

Call The Roll

An E-Publication of Columbus City Council

March / April 2008



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



(top) Council President Mentel announced that Erika Clark Jones would serve as the new Director of Advocacy for Homeless and Social Services.

Last year, Mayor Coleman and I stood onstage at the Mel Schottenstein Birthday Celebration and pledged to take our efforts to a new level in transitioning the homeless from the streets to permanent housing. The primary component of our promise was the creation of a cabinet level position within Mayor Coleman's administration dedicated to coordinating the City's response to the challenges of homelessness.

I am pleased to report we recently announced that Erika Clark Jones, a long-time public servant and policy advisor to the Mayor, has accepted the position of Advocate for the Homeless and Social Services.

Director Clark's title reflects the multi-faceted role she will serve to aide those who live on the land, while also coordinating support services ranging from additional counseling to job training programs. This position is believed to be one of the first of its kind in the nation and is expected to serve as a model for other cities to follow. One of Director Jones' first responsibilities will be to streamline the protocol for all City employees to follow when they interface with a homeless individual or family. These updated procedures will help ensure that those in need will receive critical assistance as quickly as possible. I look forward to working with Director Jones to make this new position a national model for success.

Sincerely,

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

Michael C. Mentel
City Council President



(L-R) Council President Michael C. Mentel, Director of Advocacy for Homeless and Social Services Erika Clark Jones, Mayor Michael B. Coleman and Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio President and CEO Thomas J. Stofac.

Visit Columbus City Council's [Web site](#) to learn more about Council's [Initiatives](#) and to access links to City departments and information.

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2008 BUDGET AMENDMENTS



After months of careful consideration, Columbus City Council made a number of significant amendments to the 2008 budget that Mayor Coleman first submitted late last year.

“Our [first priority](#) was avoiding layoffs and maintaining the high standard of service that the people of Columbus expect from City government,” said Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#). “I’m proud to report, under the leadership of Finance Committee Chair Kevin L. Boyce, we accomplished our goal.”

The original \$650.3 million budget proposal was based upon early revenue projections and called for the elimination of [26 full time jobs](#). Year end figures from the Auditor’s Office showed slightly higher than expected revenues along with lower than expected expenditures, providing Council with an additional \$2.8 million to allocate in 2008. The reallocation of other revenue sources also created another \$1 million dollars to cover additional budgetary priorities. Council also amended the budget to restore funding to a number of social service agencies that partner with the City on a variety of programs that serve every segment of society.



(top) Council President Mentel announced that City Council will take a proactive approach in addressing homelessness.

(right) President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce stated that Council will continue to support the creative economy.



“This budget invests in essential City services such as code enforcement, public safety, and recreation and parks,” said President Pro Tem [Kevin L. Boyce](#). “City Council also continues our commitment to leverage money from the private and public sectors to fund our arts and cultural activities.”

Highlights of the 2008 budget amendments include funding for:

- [The Community Shelter Board](#)
- [The Franklin County Clerk of Courts](#)
- [Area Commissions](#)
- [Tech Columbus](#)
- [Community Crime Patrol](#)
- [Franklin Park Conservatory](#)

NEW STREET LIGHTS FOR OSU CAMPUS AREA

The neighborhood east of Ohio State’s campus is a brighter, safer place these days as the City of Columbus recently installed nearly \$1 million in new street lights.

