

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 1 & 2** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, March 26, 2012. Mayor Pocek called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Daniel Pocek, Warner Batten, Stan Koci, Marilyn Zolata, Paula Mizesak, Don Saunders, Greg Pozar. Also Present: Clerk of Council Lorree Villers. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Police Chief Greg Duber, Deputy Chief Kris Nietert, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Fire Chief Dave Nagy.

Mayor Pocek welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. He introduced the Council Members and Clerk Villers. Mr. Angelo greeted everyone and introduced the Department Heads.

Mr. Angelo announced the World Changers would be back this year starting July 9, 2012 to July 14, 2012. He briefly explained the 200+ young high school/college students that volunteered in the World Changers Program that assisted in repairing some of the homes in Bedford in 2011. The group did several types of projects/repairs: painting, handicap ramp, gutters, steps, roofs and those types of improvements. There was an application process and guidelines that the residents had to go through to be eligible for the program. He praised the help/assistance this group brought to Bedford in 2011.

City Manager Hank Angelo started the evening with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all City Departments:

Police Department: Mr. Angelo said the City always focuses on Community Policing to maintain the Quality of Life in Bedford. Chief Duber explained the NIXLE Communication System (www.NIXLE.com) was similar to the Code Red alert system. NIXLE alerted residents through cell phone texting and internet. He added 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 alerted the residents through the phone of their choice and a recorded message would be left on the resident's voicemail. Chief Duber explained the Police Department was utilizing CompStat to focus on problem areas or specific issues whether it is accidents, robberies and so on.

Fire Department: Mr. Angelo said the Fire Department recently purchased a new rescue squad and Chief Nagy was able to sell the old 14 year old squad for \$20,000. He stated Bedford continued 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. He explained nine (9) cities were studying Regional Dispatching which would be located at Bedford University Hospital. The City was looking into a \$900,000 grant and the center would allow a combined savings of a few hundred thousand dollars after the center was up and running. A resident asked if this meant there would be a reduction of staff. Mr. Angelo replied yes, but this was approximately 18 months away. He added not only would this allow a savings in personnel but equipment cost and updates as well.

Economic Development: Mike Mallis, Economic Developer Director explained this was 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 fit ethically in the City but was energy efficient. He said there were about eight locations being considered for this home. A resident asked how many homes or properties were in the land bank today. Mr. Mallis thought there were approximately 11 homes.

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 was \$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. The General Fund paid for the service employees, police and fire operations. Commercial Water Meter replacement program was 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 was a master meter community which meant Bedford purchased its water from Cleveland in bulk. Any water problem would be handled by a Bedford employee not a Cleveland employee. He stated the City would be getting a water rate increase from Cleveland in 2014 but that was Bedford's only source of water.

Recreation Department: Mr. Angelo said in June the City received a \$35,000 grant from the Cuyahoga County Office of Development to replace the main playground toy at Palmetto which will be installed in the spring of 2012.

Mr. Angelo stated the City was very fortunate to receive the amount of grants that the Administration had applied for. Mr. Gambosi said the City had received over \$26 million dollars in grant money in the past 10 years for various things.

Bedford Auto Mile Dealerships: Mr. Angelo reported there were 1,700 employees combined at all the dealerships. Mr. Mallis 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 signs, monuments, banners and landscaping this spring. The City of Bedford was enforcing the idea that Bedford is the Ohio Historic Automobile. 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 using taxpayers money and safety levies: 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 - \$8.0+ million, Debt \$1.1+ million and Health Insurance \$2.2+ million. Bedford did not have much debt. The City carried a \$5.8+ million reserve, a 2012 \$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. He thanked Mr. Gambosi for all his hard efforts. Mr. Gambosi stated Bedford was just below the AAA rating of Solon, Beachwood and Westlake.

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. He stated there were so many amenities that people took it for granted. He asked how many cities looked as beautiful as downtown Bedford. He thanked Mr. Bellar and his staff for all their hard work. He listed several events that take place all year long, the car show and street dances and the 20+ waterfalls in the park. Mayor Pock and Mr. Angelo thanked Mr. Batten for all his hard work on several of the events.

