

The Council Ledger

Summer-Fall 2023

Council Approves Quarter Million Dollar County Contribution For Falls Gorge Dam Removal

At its August 21st Council Meeting, Council approved Resolution 2023-225 authorizing the Executive to execute a contribution agreement with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide funds, in the amount of \$250,000.00, to support the Cuyahoga Gorge Dam Removal.

Additionally, Council honored "Friends of the Crooked River," a nonprofit dedicated to good stewardship of local water resources. Gary Whidden, a retired businessman and self-described "citizen of the valley," was on hand to receive a commendation from Summit County District 2 Representative, John Schmidt. Mr. Whidden along with "Friends of the Crooked River" member, Elaine Marsh have been instrumental in efforts to remove the former Ohio Edison Dam in the Gorge Metro Park in Cuyahoga Falls.

"We are proud to approve funding for this effort and recognize the service, leadership and dedication of Mr. Whidden, Ms. Marsh and the Friends of the Crooked River. Their steadfast commitment to our natural resources will benefit generations to come," said Councilman Schmidt.

The Gorge Dam was constructed on the Cuyahoga River in 1913 and produced hydroelectric power until 1958. The dam pool was subsequently used until 1992 as a source for cooling water for the local Ohio Edison coal-fired power plant. The dam and its pool have not been used for power generation purposes for the past 23 years and the structure now acts as an impairment to aquatic species along the middle and lower segments of the Cuyahoga River.

The Cuyahoga Gorge Dam Removal will restore beneficial uses of the river to communities of Northeast Ohio, including providing a 2.5 mile white water course of international appeal which is expected to increase tourism and bring immense impact to the local economy.

The Ohio EPA and the US EPA signed a cooperative project agreement to create a plan for contaminated sediment management and habitat restoration for the Gorge Dam and the project is being funded through the Great Lakes Legacy Act with additional matching funds provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and local funds provided by the City of Akron and local partners including the City of Akron, City of Cuyahoga Falls, Summit Metro Parks, First Energy, Great Lakes Restoration, and the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

The Great Lakes Legacy Act Project Agreement between the US EPA and the Ohio EPA for the Project requires the non-Federal parties to provide matching funds in the amount of 35 percent of the total project cost.



District 2 Councilman John Schmidt
with Friends of the Crooked River
member Gary Whidden.

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Council Honors Celtic Club of Ohio for Cancer Fight Campaign

For the past 14 years, The Celtic Club of Ohio has honored those who have lost their lives to cancer. "Celtic Club Fights Cancer" began in downtown Kent in 2010 as Bras Across the Crooked River- focusing on breast cancer. It is now for all cancers. The Celtic Club has had forty-one bridge displays in seven N.E. Ohio counties- Cuyahoga, Lake, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit and Tuscarawas and has donated over eleven thousand bras to battered women's shelters.

The Celtic Club of Ohio was created in 2002 by Jim Collver and his late girlfriend, Mary Rita Murray-Klein, as a way to celebrate and embrace their Irish heritage. After Collver's grandmother and aunt died from breast cancer and Murray-Klein died from lung cancer in 2007, Culver dedicated himself to honoring those who no longer have a voice. Along with Collver, four volunteers - Lori Dunton, Michelle Kessell, Kathy Ball and Tim Yeager show up every year to represent breast cancer awareness. This year, the group set up bras along the Barberton bridge on Wooster/Robinson Road so hundreds of cars passing through could catch a glimpse. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, and more than 1.7 million cases of cancer are detected and diagnosed annually. Councilwoman **Bethany McKenney (District 7 which includes Barberton)** honored Mr. Colver for his dedication and commitment with the Celtic Club at a special presentation on Labor Day weekend, September 2, in Barberton.



Councilwoman Bethany McKenney (District 7) with Jim Collver of the Celtic Club of Ohio being honored for Cancer Awareness Campaign .

Council Honors Civic Icon Ophelia Averitt

On, Wednesday, August 16, Former Akron NAACP President Ophelia Averitt was honored for her advocacy by the Akron Municipal Court and Summit County Council at a small ceremony outside the Harold K. Stubbs Justice Center. The longtime Akron health and beauty entrepreneur, author and civil-rights activist was on hand signing copies of her latest book, "Shadows of the Past and Hope for the Future." Summit County Council President Veronica Sims presented Averitt with a commendation for her six decades of promoting civil rights and education attainment in the city of Akron.

"Ms. Averitt's commitment to equal rights transcends generations and that's what makes her truly unique. We wanted to honor her service to the community and honor her 63-year commitment to civil rights on the front lines."

Besides leading Akron's NAACP chapter, Averitt was also the first vice chair of the Ohio State Conference of the NAACP and is a member of the NAACP National Board of Directors. She helped start five new NAACP college chapters, including at the University of Akron, Kent State University, and Youngstown State University.

"I may be retired, but my work will never be done. I will never stop fighting for equal rights and protections for people in this community and across Ohio, and it is wonderful meeting people here today who share my same passion for civil rights," Ms. Averitt concluded.



Summit County Council President Veronica Sims presents a Commendation to former Akron NAACP President and Civic Icon, Ophelia Averitt.