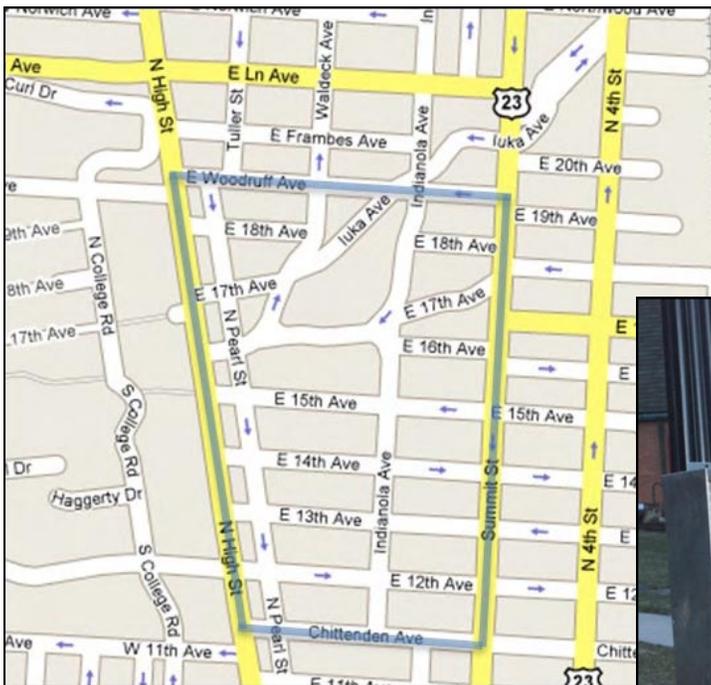
“We all know that better lighting improves the safety of a neighborhood,” said [Andrew J. Ginther](#), chair of the Public Safety Committee. “This upgrade continues City Council’s commitment to improve the vital infrastructure of Columbus.”

The new lights were installed on a dozen streets and are placed 160 feet apart—closer together than the standard 180-foot spacing for street lights. The closer spacing provides brighter illumination. The project was completed four months ahead of schedule.

“The City and OSU are committed to making campus area streets safer, and I am proud the students stepped up to ask for the lights and were a part of this partnership,” Mayor Coleman said. “Our investment in these street lights and construction of the new Moody/Hall Neighborhood Policing Center on 11th Avenue sends a clear message to criminals that we stand together against them.”



Public Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther discussed how street lights improve the safety of a neighborhood.



“The culmination of years of Ohio State students working closely with the City have led to this great development for our campus,” OSU Undergraduate Student Government President Kate Christobek said. “I can attest that students at Ohio State couldn’t be more excited about what an excellent change this new lighting brings to our neighborhood.”



(top) The new OSU street lights were installed within the following boundaries:

- North: Woodruff Avenue**
- South: Chittenden Avenue**
- East: Summit Street**
- West: North High Street**

(right) Mayor Coleman and Councilmember Ginther turn on the new OSU street lights.

WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

In a collaborative effort to prepare the next generation of working professionals, Columbus City Council and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce have created a new Web directory to link college students with a network of employers.

Columbusinternships.com is designed to provide students the opportunity to gain practical work experience and the ability to build a resume and help them find permanent employment upon graduation.

At a recent leadership conference held by the Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#) addressed the issues and challenges of cultivating tomorrow's workforce.

"City Council and the Chamber remain committed to attracting the best and brightest young minds to Columbus. Our efforts with the Summer Youth Work Program has allowed thousands of high school students to experience the principles and dynamics of employment," said Councilmember Tavares. "In order to retain college graduates in the Columbus region, we must provide them with career-building opportunities. Our latest joint effort, the Columbus Internship Web Portal, will empower students to become proactive in their own career development."

In addition to providing a wealth of information to prospective student interns, the Web portal offers numerous resources to employers to assist them in creating their own internship programs.

"This benefits employers and students," said Councilmember Tavares. "City Council has benefited tremendously from its own internship program, the Columbus Legislative Internship Program."

Research indicates that students who participate in internships are more likely to seek regional employment after graduation.

"The path from student to professional can be daunting," said Tavares. "This new tool will bridge the gap between academia and professional life. There is enormous career potential in Columbus and we want students to experience the promising future that awaits them here."



Workforce Development Chair Charleta B. Tavares discussed the importance of retaining young professionals.



