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HAPPY FALL! Well, it has been a hot, dry summer and frankly, it feels pretty good to cool down a little. We at City Hall hope your summer was safe and fruitful. I know ours was very full! As we stated in our last couple of newsletters, NCH is in the beginnings of its Renaissance. Brother is it! In the last 24 years, I don't remember so much activity and accomplishments with the promise of even more to come. Of course, at my age now, I don't remember what I had for supper last night so... Seriously, it has been an eventful 6 months so sit back and get ready for a ride. Hope you like what you're about to read.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

How much is that doggy in the window? Well, in our case, not much. Thanks to Officer Schrand, we now have our own Police Dog. After years of debating the need relative to the expense, Officer Schrand has put his fully certified and trained police dog, Niko, on permanent loan to the City. The insurance costs are only about \$80/year, and the officer will keep the dog at his home and take care of him. So, why do this now? Whether we like it or not, drugs are a problem. Maybe not as rampant here as in other areas, however, it is still a problem. Our officers are doing a good job "sniffing" out drug abusers (pun intended), but our new four-legged officer will make us better. Most crimes have their roots in the drug culture be it burglary, assault or vandalism. If we can put a bigger "bite" into the drug activity, we can reduce the other activities that follow. So, if you see a beautiful German Shepherd walking very closely to Officer Schrand, it isn't "bring your pet to the office week", it's, our new police dog.

The jail status is still not good. We are still sending those persons sentenced to jail time by our magistrate to the Clinton County jail. This is a real pain, but we have seen some change in attitude from those who think they can avoid paying their fines. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure those who need to be punished get their just reward. Hopefully, after November, we can start getting serious about a new, reasonable plan for a Hamilton County facility.

We are also looking for two crossing guards for our schools. If you, or anyone you know is interested, contact Chief Paul Toth at the Police Station, at 513-521-7171.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Congratulations to our Interim Fire Chief, Doug Eikens and our Interim Assistant Chief Ken Rogers. I know this sounds like the Reds manager situation, but we will know who the permanent Chief is after the Civil Service test is taken in mid-October.

A big welcome back to John Steins. John has returned to our Department and we're glad he's back. John's dad, Bob, served as Assistant Chief for many years until his passing.

FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)

A new ambulance has been put into service and we now have two such vehicles in our fleet. Speaking of service, we were notified that our rating as a department has gone up a notch and it may result in a decrease in our home insurance rates.

It must have been a real slow news day for the folks at the Enquirer. It shocked me to open the newspaper to read the headlines referring to the merger of the North College Hill and Mt. Healthy Fire Departments. Upon regaining my consciousness, I read the article and for the most part, it was accurate. Only thing is, these guys in the newspaper business must not read **this** newsletter. If they did, they would have known that our citizens were informed about the idea of creating a joint fire district several years ago. Just to remind everyone, the idea of a joint district has been tossed around for at least eight years. NCH and Mt. Healthy have talked very informally about the idea off and on but at this time, the logistics are not good for either community. Mt. Healthy has been and continues to be a great neighbor as we are to them. We have a mutual aid agreement and right now, it works just fine. Will we ever get serious about forming a joint district? Absolutely maybe! When we do, I'm sure you'll see it in the Enquirer.

PUBLIC WORKS

The hot weather this summer was a killer but how would you like to be one of our guys who had to work with asphalt and on the roads all summer. Guys, you have all of our thanks. Again, if you see our team out there, how about a honk and a high five.

Congratulations and good luck to Steve Meyman on his retirement. He called it quits after 30 years of service to our City. Thanks for all the years and dedication!

Don't get too excited when you notice some of our trees missing from our islands on Hamilton Avenue. They have not been stolen. Several of our trees have gone over the rainbow so they need to be replaced. We obviously couldn't do it during the heat of the summer, so now is the time. We have set up a program by which you can purchase a tree as a permanent memorial for yourself or a loved one. Permanent plaques will be affixed near the tree so that future citizens will know who helped make and keep our City beautiful. This is open to our corporate citizens as well as private individuals. The program will not be limited to Hamilton Avenue but will include an aggressive campaign to create more significant "green" areas in town and in our parks. This is a great City getting greater and greener.

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Ah, yes! It is time for the annual "My Street is a muddy mess" game. You know the game. The contractors come in, tear up your street, tell you they'll let you know when and if they will block your driveway and then never show up until after they've blocked you out. Yeah, that's the one! The lucky winners this year are those saints on Kleindale, Cordova, Catalpa, Acorn and Knollridge. Seriously, thanks for your patience with the mess. It really is worth it. The Kleindale project was delayed because we wanted to minimize conflicts with soccer games and practices. Actually, we didn't want the wrath of the soccer Moms coming down on us. **ONLY KIDDING!** All joking aside, we should be starting that project in the near future. So, get ready.

