Appendix C In the News



August 26, 2008

City considers small study

By Regan Coomer rcoomer@nky.com

PARK HILLS - Representatives from the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission presented information on conducting a small area study of the city's Dixie Highway corridor to mayor and council Monday Aug. 25.

http://rodeo.cincinnati.com/getlocal/comm.aspx?id=100036">More Park Hills news

Mayor Michael Hellmann recently expressed interest in revitalizing the city's portion of Dixie Highway through redevelopment, something NKAPC members assured council the study would facilitate.

Cities such as Independence have already conducted such a study, they said, which would act as a 20-year plan and would include a list of recommendations along with suggested implementations. Council could then adopt the study, which would be incorporated in the NKAPC comprehensive plan for Park Hills.

Should the city decide to conduct the study, the NKAPC hopes to begin in November with completion by August or September of next year, said NKAPC Associate Planner Jenna Haverkos.

Focus for discussion was small area study procedures, including the importance of putting together a citizen task force, conducting a market analysis and interviewing "key persons" in and near Park Hills such as TANK or SD-1, Haverkos said.

Cost for the study, depending on the depth and whether the city chooses to do a market analysis as well, could fall between \$39,000 to \$43,000, estimated Keith Longston, deputy director of Long Range Programming with the NKAPC.

However, Longston suggested the city discuss sharing costs for a market analysis with the city of Fort Wright, whose Mayor Joe Nienaber has also expressed interest in the rejuvenation of Dixie Highway. Longston estimated Park Hills' cost with Fort Wright contributing could be between \$30,000 and \$33,000, a significant reduction.

"If these plans are going to see implementation you've got to have those facts and figures for the study," said Dennis Gordon, executive director of NKAPC, of conducting a market analysis along with the study.

Hellmann agreed, saying the information would "allow you to target yourself and bring in the right business," and know the proper city location for bigger businesses versus "boutique" type businesses.

Hellmann thanked the NKAPC for coming, saying he'd get back to them "as soon as possible. I think we have plenty of things to think and talk about."



October 14, 2008

Park Hills OKs small area study

By Regan Coomer rcoomer@nky.com

Park Hills council authorized the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) to move forward with the small area study of the Dixie Highway corridor at their meeting Monday Oct. 13.

The city also hopes to conduct a market study along with the small area study to further economic development, but is waiting to finalize with the NKAPC for a definitive yay or nay from the cities of Fort Wright and Covington regarding a shared cost of the market study.

Should Fort Wright and Covington partner with Park Hills, each city will be responsible for around \$9,500. However, with two cities sharing the cost would be about \$13,000 and Park Hills alone would cost between \$18 and 23,000 in addition to the \$20,000 small area study cost.

"We're ready to get started whenever you all are," said Keith Logston NKAPC Deputy Director of the Long Range Plan, adding at this point it looks like Fort Wright will join in the market study, but not Covington.

Logston said he'd like to get started as soon as possible because the first step is to conduct interviews with city businesses and set up meetings with a city task force. If the city waits too long, it'll be December, which is "a wash" for meetings and interviews, Logston said.

"We should go ahead and mobilize on that because it will take some time to get the community task force together and hit the ground running," agreed Council member Steve Ryan.

And though the cost is somewhat hefty, Mayor Michael Hellmann thinks it's worth it.

"It's giving you more than a year to year look at the city," he said. "It's a long term vision for economic development."

Council should take action on the market study and appoint a citizen task force at the November council meeting.

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October 16, 2008

Park Hills votes on tax for fire truck

Measure to replace 1983 pumper would be offset by lowering street tax

By Cindy Schroeder cschroeder@nky.com

PARK HILLS - When Park Hills voters go to the polls on Nov. 4, they'll be asked to make a decision on a "revenue neutral" ballot issue to raise money for a new fire pumper and an economic development fund.

The ballot initiative calls for lowering Park Hills' street tax, now levied at \$235 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, by \$80 per \$100,000, for a new rate of \$155 per \$100,000, Park Hills Mayor Michael Hellmann said.

