

Akron Documenters

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Ward 6 meeting

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Agency: Akron City Council

Date: May 16, 2024

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Summary

- Akron police officers informed Ward 6 residents about Steven Kelly, a [“First Amendment auditor”](#) who has been recording people in public spaces throughout Akron. Officers said to ignore Kelly if they come across him since he is looking to get a reaction. Officers said that Kelly (or any person) is not allowed to record in public libraries or on privately owned property (without prior permission of the owner). (Editor’s note: [Rule 20 and 21](#) for the Akron-Summit County Public Library system go into further detail about prohibitions on making videos inside the library.)
- Mayor Shamas Malik spoke on safety issues within the community with an emphasis on curbing gun violence, holding criminals accountable and staffing up the police department. He said the Akron Police Department will roll out a new program where officers from other departments can laterally move to positions within the APD where there is a need, which is a first for the City of Akron.
- The [Ellet Historical Society](#) is looking for community participation to find a new place to display its items of historical significance and to donate items from years past. Past and current Ellet residents are encouraged to fill out [this form](#) and email it to Ellethistoricalsociety@gmail.com or drop it off at the [Ellet Community Center](#) or at the [Ellet Branch Library](#).

Follow-Up Questions

- The Akron Police Department mentioned deploying drones to record individuals, particularly on ATVs. When and where will these be used? Will officers continuously

monitor the drone footage? Will these drones only be sent to sites where there is a disturbance, or will they be active on an ongoing basis?

- How can residents follow up on the dangerous ornamental grass issue at the roundabout on Canton Road and East Market Street?

Notes

- The Ward 6 meeting started at 6:01 p.m. with a packet of handouts distributed to each attendee.
- An Akron Police Department officer spoke about [First Amendment auditors](#) and Second Amendment auditors, described as individuals who exercise their constitutional rights on public land in a way that tends to provoke, scare or upset the public.
 - The officer warned of someone named Steven Kelly who posts to a YouTube channel called [LemmyAuditYou](#). He records people on public property in Akron, and the Akron Police Department has received a lot of calls about him.
 - Kelly films people and enters spaces like post offices and the police department to record people working.
 - The officer said Kelly's actions are "annoying, obnoxious, I can't stand it, but it's entirely legal."
 - He said these "auditors" could be charged with trespassing in spaces deemed "limited public forums," such as libraries.
 - The officer said the public should ignore Kelly if they come across him. Another officer at the meeting said if you say Kelly's name out loud while he is filming, he will not post what was recorded.
- Ward 6 Council Member [Brad McKittrick](#) spoke next, thanking Akron Police Department officers and suggesting attendees visit the memorial to fallen officers at the [Fraternal Order of Police Akron Lodge 7](#) for National Police Week.
- Next, Mayor Shammas Malik spoke about public safety.
 - "This is the No. 1 thing we focus on," Malik said.
 - He said he recently went to Cincinnati to observe a program that tests bullet shells and connects shootings to trace them back to the individual responsible.
 - He said state and federal partners are working with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to "send a message to people" and hold individuals accountable for gun violence.

- Malik also talked about his recent experience at the [Akron Blind Center](#), where two individuals were blinded from shootings.
- He said the city is working to get in front of the problem of gun violence.
- “If you’re a 17-year-old pulling the trigger... what is setting them on the path?” he said.
- Malik discussed the [Youth Success Summit](#), which serves as an umbrella program consisting of over 100 youth-serving organizations in Greater Akron.
- He said the city is “resource rich,” but it has to be able to connect area youth to these resources to make sure they have stable programs that energize them and help prevent violence and crime.
- Another program Malik introduced involves having people who have committed crimes talk to area youth to deter them. “Kids won’t listen to the mayor in his tie with his law degree,” Malik said.
- Malik said his administration has had a hard time recruiting police officers and firefighters and wants to bring the class of 45 new recruits through to graduation this fall.
- He said staffing will be tough and wants to make sure the city is safe through the summer months.

- Malik introduced a new initiative involving hiring officers from other departments.
 - The city worked out an agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police union for a lateral, fast-tracked program where officers would not have to start as cadets if they move to a different department.
 - He said he currently has a list of applicants and wants officers working in the department who truly want to be in Akron.
 - McKittrick expressed concern for this lateral program, saying the academy allows residents to see how cadets perform and they don’t want to “inherit someone else’s problem” if an officer taking a new position was previously problematic.



