

Bedford City Council held a Community Ward Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 26, 2010 for residents of Wards 3 and 4. Present: Mayor Dan Pocek, Councilman Stan Koci, Councilwoman Marilyn Zolata, Councilwoman Paula Mizensak, Councilman Don Saunders, City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Building Commissioner Phil Seyboldt, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Police Chief Greg Duber, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis and Clerk of Council Kathleen Lynch.

Mayor Pocek welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. It is his great pleasure to be serving in his eleventh year as Mayor. There are some interesting things happening in the City. Mayor Pocek thanked the residents again for their support of the Safety Force Levy that passed in November. It has been heartening to know it was done with 71% of the vote in these difficult times. The residents should be commended for their participation in the City. Things are getting better, they're not great, but they are not as bad as they were.

The Mayor said this is also the first Ward Meeting with our new City Manager, Henry Angelo. Mr. Angelo just started his sixth week on the job, he rose above 41 other applicants to become the City Manager. At this time, Mayor Pocek introduced members of Council in attendance.

Mr. Angelo said this is his first of hopefully many Ward Meetings in the future. He thanked Council for the opportunity and appreciates the reception he has received over the last six weeks, it has been phenomenal. Mr. Angelo introduced the Department Heads.

Councilwoman Zolata is delighted to see so many residents from her ward, Ward 3. It is a good night to be here, it is the first Ward Meeting. It is important to meet our new City Manager if you have not already done so. The City is running very well thanks to all of the residents and their support of the Safety Force Levy.

Mrs. Zolata said there are a lot of good things in Ward 3 and we try to keep them up to par. The Building Department is always on the go. There is Light of Hearts Villa, the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity, Ben Venue Laboratories, the Northfield Road industrial area in addition to all the parks and playgrounds. There was one very significant loss in the ward, and that was the closing of St. Mary's Church. It was a cultural addition to our City and to our ward. There is no word yet on what is going to happen to the building. As soon as she does know, she will let everyone know.

Councilwoman Zolata said Ward 3 is in good hands. Mr. Angelo has been actively working with her on some of the issues. They are not unlike those in other areas, there are unruly juveniles, foreclosures, etc. She is anxious to have Mr. Angelo share with everyone his impression of the City so far. There is no local paper, there is a new little paper the Bedford Standard that comes out a couple times a month. Mr. Mallis and the Administration have been working, trying to get something in the City as far as a newspaper. Please check the board in front of the Historical Society to keep abreast of meetings.

Mrs. Zolata said quality of life and safety of our residents is always first on Council's agenda. Just keeping our homes nice and reporting anything you think is out of line in your neighborhood is the only way we can keep the quality of life in our City. She thanked everyone for being here and for their continued support all of her years on Council.

Councilwoman Mizensak thanked everyone for coming out tonight. She said the residents and those that work here have stood by each other through thick and thin. There are still good times to come. There is a paper in the City, the Bedford Standard, it comes out bi-monthly. There are a lot of people in Bedford with many talents and the phone number to reach the publisher of the paper is in there and you can submit articles. Mr. Mallis is doing a great job helping the businesses in downtown and working to bring new business to the City.

The Mayor said when Bob Reid left as City Manager and Mr. Schuman decided to be just the Law Director, he knew the City needed someone who had the experience to pick up and carry on the programs here in the City. Mayor Pocek is a full-time marketing representative for an engineering firm and he covers Northeast Ohio. Through this, he met Mr. Angelo when he was the Mayor of Warren. Mr. Angelo was the Mayor of Warren for eight years. The Mayor was always impressed with the way he conducted himself as a Mayor. He did a great job and took extreme pride in that he was the only Mayor in the State of Ohio that carried a Class IV Wastewater Treatment Operators license. Mr. Angelo came up through the ranks, he worked his way up. Mayor Pocek called him and told him of the position that was open and asked him to put in his resume. He told him he thought he was the best qualified, but it was Council's decision together. Mr. Angelo rose to the top and has developed a comfort level with Council and will be very successful as our City Manager. Including Mr. Schuman as Acting City Manager, Mr. Angelo is only the 12th City Manager since 1932. There is continuity here. Bedford likes politics but not on the front page of the newspaper.

