

Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

September 2007



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



In May, Council President Michael C. Mentel and Development Committee Chair Maryellen O'Shaughnessy announced the formation of the neighborhood work group.

Thank you for taking the time to read the September edition of *Call The Roll*. I hope you and your family had an enjoyable summer and are looking forward to a pleasant autumn.

As Council reconvenes in September, we are expecting a report from the Columbus Area Commission/Civic Association Work Group that will help us identify substantive ways in which City Council can enhance the role of neighborhood organizations.

Earlier this year, Councilmember [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#) and I empaneled this group to take an in-depth look at the relationship between area commissions, civic associations and city government.

The Work Group was formed as an independent entity comprised of neighborhood leaders, with the freedom to examine whatever issues that the members and their constituents felt were most important.

I want to personally thank Gary L. Baker II, chair of the panel, for his leadership and all the Work Group members for volunteering their time towards this worthy endeavor. I look forward to learning what they believe are the best methods for City Council to collaborate even more effectively with our neighborhoods and to help strengthen our city, block by block.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael C. Mentel".

Michael C. Mentel
Council President

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CREATING SPACE FOR THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson's experienced leadership in the arts community has provided her unique insight into the potential for Columbus' creative economy.

Trying to earn a living as an artist can be difficult; finding a place to live and work while pursuing one's artistic passion can be even tougher. That's why the Columbus arts community is looking to create affordable space for local artists to live and work.

Columbus City Council and the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) recently hosted two members of the nationally recognized group Artspace. The goal of the visit was to identify potential buildings or locations that can be adapted into live/work spaces for Columbus artists.

Recreation and Parks Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), who runs her own art gallery as a small business owner, recognizes the importance of the visit to Columbus.

"This is an exciting opportunity to enhance the arts community in Columbus," said Tyson. "The arts serve an important role in helping create the overall fabric of our city, and also help define Columbus as a great place to live."

reality. Artspace looks for certain indicators, which include broad-based public support for this type of project and identification of buildings that can make the project successful.

The initial feasibility study will allow Artspace to determine if the requisite factors exist to make a live/work project for artists a

"We need to see if there is a vibrant and active arts community in need of affordable space," said Wendy Holmes, vice president of consulting and research development for Artspace. "That is usually the case in communities the size of Columbus."

"We want people to look at artists as a viable part of the community," said Bryan Knically, president of the GCAC. "Columbus needs to value them as part of the creative economy and as a young professional group, saying to them *we value you beyond just being a member of the community, but also a part of who we are and how we present ourselves as Columbus.*"

Artspace will issue a report on their recommendations later this September. If engaged by the community, Artspace would be responsible for owning and operating the live/work sites.



Wendy Holmes (podium), vice president of consulting and research development for Artspace, will help conduct a pre-feasibility analysis on the likelihood of the live/work project.



CRAIG HOLDS CIVIC MEETINGS WITH CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



Hearcel F. Craig, chair of the Judiciary and Court Administration Committee.

Councilmember [Hearcel F. Craig's](#) first public meeting featuring the City Attorney's office held many revelations, even for a veteran neighborhood activist like Katie Radford.

"I found out we have representation in the prosecutor's office," said Ms. Radford. "I did not know that before tonight. That is a resource my neighbors and I will be using in the future to make our area cleaner and safer."