A resident asked if the City was trying to do something with one of the industrial sites. Mr. Angelo said the City tried to work with one of the landowners but they wanted \$175,000 per acre. Wal-Mart brought in \$280,000 in income tax alone which was a very positive thing for Bedford.

City of Bedford: Mr. Angelo listed the following: Rail Project with Ohio Rail Commission: the City received \$1,000,000 in upgrades in the North Park, Powers and Willis area, 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 numerous municipal buildings.

Quiet Zone: 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. Depending on the rules and the length (100 or 200 feet), the installation of the median barriers and the traffic flow could be affected and changed. 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 was still waiting for clarification before the City can make a decision on how this could affect the areas that could lead to significant traffic changes.

2012 & Beyond: Mr. Angelo said the following projects were in the works of being taken care of – replacement of Broadway water line, CDBG road resurfacing and streetscape project with better signage for visitors, for example to Viaduct Park. He added other items the City wanted to pursue were 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.

Councilman Batten reported the following for Ward 1:

- the repaving of Grand Boulevard would start in May 2012 after the asphalt plants opened for the season,
- the leaf mulch would be available around the middle of June 2012,
- the new Oasis restaurant would open in May 2012 located on the corner of Willard and Northfield Road,
- the residents should try and write down the license number, time of day and make of the vehicles that are breaking the laws regarding loud radios,
- the dealerships are allowing cars to leave their dealerships without license plate/tags on the cars.

Councilman Koci reported the following for Ward 2:

- that there was not a lot happening in Ward 2 and things were good in his area,
- the City's finances were very stable,
- the City Administration/Council was very focused and the City was headed in the right direction.

Mr. Koci urged his callers to leave a message on his phone instead of hanging up. The reason for the Ward Meetings was to hear from the residents.

Mayor Pocek opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

Joan Pletka, 210 Grand Boulevard, said she had called the Building Department twice in the past few months and her calls had not been returned. Her concerns were regarding the vacant house next to her at 214 Grand Boulevard. She wanted to know if the gas was turned off to the furnace for safety reasons. Plus the neighbors were maintaining the trimming of the scrubs and grass mowing. She mentioned there were

four other homes on Grand Boulevard traveling toward Kenyon Avenue that were not maintaining their yards. Mr. Angelo assured her this issue would be addressed and she would hear back from someone at the City.

Leslie Ashby, 916 Archer Road, pointed out the City had spent a lot of money on the Solon Road water line project and his residence did not have water pressure. Mr. Bellar said he was not aware of this problem and he would address it with the Water Superintendent. Mr. Ashby understood it was a valve problem. Mr. Bellar stated all the valves should have been replaced during the project.

Karen Ellis, 842 Northfield Road, (Lutheran Church of the Master) asked if the energy efficient home that the City was building could be purchased. Mr. Mallis explained the house would be appraised and be put on the market in some manner to be purchased per the Cuyahoga County guidelines.

Bill Poulos, 806 Wellman Street, pointed out the numerous speeders on his street. He has called several times and he felt the problem had not been addressed. He also pointed out that the school buses were traveling too fast. Chief Duber said the Police Department could put the speed monitor on the street.

Susan Bates, 147 Willard Avenue, also pointed out the numerous speeders on her street. She explained street parking was allowed on her street and the motorists were not yielding for the oncoming car. It has become a safety issue with the 50-60 mph speeders. She has witnessed a couple drug deals and drag races. She complained about the smell of diesel and the noise from the idling gambling trip buses and semi-trucks. She called 2-3 weeks ago. Mr. Angelo informed her that he recently had some discussions regarding the buses/trucks in that exact area and he thought the problem was resolved.

Chief Duber said the officers were aware that every street had speeders and with a reduced staff the officers could not be everywhere all the time. He explained how the traffic monitor box worked and after a four day period of gathering data, the report showed if the Police Department needed to monitor that area at a certain time of the day.

