said First Energy was historically an awful partner in economic development, but are now on their way to being very good. He said they should be fully engaged with First Energy, adding they should be speaking to Pat Kelly and getting him involved.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they look at water and wastewater plants in great detail. He said when they visit communities, they always visit wastewater treatment plants. He said if the community is disorganized, the plant will be disorganized. He said it is usually in the lowest place in town, which is why they visit it. He said he always suggests they plant flowers in front of their wastewater plants, adding there are about nine hundred who have done so. Mr. Wilson pointed out in Kent, they have a water reclamation plant.

Ms. Shaffer asked Mr. Schjeldahl what he thought about Kent's plant, and he said it is small and landlocked. He said Kent will run out of capacity some day, and asked if there is a plan. He pointed out there is no more room to build.

Ms. Wallach said that Mr. Schjeldahl said half of the companies he works with are looking for ready-made buildings, and asked if the other half would build their own. Mr. Schjeldahl said that was correct. Ms. Wallach noted they need to prep the sites nicely.

Mr. Schjeldahl said the work force is critical. He said they look at local wages, work ethics, work schedule, and recruiting packages. He said they typically do private interviews with local employers. He said they did projects the previous year totaling about \$210 million and thirteen hundred jobs. He said that is a typical year. Mr. Schjeldahl asked communities to define their labor shed, and suggested they should be able to do that. He said jobs go where the people are. He said during the election season, he sees the ads with the County Commissioners and Portage Workforce. He said they are not training people for the future, adding the training is not up to date. He said the compact with the schools is the laugh of the country, as it is the wrong way to do it. He said Kent City Schools needs to change the way they train people.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they should know about wired programs. He said a community needs a labor retention program. He said they should never have allowed AMETEK to reduce their levels of employment. He said they are going to leave, as he is sure they are not working with AMETEK to develop new facilities. He said a retention program is vital.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they have to fast track permitting. He said Kent does a great job on festivals. He said the community is not in that good of condition, and could be better. He said that Council has to buy into it. He said they have to give Mr. Ruller authority, and not question everything he does.

Mr. Schjeldahl said they must ask themselves if all communities in the area share a regional vision. He said they need to ask if government and business organizations work together, adding they do not. He asked if they have a product to support their strategy. He said the most disorganized communities will say they want high tech, high paying jobs, but do not know what type. He said they must have a product. He said there is no perfect place, and always things to work on. He said they have to ask themselves if the economic development staff is adequate. He said a retention program is needed, adding it should occur at the county level with two or three people who do nothing but help local companies stay strong. He said they must deliver on their promises, keep their schedule, and maintain communications.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he would review his report card on Kent. He said he cannot score Kent, adding it is

not good. He said this is true for existing businesses and potentially new businesses. He said if they cannot sell themselves to him, they will not get the investment. He said they have the right people, adding it is not about personalities or skills. He said it is about leadership. He said they are not giving their staff the right things to do.

Mr. Schjeldahl said some strengths in Kent are intelligent people and good quality of life components. He said they need full integration with the regional branding effort. He said there are no clear local strategies, and no professional ED functions. He said there is a lack of project ready real estate, as well as poor land use planning. He said there are cheap houses being built on poorly maintained roads. He said there is an absence of community cooperation, also. He said they need a good cooperative economic effort.

Mr. Schjeldahl said his recommendation is that they develop a strategy, moving toward implementation. He said there are a few companies that can do this, adding they create a vision. Following the creation of a vision, Mr. Schjeldahl said they do an assessment, similar to a SWOT analysis. He said they can create an organization to get the things done and work through the situation. He said they then begin to execute it. He said it is not rocket science. Mr. Schjeldahl said all of the items work together.

Mr. Schjeldahl said the Austin Company trademarked a slogan in 1913 that said, "Results, not excuses." He said they have screwed up a lot of projects and have made a lot of mistakes in the past. He said their culture is that they take responsibility for things that went wrong. He said they must fix them and move on, never making the same mistake twice. He said it is not going to be easy to do the plan, adding that people are going to yell at them. He said it is about results, not excuses.

