

Bedford, Ohio

April 11, 2011

Community Ward Meeting for Wards 3 & 4 was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, April 11, 2011. Mayor Pocek called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Daniel Pocek, Marilyn Zolata, Paula Mizsak, Stan Koci, Greg Pozar. Also Present: Clerk of Council Pro-Tem Michelle Gnoddie. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Police Chief Greg Duber, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Building Commissioner Phil Seyboldt.

Mayor Pocek welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. There are two issues of concern in Wards 3 and 4 that will be addressed tonight. The flooding in Ward 3 and the road closures due to railroad track repairs in Ward 4.

It is currently in the news what the Governor has proposed regarding the State budget and what is projected to happen with local government funding. It is not the intention of the City to go back to the taxpayers to deal with the State budget cuts. It is projected the City of Bedford will lose approximately \$900,000 over the next two years. Mayor Pocek thanked the citizens for the support shown the City of Bedford in November 2009 with the passage of the Safety Forces Levy. The City will deal with these state cuts and maintain the services as best as possible to make Bedford a great place to live.

Mayor Pocek introduced new Council Clerk Lorrie Villers. Ms. Villers will start on April 25, 2011, but be sworn in at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Councilwoman Zolata reported the following for Ward 3:

The City Manager has been working on a solution for flooding issues in areas of Ward 3.

There will be railroad upgrades at Powers and North Park crossings. Monroe and South Park crossings will be closed.

Thanks to the residents for passage of the Safety Forces Levy in November 2009.

The city has a new water bill and informational insert, which should help with communication due to the loss of our weekly newspapers.

World Changers is a program coming to Bedford this summer.

The closing of the Vincentian convent is a huge loss.

Commended the Police Department on ensuring safety in our neighborhoods.

Commended the Police Department on the community policing meeting last week at Ellenwood.

The condition of the UAW on Northfield Road is a concern especially since it is not the UAW's fault. The City Manager has seen to it that our service department and juvenile diversion program kids keep that area cleaned up.

Councilwoman Mizesak reported the following:

Mrs. Mizesak thanked those in attendance tonight. She enjoys helping her constituents.

Commended the teamwork between the administration and Council.

Because of the Metroparks, there are more concerns with animals than other areas of the city.

City Manager Hank Angelo stated he has been working on a trash problem on Northfield Road at the UAW Hall. Ben Venue has put out one trash container.

Mr. Angelo showed a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all city departments.

Police Department: Police Department is beginning to host regular meetings in an effort to hear the public's thoughts and concerns. Topics that were brought up at the recent meeting were animals not on a leash and running at large, animal defecation, and semi-trucks unloading cars on Broadway and Rockside. The police department is also visiting the stores in downtown and getting input from business owners and customers.

Building Department: Building Department oversees the home rehabilitation program. The City was successful in obtaining two grants to assist in the program. We have been awarded grants in the amounts of \$500,000 and \$100,000. The \$500,000 grant involved the renovation of homes within the Presidential District being 775 Lincoln and 166 Woodrow. The \$100,000 grant was used for the renovation of 97 Flora. The City is going to apply for a third round of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds (NSP III). Other homes the city has fixed up and are for sale are on Belle, West Grace, West Glendale, Washington, and two on Lincoln. Two other homes for sale are on Heather and Darlington. These are being sold as is.

The Building Department continues to keep track and address the problem with vacant homes. There are 364 total foreclosures, but only 65 are vacant.

New Website: Mike Mallis showed the audience the workings of the new website [www.bedfordoh.gov](http://www.bedfordoh.gov). City staff is currently working on building their department webpages. Anticipated launch date, end of April. City staff will be able to update the website in-house so it is always current. Special features include an emergency notification message box, e-news sign-up, calendar, and latest news to improve community outreach. The City currently has a Twitter account and we are working on setting up a City Facebook.

New Water Bill: This is another avenue for getting information out to the residents. On the water bill, there is a community message box. On the back of the bill is a phone listing, ways to pay the bill, and how to find a water leak in your house. Non-profit organizations could insert a flyer in the water bill mailing. There is a cost involved because the City cannot absorb the costs.

Presidential District Reconstruction and Enhancement Project: The City was one of only two cities in the county to be awarded a \$276,000 grant through Cuyahoga County's CDBG program. The total project cost was approximately \$300,000. It involved the resurfacing of Woodrow and Adams Street last year and the installation of welcome banners and historic street signs this spring. The purpose is to brand this part of the City.

