

CITY OF KETTERING
CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
February 14, 2023

The Council of the City of Kettering, Ohio, met in a workshop session on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, in the Deeds Conference Room, Kettering Government Center, 3600 Shroyer Road. The meeting came to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members present included Mayor Lehner, Vice Mayor Fisher, Ms. Duvall, Mr. Klepacz, Mr. Scott and Mrs. Hall. Mr. Duke had an excused absence.

Staff Members present included City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Steve Bergstresser, Law Director Ted Hamer, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Director Mary Beth O'Dell and Economic Development Manager Amy Schrimpf. Community Information Manager Mary Azbill attended via video conference.

Mr. Bob Snavelly, Mr. Kirk Mizerek and Mr. Sterling Abernathy were also in attendance.

Mr. Greeson introduced representatives from Palmer Energy who explained that Kettering is one of 8 Miami Valley Communications Council (MVCC) communities working toward an aggregation program. Mr. Bob Snavelly from Palmer Energy said that Kettering is mostly focused on electric aggregation, but gas is also of interest for some communities. Proposals from companies for electric will be sought during summer 2023. Pricing for gas could be obtained in late summer. Communities considered several companies and selected Palmer Energy. There are approximately 14 municipalities participating. Close to 60,000 households will be included in the request for proposal through MVCC who will aggregate for the community.

Mr. Klepacz asked if there would be an impact on service. Mr. Snavelly stated there would be none.

Once the two public hearings are completed, Kettering will be ready to move forward seeking pricing and creating the largest group possible for purchasing power. A meeting will be held when all proposals have been reviewed to decide—best price is typically selected. Opt-out letters will be sent describing the price, the contractor and giving residents 21 days to leave the process. The information will be submitted to the local utility. Another for customers to opt out is via a decision notice from the actual electric supplier with a seven day turnaround time.

Mr. Klepacz asked if Palmer gets different pricing and was told they get different lengths of contracts with no termination clause.

Customers who don't opt out are automatically in the aggregation program. Opting back in is possible. Communication is an important part of this program. Palmer will help train call takers and provide a help line for assistance. Palmer anticipates 6.5 to 7 cents per unit compared with utilities at 11. Palmer stated that gas savings is not as good as electric. Customers will receive a rate in the mail that could end up being more than the current power company rate.

Ms. Duvall asked how many participants to expect. Palmer stated that historically, participation starts at 40% and gets close to 60% as time progresses.

Gentile Park – Mr. Greeson stated that as the design process nears completion, budget and bidding need to be discussed. Ms. O'Dell stated that Gentile Park was a project that started before 2001, and April 2013 was the second time the project was entertained. In 2016, the project was approved, and soil contamination was found. In 2018 and 2019, trees were taken down to begin construction at a cost of \$299,000. In 2020, the budget for Gentile Park was eliminated due to COVID uncertainty. ARPA funds were appropriated at \$1.5 million. A NatureWorks grant was awarded requiring a match at \$1.6 million in grant and ARPA funding. Since 2016, the City carries a budget of \$1.5 million. Construction costs are now estimated at \$2.3 million, and two large mounds were removed at \$750,000 for aesthetic and safety reasons. The City has a funding gap of \$686,123.

Vice Mayor Fisher asked how residents responded to the park during the public meetings. Ms. O'Dell stated the park is well received and a stabilizer for the Wiles Creek neighborhood as many do not have cars to drive to a recreational area.

Ms. Duvall stated Wiles Creek is one of the few neighborhoods without a park. Ms. O'Dell explained there will be a half mile walking path around the park, as well as a naturalized playground unique for Kettering. Budget constraints do not allow for shelter or water at the park.

Mr. Bergstresser stated that remediation done by EPA found bad soil that was hauled to Gentile Park. Flood plain requirement changes also had an impact. Filling in the flood plain requires compensatory excavation for an equal exchange. This would require 5,000 yards of fill dirt and a pit dug somewhere else to compensate for that. EPA concurred that it was extreme and suggested moving the mounds and taking them to a construction debris landfill.

Mr. Klepacz asked about the mounds being part of the original plan for Gentile Park. Ms. O'Dell stated there were blind spots with the mounds in place.

Mr. Greeson restated there is a funding gap, and staff feels this is a project that built expectations in this underserved neighborhood. The park could serve as an amenity to the business park for workers and upgrade the neighborhood. The mound issue and inflation is working against the City.

Mr. Klepacz asked how much the City has spent already. Mr. Bergstresser stated the City has spent \$299,000. Mr. Greeson interjected that to some degree projects like this were the intent for ARPA funds-- important to communities

that would not otherwise get done. The City has the funds, and if applying them here would move us forward, we should consider using it. This would be spent from the \$7.3 million ARPA funds allocated for capital improvement.

Mr. Scott asked if the City maintains the park. Ms. O'Dell explained there is continued tree work at the park. Mr. Scott stated that the 45% increase over budget could continue to escalate. Has there been discussion to scale the project back to keep it in budget. Ms. O'Dell stated the project is bare bones right now.

Mr. Scott asked at what point does the City make the tough decisions for when there are no funds for this.

Mayor Lehner stated the City is too far down the road to stop now and requested that ARPA information be provided to Mr. Klepacz.

At 7:07 p.m., Vice Mayor Fisher made a motion to enter Executive Session under Section 121.06 (k) of the Codified Ordinances for purposes of Property Matters and Economic Development, seconded by Mr. Scott. The motion passed unanimously upon roll call.

At 7:26 p.m., the Council exited Executive Session and went back on public record.

The City Council Workshop Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

PEGGY LEHNER
MAYOR

LASHAUNAH D. KACZYNSKI
Clerk of Council