Mr. Angelo said it is a blessing to be here in Bedford. Coming from the City of Warren, he sees so many different things. One of those is the relationship that Council has among themselves and with the Department Heads. It is a working relationship, a team relationship, something that you see. Mr. Angelo said coming from a city where politics was a blood sport, it is so much different. He has the added benefit of having worked in the wastewater treatment facility. There is a newspaper, and what they are trying to include is City events. The City will try and get out as much information as possible. If not, he said to call City Hall to find out what is going on or call your Council members. He can call them anytime.

Mr. Angelo said the residents voted for the Safety Force Levy. On behalf of the City, please know that the levy you voted for, the money is being used for those departments. You have a Fire Chief who is actually out and about making sure there are more men at a fire scene than ever before. There is a relationship with Maple Heights that is outstanding. In the Police Department, almost two weeks ago there was shooting where a man was killed. Paul Orlosky, from Channel 3 News, called our Chief and said in thirty years of reporting he has never seen a more professional, cleaner protocol operation of that type of incident. That says a lot about the type of officers the City has out there, what the residents are paying for and the fact that these gentleman are very professional. The City workforce is very professional as well. He is grateful to be a part of that work force working for the residents of Bedford.

At this time Mr. Angelo gave a power point presentation.

The Housing Rehabilitation Program through the Building Department was discussed. The range of construction that goes into these houses includes; new windows, roofs, doors, remodeled kitchen and bathrooms, new carpet, flooring, fresh paint, electrical, plumbing. Mr. Angelo said this is helping to ensure the City of Bedford has good neighborhoods. The City obtained two grants for this program, the first was a \$500,000 grant for the renovation of homes in the Presidential District. The City also received a \$100,000 grant for one home, on Flora. The City has renovated 23 homes, successfully selling 7. The money received from the sale of the homes, goes back into the program to renovate more homes. There may be some that are beyond repair and will need to be demolished. The program has been recognized by the National League of Cities and was up for a national award.

Mr. Angelo said the City received another grant in the amount of \$276,000 through CDBG, Community Development Block Grant funds. The total amount of the project will be over \$300,000 and that will include the resurfacing of three streets and welcoming banners in the Presidential District.

There is also a partnership with the Ohio Rail Commission, no local money is going out. There will be about \$750,000 in upgrades to North Park and Powers railroad crossings and the closing of South Park and Monroe railroad crossings.

Mr. Angelo said something everyone has been waiting for, the Rockside Road reconstruction project. Again, this is outside money, no local money being used. The advertising was done on April 12, 2010 and the bids are to be open on May 4, 2010. The total project is broken down into three sections. The first being Broadway to Center; Center to Northfield and Northfield to Bartlett. All the sections in Bedford should be done this year. The project is scheduled to begin on July 6 at Broadway and Rockside.

In 2009 and 2010 there were two \$35,000 grants for new playground equipment through the Cuyahoga County Office of Development. The first one was just installed at Ellenwood and Interstate Park will be the second site. The City also received a \$5,000 grant for a community garden and that will be behind Central School.

The power point presentation was completed.

Mayor Pocek said before the question and answer portion of the night, Rev. Edwards from Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Bedford will speak on behalf of the Minister's Civility Task Force.

Mr. Angelo said before he started Mayor Pocek contacted him about working with the area clergy. He had come up with the idea that we need some outside help, hands on to deal with some of the issues. One of the things looked at is some of the problems with the youth. He feels really good about the program, the clergy are working with children over at Heskett Middle School. They've discussed a ride along program with the Police Department, Chaplaincy Program, welcoming new residents to the area. The welcome for the new residents would be to help instill the values we have as a City. Many people don't understand what those values are, and the ministers want to work with the City to get those values back into young people.