Mr. Wilson said he understood Mr. Schjeldahl to say there was something wrong with the compact at the high school, and Mr. Schjeldahl said that was correct. He said it deals with training resources to the marketplace. He said the current compact concept is rigid. He said it is not flexible nor adaptable to the needs of the community. He said his son attended the program in Kent, adding he is a fireman/paramedic in Streetsboro. Mr. Wilson said his son is in Engineering at Akron U, adding that is why he was surprised. Mr. Schjeldahl said it is about training people for the future, adding it is a reactive program. He said the wired program is putting all schools together around a strategy for the region. He said if they wanted to attract liquid crystal projects, they should start teaching electronic concepts in grade schools that ties into liquid crystals.

Mr. Hawksley asked Mr. Schjeldahl to point them to communities that have good economic development policies, and he said there are 2,000 to 3,000 that have economic development programs. Mr. Hawksley said he was not talking about programs, adding Mr. Schjeldahl challenged them to take leadership. He said the programs belong to the people they hire, but Council sets the policies. Mr. Schjeldahl said he knows more about the communities that do well on a practical level. He said he did not know how they got there. He said Victorville, CA is a great example, adding it is in the Mojave Desert and is growing rapidly. He said they have a large industrial park at the edge of the City and wanted to bring rail into the City. He said they needed a track from the main line to the industrial park, and it cost \$35 million. He said it was approved after thirty minutes of discussion.

Mr. Ferrara asked that they apply the five step process to the hotel/conference center project, which appears to be a major economic stimulus for the City. Mr. Schjeldahl said there is no question about the vision, adding it has been out there for twenty years. He said the neighborhood is holding the town back, adding they need to do something with it. He said both the University and the City knows it is a good idea, and questioned why they have not moved forward. He said they need to sit down and do the project. Mr. Ferrara said there are a lot of stakeholders, and encompasses a lot of what Mr. Schjeldahl mentioned, including the relationship between the two entities, the bridge between the two entities, and the expected future development. He said it is something positive, with the ancillary businesses that will spin off. He said this project incorporates a lot of what Mr. Schjeldahl has said.

Mr. Schjeldahl said he had a good conversation with Mr. Heisler from the University. He said Mr. Heisler said they could move dirt in a year or two, and Mr. Schjeldahl said they should be moving dirt now. Mr.

Kuhar said they need someone willing to pay for the project, and Mr. Schjeldahl agreed, adding he hoped someone would step up. He said it is a question of risk, and their tolerance of risk. He said when things are going well, they can lower their tolerance for risk. He said when they are not going well, an entity must take more risks. He said things are not well for Kent or the University, but the University holds on to the low risk tolerance.

Mr. Wilson said he has listened to people for sixteen years tell him a hotel will never work. He said it will work, but there are some that will never believe it.

Mr. Kuhar said he has spoken to people with capabilities in that industry, adding they do not think the return on investments is possible and that the risk is too high for the money that will be involved. Mr. Schjeldahl said that may be where Council steps in. He said they will have to go into debt to make this happen, adding he was talking about millions of dollars.

Mr. Fuller said they should know the information about the hotel. He said the University, Davey Tree, Ametek and other companies should commit to the rooms. Mr. Wilson said they have had studies done on the number of rooms needed, and Mr. Fuller said they are thirteen years old. Mr. Schjeldahl said they use conservative estimates. He said he did not want to scare them about spending money, adding that the community has to step up to make a project happen. He said they do not want to give anything away without getting it back.

Mr. Amrhein said they need a working relationship with the powers at be at the University and in the school system. He said they need to come together, and realize this is important. He said he is unsure if there has been a real process. Mr. Amrhein said he knows they have communication, adding they need to know the City's survival will be survival for the other entities. Mr. Schjeldahl agreed, adding all they are doing now is lip service. Ms. Wallach said they have to convince them, adding if they do not convince them, it will not work. She said they have to be an equal partner. Ms. Shaffer said she sees some effort, like with Main Street and the Multi-Modal. She said that Pat Book would like to be more involved, if there were places made for them.

Mr. Hawksley said the point on the County is well taken, adding the previous Council was anti-planning with the County. He said they used to belong to the Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Hawksley pointed out that the County has a stake about the downtown, and they need everyone at the table. He said it will take long term planning, which is a tough thought.

Mr. DeLeone asked Mr. Schjeldahl how he felt about the Multi-Modal facility, and he said he is unsure of what form it will take. He said the University has not done a good job articulating it in definitive words. He said he thought it was a terrific idea. He said one town that is an example is Walla Walla Washington. He said they have a classy hotel and a multi-modal facility, adding that the multi-modal facility was part of the redevelopment. He said they need to put a stake in the ground, and not just keep talking about it.