Rockside Road Reconstruction: The City will not accept the project that was done last year. Karvo Construction will be back out and stand behind their work. It is a four month project with three sections: Broadway to Center, Center to Northfield and Northfield to Bartlett. The problem with the work not being done on the intersection of Center & Rockside was subsurface. The concrete below was very bad and that is one of the reasons given for breaking up the schedule that they had last year. The contractor was supposed to go all the way through Bedford last year.

Broadway Culvert Repair: The City was awarded a \$600,000 grant to replace the deteriorated culvert on Broadway near the Subaru and Honda dealerships. Construction began today and will run through July. Traffic will be maintained one lane in both directions.

Railroad Crossing Enhancement Project: This project involves \$750,000 in upgrades to North Park, Willis and Powers. The project is scheduled to take place over three weekends in June because the train has to run Monday through Friday. Roadways will be closed during construction and detours will be posted. South Park and Monroe crossing will be closed.

Recreation Department: Currently preparing an application for a \$35,000 grant to revitalize the Palmetto Tot Lot. We have received this grant previously two times.

Auto Mile District: The City applied for a \$150,000 grant through the County to enhance the Auto Mile District and to brand the Auto Mile. Project would include multiple monuments, digital signs and landscaping.

Vincentian Convent: The Villa has been for sale since around April of 2010. There is no price on it. The property was supposedly appraised in November. The City is still waiting on learning the appraisal value. The City has worked with the Sisters of Charity from Cincinnati. Most of the nuns have been relocated to Cincinnati. Mrs. Zolata stated that some nuns are still here and are teaching or work at Light of Hearts Villa. The Cleveland Diocese had nothing to do with this closing.

World Changers: At the end of July, 200-250 young people will be in Bedford working on rehabilitating homes. There are no economic guidelines. It is a question of need. They will do approximately 20 projects in Bedford, Bedford Heights, Walton Hills and Oakwood. The school system has agreed to house all 200 students. They will do projects such as painting, handicap ramps, gutters, steps, roofs and those types of improvements. Applications need to be submitted by the end of this week to be considered for the program. No city funds are involved. The City is accepting donations for the costs of materials. The homeowner would most likely have to contribute to the cost of supplies.

Mayor Pocek spoke of the prescription drug program offered in partnership with the National League of Cities. It is a free program available to Bedford residents. With the discount card, there is an average savings of 20 percent on prescriptions. There are no income requirements or standards. Cards available at City Hall, banks, the library, and recreation center. Participating local pharmacies are CVS, Walgreen's, Wal-Mart and Giant Eagle.

Councilman Koci spoke of a program Mayor Pocek and he learned about at the National League of Cities. There is a utility service that has partnered with the National League of Cities where for a small fee of approximately \$4.00 a month, they will protect your sewer lines and come and clean them out. If they need repair, they will be covered for repair for the small monthly fee. Council and the administration need to discuss this further before the City approves.

Mayor Pocek opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

Inquiry from audience about who to call for a wild animal living in the garage. Chief Duber advised resident to contact the Animal Control Officer through the Police Department.

Resident reported where the house was torn down at Broadway and Mitchell, the bushes are blocking the sidewalk and the bushes obstruct view of traffic.

Resident at 44 John Street has experienced storm water coming through the basement floor drain four times in eight years causing extensive damage and inquired about the City installing a backflow preventer. Mr. Bellar stated several backflow preventers were installed approximately 15 years ago at several homes on John Street. Over these years, new owners of these homes were not aware that there are backflow preventers in place. The City had sent out a survey and is trying to determine the best way to eliminate the problem. The EPA mandated to remove storm water from the sanitary sewers approximately 15 years ago. Sewers have been added to John, Best and Northfield Road. The problem still has not been solved. Ben Venue does add a substantial amount of water to the sanitary sewer. Further discussion held concerning the flooding problems in this area.

Discussion held about the new website, Facebook, and e-mail newsletters. Inquiry made about reaching out to those who do not have a computer or access to the internet. Mr. Angelo stated the City has a new water bill and informational insert, which should help with communication due to the loss of our weekly newspapers. The library has internet computers, but there is a time limit. There have also been thoughts about taking old computers from City Hall and setting them up at Ellenwood for the residents to use.

Resident commended the City Departments. Anytime she has called, she has received polite and immediate responses.

