

The Council Ledger

Councilman Cazzell Smith Hosts First Meeting Of Abandoned and Vacant Property Task Force

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The Summit County Abandoned and Vacant Property Task Force (AVP) held its first meeting Thursday, February 5, 2009 in the Council Chambers. Council Member **Cazzell Smith, Sr. (District 5)** who introduced the legislation to establish the task force last October was nominated and elected as Chairman.

Appointed by the County Executive and approved by County Council, the task force consists of representatives from: the Summit County Executive, Council, Fiscal Office, Consumer Affairs, Health District, Mayor's offices of Akron, Cuyahoga Falls and Barberton, local non-profit builder's organizations, lending, insurance and real estate institutions and three other appointees who provide balanced advice on rural, subur-

ban and urban land use and development, civic participation and beautification efforts, environmental protection and economic growth. Over the next six months, the task force will meet and work to find ways to promote civic responsibility and engagement in maintaining local neighborhoods and reducing the number of abandoned and vacant properties in Summit County.

"There is a good representation from all the major contributors and stakeholders in Summit County who have unique knowledge and expertise in this area," said Smith. "We are looking forward to sharing ideas and resources to help reduce the number of abandoned and vacant properties



Councilman Cazzell Smith (District 5) makes a point during the initial meeting of the Abandoned and Vacant Homes Task Force.

and make more productive use of existing residential areas that are affected by this problem," said Smith.

During the initial meeting, Smith shared a PowerPoint presentation **cont. on page 2**

Council District Members Sworn In, New Council Officers Elected

Re-elected Council Members, **Nick Kostandaras (District 1); John Schmidt (District 2); Frank Comunale (District 4); Cazzell Smith, Sr. (District 5); Tim Crawford (District 7); Paula Prentice (District 8)** and new Council Members, **Gloria Rodgers (District 3) and Jerry Feeman (District 6)** were officially sworn in at the Summit County Council Organizational Meeting on Friday, January 2 in Council Chambers.

The swearing in ceremony marked the beginning of a four-year term for each district member that expires on December 31, 2012. Their oaths were administered by former Council Members,

Common Pleas Judge **Thomas A. Teodosio**, Common Pleas Judge **Paul J. Gallagher** and 9th District Court of Appeals Judge **Clair E. Dickinson**. Common Pleas Judge **Brenda Burnham Unruh** also administered an oath during the ceremony.

Kostandaras was re-elected President of Council and **Council Member at Large, Jon Poda** was elected Vice President.

District 1 includes the Northern Summit County areas of Bath, Richfield Village, Richfield Township, Twinsburg, Twinsburg Township, Northfield, Northfield Center, Macedonia, Reminderville, Sagamore Hills, Peninsula, Bos-

ton Township and Boston Heights. **District 2** includes the North Hill area of Akron, the City of Munroe Falls and part of the City of Cuyahoga Falls. **District 3** includes the areas of Stow, Hudson, Silver Lake and part of Cuyahoga Falls. **District 4** includes part of the City of Akron and part of Cuyahoga Falls. **District 5** includes the City of Fairlawn, Copley Township and part of the City of Akron. **District 6** includes the City of Tallmadge and part of the City of Akron. **District 7** includes the City of Barberton, Norton, New Franklin, the Village of Clinton, part of Coventry Township and part of the City of Akron.



Newly Elected Council Officers, President Nick Kostandaras (District 1) and Vice President Jon Poda (Council Member at Large)

District 8 includes the City of Green, Lakemore and Mogadore Villages, Springfield Township, part of Coventry Township and part of the City of Akron.



District 7 Councilman Tim Crawford comments during the Abandoned and Vacant Task Force meeting.

Abandoned and Vacant Property Task Force cont.

which outlined the problem of abandoned and vacant property in Summit County, its causes and effects on the community, health and safety risks, and possible solutions – including policy regulation, property rehabilitation, community gardens and temporary community art-space.

Following the Councilman’s pres-

entation, there was an open discussion focused on the identification of abandoned and vacant properties – there are currently more than 7,000 in the Akron area alone, but there is no current system in place to accurately track abandoned and vacant properties throughout the County. Information was also shared on programs currently in progress to address

the problem of abandoned and vacant homes, and task force members were given the opportunity to serve on a sub-committee to examine foreclosure prevention alternatives.