The issue then calls for creation of a fire/development tax of \$80 per \$100,000 of property value to buy a new fire truck and for community development and property acquisition.

If the ballot initiative is approved, the fire/development tax would be revoked after five years, and Park Hills' road tax would go back to its current rate, Hellmann said.

Last week, Hellmann sent letters to Park Hills households explaining the issue and inviting voters who have questions to attend one of two meetings, on Saturday and Wednesday at Covington Catholic High School.

He said he is not aware of any organized opposition to the tax, which would generate about \$150,000 a year.

"The city council and I have looked into many ways to meet the important needs of the city with the least impact to you, the taxpayer," Hellmann wrote. "The solution we are proposing for this issue is to create a fire/development tax, but offset that new tax by lowering an existing one. Voting yes will not increase your bottom-line city tax rate. This is often referred to as 'revenue neutral.'

With an average home value in Park Hills of about \$150,000, a typical homeowner would pay \$120. That's the same amount that home owner is paying now, but it would be used for a different purpose, the mayor said.

The tax would be used to replace the Fire Department's 1983 pumper with a new one that would be paid off in five years instead of the usual 20 if the project were financed through a bond issue, Hellmann said. He said the shorter pay-off period would save taxpayers "somewhere in the ballpark of \$200,000."

By comparing costs of fire service for cities of comparable size, Hellmann said it's more cost-effective for Park Hills to continue to operate its own fire department, rather than contract with a neighboring one.

The economic development part of the tax would go toward a regional market study of the Dixie Highway corridor business district and would help pay off the city's loan on the vacant Dixie Highway property where the John Popp Floral Co. once operated.

The city eventually hopes to redevelop that site.

If a majority of voters approve the tax, city officials would advertise for bids for a new pumper within a couple of weeks, and delivery of the pumper would take place six to eight months later, Hellmann said.

"Again, this will not increase your taxes, but rather reapportion the existing tax base," the mayor said.



November 4, 2008

Incumbents return to Park Hills, fire truck tax passes

By Regan Coomer rcoomer@nky.com

All three incumbents, Monty O' Hara, Ted Kleymeyer and Steve Ryan, were re-elected to Park Hills City Council as well as challenger Chris Sudbrink.

- http://nky.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=blog27 ">Kenton County blog
- http://rodeo.cincinnati.com/getlocal/comm.aspx?id=100036">More Park Hills news

The five write-in candidates drew 426 votes but the winners of council's remaining two spots have yet to be determined.

Incumbent O' Hara came in at 696 with the most votes and his response to his win was simple: "Great. I'm looking forward to serving."

Ryan, for his part, was happy about his win but also excited about passing of the city's tax, with 645 votes, to purchase a fire truck and facilitate economic development.

"I'm really looking forward to dealing with the economic development issues that we've talked about and really making those come to reality, especially business and job growth along Dixie Highway," Ryan said.

Park Hills Dixie Study



December 26, 2008

Cities team up for study

By Regan Coomer rcoomer@nky.com

Crescent Springs and Park Hills have partnered to share costs on a market study that will go along with a Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission small area study currently being done in each city.

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By teaming up with Park Hills the city of Crescent Springs will save \$8,600 on the market study with a total cost of \$34,600 including the \$20,000 cost for the NKAPC small area study.

The study will encompass an area bounded by I-75 and Buttermilk Pike and will center on the Toebben Executive Center, which Mayor Jim Collett considers the area's flagship.

"Walkable urban communities are important to me," Collett said of what he hopes the studies will accomplish. "Let's find out the barriers to development and let's break those barriers down."

The studies will take most of next year to complete and will utilize a task force of people who will help the NKAPC and GEM Public Sector Services, the market study consultant, better determine the needs and wants of Crescent Springs.

As for Collett, his "vision" is a central plaza surrounded by shops, professional offices and residences that will become a "gathering area for the city."

The biggest challenge the city will have to overcome to make his vision a reality is accessbility, Collett said.

