




**Community News** >>>**Akron committee hears from citizens' group about priorities**

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By Stephanie Kist

**City also supports Homeless Connect with donation**

In a presentation to Akron City Council's Planning Committee, a citizens' group outlined priorities on which the city should focus when funding projects with its share of the \$787 billion federal economic stimulus package.

Vicki Armstrong, a volunteer with the American Friends Service Committee, presented a priority list derived from town hall meetings the group hosted last month. The priorities are categorized under housing, economic development and community services and include infrastructure repair and upgrade, a renewable energy program, restoring neighborhood development programs, pollution cleanup, youth education and jobs programs, a community re-entry jobs program, increased safety forces and neighborhood violence prevention programs, community health and dental clinics, autism community services and public education on democracy and voting.

Armstrong added public hearings should take place on how to spend the funds.

Attending the committee meeting, Council President Marco Sommerville (D-Ward 3) noted it's not yet known how much of the funding the city will receive. He said Mayor Don Plusquellic was expected to address the stimulus money in his State of the City address the following day, but until there is more definite information about the city's share, it's premature to host public hearings.

However, public input will be gathered on spending the funds, he said.




[For more on Plusquellic's Feb. 24 State of the City address, see related story on Page 1.]

In other business, Council unanimously approved a \$5,000 donation on behalf of the city to support Project Homeless Connect Day taking place April 28 at The Chapel in Downtown Akron. The city and more than 30 community organizations are co-sponsoring the event, which will provide a one-stop location for various services to people who are homeless.

Also at the meeting, Council approved:

- an application for renewal of funding through the Violence Against Women Act to continue funding for two investigators with the city prosecutor's office who work on domestic violence cases;
- a conditional-use permit for the construction of a horse barn on Northampton Road; and
- the renewal of the application of Kent Shively to have agricultural property on Hickory Street placed in an agricultural district.

Council next will meet March 2 at 7 p.m. in City Council Chambers on the third floor of the Akron Municipal Building, 166 S. High St. in Downtown Akron. Committee meetings will begin at 2 p.m. that afternoon in Council Chambers.

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