

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

KENTON CITY COUNCIL

Meeting

Lilienthal Southeastern, Inc., 1-800-837-1904, Re-Order 66665K

Held

January 8, 2024

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**1<sup>st</sup> REGULAR SESSION:**

Kenton City Council met in their 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session on January 8, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in Council Chambers. Present: President, Joel Althaus, Sue Fox Buroker, David Beazley, Steve Walter, Chad Miller, Pegg Wren, Anda Tudor, Robin Jones, Law Director John Schwemer, Mayor Lynn Webb, Safety Service Director Cindy Murray.

Prayer given by Mr. Althaus:

Heavenly Father, as we convene here in Council Chambers at the beginning of the new year, we seek your advice, and guidance for the question that will be put before us this year. We ask you grant us the strength to serve our community with compassion, fairness, and integrity. May our discussions be filled with understanding, and our actions be for the betterment of all Kenton residents. In Your Name we pray, AMEN.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Althaus: Maybe a little bit on an easy start to the new year. A lot of times this meeting is fairly event free, as far as the agenda. I first, would like to welcome some new faces, and I guess I'm going to start with you Darrell. Would you like to come up and go up to the podium and introduce yourself and get everybody familiar with you?

Darrell Alexander: Hello everybody I'm glad to be here and my name is Darrell Alexander. I live on Maydoll here in Kenton. I've been here about three years. I grew up in Bellefontaine. I was approached and asked if I would be interested in the city Auditor job, and I thought that would be something I would like to try. I've never been in a political office. So, I hope I can do well, get everything up to snuff, and be able to help everybody that needs help. Thank you.

Althaus: Welcome Darrell, and very appreciative of you stepping forward. That was a unique position we were left in. Thank you for making the effort to do that. Next we have two new Council Members. So, go with the third ward, Steve now you can go ahead and talk from right there. I don't know if you want to tell us a little bit about yourself?

Steve Walter: Well, I'm in the third ward. I've lived here pretty much most of my life, married with three kids, grown adult kids, two grandchildren. I'm a Pastor here in town, and a Pastor at Hepburn church as well. My wife and I own our own business uptown here.

Althaus: Welcome Steve, and we'll move next to our fourth ward council member, Chad. Chad, if you want to introduce yourself?

Chad Miller: I'm Chad Miller. Not much has changed since our last introduction. Live down on Mill Street for going on thirty years with my wife, raised our family down there, work at Graphic Packaging, just wanted to get involved and better the City any way I could.

Althaus: Great, we welcome you. So just, we're going to take our time tonight and both of you have attended a couple council meetings so you've kind of seen how we work, but let's start with, before we even get into the minutes or anything else let's take care of a little bit of housekeeping. I do have a rough Council Committee structure I want to email out, but I guess I want to check on a couple things right after the meeting. I want to talk Steve, with you and with Chad. I need to talk with both of you about your schedules and what times of day you're available and things like that, what works for you. Beyond that, a couple of housekeeping things I definitely would like to take care of tonight if we could. So, we do have three positions that when we re-organize we really do need to either re-confirm, or re-elect, or elect a new. I'll start with the simplest one, in my opinion, and that's our Council Clerk. Emma has, that role as far as her job within the City, and what she's employed for, however we do have to, the council needs to confirm and vote to keep her in that role, or perhaps.

**Motion by Mr. Beazley and second by Buroker to confirm Mrs. Emma Nelson as the continuing clerk.**

Althaus: Any discussion? **(Roll call vote 7 ayes, motion carried.)**

Althaus: Okay, looks like you've got it again there for two years. With that, although not once since she has taken the position, once in a while there may be a situation where Emma can't be here, and we do name and appoint a Council Clerk Pro-Tempore, and evidently Whitney has agreed to do that. If Whitney has been...

Beazley: Voluntold.

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(Laughter)

Althaus: Voluntold, maybe to do that, and we can always adjust that if something comes up. So, the recommendation would be Whitney Weyant, who is our HR representative here for the City.

**Motion by Mr. Beazley and second by Mrs. Wren to accept Whitney Weyant and Council Clerk Pro-Tempore.**

Althaus: Any discussion?

**(Roll Call Vote, 7 ayes, motion carried.)**

Althaus: Any finally probably the most important role, and you saw it in operation two-weeks ago. Dave Beazley has served as President Pro-Tempore for several terms now. Actually had my job before me, and can do that much better than I can. We would entertain any nomination from the floor. He is willing to serve again, but it's up to council's discretion and vote, as to who is my back up, let's put it that way.

