

LUDLOW COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

October 12, 2023

Mayor Chris Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Ari Knight, Samantha Frank, Julie Terry Navarre, and Abigail Miller. (Steve Chapman and Lori Davenport were absent.)

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Todd McMurtry, City Administrative Officer/Police Chief Scott Smith, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Fire Chief Mike Steward, Public Works Director Shane Hamant, Code Enforcement Officer Jamie West

Presentation of a Plaque to John Dorman for Promotion to Sergeant

Chief Smith presented a plaque and pins to John Dorman for his promotion to the rank of sergeant in the Ludlow Police Department.

Presentation on Planning and Development Services of Kenton County (PDS)

Sharmili Reddy, the Executive Director of PDS, discussed the services that the agency provides to over twenty jurisdictions in Kenton County. Ms. Reddy said she likes to think of PDS employees as an extension of a city's staff that is there to help with any process regarding planning and zoning and community development. The majority of PDS's funding comes from taxpayer dollars. The City contracts with PDS to provide non-statutorily required services.

Presentation on the Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) and Ludlow Railyard Storehouse

Andy Corn, Chairman of the UDRB, discussed the role of the UDRB in the Historic District and provided an update on the Board's accomplishments since it was created in 2019. Discussion on the UDRB's award program, which designates important historic buildings in the city as a Ludlow Landmark. Mr. Corn discussed the history of the Ludlow Railyard Storehouse building and plans for restoration. Mr. Corn requested Council's permission to approve the designation of the building as a Ludlow Landmark. Discussion on how the designation could impact the possibility of the Ludlow History Museum acquiring the property from the railroad in the future.

Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Knight, to grant Ludlow Landmark status to the Ludlow Railyard Storehouse building. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

Presentation by the Property Valuation Administrator (PVA)

Darlene Plummer, the Kenton County PVA, discussed the PVA's role in assigning assessed value to properties, which is based on fair market value. Kenton County is divided into quadrants and the property in each quadrant is reviewed on a rotating four-year schedule. Assessments are certified by the Kentucky Department of Revenue. The PVA is required to send a notice if there is a change in a property's assessment. Discussion on the process to appeal the assessed property value set by the PVA. The PVA works with PDS to obtain permit information when there is new development, such as the upcoming Fischer Homes project, to assist in setting the assessed value.

Motion by Ms. Knight, second by Ms. Frank, to approve the minutes from the council meeting on September 14, 2023. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

STAFF REPORTS

Fire Department

Chief Steward discussed his monthly report. Chief Steward reminded everyone to check the batteries in their smoke detectors when they set their clocks back next month. The Ludlow Fire Department is now an EMS Training and Educational Institution. Mayor Wright thanked the Fire Department for recently hosting the Ludlow Elementary kids as part of fire safety month. Ms. Terry Navarre thanked Josh Mounce for sharing his knowledge to help students build a 3D model of the Ludlow Storehouse.

Public Works

Mr. Hamant discussed his monthly report, including upcoming pavement projects. On October 16, 2023, paving will begin on portions of Davies Street and Linden Street, and all of Helen Street. No decision has been made about the status of the 500 block of Linden Street. The incinerator was recently demolished. The Route 8 street sweeping has been suspended until the spring. Mayor Wright thanked Public Works for installing a spring-loaded gate at Ludlow Park. Discussion on the process for leaf pickup, which will begin soon.

Code Enforcement

Mr. West discussed the status of Code Enforcement cases and rental licenses. The City will be hosting a Fall Clean Up Day on Saturday, October 21, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the corner of Ash and Traverse Streets. The NKY Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be held on November 4, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at Thomas More Stadium.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Wright requested that the second reading of the vacant property ordinance be postponed until council has had more time for discussion and community feedback. The issue will be discussed at the caucus meeting on October 26, 2023. The caucus meetings in November and December will be cancelled due to the holidays. Mayor Wright encouraged everyone to get out and vote on November 7, 2023.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance – The Committee met the day before the council meeting and everything looked good.