FINANCE

Here we go! Big changes are happening as the Renaissance kicks into a higher gear. Thanks to the work and dedication our past Auditor's and Treasurer's, we have been lucky to survive the tumultuous world of Public Finance. Since May, we have had two changes in personnel. Donna Vondeylen, the Treasurer moved and had to resign. Our Auditor, Margie Hood, encountered some serious health problems and had no choice but to resign. She is recovering and we wish her well. So, what to do? God is still smiling on NCH. I really mean that. Bill Lammert, a retired CPA, outstanding humanitarian and dedicated citizen agreed to become the City Treasurer. Even though the task was daunting, he agreed and is doing an awesome job. George Snyder, former Auditor and council member agreed to come out of retirement to serve as City Auditor. These fellows have been educated in finance and have many, many years of practical experience to bring to these two important positions. After reviewing the challenges presented by today's demands in the world of public finance, both Bill and George informed us that it would be impossible to keep the City's finances in order and to function with any kind of fiscal responsibility without a full time person. Under our current form of government, there is no provision for a Finance Director. However, we can have a Deputy Auditor. So, Council funded the position to become full time and, as of September, 2007, George Snyder appointed Jim Satzger our full time Deputy Auditor. Jim has served as Finance Director in both private and public arenas and we welcome his expertise. We will be utilizing a new computer program that will assist us in tracking both expenditures and income and will simplify control of the budget. THIS IS BIG! However, it does not solve the long-term problem of accountability and structure within the finance departments that can be addressed by a charter. More on that later.

RECREATION

Man it was hot this summer! That means it was good to stay wet and cool. What better way to accomplish that than to join our pool? We did OK this year but we'd like to expand on the pool program as well as other recreational activities. Welcome to Chapter 2 of our Renaissance. We met with representatives of the Powell Crosley YMCA to talk about a possible collaboration with the "Y" to help us provide expanded recreational activities to the citizens of NCH. During these discussions, we discovered that the NCH School Board and the City have facilities that could be of benefit to the YMCA. On the flip side, the "Y" has programs and staff that can be useful to us as well as giving us the opportunity to expand our programs. A presentation was made to the Recreation Commission and Council. Both have expressed interest but still have many questions. We are seriously speaking with the YMCA to become involved with our Recreation Programs. If we can coordinate our efforts, recreational possibilities will multiply ten fold. What an exciting potential for our City! We will definitely keep you informed. Before the rumors fly, the pool is staying put.

We have had a great year of special events in town including the Cruise-In in July and the Community Picnic in August. Our goal is to have a special event in NCH each month. This takes a lot of work and we thank all of those who helped make this years events a great success. There is a craft show on November 10th and some Christmas events, which will probably include the big guy from the North Pole. No, not Big Foot. The other Big Guy. Anyway, keep watching the Hilltop for details.

Thank you and good luck to Bill Diers who is leaving the Recreation Board. At the time of this writing, a replacement has not yet been appointed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Walgreen's has informed us that they have finally worked out arrangements with PNC Bank, and will start construction in the spring of 2008. One or two buildings are planned for the site at Hamilton & Galbraith. We look forward to seeing their plans. There's more!



The Colonial Racquet Club on Hamilton Avenue has been sold and the new owner plans to invest over \$1,000,000 in renovations, making our center one of the best in the area. It was a surprise to me that the Racquet Center attracts clientele from all over, including out of state. Yet another feather in our cap as the future becomes brighter in NCH.



The old Thriftway store continues to be a thorn. We keep receiving information relative to discussions between the owner and a major tenant, but nothing in concrete, yet. Look for the City to start serious pressure such as was applied to the BP property at the corner of Galbraith & Hamilton. Private property should remain private until it becomes injurious to the general public. In our humble opinion, we're there, if you get my drift.



Lastly, our Land Use Plan is nearly complete and after a few tweaks here and there, the committee is ready to take it to Planning Commission and on to City Council for adoption. This is huge. This lays out the plan for the direction of the physical development of our Renaissance. It is, literally, our roadmap to the future. Simply put, North College Hill is now a City where dreams discover direction. The result? We will immediately be contacting these major developers who have been waiting to see if we're serious. The answer is a resounding YES!