Click on the Columbusinternships.com logo for more information on the Internship Web Portal created in conjunction with City Council and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

SURVEY OFFERS ARTISTS A NEW WAY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES



Development Committee Chair Maryellen O'Shaughnessy discussed the impact the arts community has on Columbus.

City Council is helping take the next steps in an effort to create affordable live/work space for Columbus artists. *Artspace*, a Minneapolis based non-profit development group, recently launched an on-line survey to determine the demand for such a building. City Council, JPMorgan Chase and Columbus Downtown Development Corporation have joined together to fund the survey.

"Artists are catalysts for positive change in neighborhoods," [O'Shaughnessy](#) said. "This survey is another step we need to take to continue effectively supporting our creative class."

Artspace representatives visited Columbus last summer, touring a number of potential sites for development. When the exact number of artists interested in a live/work space is determined, the City will have a better idea of the type of structure that will be needed. The spaces, ranging from studios to two bedroom apartments, will be priced just below market rate.



"The level of interest from the City of Columbus, GCAC and the arts community leads us to believe that this is a project that will add to the urban culture of Columbus," said Wendy Holmes, vice president of Consulting and Resource Development for *Artspace*.

"Columbus is fortunate to have a City Council that actively supports the arts, and we're excited that so many community partners have come together for the common good of building the number of live/work spaces for local artists," said Bryan W. Knicely, GCAC President.



(top) GCAC President Brian Knicely relayed the importance of Columbus' creative economy.

(right) At a recent presentation, *Artspace* vice president Wendy Holmes provided an overview of the concept of live/work spaces.



The on-line survey will continue through May 20. To access the survey, visit www.columbusartspace.org or click on the *Artspace* logo above.

REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS



Development Committee Chair Maryellen O'Shaughnessy (left) and Minority and Small Business Development Committee Chair Hearcel F. Craig (right) hosted a meeting with NCR leaders.

Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) districts have helped transform many Columbus neighborhoods during the last decade. Development Committee Chair [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#) and Minority and Small Business Administration Committee Chair [Hearcel F. Craig](#) held a meeting with leaders of the City's 15 NCR districts to learn more about their successes and plans for the future.

"In 2008 we are focusing on the Cleveland Avenue corridor to improve the entire Linden neighborhood," said Donna Hicho, director of the Greater Linden Development Corporation.

"We are working with business owners and code enforcement officers to clean up storefronts to make the area more inviting to shoppers and businesses alike."

The NCR program helps to stimulate reinvestment in area neighborhoods. Individuals, investors, developers, and corporations are eligible for loans that are administered through the Community Development Block Grant program.

"It is a way to encourage continued investment in targeted areas of the city," said Councilmember O'Shaughnessy. "One of the shining examples of the power of the NCR program is the Short North, now a nationally recognized destination attracting visitors from across the nation."

Business owners within NCRs can apply for low interest loans for exterior renovation to commercial property. A loan officer in the Columbus Economic Development Division works with each applicant to create a loan package that must be presented and approved by an external committee before funding is committed to a project.

"City Council is committed to helping businesses identify the appropriate strategies and tools to promote growth and success," said Councilmember Craig. "The meeting with these civic leaders was invaluable as we consider our annual allocation to the NCRs."



The Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) program is designed to help stimulate business development in designated areas.

CALLING ON ALL "GREEN THUMBS"

Columbus parks offer green spaces and recreational opportunities for people and their pets to enjoy all year round. Part of the beauty of these areas can be found in the wide variety of flowers and plants that volunteers nurture to ensure our parks look their best. Recreation and Parks Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#) has announced a new program that will help organizations cover the cost of caring for plants and flowers.

"During difficult budget times it has been the volunteers who have helped maintain the beauty of our parks," said Tyson. "Now it is City Council's turn to help these groups in return."

Tyson has announced a competitive grant program available for non-profits and other community based organization that care for landscaping in Columbus parks. A maximum of \$1,000 may be awarded to a single group, with a dollar for dollar match required from the organization. A Columbus Recreation and Parks committee comprised of forestry and horticultural staff members will review the proposals and help award the grants.