"We want to provide a community where people want to live and provide a sense of place."

Park Hills Council member Monty O'Hara said the city of Park Hills, which wants to study Dixie Highway, will also save about \$8,000 through a partnership with Crescent Springs.

"I think it'll be a good thing as we're trying to market properties in the city or trying to attract people to properties in a business district," he said of the study. "It will be nice to know what would be the most likely business to survive there."

Cities prepare for economic turn around, authorize contracts for small area studies

Seeing the economic downturn as an opportunity to get positioned for the eventual recovery, the city councils of Park Hills and Crescent Springs signed contracts in the past month for small area studies within their jurisdictions. NKAPC's long-range planning staff will focus on the Dixie Highway corridor in Park Hills and on the area bounded by I-71/75, Buttermilk Pike, and the railroad tracks in Crescent Springs

Since both study areas include a sizeable commercial land use base, both studies will include economic analyses pursued by GEM Public Sector Services of Dayton, Ohio. Recent NKAPC small area studies have utilized market-based analyses as a foundation for recommendations on future uses.

"Staff has initiated its work already in Park Hills," said Keith Logsdon, AICP, NKAPC's deputy director for long-range planning. "We have started preliminary investigations which include interviewing key persons, putting together an existing conditions report, and building a relationship with the task force that will guide our efforts."

Logsdon and his team will be working with the 14-member group appointed by the city. Together they will study the half-mile-long Dixie Highway corridor that stretches from the city's north to south boundaries.

"The study will focus on redevelopment opportunities along the corridor including land use and transportation," said Jenna Haverkos, an associate planner in the long-range planning department. "We will work with the task force to make recommendations on how to revitalize the area over the next 20 to 30 year planning period."

The study effort will include three public meetings, the first of which will take place in late January.

"We will use that opportunity to present our existing conditions report and to get some feedback from those who attend," she said. "We will then take those findings to the task force and craft recommendations so that by the second meeting—in April—we can propose several scenarios and alternatives."

The third and final meeting will be a complete presentation of the recommendations before they are sent to the Park Hills City Council for approval.

Haverkos says many residents are familiar with "The Dixie Fix," a recent study of the entire Dixie Highway corridor from Florence to Covington. That study was pursued collaboratively by the NKAPC and OKI staffs.

"We want to make sure residents don't confuse the two studies," she said. "This is a more specific and focused look at Park Hills and how the city can create a sense of place along its portion of the corridor."

Logsdon and Haverkos suggest late August as the goal for completing staff work and initiating the approval process with the City Council and Kenton County Planning Commission. The intent is for the small area study to be incorporated into the Kenton County comprehensive plan as a basis for future land use decisions.

NKAPC's long-range planning staff is also in the beginning stages of initiating a small area study for the City of Crescent Springs.

"We will be looking at the redevelopment potential for the commercial area at the main entrance to the city," said Logsdon. "We are still working with city officials on the exact boundaries. Their underlying goal is to facilitate the creation of a place that's conducive to all types of commercial growth and possibly even some residential uses."

A task force is currently being developed by the mayor.

Logsdon said one of the main challenges of this study will be providing convenient access to the study area.

"One of the main issues is that the road that serves the corridor—Buttermilk Pike—is so congested already and they're even putting in a new lane."

Ed Dietrich, associate planner in the long-range planning department, will be working with Logsdon and the task force to develop recommendations for land use redevelopment.

"We will be doing a market study and research," said Dietrich. "We will have three public meetings as we do with most small area studies. The task force will meet at least once a month with the first meeting scheduled for February."

As with the Park Hills small area study, Dietrich said the ultimate goal is to have the Kenton County Planning Commission adopt the recommendations into the comprehensive plan. Dietrich said the projected end date for the approval by the county planning commission is late December 2009 or early January 2010.

Logsdon acknowledges that some aspects of both studies will be challenging during economic recession but asserts that Park Hills and Crescent Springs will be better positioned to seize opportunities that present themselves when the recovery begins.