ELECTION DAY

As they say in the world of wrestling, "Now it's time for the main event". November 6, 2007 is a big day for our City and it is up to all of us to decide in which direction we go. There are two BIG issues on this year's ballot, both of which affect our residents directly. One involves our Charter, the other involves our Schools. Both are non-partisan and both are of immense importance.

THE CHARTER

Last November, the voters elected a Charter Commission to create a Charter. For the last 10 months, that's what they have done. At this point, allow me a personal comment. In 28 years of public service, I have never been so happy and privileged to work collectively with so many fine and dedicated people as those on this Commission. It was a joy and an honor. The Charter has been written and each registered voter will be receiving a copy for his or her review. Please take this seriously. The document you will be receiving is essentially our constitution. Pay particular attention to the cover page. It is a brief summary of the changes proposed to the way we currently operate. In this newsletter, I will attempt to put seventeen pages in two paragraphs. Here goes.

We analyzed how our government works right now and discovered that in many cases, the statutory form of government under which we now operate lacks structure, accountability and flexibility. So, we decided to improve on this. While much of the way we do business stays the same, the following high spots will change if adopted. The title of Safety-Service Director will change to City Administrator. Not a big deal, but the new title more clearly defines what he/she is expected to do, namely, administer all departments of the City and be directly accountable for the performance of each. Currently, the responsibilities are somewhat vague. There will be a position of Finance Director. I mentioned this earlier. While the duties will be similar to those of the current Deputy Auditor that Council recently funded, the BIG difference is the accountability factor. Under the current system, the Treasurer and Auditor are elected and there is neither training nor education required. All you need be is 18 years old and a resident, and that's it. Moreover, it shocked everyone on the Committee to know that the treasurer and auditor are accountable to no local authority. The only report required by law is an annual report to Council. That will change. Currently, the Deputy Auditor is accountable only to the Auditor. Under the Charter, the Finance Director will be appointed by the Administrator and answerable to him/her. The Finance Director will be required to have a degree and/or experience in finance and must make reports to the Mayor, Council and Administrator upon request. So, if the Charter passes, the Auditor and Treasurer positions will be phased out over the next two years.

The other changes will be length of terms and when Council members serve. The reality now is that everyone runs at the same time for two-year terms. That means that it would be possible for an entirely new council to be elected. While, at times in the past, this may not sound too bad, the reality is that if that happened, we would have people running our City with absolutely no experience. That's potential for disaster. Serving two years terms does not allow for any kind of meaningful legislation to be developed unless the councilperson is re-elected which means he/she needs to concentrate on re-election instead of legislation. The solution is staggered, four-year terms. This will guarantee continuity on Council and time for the elected officials to do their jobs properly without the pressures of politics. Another change is the addition of residency requirements for Council and Mayor. Currently, you can move into town one day and run for office the next. If adopted, the Charter will require a three-year minimum continued residency for mayor candidates and one year for Council. In addition, there will be a requirement for at least one professional with experience in Planning or design to be on both Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. These professionals will be volunteer and need not live in the City. This makes our Boards more professional and knowledgeable.

THE CHARTER (continued)

The biggest difference the Charter brings is the fact that we, as citizens of North College Hill, have the power to amend the charter in two ways. First, it is written into the Charter that every five years, a charter review committee must review the charter and see if it needs any updating. Any change in the Charter must be approved by a vote of all registered voters, NOT Council. Second, private citizens could demand a vote on changes, at any time, by referendum. In other words, you can propose a change by circulating a petition to get the issue on the ballot. No longer would we have to wait for legislators in Columbus to do something. We can now do it ourselves.

SCHOOLS - ISSUE 25

In the psychology of human response, the first rule is that people, any people, will respond to the environment in which they find themselves. This is not an opinion; it is a definite psychological and physiological fact. Simply put, if someone finds himself in a good atmosphere, more often than not, he will respond in a good way. If it's an undesirable atmosphere, so will be the response. The number one reason people move to or from a city or township is the quality of the school system. In addition, the most influential element affecting property values is, once again, the school system. Don't take my word for this. Check out the variety of districts around the county and compare the districts with the property values. Next question ... if someone says that if you give him or her one-dollar, they will give you two in return, would you make the deal? Of course, you would! This November, a critically important issue is on the ballot. The state of Ohio has deposited money for the school district's use for the purpose of building all new schools in NCH. They will give us \$24,000,000 in return for \$11,000,000, that's more than \$2 for every \$1 we give. Realistically, it is most likely a one-time shot. There is no absolute guarantee that new buildings will increase test scores, improve discipline or prevent juvenile mischief. However, there are things I can guarantee as an Architect, as Mayor and as a neighbor and fellow citizen of this City.