Lewis Sounik, 686 Wellman Street, had issues with the Point of Sale (POS) inspections the City mandated. He knew some people couldn't afford to pay for the upgrades/repairs to bring their home up to code because they were on a fixed income. Mr. Angelo explained to him that if a resident couldn't afford to pay for the repairs there were a few different ways to pay for them. He said the POS was a way to deal with code violations and maintain property values. He also noted that upgrades were necessary because of safety factors. The POS was a way to ensure a new appliance was not going to start a fire in the electrical box because the amperage was not sufficient.

Sam Erby, 126 Willard Avenue, had concerns about the asphalt patching around some of the manholes. Mr. Bellar explained a lot of these areas would be addressed when the weather warms up.

Denise Zingale-Travis, 27 Tudor Avenue, asked Mr. Mallis if the City had to spend the \$150,000 grant on building an energy efficient home or could those funds be used to address other problem areas or vacant homes. She had contacted the Building Department regarding one of the vacant homes on Tudor that had been vacant since January 2011 that the neighbors had been maintaining. The neighbors were told not to maintain this home in 2012. The neighbors were not aware of what was happening with this particular home or even if it was safe. Mr. Mallis explained Bedford was the first City to apply for a grant to maintain its own homes. Now that other surrounding communities were applying for the one available grant, it made the grant tough to get. Bedford decided a different avenue and that was to build energy efficient homes. Ms. Travis suggested tearing down some of the eyesores so the neighborhoods could

hold their values. Mr. Angelo explained the City tore down a home and split the vacant lot between the neighbors as long as they picked up the administration fees. Ms. Travis wanted clarification as to how many ambulances Bedford currently owned. Mr. Angelo replied, two.

Deb Novotny, 17 Leyton Road, asked what the situation was regarding foreclosures. Mr. Mallis defined a "foreclosure" as: banked owned, vacant or in the foreclosure process that could be occupied for two years, however it averaged around 300 per month.

A resident asked how the sale of a home affected surrounding property owners. It was explained that the higher the price, the better comparison for the next seller and visa-versa. Mr. Mallis explained a situation where the parents passed away and the three out of state siblings did not want the home because of the costly repairs. The children sold the home for a drastically reduced amount, the money was put in escrow for the new buyer and the property was brought up to code. Mayor Pocek pointed out the housing market has not been ideal, however, Bedford's home values varied in price.

Peggy Prior, 420 Avery Avenue, asked what was happening with the City owned properties. Mr. Angelo said the City had the same problem as every homeowner trying to sell their home. He said the City did not want to take a large loss even though it was Federal monies that fixed these homes. The resident wanted to know how to find out whom to call to gather information on a vacant home. Mr. Angelo asked if there was a bank sign in the yard. The resident replied no but there was a posting of some type on the house so she figured she would go over and read it. Mr. Angelo and Mayor Pocek shared different types of weird stories about some of the foreclosures and demolitions in Bedford.

A resident asked if Tim Anderson was going to be replaced in the Recreation Department. Mr. Lewis explained he had received 150 applications and was in the middle of sorting them and then he would start the interviewing process.

Rusty Smith, 828 Wellman Street, requested the City clear the creek that ran behind his home. Mr. Bellar said he would send a crew out to cut up the fallen trees; however, the Service Department would not be removing the debris.

Joan Burger, 200 Greencroft Road, said they were having issues seeing around the semi-trucks that were unloading vehicles on the street. Chief Duber thought there was a sign posted that told the drivers that they couldn't park there. A few of the dealerships were "grandfathered" allowing their drivers to park in the street to unload their vehicles. He pointed out that the new dealerships had to unload on their own property. Mrs. Burger felt it was a safety issue not being able to see around the semi-trucks whether the dealership was grandfathered or not. Chief Duber said he would take a look at this area.

Mecca Oldenburg, 23 Thames Avenue, complained about the terrible smell from the creek that was near her home. Mr. Bellar explained this was not a problem of Bedford but rather Maple Heights. He explained the City of Maple Heights still had a combined sewer system and the EPA was also aware of the smell. He calls Maple Heights and they address the blockage in their combined sewer system and the smell goes away until the next blockage. He strongly urges her to contact him every time the smell was overwhelming and all the proper agencies had been notified. Mr. Angelo had concerns if the creek was contaminated with e coli. He noted the City of Bedford had eight areas of its own that needed addressed.

