

Bedford, Ohio

May 10, 2010

Bedford City Council held a Community Ward Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2010 for residents of Wards 5 and 6. Present: Mayor Dan Pocek, Councilman Stan Koci, Councilwoman Marilyn Zolata, 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.

At this time, Mayor Pocek introduced members of Council in attendance. He stated Ward 5 Councilman Greg Pozar is ill and had to leave.

Mayor Pocek introduced the new City Manager, Hank Angelo. Mr. Angelo is the former Mayor of Warren and he was the successful applicant out of 41 people for the position of City Manager.

Mr. Angelo said for those that he has not met, he hopes to meet them soon. He is trying hard to learn everyone's name here in the City and the employees have so overwhelmingly positive since he started. The reception he has received has been great. Mr. Angelo is grateful for the staff here at Bedford, the residents should be proud of them, they have done some remarkable things. He introduced all department heads.

The Mayor said a year ago this time, the former City Manager Bob Reid, moved on to the Sheriff's position. He is doing a wonderful job. The September Primary will be for the County Council and County Executive positions. A member of our Council, Don Saunders, is running for District 9 County Council. The primary is the day after Labor Day.

Mayor Pocek said in Ward 5 down near the Metro Park, there have been numerous complaints about coyotes. There are two members from the Metro Park, Mr. Tyler and Mr. Schaeffer, that will answer questions later about this issue. There have also been some issues in the Presidential District concerning electrical outages.

Councilman Saunders welcomed everyone in attendance. This is the night for residents to voice their concerns with what is going on in the wards. Please bring forward any issues you may have, and the City Manager will be glad to answer any concerns, along with all of our department heads. In Ward 6, there are some homes that are being remodeled by City, it was a special grant for the Presidential District. We will do four homes at this time. The City also received a grant to do street repairs in Ward 6. He thanked the Building Department for their inspections and being diligent. The Police Department has been working hard to keep the juvenile problems limited. He said if there are any concerns to please call him and he would be happy to help.

Mayor Pocek said after Mr. Angelo concludes the power point presentation, there will be question and answers. After that there will be two speakers, Rev. Boquist from the Church of the Nazarene and School Board Member Tim Tench.

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.

Mr. Angelo cannot stress enough how lucky he is to have the department heads that he has. In the Police Department, almost two weeks ago there was a 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 gentlemen 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.

Dot Schwende, 513 Lamson, said down the street from her on Lamson, there is an empty lot from a demolished home. She asked what the plans were for grading the property or making it look more acceptable.

Mr. Angelo spoke with Mr. Seyboldt about that today. It is a bank owned property.

Mr. Seyboldt said the notice the bank was given was to clean up the property, today was actually the deadline. It was not done. If he can get a good price from a contractor over the next couple of days, he will send it to Council for approval.

Jack Shauf, 369 West Grace, has been trying for nearly a year, and he has spoken with Councilman Pozar about this, about a neighbor of his that has not cleaned up the back yard of his property at 345 Turney Road.

Mr. Seyboldt will look into it for him.

Jim O'Neill, 155 Gould, wanted to speak with Mr. Pozar tonight. He asked if the Mayor was Councilman Pozar's boss. The Mayor said no, he is a member of Council. Mr. O'Neill said there is a property next to him at 151 Gould, both Mr. Seyboldt, Mr. Angelo and Mr. Pozar know about the property. He came to City Hall and had to talk to department heads, trying to get this house out of disrepair. He asked Councilman Saunders if he called him three times to ask a question, would he have answered the call? Councilman Saunders said he would not have had to call him three times. Mr. O'Neill said Councilman Pozar is not here, so his question is what is a Councilman's job? Why did he have to come to City Hall and talk to Mr. Seyboldt and his Inspector? That is Mr. Pozar's job.

Judy Matz, 437 Lamson, said the people next to her at 441 Lamson are just as bad with their property. They claim they have squatter's rights to that property.

