

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 5 & 6** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, April 23, 2012. Mayor Pocek called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Daniel Pocek, Stan Koci, Paula Mizensak, Don Saunders, Greg Pozar. Also Present: Pro-Tem Clerk of Council Michelle Hollo. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Deputy Chief Kris Nietert, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Fire Chief Dave Nagy.

Mayor Pocek introduced the present Council Members and City Manager Angelo introduced members of the Administration.

Councilman Pozar reported the following for Ward 5:

- The City of Bedford is one of few municipalities that hold resident forums.
- City officials and administrators openly communicate with the public.
- Mayor and Council members are made aware of concerns from the various department administrators.
- Main neighborhood issues consist of blaring radios and driving at excessive speeds.
- Property values are not what they were five years ago. Mr. Pozar has the packet for filing an appeal with the County to lower property taxes.
- Residents 65 years of age and older are eligible to receive the homestead reduction on property taxes.

Councilman Saunders reported the following for Ward 6:

- A main problem in the city is the foreclosure crisis.
- Banks are selling these homes for less than what they are worth significantly cutting market value.
- The City tracks the foreclosed homes and pursues the banks to maintain the exterior of home and the property. Boarded up houses are not allowed.
- Encourages residents to contact the police department if they see anything suspicious at vacant houses.
- Bedford is doing well compared to surrounding cities
- Council-manager form of government works well in Bedford.

City Manager Hank Angelo showed a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all City Departments:

Mr. Angelo announced the World Changers would be back this year the week of July 9 to July 14, 2012. There were 200+ young high school/college students that volunteered in the World Changers program that assisted in repairing the homes last year. The group did several types of projects/repairs: painting, handicap ramps, gutters, steps, roofs and those types of improvements. There is an application process and guidelines that the residents have to go through to be eligible for the program. He praised the help/assistance this group brought to Bedford in 2011. Other cities participating in the program this year are Bedford Heights, Walton Hills, Oakwood, Euclid and Glenwillow. The area churches feed the group and they are housed at Bedford High School.

Police Department: Mr. Angelo said the City always focuses on Community Policing to maintain the quality of life in Bedford. Deputy Chief Nietert explained the NIXLE Communication System (www.NIXLE.com) is similar to the Code Red alert system. NIXLE alerts residents through cell phone texting and the internet. The alert/information would also go to the Police Department's Facebook, Twitter accounts and the Police Department's website at the same time. The Code Red alerts the residents through the phone of their choice and a recorded message is left on the resident's voice mail. Deputy Chief Nietert explained the Police Department is utilizing CompStat to direct the focus on problem areas or specific issues such as accidents, burglaries and other criminal activity.

Fire Department: Mr. Angelo stated Bedford continues to explore regionalization and resource sharing opportunities with Maple Heights and Bedford Heights. One of the future joint purchases would be a new ladder fire truck for approximately \$1.4 million. Chief Nagy explained that Bedford, Maple Heights and Bedford Heights are studying regional dispatching, which would be located at Bedford University Hospital. A federal grant for approximately \$1 million was obtained specifically for the regional dispatch center. There would be a significant savings in personnel, equipment and capital. The dispatcher center would be completed in 18-20 months.

Economic Development: Mr. Angelo spoke about the Neighborhood Stabilization grant the City received. This is a program through Cuyahoga County using federal monies in the amount of \$150,000. The money could be used in various ways to beautify some of the residential properties. The City partnered with Doty & Miller to design a home that is energy efficient and fits aesthetically in the neighborhood. There are several locations being considered for this home.

Service Department Projects: Wood Creek Culvert replacement - \$672,842 (Issue 2 Grant), Water line replacement project for Grand Boulevard, Franklin Street and Magnolia Avenue. The water line was installed but the project had to be put on hold because of the weather and the Public Works money. The City matched \$300,000 by issuing bonds and there is \$186,000 remaining for the road resurfacing. The asphalt plants usually do not open until warmer weather in May. The Solon Road water line replacement was paid from the Water Revenue Funds. The City did a UV Disinfection Improvement Program which was paid from the Waste Water Fund. Commercial Water Meter replacement program will provide additional revenue for the City because meters slow down and the commercial businesses were getting more water than what they were paying for, so now the businesses pay the appropriate amount. Bedford is a master meter community which means Bedford purchases its water from Cleveland in bulk. Any water problem is handled by a Bedford employee and not a Cleveland employee. Bedford will be getting a water rate increase from the City of Cleveland in 2014.