**Motion by Mrs. Buroker and second by Ms. Jones to accept David Beazley into the position of Council President Pro-Tempore.**

Althaus: Any discussion?

**(Roll call vote, 6 ayes, 1 abstention, motion carried)**

Althaus: thank you everyone for working through that. Finally, the meetings; in the coming year Emma scoured the calendar, and we have two dates where the Monday that we would normally meet is a Holiday, Memorial Day, the 27<sup>th</sup>, the recommendation would be to meet Tuesday night, the 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, and November 11<sup>th</sup> evidently is Veteran's Day, and the recommendation would be to meet Tuesday night, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**Motion by Mr. Beazley and second by Mrs. Tudor to adopt those amendments in the schedule.**

Althaus: Any discussion?

**(Roll call vote, 7 ayes, motion carried.)**

Althaus: So, I will, after I talk with Chad and Steve and maybe even a couple others of you right after the meeting I'll get the committee list out here tomorrow, hopefully, and we'll go from there. I do, I would ask for anyone that is interested in the Grove Cemetery, and I'm always cautious with Regional Planning, Parks & Rec Board, Grove Cemetery, Shade Tree, and BKP because they do add another scheduled meeting, okay. I'm going to hit those here really quick. I'm taking for granted David, you'd like to continue on Regional Planning.

Beazley: Yes, I would.

Althaus: There's some worth of having someone that's been on there. Parks & Rec, Robin I'm taking for granted you'd kin fog like to continue on that?

Jones: Yes, I would please, thank you.

Althaus: Tree Commission, Sue? Yes. So, I'm fully willing to stay on BKP. I only did that for a while because we had a lot of things going on there, let's put it that way. I think that's since improved immensely. If someone is interested in BKP, see me afterwards. The more important one, or not more important, but the one I'm a little more concerned about would be the Grove Cemetery Board. They meet once a month, for some reason we have had women Council Members who have done a very good job on that board, and going back before Antwill. We've had several in a row, and those gentleman have always said you guys have had some good people. So, we'd love to continue that if someone has an interest in that again, I'd like to talk with you right after the meeting.

**MINUTES:**

Althaus: Before we approve these, again thank David immensely for jumping in with a very long schedule that night, a lot of interesting things going on. Basically I got trapped out at my brother's in Kansas, and got sick out there. So, I was king of trapped in his basement for the week of Christmas, and finally got back here.

Beazley: By a vote of 4-2 we managed to excuse you.

(Laughter)

Althaus: I saw it was, I figured it was close, and it was probably Antwill and Ray just...

Beazley: It was actually 3-2 with one abstention.

Althaus: No, Pegg wasn't here....So, anyway.

Beazley: Or you might not have made it home.

Althaus: Might not have made. With that, are there any additions or corrections to the minutes as they're printer? Hearing none, let them stand approved as submitted.

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20**CITIZENS REQUESTING TIME TO SPEAK:**

None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Althaus: We do have the Hardin Chambe's minutes, they are printer for your, well not minutes, report. It is printed for your summary. That's for Economic Development report for January of 2024. If you have any questions on that, we can either get you in touch with the Alliance or Lynn can direct the questions for you. Also, it was added to your packet at your station, I think we'll go ahead, I'll mention it now. John submitted his annual report of the City Law Director, when we get to, in fact we can just, John anything you want to add to that report?

Schwemer: No, I know it always talks everyone a while to research that and study through and the reality it Law Directors are not in the business of collecting money anymore. So, it would be very unusual instance where there would be funds collected but that's the report required by the revised code which is supposed to be presented at the first meeting of the year.

Althaus: Alright, thank you John. Are there any other communications that anyone has to present?

**PETITIONS:**

None.

**ADMINISTRATION REPORTS:**

Althaus: Chief Musser?

Musser: Just real quick, we had, we typically have a view of the report published at this time of the year in January, we had a server issue and lost a couple of the drives on our server. So, we're in the process of data recovery there. So, we will get that out probably later in January or February. That's all I have.

Althaus: Thank you Chief. Chief Donnelly?

Donnelly: I just want to let council know that we are going to be opening up our, I guess application portal through National Testing Network here probably this week as we currently have a position open at the Fire Department right now. So, we'll open that portal up here, and hopefully get the process going and possibly get somebody towards the end of the month, or maybe will probably be the first part of February to try to get them hired, so.

Althaus: Thanks Chief. Cindy or Lynn, anything with Parks & Rec that you want to discuss?

Webb: Just the meeting which is Wednesday at six o'clock, this Wednesday.

Althaus: Or Economic Development?

Webb: Economic Development, a lot of good things that are happening. A lot of good things are happening. So, hopefully in the future we will be able to have more to talk about on that.

