

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
STREETS, SIDEWALKS & UTILITIES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2007**

This meeting of the Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee of Kent City Council was called to order at 8:25 p.m. on Wed., March 21, 2007 by Beth Oswitch, Chair. Ms. Oswitch explained that the only item on their agenda dealt with the consideration of traffic signal installation policy and the request process.

PRESENT: MR. BARGERSTOCK, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MS. GAVRILOFF, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUCHAR, MS. OSWITCH, MR. SCHULTZ & MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. FENDER, MAYOR & PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL; L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; W. LILLICH, SAFETY DIRECTOR; AND G. ROBERTS, SERVICE DIRECTOR

Dave Ruller, City Manager, said that issues regarding traffic intersections and signals are issues that occur. He said there are clear public safety issues involved. Mr. Ruller said the City's traditional method is to evaluate traffic signal requests, using the federal standards adopted by the State. He said they are not suggesting changing that, but want to start communicating a more deliberate process for the public. He said it is not just the signal, adding the cost is about \$100,000. He said the staff has had recent requests, which is why they have begun to create a more deliberate process. He said the residents want to know how the process works. He said they cannot afford everything, and the intention is to clear up some of the misunderstandings on what can be done, from the technical engineering and financial perspectives. He introduced **Gene Roberts, Service Director**, at this time.

Mr. Roberts said the state of Ohio has the right to approve or disapprove a traffic signal, and if disapproved, they can take it down. He said they removed some of the sections in their policy that was technical, and made reference to the State's manual. He said the manual changes from time to time, and the policy would follow those changes. He said in addition to that, they left in the section on private development and added a section that spoke to the prioritization of traffic signals.

Mr. Roberts said they have multiple signal requests annually. He said there was never a process to decide which one was to be built, and the initial matrix is a work in progress. He said that although the policy and matrix are not completed, he has reviewed it and felt that 25% for future development seemed high. He said development is addressed in the policy. He said he is not prepared to ask for approval, but asked that they bring back the matrix. He said if they get the policy approved, there are additional points that affect current projects. He said the last section addresses preferences for certain types of traffic signal equipment. He said one example is when they tie a traffic signal on a wire, and the wind blows, nothing resists the movement. He said they would specifically address these in a policy, with Council's approval, they will have the control to apply for federal funding, with the equipment being federally fundable. He said they did not use too much detail, because of changes in technology. He said any equipment installed would have to be able to work with the balance of the equipment in Kent. He said it would fall on the shoulders of the Deputy Service Director/Superintendent of Engineering, who must verify that the pieces follow the policy. He said they currently have one type of controller on one side of town, with an older one on another side of town. He said this would make sure they are all interconnected.

Mr. Roberts concluded that they are asking for acceptance of the policy, with the process of prioritization, which goes back to the matrix, returning at a later date.

Mr. Hawksley asked why they have a separate number for development priorities, and asked if any proposed development had already taken these issues into account. Mr. Roberts said he looked at development issues as something paramount to the City. He said if they have the opportunity to get additional jobs by placing a traffic signal, they would be remiss to not install it. He said in his first revision that was reduced to fifteen. Mr. Hawksley said he understood Mr. Roberts to say that installation of a traffic signal, proactively, would be weighted for justification of spending City money with respect to development.

Mr. Ruller said that Mr. Roberts is too modest, adding this is exceptional work. He said he did not contribute the authorship, adding this is the best of what the City is doing, which is professionalizing what can be a political issue. He said the policy makes it clear to the public of everything they take into consideration with a deliberate methodology. He said they see this more in bigger cities, as there are more needs. Mr. Ruller said that regardless of the needs, this is terrific work. He said that Mr. Roberts has been forthright and they will continue to tweak the policy. Mr. Roberts said this is an example of what professional government does, adding it is driven on what the days says. Mr. Ruller said this gives

the City long term credibility and helps with hard decisions. He said if Kent was flushed with cash, it might not be as important, but the tighter the cash, the better the decision when they use the best process. He said he wanted them to know this policy was “terrific stuff,” and it was “classic Gene.” He said Mr. Roberts is extremely thorough, and this is something they should be proud of.

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

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE POLICY ON TRAFFIC SIGNALS.

Motion made by Mr. Bargerstock, seconded by Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Bargerstock said that he was disappointed that the City Manager stole all of his thunder. He said he enjoys reading these types of documents. He said this assists with loss prevention. He said he has harped previously to Council that the City does not do a very good job with loss prevention, which is why they are having insurance issues. He said this is an example of professional work that stops insurance losses. He said that defense counsel and actuaries can point to this document. He said this lowers the City’s insurance costs, adding he has never seen work as good as this product. He said he wished to double all of Mr. Ruller’s comments.

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

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair Oswitch adjourned this meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) TO AUTHORIZE THE POLICY ON TRAFFIC SIGNALS**