Mr. Kuhar said he is puzzled. He said the banks would look at the amount of money coming in, and that would determine the outgo. He said they are talking about funding millions of dollars, while spending more than they are making. He said that before they fund million-dollar projects, they need something rolling so they can tell the people it would create the funding to pay for a new project. He said to do one without the other in place is a formula for disaster. Mr. Schjeldahl said if it was easy, everyone would do it. He said they are responsible to the people that they are not saddled with debt, but at the same time, they want to see Kent prosper.

Mr. Turner said they have established the stakeholders, but need to look outside of the box for other stakeholders. He said they have lost about 800 jobs in Portage County, adding the State needs to help revitalize the area. He said they need the push from the Governor's office to create the incentive. He said the State has a stake in seeing them grow. He said with a plan, they can show the desired outcome and how it will stimulate growth. He said it is a formula, and creates a new dynamic. Mr. Schjeldahl said one thing that changed with the Bush Administration was the flow of economic development funds. He said the old system funded a broad spectrum of economic development programs. He said it was more of a

democratic tradition under that structure. He said they had money that they give to people to help them get better. He said that the money now goes to organizations who have helped themselves. He said it is not about going to communities, organizing them, and making them better. He said it is for those communities that have done all of that and are ready for the next level. He said that is the way the system is now, and will be some time in the future. He said if they want governmental money, they must organize themselves before asking for it.

Mr. Wilson thanked Mr. Schjeldahl at this time. He called for a five minute break at this time, and recessed this meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Wilson reconvened this meeting at 9:10 p.m. He said the next item was the composition of the RFQ subcommittee. Mr. Ruller said he wanted to wrap this process up and get it rolling. He said he received a number of different opinions on the composition of the subcommittee. He said he needs to be clear on what they want to do. He said that some members of Council felt that less was better, while others felt that more was better. He said he thought they would get a group of immediate stakeholders to get over the first hurdle of picking a developer. He said he felt the design process was mission critical. He said they need to decide if the developer is capable to develop this type of project. He said some members wanted a big group now, and wanted to use them for the entire process. He said his inclination was for a smaller group, to get someone on board quickly. He said he thought that fewer people meant it would be easier to get them together and to come to a decision. He said it is their process.

Mr. Amrhein said as an educator, most of his life has been spent with committees, and his opinion is that smaller is better. He said a larger committee takes longer to get things accomplished.

Ms. Wallach asked if they could even make it smaller, or if his recommendation was as small as it could be. Mr. Ruller said they could remove Main Street and the Chamber. Ms. Wallach agreed that they needed fewer people.

Ms. Shaffer said she thought this would continue to be the steering committee. She said a steering committee needed more representation from the elected people. She said the Council will be the ones to translate what they are doing. Ms. Shaffer said the ultimate decision is Council's decision. Mr. Ruller agreed, adding his goal is to return with the recommendation by the end of February. Ms. Shaffer said it should be diverse, adding if it is too narrowly focused, they may get a quick decision that is not necessarily the best decision. She said they have a good mix of stakeholders. She said she would like to see Mary Gilbert on the committee. Mr. Ruller said he emailed Yank Heisler, and Mr. Heisler said he should email Mr. Creamer. He said he did, and Mr. Cramer said he would join the subcommittee. He said he did not think it made sense to have Dan Smith, since he will be joining the City as the Economic Development Director. He said Mr. Smith recommended Mr. Martin, who is the Chair of the Economic Development Committee of the Chamber.

Mr. Kuhar said he would like to see a four-person team, with a representative from Kent State, Council, City Staff, and one from the private sector. Ms. Wallach noted they had recommended Mr. Schjeldahl previously, and Mr. Ruller said Mr. Schjeldahl told him he would be traveling a lot in the month of February.

Mr. Silver said they have not had their talk, yet, on Council's role and how they work with the Administration. He said on a project like this, Council's decision is whether or not to redevelop the block. He said the RFQ described the space, the percentage of housing, retail and office. Mr. Silver suggested caution on telling a developer what to do. He said their decisions are on the amount of work to be contributed, adding that they should not tell a developer how to do their work.