Rev. Edwards is the Pastor at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. All the clergy in the Southeast area met and talked about the issues the Mayor brought before them. All the churches are involved. They want to bring people just moving into the City to a banquet or picnic to welcome them first and then sharing the history and values. It would also allow the expectations of the City to be discussed. Another program they are looking to start is a New Homeowners Resource Team. The resource team will help new homeowners with various things such as keeping their homes looking good. There is a problem with the youth and anger management. They are working with Ian Roberts from the YMCA, to conduct anger management classes not just for the youth but for the families as well. Rev. Edwards said they are also trying to have a person in the high school and middle school for at risk children. They want to teach them character, values and the right life choices. Pastor Boquist and Rev. Edwards have started a program at Heskett School working with seventh graders. There are 50 children currently in this pilot program. There is progress being made. Rev. Edwards spoke about a mentoring program, spending one hour a week with an at risk child. They also want to show their appreciation for both the Police and Fire Departments.

Mayor Pocek thanked Rev. Edwards and said the reason for this program is to ensure the quality of life we are accustomed to. Having the help from the ministers in dealing with these various issues is going to be very important.

Mr. Angelo said the partnership the City has with the ministers has a very good long term potential pay-off.

Paul Pojman, 322 Union, is intrigued by the home renovations the City is doing. He knows a couple of people that might be interested in looking at these homes and asked what the process was for this?

Mr. Seyboldt said if you call the Building Department during business hours, one of the administrative assistants can show the interested party a list and pictures of the homes the City has renovated and is selling. If you like one or more of them, then an appointment can be made to see the homes.

Mr. Seyboldt said the program started a couple of years ago when the City starting purchasing HUD owned homes. The first houses the City purchased were bought for \$1. The City upgrades the entire house, they are energy efficient, maintenance free homes. There are new kitchens and bathrooms. They are designed to be comfortable and affordable. They ask the people that live in these homes to live there for five years. There is a special program designed to promote this home ownership, 10% of the purchase price is given as a second mortgage. That second mortgage is forgiven after living in the house for five years. If you do not live there for five years, all or the portion remaining of the second mortgage has to be paid. The houses are all priced according to the market of the neighborhood, to help maintain value. Council has approved a good program, although only 7 out of 20 have been sold, the City has not started working on the last 6 or 7 homes purchased. There are 7 ready for sale now.

Louise Novak, 1252 Broadway, asked about the status of the former BP station at the corner of Broadway and Forbes.

Mr. Angelo said Mr. Seyboldt is aware of the issues there, and has been working on it. The City is working with the current owners to get the property up to code.

Mr. Seyboldt said the owner is being very cooperative. BP had the station for 40 years, and now that they have not renewed their lease, BP is responsible for the maintenance of the station. The tanks were pulled, and they are responsible to the State of Ohio concerning the ecological issues. Once the final tests come back from the State of Ohio ensuring that the site is clean, the building will be renovated, the canopy will be taken down, the paving will be restored and the fence will be fixed.

Phil Williams, 150 Best, thanked Council and all the departments in the City for the work they do. Every time you call about an issue, whatever department is responsible is there for you. You couldn't ask for a better town than Bedford. He just wanted to commend everyone for their hard work.

Jerry Oldenburg, 237 Union, was out of town last week and flew in late Friday night but on Saturday morning he awoke to his neighbors telling him that the whole back of the apartments across the street were sprayed with graffiti. Shortly after that, he saw a patrolman in his back yard. Luckily they didn't do anything to his property, but they did graffiti the back of the sign and down the whole length of the Northfield Road bridge. The bridge is a quarter mile long, and it was the most obscene, vulgar material. The City cleaned it up quickly, within hours. However, he is surprised that somebody didn't see them going down the whole length of the bridge. Mr. Oldenburg asked if there was an investigation taking place to see who did this.

Mayor Pocek received a phone call from Mr. Tench about 11:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. He called Mr. Angelo who called the Service Department to get out there right away.

Mr. Oldenburg said the Police were out there at 8:00 a.m. Chief Duber said this is the first incident of graffiti the City has had. Mr. Oldenburg said it is not the first, on the bottom of the bridge, the main pillars there is quite a bit down there.