Recreation Department: Mr. Angelo said last year the City received a \$35,000 grant from the Cuyahoga County Department of Development to replace the playground toy at Palmetto Tot Lot. We have removed the old equipment and getting the property ready to install the new playground toy.

Mr. Angelo stated the City is very fortunate to receive the amount of grants that the Administration had applied for. The City has received \$26 million dollars in grant money in the past eight years.

Bedford Automobile Enhancement: Mr. Mallis stated he met with the dealerships monthly. The City received a \$150,000 grant to enhance the district. The City will add additional funds to include digital signage, monuments, banners, raised walls and landscaping this spring. The City of Bedford is reinforcing the idea that Bedford is the Historic Automobile. We are working with Doty & Miller on this project.

The project will go out to bid next month. Mr. Angelo stated there are 32 dealerships and 1,700 employees combined at all the dealerships. He added Ben Venue employed about 1,400 employees.

Finance: Mr. Angelo listed the various departments and the amount of money it took to operate each department: Operating Budget – over \$32.5+ million – Police \$4.3+ million, Fire \$2.8+ million, Service - \$1.6+ million, Administration \$1.9+ million, Recreation \$1.1+ million, Municipal Court - \$2.0+ million and Water / Waste Water - \$8.0+ million, Debt Service \$1.1+ million and Health Insurance \$2.2+ million. Bedford did not have much debt. The City carried a \$5.8+ million reserve, a 2011 - \$1.8+ million carryover and Council passed legislation that mandated to maintain a 15% reserve which was very important. Being fiscally responsible also added to the bond rating. Our bond rating is AA and AA2. Mr. Gambosi stated Bedford is just below the AAA rating of Solon, Beachwood and Westlake. Mr. Gambosi received his 21st “Government Finance Officers Association - Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting” award for the City of Bedford.

Marketing the City: Mr. Angelo said efforts were made to market the City on the new website, monthly utility bill inserts, Twitter and Facebook to get the word out of The Bedford Advantage. There are so many amenities that people take for granted. There are several events and festivals that take place all year long.

City of Bedford: Mr. Angelo listed the following: Rail project with the Ohio Rail Commission: the City received \$1,000,000 in upgrades at the North Park, Powers and Willis crossings, Bedford Audi Improvements: assisted the dealership with incentives toward the \$3.5 million project along with five other dealerships, 600 Solon Road: a new business location, Milano Monuments: assisted with incentives for their new office on Broadway Avenue, and Energy Improvements: the City will be making over \$100,000 in energy improvements throughout the municipal buildings by way of grants received from NOPEC and the County.

Quiet Zone: On display in the Council Chambers are the delineators that will be installed on W. Grace, E. Grace, W. Glendale and E. Glendale. Mr. Mallis explained he had submitted two applications over a year ago and to date, the City was not clear on the rules or regulations. The Federal Rail Administration has also requested updated information pertaining to trains per day, traffic counts, and accidents in the area. One form is completed and Mr. Mallis is still completing the second form. Mr. Mallis has learned that the criteria for every quiet zone situation in other cities is judged different. Bedford has two lines that are extremely close together. Cars must be prevented from going around the gates. The City is not installing double overhead gates due to the high cost (\$1.5 million), but installing delineators. Depending on the required length the delineators need to come back from the tracks (100 or 200 feet), the installation of the median barriers and the traffic flow could be affected and changed (Palmetto extension, Walgreens, Coffee Cup, etc.). Some of the roads could be changed into one-way streets or right turn only. The median barriers were already purchased for the amount of \$16,000-\$17,000. The Administration is still waiting for clarification before the City can make a decision on how this could affect traffic flow.

2012 & Beyond: Mr. Angelo said the following projects are being planned: replacement of Broadway water line and CDBG road resurfacing and streetscape project with improved signage for visitors. Other matters the City wants to pursue is the development of the old Taylor Chair property, collaborate with Meadowbrook Market Square developers to enhance the retail area and collaborate with Hemisphere to market Tinkers Creek Commerce Park.

Mayor Pocek announced this year is the 80th anniversary of the City Manager form of government, 85th year for the Bedford Garden Club, and the 175th year of the incorporation of the City of Bedford.