"The money can be used for a wide variety of items such as plants, trees, mulch, watering, fertilizing or weed control," said Tyson.

For more information contact Columbus Recreation and Parks Assistant Director Mark Young at mayoung@columbus.gov.



Councilmembers Charleta B. Tavares (left) and Priscilla R. Tyson (right) visited the Franklin Park Conservatory. As part of her 2008 budget amendments, Councilmember Tyson restored staffing levels in the Recreation and Parks Department.



Floral arrangements on display at the Franklin Park Conservatory.



SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Business leaders in the Clintonville community learned firsthand how the 2008 budget is impacting their neighborhoods.

Public Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#) was invited to speak at the Clintonville Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon. Ginther discussed a variety of issues, ranging from safety issues in the Clintonville area, to ways that local business leaders can contribute to the safety initiatives spearheaded by City Council and Mayor Coleman.

"Making Columbus the best place to live, work and raise a family requires us to have safe neighborhoods in which to do business," said Ginther. "Over 70% of the City's budget is dedicated to safety. Despite the economic challenges of the future, we will continue to invest your tax dollars wisely."

Although Ginther noted the City is facing tougher economic times, he painted a picture of hope and optimism built on community involvement and the activism of neighborhood leaders.

"We are a safer city," said Ginther. "Through innovation, we have found ways to use the resources we have available to reduce crime in every major category. From the Summer Strike Force, to the Anti-Gang Initiative we are seeing the positive effects of our efforts. However, with all of our success, there is still more work to be done. As business leaders you are in a unique position to influence those around you to become more involved and help find solutions to the challenges facing our community. You have my commitment to make Columbus a safe place to do business. I know that you'll be there with me every step of the way."



Public Safety Committee Chair Andrew J. Ginther discussed the City's safety initiatives.

NATIONAL ATTENTION FOR A LOCAL ISSUE

A New York City news crew recently spent time in Columbus covering a story that affects cities across the country, but none more so than Columbus.

During February and early March, Columbus residents caught a glimpse of what lies ahead: the high cost of protecting presidential candidates and their surrogates during the long election cycle.

"It may be a federal election, but when it comes to paying for police and fire protection for these candidates, it is the residents of Columbus who end up paying the tab," said Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#).

The 2004 presidential election cost Columbus residents more than \$400,000 for public safety services when candidates and supporters visited, with no help from Washington, D.C. Council President Mentel is urging national leaders to help cities like Columbus meet their obligations to visitors and residents by using a formula similar to the way Homeland Security funds are allocated to help pay for the necessary police and fire protection during the 2008 campaign season.

To watch the story visit <http://www.reuters.com/news/video?videoid=75096>



Council President Mentel urged the federal government to help support the cost of the police presence required during presidential campaign events.

ANNOUNCING THE ECONOMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE



President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce weighed in on the City's current financial status at the first Economic Advisory Committee meeting.

Recognizing that difficult economic times call for strong and consistent leadership, City Council along with Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Auditor Hugh Dorrian helped launch the Economic Advisory Committee in March. The committee members will be responsible for studying ways to ensure the continued sustainability of critical City services.

"The time has come for us to fully assess the needs of our city and even more importantly to develop a plan to address those needs," said Councilmember [Kevin L. Boyce](#), chair of the Finance Committee. "This advisory committee, comprised of experts and community leaders, will help guide the discussion and make recommendations toward that end."

The committee will study all aspects of Columbus' budget. They hope to find ways to maximize revenues while being fiscally conservative with all tax revenue.

The Economic Advisory Committee is expected to issue a report on their findings in late 2008 or early 2009.

ECONOMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

1. Hugh J. Dorrian, Columbus City Auditor
2. Kevin L. Boyce, Chair, City Council Finance & Management Committee
3. Joel Taylor, Director, Department of Finance & Management
4. Joe Alutto, Executive VP and Provost, The Ohio State University
5. Darrell Gammell, Business Representative, Plumbers and Pipe fitters Local Union 189
6. Chris Gawronski, Clintonville Area Commission
7. Eddie Harrell, Jr., President, Columbus Urban League
8. Jesse M. Hemphill, CPA, Hemphill & Associates
9. Bob Howarth, Attorney, Shoemaker & Howarth, LLP, Chair
10. Carl Kohrt, President and CFO, Battelle
11. Bill LaFayette, Vice President Economic Analysis, Columbus Chamber
12. Barbara Poppe, Executive Director, Community Shelter Board
13. Susan Tomasky, President, AEP Transmission
14. Philip H. Urban, President and CEO, Grange Insurance Companies
15. Tiffany White, North Central Area Commission



President Pro Tem Kevin L. Boyce helped announce the creation of the Economic Advisory Committee during the 2008 budget roll-out.

STUDENTS CARRY ON THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

A group of very talented middle school students have used their artistic gifts to give the community a glimpse of how Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has impacted their generation.

Health, Housing and Human Services Committee Chair [Charleta B. Tavares](#) presented the winners of the first annual *Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School Art Contest* with certificates of honor for using their artistic abilities to express their renditions of Dr. King and his legacy.

“City Council is proud of each one of you,” said Councilmember Tavares. “I am asking each of you to focus in on your passion for the arts. Regardless of whether your talents lie in the visual arts or writing, continue using your abilities to beautify the City of Columbus.”

The competition’s theme, *Celebrating the Legacy from Dreams to Actions*, emphasized Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision of equality. In addition to their artwork, students submitted essays that demonstrated their knowledge of Dr. King’s accomplishments.



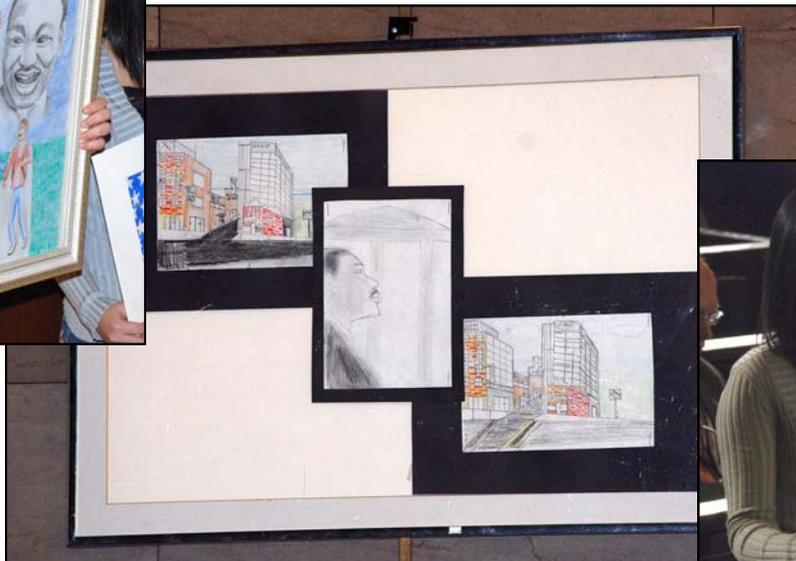
Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares presented Vincent Johns, Jr. with a certificate of honor for his outstanding work.



(top) In addition to receiving a certificate of honor, first-place winner Shane Hsiung received \$500.

“This competition was so inspirational to those of us involved,” said Nelson Hewitt, the program’s coordination. “We will continue looking to these young people to help promote the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”

The students’ artwork was placed on exhibit in City Hall for all the enjoy.



(top) Vincent Johns Jr.’s art was placed on exhibit at City Hall.

(right) Third-place winner Amy Mo displayed her artwork.



