



Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

April 2003

COUNCIL MOVES TO GET OLD TRAIN DEPOT BUSTLING AGAIN

A hundred years ago, Columbus citizens embarked on their journeys from the Toledo & Central Ohio Railroad Depot. Now the historic train station itself will start on a new excursion through the 21st Century as the City of Columbus is purchasing it with state grant dollars.

“We are grateful the owners have given us a chance to use this magnificent Columbus landmark to its fullest potential,” said Columbus City Council President Matt Habash. “We are now seeking out the best ideas for the station’s use so that it remains a key community asset for generations to come.”



Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares celebrates the city's acquisition of the old Toledo & Central Ohio Railroad Depot.

The Volunteers of America own and use the 108-year-old station for offices. The organization has kept

the West Broad Street building in outstanding condition.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the station's pagoda-style clock tower is recognized by thousands who visit nearby Veterans Memorial Auditorium and COSI.

Capitol South Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation will acquire the station on behalf of the city, and the Downtown Development Office will solicit proposals for its future use. The city is interested in all proposals including those of non-profit organizations, private developers and public agencies.

Built in 1895, the 15,000-square-foot T&CO depot has withstood the test of time as well as fire and flood. It escaped its first fire in 1910 and its tracks were elevated to accommodate growing car and truck traffic.

Franklinton's 1913 flood filled the ornate lobby with five feet of Scioto River water, but that station kept serving the city. Eventually the station located at 379 W. Broad St., closed in 1929 after the New York Central Railroad acquired the line and moved passenger operations to the former Union Station.

Capitol South, which frequently partners with the city on downtown redevelopment projects, will pay \$575,000 for the depot and provide a \$25,000 relocation grant to the Volunteers of America.

Councilmembers Charleta B. Tavares and Maryellen O'Shaughnessy worked closely with Habash to facilitate the city's gaining control of the property.

“This is one of the finest pieces of local history still remaining in our downtown. It could be put to many outstanding uses including a welcome center to those visiting Columbus,” Tavares said.

STRIP CLUBS BANNED FROM RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Led by the work of Council Safety and Judiciary Committee Chairman Michael Mentel, City Council adopted tough new restrictions on adult entertainment businesses on April 14.

“These outfits don't belong in residential neighborhoods,” Mentel said.

The new ordinance was crafted in response to a legal challenge to the city's existing law filed by four adult businesses. Any new adult-oriented business would be permitted to operate only in land zoned for manufacturing. Within those zones, the adult business must be at least 250 feet away from any residence, school or university facility, day care, preschool or church.

This leaves approximately 2 percent of all city land available for the operation of adult businesses. A federal judge struck down the previous law because it only allowed adult businesses to occupy less than 0.47 percent of city land.

The city closely followed the judge's guidance in crafting new restrictions, and the city Department of Development worked several months on drafting a solid new plan. City Attorney Richard Pfeiffer's Office reviewed zoning restrictions in other municipalities that have been deemed constitutional and advised Council and the Administration on how best to protect public health and safety and still withstand a legal challenge. The new law took effect immediately.

THOMAS WATCHES NOTORIOUS DRUG HAVEN MEET ITS DOOM



Councilmember Patsy Thomas watches as the city destroys a notorious South Side drug haven she fought to shut.

Determined to keep thugs from harming her five grandchildren, Elizabeth "Granny" Mitchell-Dulaney spent more than two years in prison for shooting a neighborhood drug dealer who operated out of a duplex across from her home.

Meanwhile, as an assistant city prosecutor, Patsy Thomas fought for the permanent closure and eradication of the largest illegal pill house discovered in Franklin County and the adjoining cocaine lair that Columbus police called the "epicenter" of Fourth Street drug dealing.

Granny won her freedom last summer. And Patsy Thomas joined Columbus City Council with a goal of improving city efforts to get rid of nuisance and abandoned properties in city neighborhoods.

The two celebrated an emotional day together when the city demolished the house at 1616-1618 South Fourth Street. Onlookers cheered as one of the worst threats to their safety was wiped out. Thomas is working on a plan to improve the city's procedures to rid neighborhoods of vacant and abandoned buildings.

"On Council, I am working to strengthen our laws so the city can move faster to get rid of decaying properties before they become criminal havens. I believe everyone should live in strong, safe neighborhoods," Thomas said.

POLICE EQUIPPED TO ENFORCE REVISED NOISE ORDINANCE

Police officers will be better able to keep loud and raucous noise out of residential neighborhoods after City Council modified the city noise law.

Councilmember Charleta Tavares worked with city and community leaders to help residents keep neighborhoods peaceful and enjoyable.

The new plan helps police to determine what is unreasonable noise by setting a series of distances from which noise can be heard from a stationary source, like a stereo or car engine. Sounds coming from inside or outside a dwelling can be cited for a violation if the noise is plainly audible at 50 feet beyond the property line of a residential unit.

When two or more residential units are contained in one structure, operating a sound system that is plainly audible at 25 feet beyond the property line of the unit from which the sound emanates is a violation.

When there are adjoining residential properties within 50 feet of one another, operating a sound system that is plainly audible at a distance of 25 feet onto the adjoining residential property breaks the law.

ROBERT "BO" CHILTON JOINS COUNCIL AS AIDE TO TAVARES



A desire to improve the lives of others, especially children, has prompted Robert "Bo" Chilton to join Council staff as the legislative aide to Charleta B. Tavares.

Chilton, who has a bachelor's degree in English and master's degrees in both teaching and higher education administration, has been interested in community service since joining the fraternal organization Alpha Phi Alpha. Bo is also a member of Big Brothers and has mentored a little brother for more than two years.

He hopes to work on efforts that increase job opportunities and access to health care, and improve the educational system. Bo enjoys bowling, basketball and listening to music. He also collects African masks. To welcome or meet Bo, call his office at 645-8580.