"Down times—economically speaking—are often really good times to look forward and get prepared, he concluded.

Two Kenton Co planning commissioners step down following decades of service

Two of Kenton County Planning Commission's longest-serving members, Alexandra Weldon and Paul Swanson, stepped down recently after serving a combined 40 years on the county planning commission. Both got involved with planning issues based on their interest and dedication to the community; both served as officers during their long tenure.

Swanson's service to planning in the region also included a six-year stint on the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission following its formation in 1961. He served as treasurer the entire time.

"I had a unique opportunity during the past 48 years to serve both the Area Planning Commission and Kenton County Planning Commission," said Swanson.



In 1988 the mayor of Erlanger appointed Swanson as Erlanger's representative to the Kenton County Planning Commission. He served on that body continually until last month when his fifth term expired and he decided 20 years were enough. He served as the county planning commission's treasurer from 1996 through 2008.

"I have seen many changes during my tenure," he said. "I have enjoyed working with all the members, but have especially enjoyed chairing the subdivision review committee."

Alexandra Weldon also served 20 years on the Kenton County Planning Commission, being appointed in 1988 along with Swanson. She was one of three Covington representatives to the county planning commission and served as chairperson since mid 2004.

"As chairperson, I hope that I brought an openness to the meetings by allowing for public debate on the many issues that came before us," she said.

Michael Schwartz, AICP, NKAPC's deputy director for current planning, said the two will be greatly missed.

"We can't thank them enough for their years of service and all that they brought to the commission and to NKAPC. We will keep them in our memory and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors."



January 19, 2009

City to amend model sign ordinance

By Regan Coomer rcoomer@nky.com

Park Hills City Council discussed changes to the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission's model sign ordinance at their regular meeting Jan. 12.

- http://rodeo.cincinnati.com/getlocal/comm.aspx?id=100036">More Park Hills news
- http://nky.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=blog27 ">Kenton County blog

City Council plans to eliminate pole signs and advertising benches, two signs allowable by the model sign ordinance the city adopted in November.

Pole signs have not been allowable in the city since the 1970s, Mayor Michael Hellmann said, partly because allowing them doesn't make sense.

"Pole signs are fine for cities that have their businesses within sight of the interstate," he said. "However, in Park Hills, a pole sign can't possibly get high enough for people on I-71/75 to see it."

Advertising benches were allowed in the city's previous zoning as well as in the model sign ordinance. Nonetheless, Hellmann said the benches "are something we have long heard complaints about" from residents.

"It seems that we are the only city in the area that allows them," Hellmann said, adding he and council had held off on prohibiting them until the NKAPC model sign ordinance was finished and adopted.

Hellmann said council will soon be looking at an ordinance causing the removal of advertising benches in the business district and will replace them with a "cohesive" set of benches provided by a TANK program placing rod-iron benches at their bus stops.

"Right now they're unregulated," Council Member Steve Ryan said of the advertising benches. "We could have a proliferation of bench signs if we didn't get it under control."

Once the changes are made to the model sign ordinance, Ryan, the chairman of the Small Area Study Task Force for his city, feels confident it will work well with the results of the study.

"I think it will be consistent with the vision that comes out of that study," he said.

Ryan said council will hear a reading on the advertising benches in February, but the pole sign change must first go to the NKAPC for a public hearing.



January 22, 2009

Park Hills seeks community input tonight

By Cindy Schroeder cschroeder@nky.com

PARK HILLS – Residents, business owners and other interested parties can help create a vision for the future of the community at tonight's first of three public meetings on the Park Hills Dixie Study.

The meeting will be 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. today at the Covington First Church of the Nazarene at 1550 Dixie Highway. The church is next to Covington Catholic High School.

The study will focus on the redevelopment of a half-mile stretch of Dixie Highway in Park Hills.

"The purpose is to gather input about a vision for the area," said project manager Jenna Haverkos, an associate planner with Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission. "That way, it's not just NKAPC staff doing this study. It's the city's plan."