Mayor Pocek opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

Dot Schwende, 513 Lamson, inquired about future plans for adult programs through the Recreation Department. She is interested in evening programs for weight loss, fitness and nutrition. Mr. Lewis responded there have been some programs in the past through outside interests. For example, Weight Watchers has been there and did offer evening classes and two day sessions. There was not enough interest in the evening class. Exercise classes have been done on and off throughout the years. The City does not go out and hire instructors to fill the classes. The instructors come in and run their own classes. Line dancing was also done in the past. If there are a number of people who want to do a specific thing, we would be glad to entertain that. Mr. Lewis recently spoke with a lady who does Zumba who is considering holding an evening class.

Dan Volk, 73 Wandle, commented about the great things happening on the Automile and the many dealers upgrading their property. There are still some properties that are eyesores and inquired if the City is currently working with these property owners to upgrade their appearance. Mr. Mallis stated the Building Department is beginning to target exterior maintenance citywide, residential and commercial. Last week staff went around throughout three wards looking for obvious violations. Approximately 45 letters went out in addition to numerous high grass notices. Mr. Mallis spoke of a vacant building on the Automile. The owner still must maintain the look of the property.

Jerry Pittis, 19 Elm, asked if the proposed regional dispatch center would eliminate jobs of those working there now. Mayor Pocek replied this is in the infant stages at this time. Bedford, Bedford Heights and Maple Heights just passed resolutions to proceed forward and form a Council of Governments. Chief Nagy stated there may be a few jobs lost, but there still is a need for people to operate this call center. The best people that the three communities have to offer will provide more efficient service at a reduced cost. Residents will not notice a difference if calling 9-1-1. Mr. Angelo stated the County's goal is to have five regional centers in the future. The County has always subsidized all 9-1-1 centers and the County has advised all municipalities they are no longer going to subsidize. County involvement this year (\$1 million grant) is based on three cities taking the forefront and going into this. Our intent is to be the premier center and to ensure that monies available come to Bedford, Bedford Heights and Maple Heights.

Jack Shauf, 369 W. Grace, asked if there were plans for W. Grace to be resurfaced. The road handles a lot of traffic and is in terrible shape. After the road was resurfaced last time, water now pools up in the center of the road. Mr. Angelo responded there is no plan this year to resurface W. Grace Street. It is a County road and in the past the County participated in the cost of the resurfacing. We need to wait until the County will participate. Mr. Shauf said that someone has dug trenches. Mr. Angelo stated it was Dominion. Also, the City was not successful this year in discussions with the County regarding participating in two other roads.

Carole Pittis, 19 Elm, is concerned about the electric/telephone pole that is located at the bend on Elm Street. She showed pictures of the wires to Mr. Angelo. Mr. Angelo will contact Terry Killeen of First Energy, our government contact.

Vickie Fetterman, 78 Gould, stated drivers are not stopping at the stop signs on Kenyon. Also, it is a drag strip from Eldred to Ellenwood. Deputy Chief Nietert stated a speed sign could be put out for one to two weeks to monitor the speed. The speed sign also breaks it down by hour of the day. If the time could be narrowed down, the police department will direct enforcement at that time frame.

Sarah Piller, 96 Tarbell, questioned why Bedford UH will be the site of the new dispatch center and not City Hall where there already is a dispatch center. Mr. Angelo responded it is a larger area, will be the entire basement. We are looking at the number of work stations we need to have and it is larger than what we have right now. Our current dispatch center could be a back-up facility. Also our current center could be a back-up for all of Cuyahoga County. University Hospital will give us the basement at no cost, cover all the utilities and make all the renovations. Bedford would also receive the income tax.

Dick Bender, 69 Wandle, asked about the status of vacancies on Broadway particularly the Medic building and bike shop. Mr. Mallis responded the Medic building is a similar situation as what is happening at Meadowbrook. Walgreens is paying on the lease of that building. The building is for sale for \$1.2 million. We were close to having Save-A-Lot in there last year. The building owner wanted an extended lease and the store wanted the parking lot leveled. The two parties could not come to an agreement. Bedford is a member of the First Suburbs Consortium. FSC has a database of available properties in member communities. FSC advertises in various publications and site search companies.

Nancy Lachowski, 197 Wandle, inquired about the recycling of special items. Mr. Bellar said that the Service Department is still collecting paints and pesticides, and computers, keyboards, printers and related computer equipment through April 30th. Latex paint is not accepted. Latex paint may be put out with regular garbage after it is dried out. The City is also hosting two paper shredding events at City Hall on May 12 and October 13.