Any person or group of people will respond negatively to an environment that reflects a negative atmosphere. Please walk through our Junior/Senior High School. Our facilities have negative impact on the learning capacities of our children. Our kids have to overcome, not only the challenges of school, they must also overcome the environment in which they find themselves. By the way, the inspectors from the State of Ohio agree.

As Mayor, I have had the privilege to travel around this state and have learned a lot. The cities that I have noticed, of which I became envious, all have one thing in common ... they have good school districts and, for the vast majority, have excellent facilities. Over the years, we have observed districts all around us building and updating their facilities while we have struggled. It time we take our rightful place among the best.

Finally, as a citizen/homeowner, even if you have no interest in the schools, the administrators or the teachers, think about your own situation. We are right smack in the middle of our re-birth as a city. The biggest key for the success of our city is the success of our schools. There are people who are watching us this November. Quite frankly, they are poised to invest millions of dollars in our City if we are willing to help ourselves. The result of this future activity affects property values, which affects security, which affects the quality of citizens that are attracted to NCH. And you know the best thing? Not only do we get \$2 for \$1, the money stays here at home. There are other important countywide issues on the ballot in November but this one affects North College Hill directly. Please, give this serious consideration.

BITS AND PIECES

Welcome Sarah Headley to the Planning Commission and Jim Funk to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Sarah is an Urban Planner and brings the experience and talent we need. We appreciate her volunteering and look forward to her leadership. Jim is an experienced General Contractor who brings a practical point of view to the Board. Thank you, both.



Congratulations to Don Rohling, the director of Mission Integration at Mercy Hospital Mount Airy. He was among 86 nominees from throughout the state who were recently honored at the Ohio Hospital Association dinner in Columbus.



Speaking of congratulations, a big “way to go” goes out to Miss Alex Warner, of Bake Street, for being one of the recipients of this year’s Marvin Lewis Scholarship.



After saving up and planning for over two years, JoAnn & I took a month off and headed west ... yes, an entire month, and, boy, did I take heat for that, but it was worth it. The Northwest is vast, grand and green. There is nobody home in Montana and lots and lots of corn in Iowa and Nebraska. Seattle is everything and more than we ever expected. San Francisco, what can I say? Having said all that, we spent a lot of time off the expressways, and spoke with citizens of towns like ours, and we discovered that they have the same concerns and challenges. Sometimes, I think we are alone in our successes and failures but we’re not. It is truly a great country.



Take a look at the new bench on Galbraith Road by the Municipal Parking Lot. It’s a memorial dedicated to Davey Tabar. If I need to explain who Davey was, you’re a really new resident. Suffice it to say Davey was a very special citizen.



I hope you heard the WGRR morning broadcast on June 28th of the “Chris and Janene Show” live from Perkins on Hamilton Ave. It was a really great show and was an excellent venue from which to highlight good things about our great City to their broad listening audience. Thanks to WGRR, Chris, and Janene.



Did you know that the Ohio Chapter of the Theater Organ Association is headquartered in NCH? So what you might say? Well, these organs come from the old theaters that many of us still remember. They are fabulous instruments and Joe Hollman has installed one in his basement. We had the pleasure of hearing him play it and it is unbelievable. For the younger readers of this newsletter, these things are not synthesizers. They are all pipes, bells, and strings and produce real music. It is something to see. I would just like to know ... what did Joe have to promise his wife?

COMMUNITY ROOM NEWS: Our local eagle scouts and their helpers are turning the vacant spaces at the Administration Building into new Community Meeting space. They hope to be finished by year-end.



Trick-or-treating for Halloween will be held on Wednesday, October 31 from 6:00 P.M – 8:00 P.M. Watch out for the little ghosts and goblins if you are on the road.



LEAF PICK-UP: Mark your calendars for this year's leaf pick-up by Rumpke ... it will be Saturdays, November 3rd, 10th & 17th. Make sure you have your bags out by 6:30 A.M.



I apologize for going on and on but as you can see, there is a lot happening. You know, we may not be rolling in dough but we're not broke. We may not be perfect, but we are better than O.K. We may disagree, but we are family. And that's what counts! We have fought the odds together and are on the brink of winning. To those who say we are changing, I say you're right. We are changing for the better and I'd suggest you get on board "cause this train's rollin'. Thanks for allowing me to be the conductor. Remember, next time you see a visitor or new citizen just say, "Welcome my friend, you're in North College Hill, where dreams discover direction. See you next time

Just a thought:

"It's choice – not chance – that determines your destiny."

– Jean Nidetch