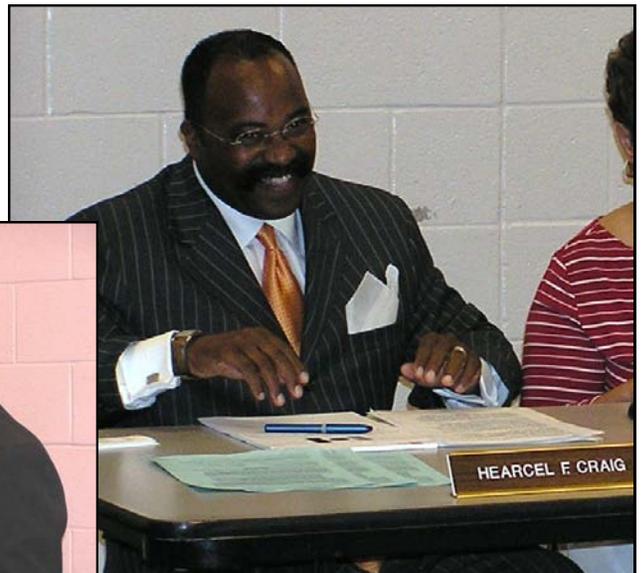
That's just one piece of information that Radford and others took away from the meeting held at the J. Ashburn Youth Center in the Hilltop neighborhood. Craig, chair of the Judiciary and Court Administration Committee, wanted to help residents better understand how the City Attorney's office works everyday to make Columbus as safe as possible.

"We were looking for great community dialogue and that's exactly what we had," said Craig. "These meetings will help strengthen the lines of communication between City Hall and Columbus residents, who now have a better understanding of how the legal system works."

City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. introduced the members of his staff who have been assigned to work with specific precincts or departments in the Division of Police. Each one explained how they interact with officers, residents, and judges on a variety of cases from prostitution to tearing down abandoned buildings.

"This is a perfect forum to gauge the success of our Zone Initiatives," said Pfeiffer. "Some of the frustrations people feel are the same frustrations we feel. Communication is the key to overcoming problems, and following tonight's meeting I know we are on the right track."

Health Housing and Human Services Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#) and Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#) also attending the meeting.



(top) Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig hosted a series of public meetings designed to educate the public on various programs that the City Attorney's office has in place to fight crime and improve neighborhoods .

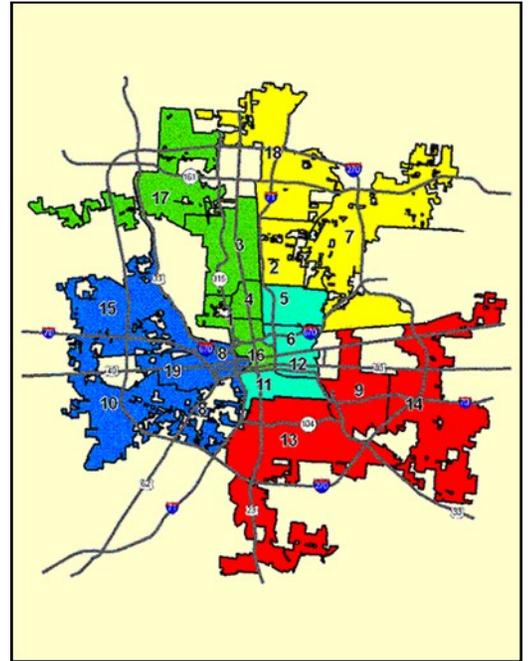
(left) City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. addresses the crowd at the J. Ashburn Youth Center while Councilmembers Craig (left) and Tavares (right) listen.

CRAIG HOLDS CIVIC MEETINGS WITH CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE (CONT.)_

Meet the Zone Initiative Team



City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.



Tannisha Bell



Jody Spurlock



Steve Dunbar



Robert A. Beattley



Natalia Harris

SETTING THE NEW STANDARD FOR SAFETY



Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther was given a tour of the Pinetree Village apartment complex by the site's manager, David Sethi.

There is a national program that helps to make apartment complexes as safe as possible. It's called the *Crime Free Multi-Housing* program and there is only one complex in Columbus that is certified by it.

"Ultimately it's about awareness," said David Sethi, manager of Landis Properties, the company that owns Pinetree Village Apartments. "It is moving security from the back burner to the front burner."

Pinetree Village received the Crime Free Multi-Housing certification this summer following months of training by property managers and significant improvements to the grounds.

"I think they want the best for the apartment community," said Wendy Burney, a resident of Pinetree Village. "This has never been a high crime area and the managers and police are working to keep it that way."