The Mayor said Mr. Angelo will address it.

Alma Rhine, 585 Button, said there is a raccoon that comes up on her back porch and does his business there. She asked what she can do keep the raccoon from her property.

Chief Duber asked if she put any food out, or had any trash on the porch. She said no. She asked for a trap but was told she lives on Button Road it should be expected.

Chief Duber said they can try to get the one nuisance out of there, with a trap. It may just be one nuisance critter.

Nancy Kusak, 99 Wheelock, is sure the City is aware of the big power surge the residents of the Presidential District had. She was told by Mr. Killeen that one transformer was the cause for this. She has tracked this down and from what she can tell at least three transformers were down. CEI does not want to be responsible, and every time she speaks with Mr. Killeen she gets a different story. She has been told she is rude and called a liar by CEI. She spoke to the woman at the AT&T building and there is a transformer there, and supposedly they were putting oil in there, she does not know if this caused the first trigger. There was over \$6,000 worth of damage to Central School. She does not know why the City of Bedford isn't up in a rage against CEI about all of this.

Mayor Pocek knows Mrs. Kusak has had conversations with Mr. Angelo about this matter. They spoke with the Law Director and the City cannot get involved in private litigation on this.

Mrs. Kusak said it's not all private, but the City should make them pay for the Central School. If they admit to the damages at the school then they need to pay everybody.

Mayor Pocek said there is a member of the School Board here tonight. Mrs. Kusak said the residents should be allowed to know whether CEI is going to pay for that or not.

Mr. Angelo has spoken to Mrs. Kusak many times over the phone. One of the things he told her today is that the City is working with Terry Killeen, the City's CEI Representative. Mr. Killeen has been trying to get all the information about where all the outages were. He has given him a list of about 13 different outages in the last three years. He has not been able to get any addresses. The Mayor will be inviting Mr. Killeen to the Council Meeting on May 17, 2010.

Mr. Schuman told Mr. Angelo that it puts the City in a bad position, because the City cannot get involved in private litigation, even on behalf of the School Board. If the School Board wanted to do that, it would be their option, not the City.

Mrs. Kusak asked why the School Board isn't pressing the issue, because as taxpayers they are paying for those repairs.

Mr. Angelo said something that has to be proved is that CEI was negligent, and what caused it. How do you prove negligence, there probably has to be a whole team of attorneys to determine this.

Margaret Downs, 22 Franklin, said there have been over 20 outages in the last two years. They are on record and a complaint has been filed with the Illuminating Company. She has lost a computer in the last power surge, their Direct TV box, two surge protectors that knocked out their breaker. She has a letter from CEI stating they would not pay for any of the items lost. If that is not negligent, she doesn't know what is. If she doesn't pay her bill, she doesn't have lights; if she pays her bill, she doesn't have lights.

Mr. Angelo said one of the letters received was from PUCO indicating there was no negligence based on the information given to the PUCO from CEI.

Mrs. Kusak said that CEI is lying. It wasn't an act of God. She had complained about previous incidents and was told she was the only one that complained. She found out she was not the only one.

Mr. Angelo said Mr. Killeen will be here at the Council Meeting on May 17, 2010.

Councilman Saunders feels for the residents experiencing these issues. They had the same problem at the corner of Logan and Ennis a few years ago. The power would go out two to three times per week. CEI would come out and put in a new breaker and that would be it. They told him that they will not replace the transformer unless it blows within fifteen minutes of the new breaker being put in. It finally did, and it took out every electrical appliance in his house. Mr. Saunders said CEI would not pay him anything, because when a resident signs their agreement you assume the liability of any of that, forcing you to go through your own homeowner's policy. Unfortunately, most deductibles are higher now than they used to be.

Mrs. Kusak said if CEI was working on the transformer behind the AT&T building and it went, then they did something. If they can prove that, then CEI is liable to pay everything. She has also heard, that someone was paid.

