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Thursday April 14, 2011

Kingwood Council hears report on community needsby The Associated Press
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MCT REGIONAL NEWS

By Michelle Wolford

The Dominion Post, Morgantown, W.Va.

(MCT)

April 14--KINGWOOD -- A report the city hopes to use for future planning and grant opportunities was presented to City Council on Tuesday.

Sera Zegre, a project manager with Downstream Strategies of Morgantown, completed the report based on data collected in 2004-'05 by the Preston County Chamber of Commerce. The information wasn't fully compiled until Zegre was commissioned to do so by Kingwood City Council last July.

Zegre was paid \$5,000 for the report. The funds came from \$25,000 donated by Imre and Janet Szilagyi for a community needs assessment with an eye toward developing a marketing plan for the city's indoor pool, which was closed after the roof collapsed under the weight of snow two winters ago.

The pool will reopen June 11.

The 31-page report highlights issues of concern to county residents in 2004-'05. Jobs were of primary concern, followed by the condition of the county's schools.

Assets were the county's people, quiet and scenery.

Council member Kathy Mace, who is also the county administrator, said she's proud that the city had a hand in getting the report completed. "I hope we can make this information available to the county and to nonprofits," she said. She has already heard that the county health department is interested in making use of the data.

Zegre spoke with community leaders to provide an update since the data was collected. The update "was to ground the visioning data in the present realities of the county," Zegre said. "Beyond updating the vision, many changes serve as success stories in the county, examples of citizens and municipalities responding to an issue and taking action to improve the situation."

"It was most surprising to realize the interconnectedness of the issues and their solutions -- for example, reducing crime by supporting the arts programming," she said. "There's so much potential collaboration in existing efforts and future projects."

Also on Tuesday, City Council:

Agreed to begin the condemnation process on a building at 146 S. Price St. Mayor Jim Lobb said the owner, Joe Hall, said he had tried to contact contractors and was considering donating the two-story structure to Habitat for Humanity

5/5/2011

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or Main Street Kingwood. Lobb said the organization had no interest in the building, which is likely beyond repair.

Agreed to allow Kingwood Christian Fellowship to carry crosses through town April 23.

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