Althaus: Income Tax, there is a report in your packet. Any questions or comments on that? Alright, Auditor's office, Pam?

Romanko: I just want to welcome my new boss, and the new Council Members, and to remind you to get your employee packets to the HR department so that we can get you in the payroll and start processing pay checks. It's really important to get that done. So, thank you.

Althaus: I think both of you have the information on how to get ahold of, okay, get ahold of Whitney. Anything you want to add Darrell?

Alexander: Not yet.

Althaus: Treasurer is not here tonight. Unless John, anything to add?

Schwemer: Just a reminder because I received an email and did that last week. All the elected officials have to do the ethics filing, including the newly elected council members, the mayor, myself, and it is not exactly a fun task the first time you do it because you have to list where you have investments, bank accounts, certain types of debts. So, it can take a little while, but the benefit is once you do that then next year you can upload everything from the prior year. So, you're only doing changes, but it is important to get that done because there is a daily penalty if you don't get that done by a certain date in May. So, if there's questions, it's just the Ohio Ethics Commission, there's link, you first time registration and you just input information, just fill out the questions, there is a thirty-five dollar filing fee. So, if anyone has questions on that, let me know. We'll try to remind you as we move

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closer to may because we don't want anyone to get nailed with that per day fee which we have had a couple people historically that have missed that over the years. So, it's just one of those things that you need to do. It's a requirement of elected officials. So, just anyone have questions on that, let me know, and also as we move forward if any of the newly elected officials have questions as far as any of the process, anything at all, feel free to reach out to me either at a meeting, my private office, or you know, Emma knows how to get ahold of me at any time too. So, you know, don't want you to feel like you're, you know, moving around with questions just let me know if there's anything I can help you out with as you get accustomed to the process and procedure. That's all I have, Joel.

Althausen: Okay, thanks John. Cindy?

Murray: The only thing I have is we did get our four-million-dollar loan from the EPA. Principal forgiveness, excuse me, and so the pre-con meeting for the starting of the Phase-Two project downtown will be the 16<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-2:30 if anybody would like to attend, they're more than welcome to, right here in this room.

Jones: And that's January what?

Murray: Sixteenth.

Jones: Okay, what time, please?

Murray: 1:30-2:30

Jones: Okay, thank you.

Althausen: Alright, thank you Cindy. Lynn anything now?

Webb: No, I'll wait.

#### **REPORTS & SCHEDULING OF STANDING COMMITTEES AND/OR SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

Althausen: I'm going to guess there are no reports carried over from last year. So, I will, I know Cindy would like to get meeting schedule for Legislative, Legislation, Codes, and Regulations, MOP, and we have one scheduled for Public Utilities, and that's January 10<sup>th</sup>, which is Wednesday at 3:30. I will say that on Public Utilities, I do need to check on schedules but I had intended on Robin and Sue staying on there, with Robin staying as chair. That was a new committee and it would be nice to have some consistency there, and so either way at least, if the two of you can plan on that meeting still, if you're still going to have it Cindy.

Murray: Mhm.

Althausen: Okay, and then Chad and Steve, I think I gave you descriptions of the committees. So, we'll touch base right after the meeting. I've got a couple things to ask about. Anything else in committees at this time? Okay, David, anything on Regional Planning to report?

Beazley: No, sir. That was delayed, Mr. Doll had an illness last week.

Althausen: Parks & Rec, the meet this coming week. Obviously Antwillia is not here anymore so we'll work on Grove Cemetery. Tree Commission probably didn't...

Buroker: Thursday.

Althausen: Thursday, and then BKP will meet next week.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

#### **ORDINANCES /RESOLUTIONS:**

##### **1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

None.

##### **2<sup>ND</sup> READING**

- **ORDINANCE NO. 23-036, TITLE ONLY; AN ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE ZONING OF THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 130 E. LETSON STREET IN THE CITY OF KENTON, OHIO, FROM M-1 (LIGHT MANUFACTURING DISTRICT) TO B-3 (GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT).**

Althausen: And from what I read in the minutes there was no urgency on this two weeks ago, I'm guessing it's the same. I want to pause just a moment, probably old news for some of your or old topics, but I just want to remind all here; so, we are in an obligation by the Ohio Revised Code to read all pieces of Legislation three times, a first reading, a second reading, and a third reading. All of that is to give, not only the seven of you time to fully understand the Legislation, but also, and more importantly to give