Inquiry about gas drilling and energy conservation in Bedford. Mr. Mallis replied we attempted drilling behind City Hall a few years ago, but that company folded. The City researched other areas, such as property on Solon Road, but there is not enough acreage. Mr. Angelo replied we do have some energy conservation projects. The City received a NOPEC grant for \$144,000 and a County grant for \$40,000. Mr. Seyboldt researched and recommended regulations regarding solar panels and wind turbines. City Council passed ordinances for this. Hull and Associates has installed solar panels and did obtain a grant for the expense. This project cut their energy costs by 80 percent. Bedford is a member of the First Suburbs Consortium. The First Suburbs Consortium has created an Advanced Energy District. FSC is working with the City of Cleveland and the Port Authority. At first, the program is only for businesses. If successful, FSC would like to extend to residential. A business would apply to the Advanced Energy District for a project. The AED will provide the upfront money for the project and then assess the property taxes to pay back this loan.

Comment from audience that she hires someone to plow her drive then the snow plow pushes the snow into her apron. Inquiry if the City could plow aprons. Mayor replied it is an issue of cost involving personnel and equipment. The streets have to be done first. Mr. Bellar stated when they did aprons for senior citizens, there were 650 seniors on the list. In heavy snow falls, it takes a 1 ½ days to clear all the streets and these aprons could not be done timely.

Resident commended Service Department for cleaning the roads and inquired if less salt is being issued. Mr. Bellar replied that two years ago, the majority of Cuyahoga County cities did a sensible salting plan. Salt is applied only at stop signs, main and secondary roads.

Inquiry from audience on the City's financial situation. Mr. Gambosi replied the City will lose approximately \$900,000 due to cuts in the CAT tax, estate tax and local government fund. Mr. Gambosi stated this \$900,000 will be lost over an eight year period. These are cuts proposed by Governor Kasich and have yet to be approved by the State legislature. The City will figure how to absorb these cuts. Mr. Gambosi and Mr. Angelo mentioned several measures that have occurred to save money such as the City is currently down 11 employees, wages are frozen, use of part-time employees, reviewing natural gas, cell phone and telephone contracts, sharing services with other communities (garbage collection, fire, animal warden, SEALE), worker's compensation and hospitalization costs. The City has been doing regionalism for several years already. The City's bond rating AA2.

Inquiry from the audience regarding recent articles in the Plain Dealer about increased water and sewer costs. Mr. Angelo replied Bedford residents are not affected by Cleveland Water rate increases until 2014 because we are a master meter community. Bedford sewer rates are not affected by Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District rate increases.

Inquiry from audience if anything could be done about the deer. Mr. Angelo responded that the Metroparks are responsible. In March, Metroparks culled the herd and took inventory. Mrs. Mizsak stated there is an ordinance prohibiting feeding animals.

Inquiry regarding the internet cafes and gambling. Mr. Angelo responded there are currently three open and three internet cafes looking to come into Bedford. An ordinance was recently passed to regulate these internet cafes. There is a \$30 per month/per machine fee and a \$5,000 annual occupancy fee. This money goes into the general fund. These internet cafes have not complained about these fees. Our ordinance addresses how these businesses are to operate and the machines have to be certified. They are not located near schools and churches. The police department has not encountered any problems at these establishments.

Inquiry about where the City obtains natural gas for the municipal buildings. Mr. Gambosi replied the City uses Volunteer Energy Services. The resident is always receiving information about gas suppliers. Mr. Angelo suggested he go to PUCO's website and look at the Apples to Apples (rate comparison chart).

Inquiry if West Grace Street would be resurfaced this summer. Mr. Angelo responded it would only be patched. To resurface West Grace would cost more than is currently budgeted for this year. Another resident inquired about the ruts at Broadway/Union/William.

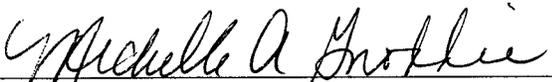
Resident inquired if the City could limit how many internet cafes could come into the city. Mr. Angelo responded that the three businesses that would like to come to Bedford are not able to find locations that provide adequate space. They are only allowed to go into certain areas of the city.

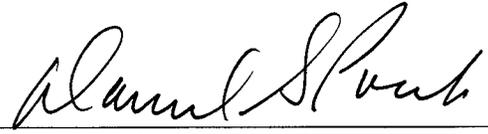
Inquiry if Bedford is still a Tree City. Mr. Angelo replied we received notification last week Bedford was again awarded this designation. Bedford has been a Tree City for 26 years.

Sign-up forms for Code Red and a police email distribution list are available.

Mayor Pocek introduced State Senator Nina Turner. Senator Turner gave a brief presentation on what is currently happening in the State Senate concerning the Governor's proposed budget, SB 5, budget cuts to local government and education, her co-sponsoring of a bill allowing cities to provide municipal service sharing and took questions from the audience.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

  
Clerk of Council Pro-Tem

  
Mayor – President of Council