

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

This work session of Kent City Council was called to order by John Fender, Mayor and President of Council, on Wed., January 9, 2008. Mayor Fender explained the purpose of this meeting was to conduct interviews for vacancies on City boards and commissions.

**PRESENT: MR. AMHREIN, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUHAR, MS. SHAFFER, 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 called for a moment of silence for William J. Schultz, Council member at Large, who died on January 3, 2008. He explained there would be a memorial for Mr. Schultz on Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008 at 3:00 p.m.

Mayor Fender explained applicants will be asked to provide some information on themselves and give their reason for applying. He said they would be voting the following week.

**John Thomas, Planning Commission:** Mr. Thomas thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak. He explained they have his brief resume, including his involvement as a volunteer and his service to the community.

Mr. Thomas said that every fifty years, there is change in Kent. He said in his opinion that between the last few years and for the next five or six years, the stage has been set by the community to determine what Kent would look like. He said he would like to be part of that progress, adding he enjoys the service he has given to the community, with the most recent being the Civil Service Commission. He said he looks forward to being a part of the team, working with the Community Development Department, the general administration, and anyone coming forward. He said he has the time, and the ability to roll up his sleeves and get involved. He said he will not just show up, and would like to put his times and talents to use.

Ms. Shaffer asked Mr. Thomas his views on the importance of the downtown to Kent's economy and the future, and Mr. Thomas he feels with the evolution of Kent and retailing commerce, people will be pulled to the downtown, and it will be coming back. He said he spent a lot of time doing shopping in downtown Hudson. He said there was plenty he could purchase there. Mr. Thomas said he sees that happening over a period of time in Kent, adding it will not be tomorrow, next year, or the next few years. He said he hoped it would happen by 2025, if not sooner. Mr. Thomas said he would like to see Kent become a vibrant part of their lives.

Mr. Ferrara asked Mr. Thomas his feeling on the role of government being a catalyst for development, and Mr. Thomas said government should be a catalyst. He reminded them of Goodyear's announcement a few weeks earlier, and how the city of Akron would be assisting. He said that government has to facilitate development, and needs to work with free market economy in the private sector.

**Greg Werner, Planning Commission:** Mr. Werner thanked everyone, and provided his biographical information. He explained he has lived in Kent for nine years, having grown up in Barberton. He received his education from the University of Akron, and is currently employed at Ohio Edison as a system business analyst.

Mr. Werner said his attitude of service came from his father, who was constantly busy with four children, but still time to be involved either through his community or his church. He said he is attempting to instill that in his son.

Mr. Werner said the second reason is that he is a firm believer that they tend to be short-sighted when it comes to planning in the United States. He said they tend to limit terms, wanting to make things shorter, adding they lose sight of their long term plans and goals. He said that the Planning Commission is a good opportunity to put together that plan, and implementing it on behalf of the City.

Mr. Hawksley thanked Mr. Werner for applying, and asked what he felt they needed to do with the planning and zoning codes. Mr. Werner said that he is not as familiar with them as others, but his experience in the past and where he grew up proves that the long term look meshes in with the short term and practical realities. Mr. Werner said they should fail to plan, not plan to fail. He said he is not familiar with the issues in Kent.

Mr. Kuhar asked if he was asked to rearrange Kent in a manner to make it successful, how he would do that, and Mr. Werner said he would group land being used and is prone for development versus those that are not, which would result in some rezoning and possible increased business opportunities.

Mr. Kuhar asked if he could wave his magic wand, how he would do so, and Mr. Werner said he would maximize those businesses that generate the most benefit. He said he would also maximize the existing synergies, like the University and the downtown. He said that one of the first ideas he remembers discussing with his dad was about urban renewal. He said they need to maximize as much space as possible for businesses to benefit in Kent, and maximize their assets, like the University.

Mr. Ferrara asked Mr. Werner his feelings on the role of government in redevelopment and planning, and Mr. Werner said the role is critical. He said he works for a utility, and they have to sell a product and are responsible for working with cities. He said they need to plan the seeds, making the city attractive and accessible. He said government's role is critical.

Mr. Ferrara asked his views on eminent domain, and Mr. Werner said that he is against it for all but a few rare cases, philosophically.