Mayor Pocek said next Monday night, Mr. Killeen will speak with Council at the Work Session and then after the Council Meeting those that wish to speak with Mr. Killeen will be able to do so.

A resident asked why nobody was notified about the Ward Meeting tonight.

Mr. Angelo takes responsibility for that, on Friday he was supposed to do the Code Red and he didn't do it. He apologized and said that with the lack of a paper, it is sometimes difficult to get the word out.

Brenda Flask, 25 East Glendale, said with the weather starting to get nice out, by the skate park, there is starting to be problems with groups of kids. There is public urination and other things going on.

Chief Duber made a note from their conversation.

Mayor Pocek said Chief Duber had promised the two representatives from the Cleveland Metro Parks that are here tonight that they would be able to address the coyote issue. He introduced Rick Tyler and Eric Shaeffer.

Mr. Tyler and Mr. Schaeffer were invited by the Animal Warden to attend tonight's meeting. They were informed residents on Powers Road filled out coyote complaint form on their website.

They explained there is a coyote family group at Circle Emerald in the park for the past nine years. The same alpha female has been producing two to three cubs per year. They received permission from some of the homeowners to put up remote cameras on their property. They are trying to determine if the cubs are out yet.

There are coyotes that are entrenched in all of the Metro Parks Reservations and in all the bordering municipalities. They handed out a facts sheet to those in the audience.

They explained the importance of filling out the complaint forms on their website if there are any issues with coyote aggression. These forms help them target those areas.

Most of the communities that are experiencing issues with coyotes now, are well entrenched and well established, there are incidents of cats and smaller dogs disappearing. The Metro Parks did a four year coyote diet study across the area. For the most part, the coyotes are eating what they are supposed to be eating, i.e. small rodents. The Metro Parks have tried to educate most people that the days of letting the dog out in the back yard, is changing because coyotes will take those animals. They explained that signs are posted in areas of the Metro Parks that are known to have coyote families. Coyotes do become very aggressive towards people walking larger dogs. About 90% of their complaints are from people walking their dog on a leash and they get near a coyote den. They will be in contact with the Animal Warden here.

Jean Sapir, 597 Button Road, asked if there are foxes in the Metro Parks. Mr. Tyler said yes.

Ann Rayner, 132 Powers, has spoken to the gentleman from the Metro Parks and from reading their website the urban coyote is beginning to diet on people's garbage. She said it is important to keep garbage secure and not to put it out the night before if possible.

Kathy Williams, 491 Lamson, has a friend who walks her dog and saw three coyotes at Chanel High School on the football field. They must be living in the small patch of woods behind there.

Mr. Tyler said most groups of coyotes are between 6 and 7. There is a process called dispersal. When the pups are ready, they will disperse out of the group, especially males.

Ms. Williams said Chanel is not part of the Metro Parks. Mr. Tyler said coyotes are in all the residential areas as well.

Mayor Pocek asked if the coyotes will roam from their den searching for food and then go back. Mr. Tyler said yes.

Barbara Tapocsi, 51 Ennis, asked if there were any incidents of coyotes biting anyone.

Mr. Tyler said there have been no incidents of a coyotes biting. They will posture and they will growl.

A resident asked if people are conscience about their garbage, will the coyotes leave the urban areas.

Mr. Tyler said most of their diet consists of rodents, but it will help if people watch their garbage.

This resident lives behind an apartment complex by Chanel High School and said the management has been lacking. There is garbage all over and it should be something the building inspector looks into.

Jean Sapir, 597 Button, said people are putting out food for deer in their yards and that probably doesn't help the situation.

At this time Mr. Tyler and Mr. Schaeffer from the Metro Parks left the meeting.

Barb McDaniel, 186 Center, has a number of kittens in her yard. She called the animal warden on a Friday and they couldn't help her until the following week.

Chief Duber will send the animal warden to her house.

Barbara Tapocsi, 51 Ennis, said Ennis is used as a cut through for juveniles and the way they behave is horrible. The cars that use Ennis also are driving at very high speeds. There are children playing in that area.