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the public time to come to a meeting, to make statements, to address council on issues regarding the Legislation that we might not have thought of. As happened last, or two weeks ago, we can speed up that process by suspending the rules, and we've done that on several occasions, and typically that will be something that is fiscal in nature that needs to happen relatively quickly, or sometimes something that routine, or we've discussed multiple times ahead of that, and Council feels it's okay to do that. Again, what the seven of you are weighing when you suspend the rules; do you feel that the public has been informed enough, and that you feel we can moved forward. So, in that case we do need a super majority to pass that, which would be 75%. We also discuss things passed with emergency language; those are not the same. Suspending the rules is one thing. Emergency language means, number one the language has been included in the Legislation, and that upon passage, it will go into effect as soon as the Mayor signs it. If it does not have emergency language it will not go in effect for thirty, it will go into effect thirty days after the Mayor signs it, and there's one other small part; emergency language technically needs to pass by two-thirds. So, if something were to not pass by two-thirds, the emergency language would not be validated. If that the right way to say it, John?

Schwemer: Correct.

Althaus: So, that's just to get everybody up to speed and as John said earlier, you can ask anyone who has questions about that, don't ever hesitate to say whoa Joel, stop, slow down, okay, I've got to figure out where we are. We are very open about discussion here. We want folks to understand. Not just the seven of you but anyone here, present. Now, if it gets carried away we're going to try to call, you know, and try to end discussion but we want everybody to be able to comfortably discuss the Legislation. So, with that, if there are no objections, we will read that again in two weeks. I think everybody was fine with that.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> READING

Althaus: We have nothing on third reading, and this will start to change as Pam runs out of money, and as committees get working. Once committees get going Legislation seems to come up.

Schwemer: And we always, the goal is always to try to give things three reads. As you will quickly find out, over the last year one of the main issues we've had to expedite is, oddly enough, stuff with the state, and with the downtown project. We inevitably will have more legislation this year that we need to rush through and shockingly, the ones we always get last minute are Highway Improvement Legislation, where we're always short a couple council members, and we get the notification a week before and we have to get it passed right away, and if anyone knows the process it should be the state, but we sometimes run into that. So, the goal is to do three reads on almost everything we can but fiscally there's a lot where we just do not have the time, and even though we may want to give the public time, if we delay, we could lose funding, grants, or just the ability to do projects. So, that's the reality. So, as well as we plan, it's nothing against the administration., sometimes we just don't get that information until a week before Council and it's a rush, and it'll be kind of surprising how often that type of thing does pop up. So, just be ready for it, and again, the administration, Emma, always tries to make sure everyone is aware, but it's sometimes us getting the information last minute.

Althaus: Our last resort, and we have done this when it's needed, is to call Special Meetings. Now, there is a bit of trick to that. We can't just call three meetings in a row at one o'clock, one-fifteen, and two o'clock. We have to give the public notice. So, it essentially means, it's almost forty-eight hours between them, but we have done that. We have met, we might have met three times in a week once.

Schwemer: You can meet consecutive day, as long as the press is notified of the days.

Althaus: As long as the press is notified, right. So, year that's true. That's where you could meet one day, then the next day, then the next day. You would have to be smart about it.

Beazley: We did that during Covid when we didn't have enough members to pass.

Althaus: Yes, So, now hopefully we continue to have print media...

Beazley: That doesn't mail it in.

Althaus: Yeah, and I don't mean that as a bad thing. I think anything we can do, I'm very concerned if we were to ever lose our print media. Nothing against radio at all, but I am very concerned with that. So, anything we can do to help keep them here.

Tim Thomas: Set out a collection jar.

Althaus: I don't know if that one will get you much, Tim.

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**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE NEWS MEDIA:**

None.

**COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATION:**

Althaus: Chief, either Chief, anything we need to add?

Musser: No, thank you.

Althaus: Darrell, Pam?

Beazley: Mr. Castle, from our Street Department?

Althaus: Yes, was just going to...

Tim Castle: Just taking it in.

Althaus: Just taking it in, okay. Well then Sue?

Buroker: I would just like to welcome our new member Steve and Chad, and also to the new Auditor Darrell. I'm glad to have you here. That's all I have.

Beazley: I would echo those welcomes.

Althaus: Steve?

Walter: I just ask for your patience. You know, this is going to be a learning experience for me.

Beazley: It was for all of us.

Althaus: We appreciate you being here Steve, and you've got some Council Members that just went through it last term, and they can be of great help. A few of us have been around a little while. I'm looking at David, Pegg, myself, but this is fresh in Sue and Anda's mind and even Robin's to some extent. What is this the third term you're starting? But it's really fresh in their minds so seek them out too. Chad?