**James Jewell, incumbent, Shade Tree Commission:** Mr. Jewell said he would like to continue serving. He said it was a long process to rewrite the tree ordinance, and he felt this was the year it would be given a test drive. He said he would like to be present, and assist with making adjustments. He said he would feel like he was dropping the process if he did not try to stay on.

Mr. Jewell said if he is reappointed, he would like a little more outreach and public education, and try to get everyone in Kent to see the bigger picture of an urban forest. He said he found a lot of people do not know that Kent has a tree commission, and he would like to educate the public. He said they are currently just managing trees on the street, which is good, but as they look at Kent, they see that a vast majority of their canopy is going to be private land. He said they need to reach out to people, and that cannot be done without a citywide management plan. He said they need to have people aware because if they have a tree removed, they may not replace it as they do not realize they are part of the urban forest. He said they can get the aesthetic values, but to get to other values, they need to look at all of the trees, including those on private property. He said, again, he would like to be more involved in the outreach part.

**Debbie Miller, Shade Tree Commission:** Ms. Miller said she works for Davey Tree Expert presently, having received her Master's from Michigan State. She said she is part of the Davey Research Institute, adding she also has a Master's in Education and spent a number of years teaching. Ms. Miller said she had her own business, and during that time, she joined the board of the County landscape nursery association.

Ms. Miller said she has a strong passion to give back to the community, and is interested in the concept of an urban forest in Kent, similar to Mr. Jewell. Ms. Miller said that green corridors are something she has gotten into, and her home yard is torn up currently as she is planting natural gardens. She said if she does not have the knowledge when asked a question, she has the resources and intelligence to find the information.

Ms. Miller said she has worked with the City Forester in Hudson during her time with Davey. She said she presents programs to the Hudson elementary schools on Arbor Day. She said she also does education programs with Macedonia for career development.

Elisabeth Wilmott, Storm Water Review Board, was unable to attend, but asked that the Clerk convey her interests in her first choice, or the Shade Tree Commission, her second choice.

**Ron Heineking, Civil Service Commission:** Mr. Heineking said he is also a graduate of Kent State, and retired as Associate Vice President from the University of Akron. He said she sat behind the table for a number of years, as a Council member, and it was strange not to see Mr. Schultz.

Mr. Heineking said he spent fifteen years with the Kent Police Department and was involved with Civil Service. He said at the University of Akron, all of his employees were Civil Service. Mr. Heineking said he does promotional assessment centers for the Ohio Chiefs of Police and Case Western. He said he has done about sixty promotional assessment centers.

Mr. Heineking said that while he was in Kent, he wrote promotional exams for Civil Service. He said he felt the need to apply since he was the one who took their wages away. He felt he ought to make up for it.

**Robert Wolf, incumbent, Parks and Recreation Board,** was unable to attend.

**Denise Mote, Incumbent, Income Tax Board of Review:** Ms. Mote said she has served for eighteen years, adding her math degree came from Ohio State, with a Master's in Business Administration from Kent State. She said she also helps out with AARP's Volunteer Tax Assistance Program. She said she must admit why she wanted to be on the board, adding she was there for the money.

**Andrew Kunos, Income Tax Review Board:** Mr. Kunos said he serves on the Parks and Recreation Board and felt this board was another opportunity to serve his City. He said he retired from Goodyear, after 31.5 years of service, and presently works part time and seasonally with H & R Block. He said he wanted to continue serving his community.

**Howard Boyle, Incumbent, Parking Action Committee,** was unable to attend.

**Pamela Freeman, Incumbent, Board of Health:** Ms. Freeman explained she submitted her v ita with her application, and apologized, as she was battling a bad cold.

Ms. Freeman said she has been on the board for four or five years, adding she is a medical sociologist. She said she is passionate about public health, adding she has accomplished a lot. She said that the things they have done in the last view years have established and nurtured some collaboration with the community and different levels of government. She said they are trying to develop networking with Kent City Schools, including the issues of emergency awareness and pandemic flu plans.

Hearing no further business before this Council, Mayor Fender adjourned this work session at 7:30 p.m.

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Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council