Mr. Hawksley agreed with Mr. Silver. He said his concern whom they pick is critical, and the "lucky" firm needs to understand the context they are working in. He said there may be some level of public process. Mr. Hawksley said he thought those issues would be discussed, adding that one issue that is going to be controversial downtown is the parking issue. He said it must be discussed. He said he is concerned about a narrow-focused group of people not concerned with the diverse issues.

Ms. Wallach said the Council needs to look at policies, like the one for green building. She said that Main Street has been looking at design policies. She said the firm selected will have to comply with some guidelines.

Mr. Ruller said that every developer who submitted an RFQ has said they fully appreciate the public process. He said they know the project will not work without the public's involvement. He said they learned lessons from the previous project. He said they will have as much control as they want, adding it works best as described by the Law Director. He said they have three potentially good developers, who have done projects before and partnered with communities. He said they have a higher understanding of how to make it work. He said there is one group that has been knocking on doors, getting feedback. He said that demonstrates how they make a project happen. He said the sensitivity is good to have, but there is more evident in a quality developer.

Mr. Silver said that any developer is going to ask them for a lot of money. He said they will put in about two to five times more money, and they want to succeed. He reminded them that the developers are the experts. He said they do not want a thirty or forty-million-dollar hole in their pocket.

Mr. Kuhar agreed with Mr. Silver that someone with that much money does not like being told what to do. He said Right Dimensions found someone with the means, but still wanted to control everything. He said that ran out a good partner. Mr. Kuhar said when the development is proposed, the developer will show if they have adequate parking. He said it is Council's duty to make decisions on parking.

Ms. Wallach said she was comfortable with whatever Mr. Ruller proposed.

Mr. Wilson said all they are doing is seeing if people are qualified to speak to the City. He said they are not being asked to draw up the plans. Mr. Wilson said the developers want to know ahead of time. He said issues like parking and the types of stores will be discussed. He said a good developer will probably want to meet with the entire Council. He said it is up to the Manager.

#### **MOTION TO APPROVE A FOUR-MEMBER COMMITTEE.**

Motion made by Mr. Ferrara, seconded by Mr. Kuhar.

Ms. Wallach agreed with the motion.

The motion carried by a voice vote of 8-0-1, with Mr. Wilson abstaining.

Mr. Ruller asked who should be on the committee, and several members told him to pick four people. Ms. Wallach said he knows who has the background.

Mr. Ferrara suggested the Manager return with something definitive next time.

Mr. Ruller said he would have one of the members of Council on the Committee, and Mr. Wilson told Mr. Ruller it was up to him. Mr. Ferrara agreed.

Mr. Ruller said there are multiple Council members who want to be on the committee, and Mr. Hawksley said they trust Mr. Ruller's decision.

Mr. Ruller said he needs a date for Sy Murray and the Council/Manager relationship. He said the Clerk reviewed the calendar, and thought that the February 20 regular Council meeting should be about thirty to forty minutes. He said the Clerk suggested Council be held at 6:30 p.m., with Mr. Murray coming in about 7:30 p.m. He said Mr. Murray is available on Feb. 20, if they wish to consider that option. He said that without using Feb. 20, it would have to be a Saturday or a Thursday.

Mr. DeLeone asked if it is a problem if they schedule the meeting earlier, and Mr. Wilson said it must be done with proper notice. He said the Charter calls for one regular meeting per month. Mr. DeLeone said he thought they had some rules regarding that and questioned what happens if someone comes in at

7:30 p.m. Mr. Hawksley said they just need to be sure they advertise 48 hours before.

Mr. Kuhar suggested they start at 7:00 p.m., for Council, so they allow those who work for a living to have dinner. Mr. Wilson agreed, and asked if it would be a problem for anyone. No one indicated a problem.

**MOTION TO RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION ON TWO ISSUES OF PENDING LITIGATION.**

Motion made by Mr. Ferrara, seconded by Mr. Amrhein.

Roll call was taking. Voting aye: Mr. Amrhein, Mr. DeLeone, Mr. Ferrara, Mr. Hawksley, Mr. Kuhar, Ms. Shaffer, Mr. Turner, Ms. Wallach, and Mr. Wilson. The motion carried by a roll call vote of 9-0.

Mr. Wilson recessed this meeting at 9:30 p.m. Following Executive Session, Mr. Wilson called this meeting back to order at 9:48 p.m. Hearing no further business, he adjourned this meeting.

Transcribed on February 4, 2008, by Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

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Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council