Miller: I would just echo what Steve had to say. I'm just grateful for the opportunity to work with you guys and provide any insight into what I could to help in the City.

Althaus: Alright, thanks. Pegg?

Wren: I'll just echo what Sue said, welcome and looking forward to working with you.

Althaus: Anda?

Tudor: Welcome to everybody.

Althaus: Robin?

Jones: Thank you Chad, and Steve, and Darrell, and I guess we're blessed to have you guys to jump on board and be part of the City and watch it keep moving forward. That's our goal, I hope.

Althaus: John? Cindy?

Murray: The only thing I'd say, it's going to be some very exciting times here in about, for the next couple two or three years so, we will do our best to communicate as best we can. If you have any suggestions, let us know, but as I told the Mayor, buckle that chin strap. Here we go.

Webb: Don't forget the mouthpiece.

(Laughter)

Althaus: Okay well then Mouthpiece, go ahead Lynn.

Webb: Again, thank you everybody that's willing to serve. It's a great thing to do. I love having everybody on board. Everyone, whether it's your first or you know, those who are seasoned, has helped us along for this first term moving in to the second. Please never hesitate to come up. Please never hesitate. These doors are always open. If you have questions we are all on the same playing field. You are out in the community now. You will get questions, promise, and you know what, the best is to have the right information and that helps you. That helps us. So, you know we're always here. Get our phone numbers. If you have a call, I will answer it at two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock, I'll answer it. It's those things that how we build community is communication. I also want to know or invite anyone, those who have an open schedule during the day, the Economic Development breakfast that are bi-monthly, Sue's there because she's usually serving, sometimes Anda is there but it's very informative. If you want to be put on that mailing list from the Chamber, let me know. It's very informative, you get the whole county look plus you kind of get that what's happening. So, that's a good thing to jump into. Again, we have a lot coming down the pipe very, very quickly and I would say these four years will be going by at lightening speed, but we have to be as informed as possible. I encourage everybody not to wait til Council night to say, what's this all about, you know. What you get your packets on a Friday? So,

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you have all of these, you know Dave is a wealth of knowledge. Joel is a wealth of knowledge. Everybody, and everybody, all the administration, the chief, everybody, those, you have access to these people. So, do not hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can help you best understand it because again, like we've said when we go to vote for things, it's history. I mean, we're making things happen. So, I appreciate everybody jumping on board, and I'm really excited for the next term. January 22<sup>nd</sup> so we have that confirmed that will be Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Development will be here, the whole state. So, that's where all the money is coming from this big project. They are excited to be here. They want to be here. That will be at ten o'clock January 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will get with you on the exact location. We're going to do a quick little tour of downtown, if I can get everything coordinated with the business people. I would love for as many people to be there as possible, to show support plus it's a big deal. They are really believing in us and what we're going, they're excited to see what's going to happen in Kenton. So, Not only did they give us this funding to be, show our gratitude, but it always help for the future. For every grant we put in and they see what we're all about. If it's a no show, they don't show. We've got to show them who we are, and they know we're on fire. So, I will get out more information to you , but hold back January 22<sup>nd</sup> at ten o'clock. I would say we're looking at 30-45 minutes. Also, the Director of Ohio Development will have, she will be doing downtown business association meeting following that at eleven o'clock. Also, that's everyone is invited to that, which would be a great piece to see. So, if you can fit that in your schedule that would be fantastic.

Althausen: Okay, and just to follow that up, there will be times in the next couple years that I think we'll be asked to do things that aren't always in our comfort zone. We will need more faces out and about, and can I quantify what that will consist of yet? No, I can't but we're going to need to be present, and visible, and informative. Especially to those folks who work or live close to this nine-clock area. We're going to want to get our hands dirty and make certain we know what's going on and really try to be proactive. The spear of that whole project is the administration, but I know Lynn is going to ask for help whenever she can get it and I would encourage you to try to come up here, be up here, be present in the City Building so they know that they can rely on you. Also, yeah you will get questions from time to time. There's nothing wrong with ever saying, I'm not certain of that answer, but I will find out for you. Nothing at all, and so if, good resource, depending on the question, John, Cindy, probably the top one, Emma, very good resource, I think she just got all of Brenda's knowledge. So, or if she needs to find something from old accounts, she'll find it. Alright, with that I think that's it for this evening, we've kind of gone over the dates well enough. We will meet here again January 22<sup>nd</sup>, which happens to be the day Ohio EPA is going to be here so that might be a full day for anybody that has the time. I want to touch base with everybody afterwards, but if there are no objections, we're adjourned.

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Joel Althausen, President of Council

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Emma Nelson, Clerk