Chief Duber said that area will be patrolled. He asked what time of day is worst. Ms. Tapocsi said usually early evening.

Judy Matz, 437 Lamson, said the car dealership on Broadway across from the Coffee Cup, bring cars on trailers during the night and it is very loud. The second thing is the radio from cars at Charter One Bank on the corner is also very loud.

At this time, Mayor Pocek asked Rev. Doug Boquist to speak about the Minister's Civility Task Force. He and his family are newer residents to Bedford and are enjoying it here immensely. The Mayor has come to the clergy in the area as well as the Superintendent of Bedford Schools asking for help. There are a number of residents new to the community that have not grown up in a community such as ours. Over the last two or three months, 11 clergy members representing 11 churches, have met a number of times and are putting together a series of initiatives. There are three different categories. The first one is helping our new residents become acclimated to our town. They want to convey to them that they are now a part of a very proud, historic community. A tentative date, August 15, is set for a new residents picnic. There will be presentations from civic leaders, school officials and basically say welcome to our community and this is what we value and what is important to us. There is also a multi-church new homeowner's resource team. They will help with homes that are not in compliance or new homeowners to teach them how to maintain their property. The second area is working in conjunction with our schools. They are looking into having four churches adopt the four elementary schools and send mentors in to help the teachers. This will help those that come to school with some emotional need and hardships. Putting the same person with them for one hour per week for a year or two has proven to be immensely successful in a national program. They are in the process of achieving permission and funding for a professional that will work together with all the churches to recruit volunteers to work with junior high and high school students in the area of character development and mentoring. The third area is that the area churches want to be supportive and appreciative of our safety forces. Rev. Boquist is appreciative of the Mayor and City Manager to allow three major players, the schools, churches, and city government, in the community to address mutual concerns and to keep the City proud.

At this time, Mr. Tench our School Board Representative spoke about the status of the schools. He wants to address the issue about the CEI power outage. Mr. Tench called the Business Manager about Central School and the amount was quite substantial. The school's insurance does not cover it, and they are in discussions with CEI to come to a settlement for the losses at the school.

Mr. Tench said a year ago the school board passed a levy. It is instrumental to provide a quality education to the students of the district. If a levy does not pass in Bedford, then it does not pass for the district. He thanked all those that voted for the levy last May.

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 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 last Wednesday there was an episode on Channel 5 regarding non-residents enrolling their children in different school systems, and Bedford was featured. This is just as big an issue of quality of life as are other concerns. The people that do not live here and enroll their children here, the taxpayers are paying for it. They are stealing from every resident in the district. There is a group of individuals at the Board of Education in charge of finding out who is not a resident. In the last ten years, these are the number of students that were removed from the schools; 2001 – 125; 2002 – 79; 2003 – 58; 2004 – 63; 2005 – 86; 2006 – 167; 2007 – 205; 2008 – 112; and 2009 – 138. During this year, there have been approximately 105. This year the school has recovered \$15,000 owed to the district, with over \$77,000 still pending. Two years ago a woman from Maple Heights owed close to \$20,000 and the school settled, but you are not going to be able to get blood out of a turnip. If a resident sees something that doesn't look right, call the School Board.

Mr. Tench said there will be a new leader at the high school. They are in the process of interviewing for a new principal. It will be different in a lot of areas, and that is the plan. It has to be the right mix at the high school and make a difference.

A resident that lives on Northfield Road stated she sees people getting on and off the RTA. Are the busses being watched?

Mr. Tench said they have a retired detective that does their investigations on that. They could be coming from Bedford Heights and Oakwood.

Mr. Tench said it is so important to the City what Rev. Boquist and the other clergy members are doing. Those moving into Bedford don't understand the history and beauty of this area. The residents have worked so hard to keep it a place where you want to raise a family.

Mayor Pocek 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.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 P. M.

  
Clerk of Council

  
Mayor – President of Council