Chief Duber said they will look at that, but this is not an ongoing problem in the City. The Police recovered the cans. Unfortunately, there is not a suspect yet. The School Resource Officer is working on it at the school. Usually, in this type of incident, people talk and eventually the information on who did it will get out.

Mr. Oldenburg took pictures of the pillars of the bridge. There are some names on the graffiti, such as Bedford Boys, so hopefully someone knows something.

Mr. Angelo said the department heads meet every Tuesday morning. The City's goal in regards to graffiti will be to have it removed within 72 hours. The City may not always make that goal, but one way or the other the City intends to make sure whatever paint they put on, the City will put more on.

Anna Romito, 174 Williams, thanked the Police Department for watching over her house. She was gone for almost a month.

Louise Novak, 1252 Broadway, asked if there was a problem in Bedford with gangs, in light of the graffiti issues.

Chief Duber said no, there is nothing established here.

Mr. Angelo said his comments weren't meant to alarm, but he wants to take a proactive approach.

A resident in the audience asked if there were any new businesses coming into the City, in particular, at the former Dairy Queen on Northfield Road.

Mr. Angelo said that will be a tattoo parlor. They have done a good job of fixing the building up. Mr. Angelo is meeting with Mr. Goudreau and Mr. Mallis about Meadowbrook Square. Council recently approved a Jobs Ready Site grant application for \$3.5 million to purchase the 22 acres at Tinkers Creek Commerce Park and work with others to get the property sold. The City would like for Ben Venue to expand, but there are no guarantees. If this grant does come through, the City of Bedford will own those 22 acres, the City will be able to sell as we see fit to whomever. The goal is not to own property but to make sure it gets developed and doesn't sit idle. Mr. Mallis is also working on store front improvements. There is money available to those store owners in downtown Bedford.

Mr. Mallis said in regards to the Jobs Ready Site grant, the City went in front of the County last week to defend our application. The application first goes through the County and then through the State. The City believes we can market it better than the current developer. The plan is if the City acquires the 22 acres the City would start marketing it at \$40,000 per acre. The City has a much better chance of getting a business to come here at \$40,000, compared to the current price of \$150,000 per acre. There is a tremendous amount of debt on the property. This would help attract businesses to come here.

Mayor Pocek said it is the old S.K. Wellmon property. The City can keep the money it makes from selling the property. Mr. Mallis said if the City sells the 22 acres, we will profit approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000.

Mayor Pocek said the City feels good about their application, he addressed a letter to the Governor and Speaker of the House. Mr. Mallis said Mr. Gambosi, Mr. Schuman and he began researching this last fall, but as a City you do not want to get into owning property, but in this economy this is the best approach to bring business into that park.

Mr. Angelo said the other option is to do nothing and wait. This is the best way for the City to be proactive.

Ann Romito, 173 William, asked about the part of Meadowbrook that had Target and Tops. Isn't there any business to go in there?

Mayor Pocek said that is probably going to be more difficult. Mr. Mallis said the City has consistently sent marketing letters to various businesses. He had a very lengthy conversation with the developer, and questioned his lease rates in comparison to other shopping centers. His terms for lease rates are rather high. The City wants to work with him to develop a plan. There is a meeting with him on Friday.

Mayor Pocek said Wal-Mart is extremely successful, but they own that property. They are the most successful Wal-Mart in Cuyahoga County.

Phil Williams, 150 Best, asked about the donut shop on the corner of Best Street. Mr. Seyboldt said it is not owned by an individual, it is a trust. The City has tried but it is difficult to deal with a trust situation.

Joe Jancsurak, 1245 Broadway, asked if the City had any contact at all with the people handling the trust of the old donut shop. He has been trying to get in contact with them for the last five years.

Mr. Seyboldt said no. A year or two ago the City asked them to do some paving and painting to the building and they did that. There is a chain around the property as well. Mr. Seyboldt is not aware of any big problems on that site right now. He will take a look though at it tomorrow.