At a second meeting in April, various redevelopment scenarios will be presented. A final public meeting is tentatively scheduled for late July.

A 15-member task force that includes representatives of all facets of Park Hills, including residents, business owners and local council members, will discuss suggestions presented at the public meetings.

"A small area study eventually becomes part of the (Kenton County) comprehensive plan, which is generally a 20-year vision," Haverkos said.

The study – which is expected to take about 10 months - will explore the community's vision for the Dixie Highway corridor in Park Hills. It will look at whether stakeholders prefer commercial development, residential development or mixed use for the study area.

For more information on the study, visit nkapc.org, click on long range planning and then on studies. You also can call 859-331-8980 or e-mail ParkHillsStudy08@nkapc.org.

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The Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) has been asked to assist the City of Park Hills in an examination of the Dixie Highway corridor, as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan *Update 2006: An Area-Wide Vision for Kenton County.*

The Park Hills Dixie Study will utilize the NKAPC's Small Area Study process, which includes monthly meetings between NKAPC staff and the study's 15-member task force, interviews with key stakeholders, and three public meetings. The process is designed to allow participants to clearly understand the intent of the plan and the actions necessary to accomplish the recommendations.

According to NKAPC associate planner for long range planning Jenna Haverkos, it's a comprehensive approach to planning at a neighborhood level, where research and public input are focused on the needs of the area.

"The process is intended to create a plan that will be more readily implemented because the public and decision makers have gone through the preparation process together for an area they easily identify with versus the entire county scope of the comprehensive plan," she says.



The Park Hills Dixie Study launched with its first public meeting in late January, and the next public meeting is scheduled for April.

As of yet, the final goals and recommendations of the study are yet to be determined.

"Staff is working with the task force to review public comments from the first public meeting and work toward a vision for the area," Haverkos says. "Once this vision is decided, the task force will move

forward toward alternatives for the area and eventually craft recommendations for the study area."

If the city chooses to adopt the study, it will be forwarded to the NKAPC for a recommendation to the Kenton County Planning Commission, who may choose to include it in the countywide comprehensive plan.

Writer: Kevin LeMaster

Source: Jenna Haverkos, associate planner/long range planning,

Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission



February 19, 2009

Crescent Springs seeks design ideas

Goal is to make better use of city's 'Uptown' gateway

By Cindy Schroeder cschroeder@nky.com

CRESCENT SPRINGS - Residents, property owners and other stakeholders can help create a 20- to 30-year development plan for an area that's the gateway to the city at Monday's kick-off meeting for the Crescent Springs Small Area Study.

The yearlong study will focus on what's known as the city's "Uptown," a commercial and residential area bounded by Buttermilk Pike, Interstate 75 and the railroad, said Councilman Tom Vergamini, chairman of the city's long-range planning committee. The study area includes Ritchie, Hazelwood and surrounding streets, and it has only two access points - High Street and Hazelwood.

That area is now "a mish-mash of uses," including limited highway access, business office, residential and retail, Vergamini said. He added the Small Area Study "is long overdue."

Keith Logsdon, the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission's deputy director for long-range planning, said the study will focus on the redevelopment potential for the commercial area at Crescent Springs' main entrance.

"For most of the traveling public that gets off the interstate, this is their first impression of Crescent Springs," Vergamini said.

Because the area includes a sizeable commercial land base, GEM Public Sector Services of Dayton, Ohio, will do an economic analysis to help determine future uses.

As part of the study, Mayor Jim Collett is appointing a 12- to 18-member task force of city residents and property owners to analyze the study area and develop recommendations for future land use and planning.

"We've identified people that we'd like to be on the task force, but there may be people who we're not aware of who'd like to be part of this," Vergamini said.

Because the study will develop a 20- to 30-year vision for the area, Vergamini said he would like to see younger residents on the task force, as well as a cross-section of the city and a mix of male and female stakeholders.