Jack Heaton, 31 Mapledale, stated his neighbor at 21 Mapledale passed away last year and the property is an eyesore and the grass is not being cut. Councilman Pozar stated it is a situation of fighting within the family and no one is taking charge of the estate. The City has already cited this property and it is going through the Building Department's process. If no improvement is made, the home may eventually be razed.

Mr. Heaton also inquired about the railroad gates on Grace and Glendale. With the apartments on Turney and heavy traffic on Broadway, Mapledale is already a cut through street. Mayor Pocek responded the City looked into installing another road several years ago, but it was too expensive. It would cost approximately \$4 or \$5 million.

Kathie Williams, 491 Lamson, stated there was a tree removed at 475 Lamson and there is still a hole in the treelawn. Mr. Bellar replied the Service Department is behind and they are working to catch up. Mr. Bellar will look into this.

Bruce Hathaway, 48 Eldred, stated it was a good decision to salt only intersections. He notices and appreciates those types of decisions.

Jim Westfall, 727 Washington, questioned what is happening with the issue of power outages in his neighborhood. He said there were 20 outages today. Mr. Angelo responded there were several power outages in the entire Cleveland area today due to the high winds. This area of Bedford is rated one of the worst districts in all of First Energy's areas. First Energy has made a concerted effort to make

improvements. Mr. Angelo will contact Terry Killeen, of First Energy, to find out what the audit of the area found and what has been completed. The discussions going back two years have not been what the City expected. First Energy has taken no responsibility and the Ohio Consumers' Counsel determined First Energy was not at fault. Mr. Angelo will be sending letters to the affected residents who had financial losses.

Joyce Daunch, 86 Harriman, inquired how the rehabbed houses are being marketed. Mr. Mallis replied in addition to advertising locally, there has also been discussion about marketing the entire community. When someone buys a house, they want to see what the neighborhood is like, what are the city services, and what events happen in that town. The City wants to bring people into Bedford and we need to give reasons to buy in the city. A couple years ago we met with a marketing firm who suggested that everything needs to be on the website. Last year we completely renovated our website. We have used the County grant money to advertise the homes. We have taken out full page ads in Cleveland Magazine, especially the edition of "Rating the Suburbs". It shows the renovated houses and the Bedford Advantage, see what Bedford has to offer. Mayor Pocek stated that Council has a work session scheduled to discuss marketing the city.

Barbara McDaniel, 186 Center, commented she mentioned at a Council meeting the condition of the walkway behind City Hall. She was pleased to see that the following day the debris that was floating in the pond was cleaned up.

Mary Ann Rudy, 82 Harriman, stated she lives next to a house in which the fence is falling down and the grass is tall. There are many houses in the area that are declining. It had been mentioned letters went out by the Building Department. Mrs. Rudy is inquiring what these letters accomplish and what the procedures are. Mr. Mallis explained in past years the building inspectors would go through the whole city, walking house by house, doing very detailed inspections. To inspect the whole city would take about three years. What is being done now are the inspectors are driving all the streets looking for violations that stand out such as hanging gutters, broken windows covered with cardboard, and tall grass. Mrs. Rudy indicated the address is 72-74 Harriman and this fence has been down for two or three years and it is a rental property.

Mr. Angelo stated the vacancies at the highest were at 350. Right now the vacancies are at about 325. This includes foreclosures and bank-owned houses. Some of the bank-owned houses are not vacant. Mr. Angelo encourages the residents to contact the City to notify us of a problem house. Mr. Mallis explained the process is the property owners are notified by letter that they have 30 days to fix violations. If the violations are not corrected, the property owner will be cited and will have to appear in court.

Mr. Mallis said that the rental program requires there be an inspection when the tenant changes. There has been discussion of changing this. There are situations when the same tenant has lived in a rental home for ten years. In checking with other cities, some do inspections yearly or every other year. Some cities inspect rental homes every third year.

Mayor Pocek introduced C. Ellen Connally, President of the Cuyahoga County Council and Bedford's County Council representative. Mrs. Connally gave a brief presentation on what the County Council is working on and answered questions from the audience.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

#7

Bedford, Ohio

April 23, 2012


Clerk of Council Pro-Tem


Mayor - President of Council