Photo courtesy of Ohio.com

Council Members Join Ohio Education Association Leaders To Unveil New Historical Marker in Akron

On August 10, Summit County Council President **Veronica Sims (District 5)** and **District 2 Council Representative John Schmidt** were on hand for the unveiling of an Ohio Historical Marker for the Ohio Education Association (OEA). The bronze marker commemorates the first formal gathering of the group of educators who founded the Association and who paved the way for OEA to become a leading voice in public education advocacy for its nearly 120,000 members and the 1.7 million students they serve today. "As a product of the Akron Public Schools and former APS School Board Member, I can appreciate the dedication and unwavering commitment that our educators have shown to ensuring that our students get the best public education that is possible as they pursue their future dreams and aspirations," said Sims. "This marker is a reminder of how far we have come and how far we still have to go to insure that our students continue to receive the best education they deserve." The OEA marked its 175th Anniversary in 2023.



Council President Veronica Sims (back row second from left) and Councilman John Schmidt (back row far right) with County Executive Ilene Shapiro's Chief of Staff Brian Nelson (back row second from right) and other OEA leaders at the unveiling of the OEA Ohio Historical Marker.

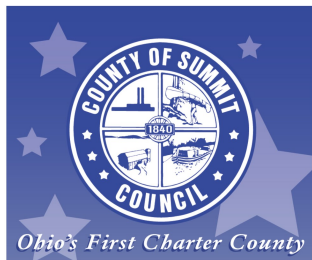
Council Honors Tallmadge Girls Softball State Champions

Prior to its June 12, Committee Meeting, Summit County Council honored the Tallmadge High School Girls Softball State Champions.

On Saturday, June 3, 2023, the Lady Blue Devils won the OHSAA Division II State Championship with a commanding 9-0 victory over Canfield High School at Firestone Stadium in Akron, Ohio. The Blue Devils (26-8) took control of the game in the fourth inning with five runs and then scored four more runs in the fifth. The 2023 State Championship was the 8th title in school history. The first seven Tallmadge teams to win state championships competed in Class AAA in 1981 and 1987, Class AA in 1988 and 1989, and Division II in 1993, 1997, and 1998. The 2023 season marked the school's 16th appearance in the state tournament, with Tallmadge taking home the title of state runner-up in 1983 in Class AAA and in 1990 in Division II.

The Lady Blue Devils are led by Coach Brittany Lightel, a 2011 graduate and a sophomore during the 2009 season when Tallmadge reached the Division II state semifinals. Coach Lightel led the 2023 girls to stellar accomplishments beyond their championship win. Senior Marley Queen broke the record for doubles in a career and senior Jocelyn Caffelle broke the record for doubles in a season and tied the record for hits in a season. Junior Lexi Gray was named Division II Second Team All State and First Team All Northeast District, senior Jocelyn Caffelle was named Second Team All Northeast District, junior Sydney Becks was named Honorable Mention All Northeast District and junior Ashlyn Severns was named Honorable Mention All Northeast District. Most of the Blue Devils team had played together since childhood, with many getting their start in Tallmadge Little League. Community support for the girls throughout the tournament was phenomenal and a source of inspiration during the incredible comeback victory over Greenville High School in the state semifinal, with the Blue Devils pulling off a walk-off 6-5 win. Tallmadge finished the season with an impressive run, winning 15 of their last 16 games. **Councilwoman Christine Wiede Higham (District 6)**, a Tallmadge High School alum and former player in the Lady Blue Devil softball program, proudly presented the Commendation to the State Champs. She is pictured with the team (back row center right behind the Commendation) following the presentation in Council Chambers.





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2023 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
October 9	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED COLUMBUS DAY		
October 16	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
October 23	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
October 30	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 6	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 10	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY		
November 13	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 20	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 23-24	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING		
November 27	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
December 4	Council/Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
Last Meeting Before WINTER BREAK			
December 25-26	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS		

2023 County Council Members

***Veronica Sims**

President

District 5

Rita Darrow

Vice President

District 1

John Schmidt

District 2

Gloria Rodgers

District 3

Jeff Wilhite

District 4

Christine Wiedie Higham

District 6

Bethany McKenney

District 7

Anthony DeVitis

District 8

John Donofrio

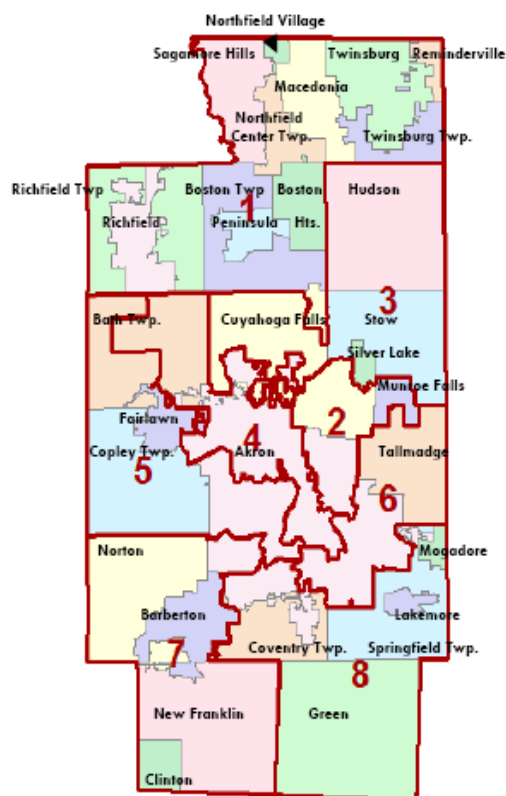
At -Large

Elizabeth Walters

At -Large

Erin Dickinson

At -Large



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Chief of Staff

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W. Kent Starks, II

Senior Research Analyst

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