A resident asked about the property on the corner of Northfield and Interstate. Mr. Seyboldt said at the next Council meeting, they will be asked to declare that property a nuisance. It did go to Sheriff's sale and the bank owns it now. The owner/bank has the opportunity to fix the property, but in all likelihood it will be demolished.

Councilwoman Mizsak asked Chief Nagy to discuss the regionalization with Maple Heights.

Chief Nagy said the City identified a need with the City of Maple Heights, who the Fire Department works very closely with. Chief officers from both departments discussed that on many occasions due to our reduced staffing and staffing at Maple Heights, the City was responding on fire calls without a ladder truck even though both stations had a ladder truck. It is a very important piece of fire apparatus that was not being utilized. There was also a delay in notification to get those resources on the scene of a fire incident.

The Chief said there are two communities, three fire stations and have approached it as one community with three fire stations. Maple Heights shut down one of their engines, they no longer run an engine out of their Station No. 1 and Bedford no longer runs a ladder truck. The City was only able to staff the ladder truck approximately 23% of the year anyway. The two cities have also entered into automatic dispatching. If there is a fire call in Bedford, our dispatchers will notify our Fire Department and Maple Heights' Fire Department simultaneously. The same occurs in Maple Heights.

Chief Nagy said on every fire alarm in Bedford, not only have we guaranteed a ladder truck, we have increased the responding firefighters by 45%. If there as an incident of a working fire, explosion or smoke coming from a house the City has also entered into a partnership with Oakwood Village. They are automatically dispatched on those calls. Our firefighter and dispatching resources have increased by 70% over what we were getting a year ago at this time. Time is of the essence in any safety situation. It doesn't do the firefighters or residents any good to have these resources showing up 5 to 10 minutes after. They are needed immediately. By entering into this partnership with Maple Heights, the City has been able to accomplish this with zero cost to either community. The partnership has been going on for the last two months and so far so good.

A resident asked about the old Taylor Chair property, what is the status of it?

Mayor Pocek said that is in limbo, it is still in the Courts, it is now Rysar Properties. The developer went bankrupt because of the economy. They owe the City \$70,000 and there is a lien on the property.

Mr. Seyboldt said the City had to finish the demolition, right now it is going to sit until possibly the economy starts to come back.

Mayor Pocek said the infrastructure is all in. Mr. Mallis said Mr. Schuman spoke to him about nine months ago, and asked him to put in the street and plant grass. The owner said he was contacted by the Metro Parks about the property, the Metro Parks does not want it. The City has spoken to them and they are not interested.

82 Egbert, has been having trouble with the water in her home. It is cloudy and dark in color. This has been going on since last July. A new fire hydrant was put in near their home a few weeks ago, but there are still so many bubbles in the water.

Mr. Bellar said the Water Superintendent, Shawn Francis, has made many visits to her home. If there is still an issue, Mr. Bellar will have Mr. Francis stop again. The water was sampled and is safe. The bubbles means there is air in the lines.

She asked what the City can do to get the air out of the lines. It could possibly be something in their home that is causing the air in the lines.

Mr. Angelo said the City needs to come up with a reasonable explanation what the cause is. He and Mr. Bellar will speak with Shawn about this. Mr. Bellar said if the neighbors' water is fine, and it is in that area, that it puts the problem somewhere in their home. The City will need to take a look at it.

Mr. Angelo said the City needs to find the reason.

Councilwoman Zolata said there is another issue in that area, it is in regards to how the Metro Parks cuts the grass on Old Egbert.

Mr. Bellar said the Metro Parks quit cutting, probably to save on labor, and only do the first ten feet. They have put signs up as well. He does not know if the City can force them to cut any farther. It is a field. Mrs. Zolata said it is a residential area.

Mr. Angelo said the City will check the legality of whether or not the City can make the Metro Parks do that.

Mr. Bellar will contact the Metro Parks about this.