"We're not trying to dictate to people how they should use their property," he said. "We're simply trying to find out what (uses) would be best for the city and (the stakeholders)."

The ultimate goal is to have the Small Area Study become part of the Kenton County comprehensive plan.

The city of Park Hills also is doing a Small Area Study on how to redevelop a half-mile section of Dixie Highway stretching from the city's northern to southern boundaries.

The meeting is 6:30 p.m. Monday at the city building, 739 Buttermilk Pike. Information: 859-341-3017.

Additional Facts

If you go

What: Kick off meeting for Crescent Springs Small Area Study

When: 6:30 p.m. Monday

Where: Crescent Springs city building, 739 Buttermilk Pike

Information: 859-341-3017



PROVIDED. SUBMIT PHOTOS TO BMAINS@NKY.COM Park Hills Business Association members (left to right) Leo Stamm, Sharon Dickman, Bob Dickman and Dave Fangman get ready for some street

Park Hills group betters city, has hopes

By Regan Coomer

rocomer@nky.com

Keeping Dixie Highway neat is one way members of the Park Hills Business Association (PHBA) hope to improve their city.

cleanup along Dixie Highway Saturday March 28.

Every year members pick up trash along Dixie Highway, which five members did March 28.

The business association, which started 15 years ago, also hangs up city banners, participates in the city's Memorial Day Parade and 10 years ago the group petitioned the state to fix flooding problems on Dixie High-

"Look how nice it looks," said founding member Tom Stamm of the Fort Mitchell Garage about Dixie Highway. "It does make a difference.

Besides making the area around their businesses better,

recently members have been working with city officials and the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) on the small area study of Dixie Highway to find ways to make the city better for businesses and residents.

"We feel like that's so important to us and our future here," Leo Stamm said of the study.

Leo Stamm is optimistic the study will make it easier for new businesses to locate in the city as well as give the group a development plan to work with.

"Hopefully the study will be friendly toward our businesses and not hurt our parking or access to our properties," Leo Stamm said.

Elizabeth Dickman of Dickman Realty on Dixie Highway has attended almost every NKAPC task force meeting, a group made up of both residents and businesses.

Dickman said zoning along Dixie Highway is "discombobulated" and hopes the study will help the city make zoning more uniform along that corridor.

"We're trying to get businesses to have the same zoning, the same type of signs and the same look so we'll have continuity for new businesses coming in," she said. Dickman thinks if businesses

along the corridor maximize their "road frontage", vehicles traveling down the road will stop and have a look at the niche shops and restaurants in the area.

But whatever happens with the small area study, PHBA members plan to stay as a presence in the community and offer the best services possible.

"I think the more we stick together, the more we offer to the community the better for your business," Dickman said.

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Residents at hotel getting kicked out

Posted: Sep 18, 2009 8:28 AM EDT Updated: Sep 18, 2009 8:28 AM EDT By Brad Underwood - bio | email Posted by Trina Edwards - email

PARK HILLS, KY (FOX19) - The Den Lou Motel is a nuisance or an eyesore to many living in Park Hills. However, to nearly 20 people, it's home.

But in six days, the people living there could find themselves out on the street.

"This is a family here, we take care of each other, we check on each other every night," said resident Michelle McWhorter.

Park Hills Police are shutting down the Den Lou, and the permanent residents have to be out by Wednesday, Sept. 23. Police are blaming the owner.

"City violations have occurred and piled up," said Park Hills Police Chief Rick Smith.

The Den Lou doesn't offer a lot of luxury. The rooms are small and rundown, but it's enough for these residents. Some of them are on disability, while others are out of work.

"All we want is answers," said McWhorter. "If we have to go, we're fine with that, but we need time."

Residents say the community's perception of the motel and negative feelings from the city is why this is happening.

"It has nothing to do with the people down there right now," said Smith. "It has to do with Mr. Kenneth Wolfe and the way he's keeping his property and the violations he has occurred over the last year."

The Den Lou residents say they will be in court Friday morning appealing the decision to put them out on the street.

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9/21/2009