

Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

March 2006

FRANKLINTON REMEMBERS A COLUMBUS LEGEND



Mel Dodge Portrait

Don't expect Council President [Matt Habash](#) to step into the ring for a few rounds of boxing at the City's newest recreation center, but he was on hand with residents of Franklinton to dedicate the Dodge Recreation Center. It replaces one well past its prime. "As much as anyone in Columbus history, Mel Dodge understood the importance of recreation," Habash said, noting the former department director's more than 33 years with the City. "Recreation is a cornerstone to achieving the highest quality of life for ourselves, our family, and our community."

Dodge, known for inviting a few of the Columbus Zoo's big cats into his home from time to time, would have been proud of the new facility. At \$5.5 million it is the City's fourth multi-generational center. And at 30,000 square feet it offers fun for the whole family.

CHARLETA CONNECTS WITH KIDS

February 27th kicked-off Right to Read Week in Columbus and Council member [Charleta B. Tavares](#) hit the books with students at Siebert Elementary. Mr. Bellamy's third graders were treated to *The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash*, while Mrs. Wiles' fourth and fifth graders heard about *The School Nurse and the Black Lagoon*. "It's never too early to discover the magic of books," Tavares told her audience, confessing that she read under the covers with a flashlight as a child herself. "Reading skills are the key to a good education and the door to a lifetime of learning."

Tavares also sits on the Franklin County Family and Children First Council, a collaborative effort involving many local child advocacy agencies. One of its objectives is to

promote services that reduce non-academic barriers in the schools.



Charleta Tavares with friends from Siebert Elementary School.

Click here to access a Columbus Municipal Library website dedicated to advancing literacy by connecting kids and parent to books: [CML Kids](#)

CALLING ON KIDS TO HELP KEEP COLUMBUS SAFE

Any parent needing help from their child to fix a home computer glitch knows that kids learn faster and retain new knowledge longer than adults. That's one of the reasons why Council member [Patsy Thomas](#) and Capitol City Cardiology took Project Second Chance on the road to the Salesian Boys and Girls Club of Columbus. Capitol City Cardiology joined the growing ranks of Corporate Champions.

In addition to buying AED equipment and training for its own employees, Capitol City Cardiology generously donated the AED/Training package to the Salesian Boys and Girls Club, a downtown non-profit organization dedicated to Columbus children.

"We are committed to educating the community about simplistic life saving measures like CPR and AED utilization," said Krystal M. Thompson with Capitol City Cardiology. "The Salesian Boys and Girls Club of Columbus will train some extraordinary children, who in a crisis may save one of our lives." Thanks, Capital City Cardiology!



Patsy Thomas congratulates Brother Thomas J. Sweeney, executive director of the Salesian Boys and Girls Club, on receipt of an AED from Capitol City Cardiology. Tim Hill of CCC looks on.

MAKING CITY GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT



Michael C. Mentel speaks with a Franklinton area resident at a recent Leaders' Meeting. Citizens and neighborhood advocates won't need to register under the new law.

If you want to know who's talking with City officials, and what they're talking about, you'll soon be able to find out with a click of your computer mouse. Council member [Michael C. Mentel](#) has been working on legislation to require lobbyists to register their affiliation. Mentel first announced plans last September, saying he wanted to do all he could to make city government accountable and clearly visible to the public. "Lobbyist registration is one very direct way to improve public trust," said Mentel. "The state and federal government already have systems in place to keep citizens informed. I want Columbus residents to have the same opportunity locally." Lobbyists will be able to register and the public able to access the data base via the internet.

Mentel held a public hearing on the ordinance on March 16th and expects Council to vote sometime in April. Neighborhood advocates and business owners are not considered lobbyists, so feel free to continue to bend a Council member's ear and speak up for your neighborhood or favorite community issue.

UPDATE ON BIG DARBY ACCORD

Things are looking up for the Big Darby Watershed. Planning partners are closer to reaching a common vision for future development in the 50,000 + acre portion of this environmentally sensitive area that lie in Franklin County. City Council has twice extended a moratorium on expanding City water and sewer service into the area within the City of Columbus to give partners time to develop a plan that protects the environment and preserves the rights of property owners wishing to develop land. The current deadline is June 30 of this year. The biggest threat to wildlife and stream integrity comes from storm runoff from farming and development. Under the proposed Accord, development will be focused where sewer service is available, in areas that are less sensitive, and as long as its uses best management practices that maintain and improve water quality. And new revenues will be raised to help purchase environmentally sensitive land for permanent open space.



The blue crane that frequents this pond in the Big Darby Watershed is safer thanks to the agreement of ten local political jurisdictions to keep development from encroaching on native habitats.

“It’s an unprecedented environmental attempt,” said Council President [Matt Habash](#). “This is the kind of partnership Columbus and its neighbors must continue to create on a variety of issues to keep Central Ohio a great place to live. From addressing traffic challenges to dealing with the homeless and uninsured, our future remains brightest when we work together.” Ten local government jurisdictions are involved.

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?



Thanks to City Clerk staff, including Thamie Freeze and Darla Character-Johnson, future research into City decisions and action will be easier and more efficient.

Thanks to some smart thinking by Council staffers, Columbus citizens a hundred years from now will be able to ask that question and others about Council meeting testimony since 1985. While it’s not something anyone outside City Hall likely noticed, City Clerk staff has been busy bringing the City of Columbus into the 21st Century when it comes to record-keeping. For the last month they have worked to convert twenty years of analog tapes to a safer, permanent digital format, saving the City over \$250,000 compared to the lowest quote received by an outside vendor for the work. Opting to do the project in-house also allowed Council to upgrade staff computers, and will enable other important audio and video archiving projects for the future.

Under the old system of cassette tapes, testimony at Council meetings could have been lost to history after about 25 years, as the quality of tapes degraded over time. So remember....if you speak at a future Council meeting, your comments will be preserved for generations.