At this time, Mr. Tench our School Board Representative spoke about the status of the schools. The issue with the graffiti on Northfield Road was handled so well. It was cleaned up within a couple of hours and as a taxpayer, this is the type of quality of life issues talked about during the levy campaign. He does not mind paying taxes for that kind of service and the service Chief Nagy and Chief Duber provide with their departments. It is worth every penny. As concerned citizens, if you see something that isn't right, make a call. That is why our Council members are here, nobody loves the City of Bedford more than them and the department heads.

Mr. Tench said if there are any issues with gangs, the schools will know it before anybody. The schools are very diligent in that area. There are no issues with gangs. Mr. Tench said there were similarities between the incident on the Northfield Road bridge and an issue at the School Board building about a month ago. They are looking into that as well.

Mr. Tench said the Walton Hills transfer has been an issue for the schools for many years. There was a hearing in December at the Ohio Supreme Court. One of the Supreme Court Justices that heard the case passed away a couple of weeks ago and his concern was that would throw this issue back into another round. Although it may delay the decision a little bit, it should not have much of an impact. It is hopeful that this will be put to rest soon.

School funding in Ohio is an issue for every public school district. It is difficult when you are trying to provide quality education to the students of this district, while the State and Federal governments continue to take money. It is important to know that over the past five years, \$1 million has been cut every year out of the budget. Staffing, closing a school, services, they have been able to keep those cuts out of the classroom. How do they continue to provide quality opportunities? There are more opportunities here in Bedford than there are at the private schools.

Mr. Tench said the schools have to be very prudent in how they handle their finances, and they have done a very commendable job over the years. The levy passed last year, thanks to the citizens of all four communities. The schools are going to continue to look at viable changes to implement without affecting the educational process. It is a difficult job. There are some difficult decisions that have been made.

Mr. Tench said a new football coach was hired. It was a difficult decision to remove the current coach from the position, but sometimes it just doesn't work out. The new coach is Sean Williams, he is a graduate of Bedford High School and played in the NFL. The enthusiasm he has relates to our kids. He has some great things planned. They are also in the process of bringing in a new principal at the high school. It will be a difficult decision, there are close to 50 applicants. The selection committee is looking for a leader that will hold people accountable. The only school that has dropped the ball with the dress code is the high school.

Mr. Tench said the clergy is involved at Heskett Middle School, reaching out to the children. There are many children coming from difficult home situations. There was a comment made about all of the police cars at the high school. He has no problem with that, if there is a problem it will be handled.

Mr. Tench said a grant was received from the Cleveland Browns to build an exercise park behind Heskett Middle School, that will start at the end of the month. It will be open to the public. There are a lot of exciting things happening.

Councilwoman Mizensak asked about the possibility of putting cameras on Northfield Road. The police do a wonderful job, but this might help.

Chief Duber said the City would probably have to document that there is more than just this recent incident.

Mr. Tench said it looked like street chalk. There are fifty to sixty cameras at the high school and things are still missed. The important thing is to get the word out.

Mayor Pock discussed the NLC prescription card available to the residents of Bedford, it is good for those that don't have or do have insurance. The minimum savings per prescription is about 20%. To date, residents using this card have saved approximately \$10,000 and the dues to the organization are \$1,400 per year. It is well paid for.

A resident said a good majority of this town that has email and facebook pages. The Bedford Police website is great and the Recreation Department newsletter is emailed to her. The City might want to start looking at more electronic ways of getting information to people.

Mr. Mallis said one of the challenges of the City is the cost. The company that helped with the levy campaign does marketing and website redesigns too. The cost is approximately \$50,000. It is something that is being discussed.

Councilwoman Mizsak thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

Councilwoman Zolata said it is important to check the City website. There is a lot of talk about the Presidential District, and there are two homes being renovated.

A resident from Caryl Drive asked about the incidents at Wal-Mart?

Chief Duber said there is a link off of the City's website to the Police Department and he tries to keep that up to date. There is information on the various incidents at Wal-Mart. The Police Department also has a facebook page, six people have been arrested because of this.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 P. M.


Clerk of Council


Mayor – President of Council