Mrs. Oldenburg also had trees that had fallen over the creek that was causing flooding problems. She said she called Bob Duber in 2011 and nobody showed to cut up the trees. Mr. Bellar explained there was an

ordinance on the books that stated if a property owner had a stream or creek in their backyard, the property owner was responsible for the blockages. Mrs. Oldenburg said the creek was owned by the City. Mr. Bellar assured her someone from the Service Department would come out and take a look at her complaint. He also pointed out that her neighbors were dumping their yard clippings in the creek and when there's a blockage, the complainant wants the City to fix it. He said when the Service Department finds someone dumping yard clippings in the creek; the City sends that resident a letter requesting them to clean up their mess.

Joan Pletka, 210 Grand Boulevard, asked how she could go about requesting a tree-lawn tree. Mr. Bellar said the City would come out and evaluate the tree.

Steve Senderak, 492 Center Road, pointed out the poor condition of the garage located at 750 Northfield Road. Mr. Angelo explained the Administration had already looked into tearing it down but there were too many liens against the property and the City would not pay for the demolition. Steve also asked if the City had "relaxed" the signs on tree lawns. Mr. Angelo agreed the City had not been doing a commendable job regarding this issue.

There was a brief discussion regarding "graffiti". Mr. Angelo urged the residents to call the City. There was a 72 hour policy to have it removed.

A resident asked about left turn traffic light arrows that did not have marked left turn lanes. Chief Duber explained this was not the decision of the City. This was dictated by the amount of vehicle traffic and pedestrian traffic which was set up when the traffic study was done. He stated officers do write tickets if they see a vehicle cross illegally over the double yellow line to make a left hand turn if they are not the first car in line.

Bill Astalos, 685 Archer Road, thought if the residents at Greencroft Road could not see around the car haulers, then the dealership should have someone direct traffic.

Joan Burger, 200 Greencroft Road, pointed out that some of the sidewalks were covered by trees by the creek near the park area. Mr. Bellar wasn't sure if it was private property but it would be looked into.

Councilwoman Mizsak knew the creek had been an endless battle with odors. She urged everyone to not put their grass clipping and branches in the streets, so they don't clog the storm sewers. She said the tree lawn trees were very well maintained by Mr. Bellar's Service Department. The City currently had a certified arborist.

Councilwoman Zolata stressed the City/Police Department can't stop every speeder and the booming loud music. She urged everyone to jot down the license numbers. She walked a lot and reported to the City Manager anything she thought needed addressed. The home improvement program had worked beautifully and that's why other communities copied Bedford. There are still going to be un-kept homes. She explained the City could not trespass on a vacant home just like anyone else unless the owner was being written up for violations. She stressed for the residents to please call.

Councilman Pozar noted this was interesting times we currently lived in. He noticed that everyone in the room was over 30 years old. Bedford for the most part was senior citizens that made do with what they had. The problem with the housing situation was not going to go away, the mentality of students and people had changed. Respect was not practiced for the most part anymore. He pointed out that the part of

what Council or the Administration did on a daily basis was put up with the minor noise and to deal with the big issues. The departments feel like a little Dutch boy with one finger in the dyke and before you knew it, it was more fingers and a toe. He appreciated everyone's input and how the residents viewed things. The major issues that are dealt with on a daily basis were dealt with the best way possible. He thought that was reflected financially and the services the residents received for the taxes they paid. He hoped the residents present shared this information.

Mayor Pocek thanked everyone for attending this evening. He stated the current Council had been together for 13 years and they were very stable with 140 years of experience. He personally had been involved for 29 years in his commitment to Bedford government. Council and Administration was in a transition phase trying to set up the City in the next 10 years so the City holds and maintains itself. The Garden Club was celebrating its 85th year, the City was celebrating its 80th year of Bedford as a City Manager form of government and it was the 175th year of Bedford being a corporate municipality. Bedford had been in existence as a township since 1799. It was important to maintain the Quality of Life in Bedford.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 P.M.



Denise Jones
Clerk of Council



Alan H. Pocek
Mayor – President of Council