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In addition to dozens of cameras monitoring the common areas of the complex, Pinetree Village owners also cut down bushes and trimmed trees to improve sightlines for police and to prevent people from hiding near doors.

Under the leadership of President [Michael C. Mentel](#) and President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#), Columbus City Council approved funds to send a Columbus Division of Police commander to Arizona for training in the program. The hope is that more complexes will follow Pinetree's lead.



Pinetree Village is the first multi-housing apartment complex to receive crime-free certification in the city of Columbus.

"This is a real partnership between the property owners and police," said Safety Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#). "We would like more owners to step up and allow police to make their properties as safe as possible."



NEW HOME FOR THE COLUMBUS CLIPPERS

With the smell of peanuts and hot dogs in the summer air, the new home of the Columbus Clippers started to take shape. Participants in the groundbreaking ceremony for Huntington Park promised a bright future for pro baseball in Columbus, while also tipping their cap to the past.

“When the Clippers first came to town, I got a summer job at the stadium selling hot dogs,” said Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#), recalling his teenage years in Columbus. “It was an amazing experience and I cherish those memories to this day.”



Council President Mentel addresses the crowd at the future site of the new Clippers Stadium.

Council President Mentel also praised the trio of county commissioners and the many corporate partners in attendance who helped lead the Huntington Park project from concept to reality. The new ballpark will seat 10,000 at a cost of approximately \$50 million. Columbus is spending \$11.4 million on infrastructure improvements, including new sanitary sewer and power lines in the area.

“This is another great example of reinvention in our downtown,” said Council President Mentel. “We are standing here today to turn a dusty, unused lot into a place where families will gather and enjoy the all-American sport of baseball for decades to come.”



City Council President Michael C. Mentel (fourth from left) was joined by Mayor Coleman and other dignitaries for the groundbreaking ceremony at Huntington Park. (Photos courtesy of Columbus Clippers)

BRIEFING HELPS IDENTIFY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS



Health, Housing, and Human Services Committee Chair Charleta B. Tavares.

The budgets for local human services agencies are tight and only getting tighter. That was one of the main messages for Health, Housing and Human Services Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#), who held two days of testimony with leaders of organizations that help low income and disabled individuals.

“The challenge for many of us in the non-profit community is to meet the needs of our clients while dealing with flat-line funding,” said Steve Votaw, CEO for *Directions for Youth and Families*, who says money from government, charities and corporations has not increased significantly in recent years. “The demand for help is greater than our ability to assist teens and families. For some services, we have a three month waiting list.”

Councilmember Tavares says she uses the briefings to help determine the trends and challenges that face human services agencies, and to better prepare for the 2008 budget. She says one of the greatest needs uncovered during the hearings concerned the matter of helping feed low-income working families.

“When we have people who are working everyday and still have to use the food bank and pantries in order to make ends meet, we have a problem,” said Councilmember Tavares. “We have seen a 29% increase in food needs for the working poor—those who are working everyday and still need assistance.”

Some of the other groups that took part in the Human Services briefings included St. Stephen’s Community House, the Community Kitchen, Inc., the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Maryhaven, Life Care Alliance, and the Columbus Urban League.

CITY COUNCIL LEADERS VOLUNTEER IN CLASSROOMS



Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson (podium) will take part in *Project Mentor*.

A new school year is underway and soon Columbus teachers will have some help in the classroom. *Project Mentor* is a joint effort by the City of Columbus, the Columbus City School District, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters to place 1,000 volunteers in classrooms with 1,000 8th grade students who are at risk of not graduating by 2012.

“As a proud graduate of the Columbus public school system, I know that all of Columbus wins when our children succeed in the classroom,” said Councilmember [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), chair of Council’s Administration Committee and a *Project Mentor* volunteer. “As we prepare for our city’s bicentennial in 2012, it is our goal to do whatever we can to assist the Columbus City School District to reach their goal of a 90% graduation rate by 2012.”

Mayor Michel B. Coleman’s Office of Education has set a goal of having 200 City employees volunteer for the *Project Mentor* program. Volunteers will help students with their class work as well as provide support in their social and emotional development.