Parks and Recreation – The Committee is looking into grant opportunities.

Public Works/Code Enforcement – The Committee and Mr. Hamant met with Chris Smyth of Green Umbrella to look at the possibility of putting in a fruit orchard at Jackson Park.

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Chief Smith thanked Ms. Sparks for getting the tax bills out and the payments entered. Chief Smith advised that the trustees of the Ludlow Vets need to have a conversation with the developer on the project at the west end because it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. John Dorman has been with the Ludlow Police Department for many years and was promoted to the rank of sergeant. A new police officer coming from Erlanger was sworn in earlier that day. Chief Smith discussed the recent vandalism at Ludlow Park, which was committed by kids ranging in age from eleven to fifteen years old. The kids have been identified from the camera footage. Chief Smith advised that the vandalism occurred while there were adults in the park and encouraged adults to either get involved by confronting the kids or contacting the police. The goal is to prevent damage from happening.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Derek Gaiser, 304 Poplar Street, discussed the recent property tax increase and its impact along with inflation and the rising cost of living. Mr. Gaiser believes there is a conflict of interest because the city administrator is also serving as the police chief, and he believes it is illegal to hold two offices simultaneously. Mayor Wright advised that the decision to have Chief Smith serve in both positions was made as a short-term solution to the financial situation the City was in several years ago. The City is seeing significant savings by having one person do the roles of two people. Mr. McMurtry advised that there is no conflict of interest because both the city administrator and police chief positions are supervised by the Mayor. Mr. McMurtry advised that many smaller cities have to have flexibility as a cost saving measure.

David Ziegler, 300 Highway Avenue, asked on behalf of Angie Knipp, President of the Ludlow PTO, whether the City could allow the May Festival to be held at Ludlow Park next year due to construction at Ludlow Schools. Mayor Wright advised that Casey Williams of the Ludlow PTO already reached out to him, and he is working with Chief Smith to make that happen.

Paul Miller, owner of Bircus, inquired about what could be done to get the City financials on OpenGov. Mr. Miller discussed a Developers Day event he participated in in 2009 and how the tax rates have increased since then. Chief Smith advised that the City's financial information is currently on the City's website.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

First Reading of Ordinance 2023-13

Mr. McMurtry completed the second reading of Ordinance 2023-13 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, in Kenton County, Kentucky, Amending Chapter 92 of the City's Code of Ordinances*. **Motion by Ms. Frank, second by Ms. Terry Navarre, to adopt Ordinance 2023-13. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.**

NEW BUSINESS

Disabled Parking Space Application – 311 Linden Street

Mr. West received an application for a disabled parking space in front of 311 Linden Street, but per City ordinances, he had to deny the application because there is off-street parking available. The parking pad does not have a sidewalk that connects to the house making it difficult for the resident to access the home through the grass. **Following discussion, motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Frank, to approve the application for the installation of a disabled parking sign in front of the home at 311 Linden Street. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.**

Resolution 2023-14

Mr. McMurtry read Resolution 2023-14 *A Resolution Appointing Challis Hodge as the Representative for the City of Ludlow on the Kenton County Joint Board of Adjustment*. Mayor Wright discussed the role of the Board of Adjustment and advised that Mr. Hodge was the only person who expressed an interest in serving on the Board. Paul Miller inquired about Mr. Hodge's role in Ernie's Yard. Discussion on food truck and trailer regulations in the city. **Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Knight, to pass Resolution 2023-14. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: three ayes and one abstention (Ms. Miller).**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Miller encouraged everyone to go vote in November. Ms. Terry Navarre announced that the Ludlow Historic Society is hosting a scavenger hunt on Saturday, October 14th from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. beginning at Second Sight. There will also be a kid’s version of the scavenger hunt. Ms. Frank inquired about the status of the survey that was distributed to local businesses a while ago. Chief Smith advised that he would have information on the survey results soon. Ms. Knight announced that the new edition of the Ludlow Express will be distributed tomorrow.

Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Frank, to adjourn the council meeting at 8:39 p.m. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Chris Wright, Mayor