The next AVP task force meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2009 in the Summit County Council Chambers at 9:00 a.m.

Councilwoman Prentice Hosts SCHIP Meeting

Summit County Councilwoman **Paula Prentice (District 8)** brought together around 30 community leaders Dec. 10 at the Job Center, 1040 Tallmadge Ave., in Akron to explore ways the county can help get eligible children signed up for healthcare coverage.

At the meeting, Prentice highlighted aspects of the State Children’s Healthcare Insurance Program (SCHIP), which is a federal Medicaid expansion program that goes by different names in different states – in Ohio, the program is called Healthy Start. The Healthy Start program covers children ages 19 and under who are from families with income up to 200

percent of the federal poverty level.

Prentice explained that data shows around 7,200 children in the county are eligible for expanded Medicaid coverage, but are not enrolled. Around 5,500 children are already enrolled in the program.

“Because of all that is going on in the United States at this time, we are undergoing changes in our culture. The need for SCHIP is not just for the ‘poor’ anymore but for a wider population,” Prentice said. “The working people are in need of support. It is important we project SCHIP as an insurance program for children not coverage for the poor.”

Some of the initial goals noted at the meeting included:

- 1) Providing a more comprehensive way to expose potentially-eligible parents and guardians to the SCHIP enrollment application;
- 2) Making SCHIP applicants aware of other programs such as Home Weatherization and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); and
- 3) Marketing the availability of the program throughout the county through various media outlets.

The group will continue to meet to focus on more specific approaches to accomplishing the overall goal.



Councilwoman Paula Prentice (District 8) addresses community leaders during the Dec. 10 SCHIP meeting at the Job Center in Akron.

The next scheduled SCHIP meeting will be Monday, April 6 at 10 a.m. at the Job Center, 1040 E. Tallmadge Ave.

Green Task Force Resumes Following Recommendations to Council



The Summit County Green Task Force resumed meeting in February

following their recommendations to County Council and the Executive at the end of 2008. The task force asked for an additional 24 months to pursue several environmentally friendly initiatives including:

- The feasibility of a construction demolition policy requiring recycling or re-use of 25% of debris generated from all government, commercial and industrial sites.

- Reducing electricity and natural gas usage in all County buildings by 15% by the year 2015.
- Developing a Green Business Certification Program that would provide businesses with steps to achieve environmental sustainability and natural resource conservation.
- Creating a Summit County Green Fleet Policy by the end of 2009.
- Establishing tax abatements for expanding or relocating businesses that clean up brown field sites in Summit County.
- Creating model legislation or a Memorandum of Understanding that would encourage the use of economic incentives for businesses that create green jobs or show significant reduction in energy use; reduction and/or restoration of natural resources; or reductions in solid waste based on established standards.

The task force also recommended expanding the group to include representation from education and health, Chamber of Commerce, Metro Transit, and the Summit County Fiscal office.



Former Council Member Louise Heydorn (center) along with Council Member at Large, Ilene Shapiro (left) meet with the Green Task Force in Council Chambers, February 25.

The Green Task Force will meet monthly on the last Wednesday of the month at 3:45 p.m.. The next meeting is on March 25.



Councilwoman Shapiro Travels to India on Trade Mission with Summit County Mayor's Association

Council Member at Large, Ilene Shapiro recently traveled with members of the Summit County Mayors Association on a first-ever trade mission to India.

The trip had to be postponed at the end of last year due to the acts of terrorism that occurred in Mumbai, one of the group's scheduled stops. The group traveled from February 1 to February 13 to Mumbai, Ahmadabad and New Delhi.

The purpose of the trip, described as a "pathfinder mission" by Association President,

Stow Mayor Karen Fritschel, was to attract businesses, create jobs, and enhance economic opportunities for existing companies in Summit County and attract commerce to Northeast Ohio.

In addition to Stow, other communities that participated in the mission were Akron, Hudson, Twinsburg and other Summit County representatives.

Rapidly emerging as one of the world's leading economies, India has substantial relationships with and investments in Ohio

already. According to Shapiro, the mission concentrated on the automotive, plastics and polymers, alternative energy, industrial automation and instrumentation, controls and electronics industries.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to develop business and government relationships. It is important for our growth in Northeast Ohio and Summit County to find new international partners for our products, services, investments and business locations," she concluded.