NASA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS



NASA's Deputy Administrator Shana Dale presented Council President Mentel with a montage of NASA's space exploration accomplishments.

The achievements of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration over the last 50 years has inspired multiple generations to dream about space exploration and scientific research.

The Center Of Science and Industry (COSI), the organization in Columbus' own backyard that has brought the wonders of science to countless children and their families, invited Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#) to participate in NASA's Future Forum.

Columbus was chosen as one of only seven cities around the nation to host the *Future Forum* and celebrate NASA's 50th anniversary. The event attracted experts in a variety of fields, including science and technology, to discuss how space exploration benefits Ohio. President Mentel welcomed NASA Deputy Administrator Shana Dale, who discussed the "Space Economy," or the tangible, everyday benefits that have culminated

from decades of research by scientists who have contributed to NASA's success.

"Thanks to high resolution, real time imaging technology derived from the Hubble Space Telescope program, breast biopsies can be performed with a needle instead of a scalpel," said Dale. She also noted other medical advances credited to NASA-related research such as improvements to LASIK eye surgery and heart pumps designed by engineers at the Johnson Space Center.

Along with COSI, leaders from Battelle Institute and The Ohio State University were on hand to discuss ways to expand educational opportunities for children to expose them to the marvels of science.

Attendees were also treated to an exciting preview of NASA's Constellation Program, which will take Americans back to the moon and blaze a trail to Mars and beyond.

"I encourage everyone to take advantage of COSI and the many enriching and fun experiences they have to offer Columbus residents, both young and old," said President Mentel.



COSI President and CEO David Chesebrough and Deputy Administrator Dale look on as Council President Mentel encouraged the community to support COSI's innovative new programs.

NEW HOLSTERS FOR POLICE

Last year, the Division of Police transitioned their standard issue weapon from Smith & Wesson's discontinued .45 caliber handgun to their new .40 caliber model. The resulting differences in design and function of the new model requires a different style of holster, and City Council recently fulfilled its commitment to provide Columbus police officers with new holsters that will help ensure safe handling of their firearms at all times.

Public Safety Committee Chair [Andrew J. Ginther](#) and Administration Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#) co-sponsored legislation that appropriated \$71,750 from Council's *Public Safety Initiatives Fund* to purchase the holsters. The holsters will allow officers, including plain clothes detectives and those working undercover, to carry their service weapon in almost any situation.

With very few exceptions, Columbus police officers are required to carry their weapon at all times, whether on-duty or off-duty.



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES: KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED



The hyperlinked video and audio files located throughout *Call The Roll* will highlight the numerous events attended by Councilmembers.

New Time Slot for Call The Roll Radio: Council President [Michael C. Mentel](#) is pleased to announce that City Council's public affairs radio program, *Call The Roll*, can now be heard two times every Saturday, at 7:00 am and 2:00 pm, on *Freedom FM, 91.5*.

"Expanding our community outreach programming will help us reach more residents and educate them on many of the beneficial initiatives provided by the City and our partners," said President Mentel.

Call The Roll is a lively half-hour program that features interviews with members of City Council and other Columbus leaders on topics that range from pending legislation to upcoming community events and programs.

with Columbus citizens. City Council meetings and other city events are now available live on-line for viewing at GTC-3's Web site.

City Council Meetings Now Live on the Web: GTC-3, the City's cable television channel, is offering a new way for City Council to connect

"Streaming video online will allow even more people to monitor their government," said Administration Committee Chair [Priscilla R. Tyson](#).

Watch live gavel-to-gavel coverage of City Council meetings on Mondays beginning at 5:00 pm by visiting www.columbus.gov/tv/

Multi-media platforms: In addition to streaming video, residents can now access audio clips that will expand on the stories covered in *Call The Roll*.

Click on the hyperlinked text throughout *Call The Roll* to preview sound bites from a wide variety of events attended by the members of Council.