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH OF COLUMBUS

The results are in and they validate the positive impact of the Summer Youth Employment Program.

In March, City Council collaborated with Mayor Michael B. Coleman to allocate \$756,000 to help fund the initiative. The program's goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to gain practical work experience that they will carry with them the rest of their lives.

Recently, a press conference was held at the Sawyer Recreation Center to offer the public a progress report on the success of the program.

"Thanks to the City's partnership with the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation, we have taken this program to a whole new level," said Council President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#). "With a 90% retention rate and nearly 1,200 school aged youth and 128 young adults enrolled, the program boasts statistics that the entire Columbus and Franklin County community can be proud of."

Not satisfied with a numbers-only perspective, President Pro Tem Boyce wanted to see the impact that the initiative was having on the program's participants first-hand. Prior to the press conference, he visited the Salesian Boys & Girls Club of Columbus to talk with some of the youth who are employed through the program.

"The true value of this program is the learning that occurs," exclaimed Boyce to the participants. "This program is about more than just working for a few months and earning a pay check; it's about experiencing the principles and the dynamics of employment."



During his visit to the Salesian Boys & Girls Club of Columbus, Council President Pro Tem Boyce mentioned that his early job experiences helped provide him with the work ethic he still carries with him today. (Photo courtesy of Fr. John Puntino)



Council President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce (pictured) joined Mayor Michael B. Coleman and members of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners to provide a progress report for the Summer Youth Employment Program.

"On behalf of myself and my Council colleagues, I want to extend a well-deserved congratulations to all the participants of the program," said Workforce Development Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#), who also attended the press conference. "They are learning the skills required to not only retain a job, but to build a career."

INNOVATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Workforce Development Committee Chair Charleta B. Tavares and Dr. Charles Wise, director of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs announce the creation of the Columbus Legislative Internship Program.

Columbus City Council and The Ohio State University's John Glenn School of Public Affairs have begun an internship program that will provide practical experience for graduate school students and valuable help at City Hall.

The Columbus Legislative Internship Program (CLIP) will consist of paid internships for students from the Glenn School. The students will be placed in various City Council offices to assist in policy research, constituent services, writing analyses, monitoring and attending meetings and reviewing legislation.

"This is a win for City Council and The Ohio State University," said [Charleta Tavares](#), chair of the Workforce Development Committee. "We can take what these

students learn at the Glenn School and help put that knowledge into practice."

The first year of the CLIP program will have four students from the Glenn School working at City Hall. The head of the Glenn School says this program will help attract students across the country to Columbus.

"The best and the brightest will recognize this for what it is, a tremendous opportunity to work in city government," said Dr. Charles Wise, director of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs. "Professional preparation is greatly enhanced by a component like this. The interaction between the practice of public affairs and the academic learning of public affairs brings synergy that is invaluable in developing the leaders of tomorrow."

The interns will work 20 hours per week during the school year and full-time during the summer. City Council will pay the students a stipend while OSU will cover their cost of tuition during the time they are enrolled in the two-year program.

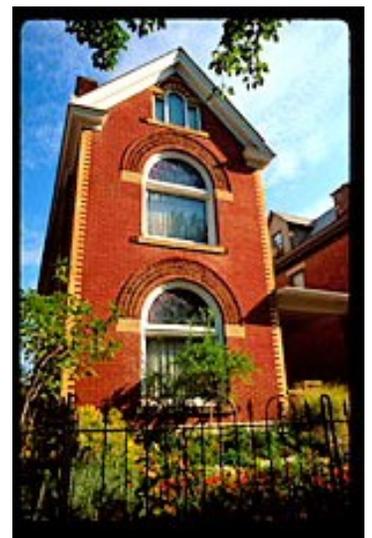
CONSERVING COLUMBUS NEIGHBOHOODS

A proposal to preserve distinguishing features of Columbus neighborhoods will be discussed during a public hearing.