Council Member at Large Ilene Shapiro (5th from left) is shown in India with the Summit County contingent and Narendra Modi, the chief minister of the State of Gujarat, shown at center in white.

Council Members Attend Planning Retreat at Akron Zoo



From top left - Council Members Tim Crawford, Gloria Rodgers, John Schmidt, Jerry Feeman (left photo), Frank Comunale and Cazzell Smith (right photo) play an ice-breaker game.

Bottom Left - Councilman Pete Crossland makes a presentation during the Council Planning Retreat.

County Council Members met on January 23-24 at the Akron Zoo for their 2009 Planning Retreat.

According to Council President **Nick Kostandaras**, the purpose of the retreat was, "to study and examine the role and operations of Council so that we can grow and ultimately better serve the constituents we represent."

Additionally, the Council Members reviewed goals, met with Summit County Executive Russ Pry, and had some time to

explore the Zoo and unwind with a few ice-breakers and team-building activities facilitated by the Council Staff.

"Each member of our group has a personal expertise that enriches us as a whole. We cannot forget those who are struggling in these difficult times, that deserve our strength, leadership and trust. We owe it to the people who elected us to look for ways to improve the functions of this county's legislative branch," concluded Kostandaras.

Council Recognizes University of Akron Men's Soccer Team For Outstanding Season

In December, County Council recognized the 2008 University of Akron Men's Soccer Team with a Commendation for an outstanding season. Led by **Coach Caleb Porter**, the Zips marked a banner year with a record of 17-2-4, setting the school record for goals-against-average, allowing just 11 scores in 23 contests. The team was rewarded with the highest tournament seed in school history (No. 5), achieving home-field advantage and advancing to the "Sweet 16" of the NCAA Tournament. Akron held its opponents to one or fewer goals in all but one game in 2008 and finished with 14 shutouts on the season, spending nine of 13 weeks ranked in the top five of the NSCAA/adidas national poll. The Zips brought home their second consecutive Mid American Conference tournament crown, posting a conference record of 16-1-1 and have produced 26 all-conference honorees since 2006, including 21 first teamers and the league player of the year all three seasons and had six players named to the all-conference academic team and a team GPA of 3.11 for the 2007-08 school year, earning the NSCAA team academic award.



University of Akron Men's Soccer Coach Caleb Porter (left) accepts a Commendation from Summit County Councilman, John Schmidt.

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The Council Ledger is produced quarterly by Council Staff.

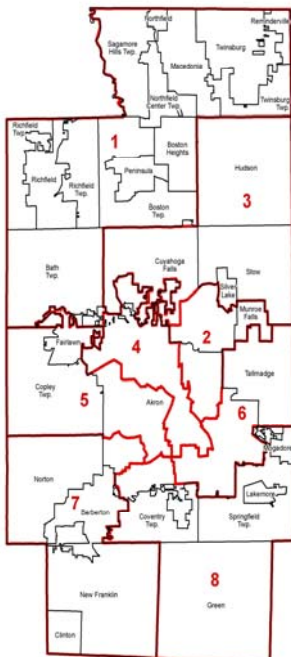
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Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
March 9	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 16	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
March 23	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 25	Summit Co. Green Task Force	Council Chambers	3:45 p.m.
March 30	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
April 2	AVP Task Force Meeting	Council Chambers	9:00 a.m.
April 6	SCHIP Meeting	Job Center	10:00 a.m.
April 6	Council Committee Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 13	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
April 20	Council Committee Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 27	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
April 29	Summit Co. Green Task Force	Council Chambers	3:45 p.m.
May 4	Council Committee Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
May 7	AVP Task Force Meeting	Council Chambers	9:00 a.m.
May 11	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
May 18	Council Committee Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
May 25	Offices CLOSED for Memorial Day		
May 27	Summit Co. Green Task Force	Council Chambers	3:45 p.m.

2009 County Council Members



Nick Kostandaras	District 1
John Schmidt	District 2
Gloria Rodgers	District 3
Frank C. Comunale	District 4
Cazzell Smith, Sr.	District 5
Jerry Feeman	District 6
Tim Crawford	District 7
Paula Prentice	District 8
Pete Crossland	At Large
Jon Poda	At Large
Ilene Shapiro	At Large

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