Akron Mayor Shammam Malik speaks to residents at Ward 6 meeting May 16.

- Malik took questions from attendees, beginning with a question regarding the enforcement of accessible parking signs, particularly at the PNC Bank parking garage in Downtown Akron. Malik said the city's service department could look into it.
 - Another question was about [the roundabout in Ellet](#), located at East Market Street and Canton Road. Tall ornamental grass in the middle of the roundabout prevents drivers from seeing other vehicles and pedestrians.
 - Malik said he would take this issue to the service department.
 - McKitrick said the grass was cut down when the plant was young, but now that it's maturing, height is becoming an issue again.
 - An attendee suggested putting up a sign that said, "free grass," and someone would take it.
 - Another issue raised before Malik was regarding people riding dirt bikes and four-wheelers and making noise at all hours of the night.
 - Malik said the city is trying to find a safe location for an ATV park.

- A police officer at the meeting said the department is training eight drone pilots to track the location of ATVs and record them so officers do not have to chase them.
- Attendees suggested putting up signs around Derby Downs since signs near Stricklands at [1809 Triplett Blvd.](#) have been helping to cut down the noise.
- One attendee also raised concerns about noise coming from the Akron Skate Park, located at [990 Derby Downs Drive](#).
 - A possible relocation of both the skate park and potential ATV park to the Airdock was in the works, but the timeline was delayed.
 - An officer at the meeting advised residents to call the Akron Police Department any time they hear excessive noise at night.
- District 6 County Council Member [Christine Wiedie Higham](#) spoke about Akron residents who may be eligible for home repair assistance.
 - Higham turned it over to Edna Borders, who advised attendees to look into the Home Weatherization Assistance Program for refrigerator, furnace or hot water tank replacement.

COUNTY OF SUMMIT HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HWAP)

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) assists income qualified individuals to lower their energy usage.

HWAP may be able to provide the following services to income qualified Summit County residents:

NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT FURNACE
NEW HOT WATER TANK
INSULATION
NEW REFRIGERATOR
NEW FREEZER
LED LIGHT BULBS

An inspection is completed on each home to determine what services are needed. HWAP is not an emergency service, and applications are considered in the order in which they are approved.

Services are completed at NO COST to the applicant.

THE CURRENT 2024 HOUSEHOLD INCOME GUIDELINES

1 PERSON	2 PERSON	3 PERSON	4 PERSON
\$30,120	\$40,880	\$51,640	\$62,400
5 PERSON	6 PERSON	7 PERSON	8 PERSON
\$73,160	\$83,920	\$94,680	\$105,440

Income guidelines are subject to change. Applicants must also be current on their property taxes.

For more information contact HWAP staff at 330-643-2537

Department of
Community & Economic Development
The Ohio Building
175 S. Main St., Suite 207, Akron, Ohio 44308
phone: 330-643-2537 • fax: 330-643-8249
hours: Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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- Renters can apply, and the county will contact their landlord about the program.
- An attendee asked who should be contacted if a senior neighbor needed help getting raccoons out of their attic. Higham said to call the [Summit County Public Health Department](#).
- [Ellet Historical Society](#) President Bill Fritz spoke next. The group has collected items of neighborhood historical significance for 10 years and is looking for more pieces to add to its collection.
 - The group is looking for a place to display their artifacts and is seeking more high school yearbooks, display cases and bookshelves.
 - The group is also looking for location suggestions to place additional historic plaques and markers around Ellet for Akron's bicentennial.
 - Fritz pulled a bin out with several historical items, including a class of '67 high school sweater, a class of '69 letterman jacket, newspapers and a pennant.
 - The society currently has items on display at the Ellet Community Center, where the Ward 6 meeting was held. Additional items are displayed at the Ellet Branch Library.
 - An attendee suggested housing the society's collection in the former Ellet Upholstery building on Canton Road.



- McKittrick closed out the meeting by discussing the Ring camera program, council applying to obtain 2,400 carbon monoxide detectors for residents, and a SAFER grant to hire more firefighters.
 - An attendee asked a question about repurposing the Ellet airport baseball fields. McKittrick said [Lighter Than Air](#) is building dirigibles there.
 - Another attendee thanked the City Council for opposing the 30% increase fee from Dominion for gas, while another individual asked if residents could get relief on their water bills.
 - McKittrick said next month's Ward 6 meeting will include a sanitation presentation and a possible Summa representative who will speak about [the healthcare company's planned acquisition](#).
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.