Development Committee Chair [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#) will host the hearing to discuss the creation of three conservation neighborhoods in Columbus.

Conservation Neighborhood Districts will identify areas of the city that have distinctive characteristics that neighbors wish to preserve or protect if future development occurs. The hope is that these efforts will help foster civic pride and increased investment in various sections of Columbus.

The Department of Development will designate three neighborhoods to participate in a one-year pilot program before other areas will be permitted to take part in the initiative. Residents within the designated boundaries of the district will decide what features set their area apart from others.



STANDING WITH THE COMMUNITY AGAINST CRIME

Each year, neighborhoods throughout Columbus join together to celebrate *National Night Out*.

Neighborhoods use block parties, cookouts, parades, visits from police, flashlight walks, contests, youth activities, and anti-crime rallies to send a message to criminals that they are organized and fighting back.

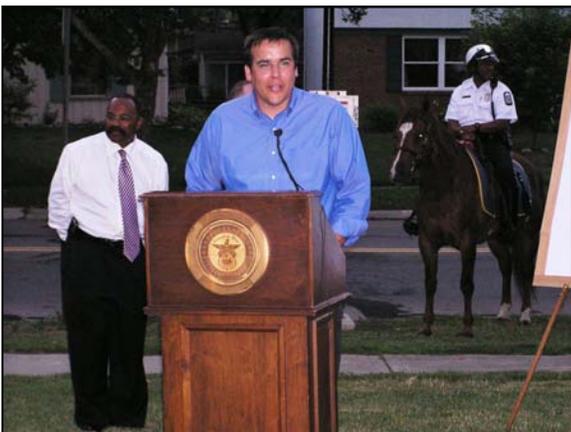
At this year's *National Night Out*, Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair [Hearcel F. Craig](#), Administration Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#), Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#), and Council President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#) took to the streets to meet one-on-one with Columbus residents.



***National Night Out* encourages neighborhood camaraderie and community activism.**

“These activities promote police and community partnerships,” said Councilmember Hearcel F. Craig. “This campaign has proven itself time and time again to be effective in deterring crime and increasing neighborhood safety.”

As the night progressed, the Councilmembers visited a number of neighborhoods including Olde Town East and Greater Linden. Their visit to the Hilltop afforded an opportunity for Gary L. Baker II, chair of the Greater Hilltop Area Commission, to relay a progress report on the crime-fighting programs that his West Side community has utilized.



Prior to the ceremonial street lighting celebration, Councilmember Ginther (podium) and Councilmember Craig (left) relayed to the neighborhood the impact the new lights would have on fighting crime.

“It is vital we get this type of opportunity to discuss neighborhood safety issues with Columbus residents,” said Councilmember Tyson. “These events generate support for local anti-crime programs and initiatives. We must continue to work together with neighborhoods and support their efforts to fight crime.”

The last stop of the evening took place in the Sharon Woods neighborhood, and was especially exciting for Councilmember Ginther, who also chairs the Public Utilities Committee. The neighborhood recently installed new street lights, which were turned on for the first time during a ceremonial street lighting.

“Street lights are vital for increasing safety,” proclaimed Ginther. “Improved lighting discourages criminal activity and makes it easier for Columbus police officers to do their jobs.”

“I join with Sharon Woods in celebrating the installation of these new street lights,” added Councilmember Craig. “A unified neighborhood can have an amazing impact on improving safety.”

STANDING WITH THE COMMUNITY AGAINST CRIME (CONT.)



President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce speaks with Columbus Fire Fighters.



Recreation and Parks Committee Chair Priscilla R. Tyson addresses Hilltop residents.



Judiciary and Court Administration Committee Chair Hearcel F. Craig (right) and the Greater Hilltop Area Commission Chair Gary L. Baker II (left).



New street lights will help keep the Sharon Woods neighborhood safe.



Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther addresses the *National Night Out* crowd in the Hilltop.



Councilmember Ginther assists in the street lighting.



Councilmember Tyson (left) with residents.