Newsletter of the Summit County Council

The Council Ledger

Summer-Fall 2026

Council and Executive Recognize Habitat for Humanity on 40th Anniversary

At its June 22nd Council Meeting, Summit County Council and Executive Ilene Shapiro recognized Habitat for Humanity of Summit County on their 40th Anniversary.

Habitat was founded April 25, 1986, in Akron, OH by a group of dedicated faith leaders to be established as Habitat for Humanity of Greater Akron. On July 10, 2001, the name was changed to Habitat for Humanity of Summit County Inc. to be more inclusive of the entire Summit County service area.

Families partner with Habitat to achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build a better future. Habitat homes are sold on a 30 year, zero-interest mortgage to each partner family. In return for interest-free mortgages, Habitat families volunteer 250 hours of "sweat equity" at Habitat home sites and participate in mandatory home ownership classes that provide the new homeowner with training on budgeting, home maintenance, gardening, nutrition, first aid and more.

Over 40 years, Habitat has completed 248 new and/or rehabilitated homes, 397 home repairs, 631 minor home improvements and community projects and 1035 deconstruction of homes to save useable materials. Current President and CEO, Rochelle Sibbio, has led Habitat since June 6, 2006, and 2026 marks her 20th year of leadership serving families to build homes, community and hope in Summit County.



Summit County Councilmembers Brandon Ford (District 5) and Jeff Wilhite (District 4) with Habitat for Humanity President, CEO Rochelle Sibbio as she thanks Council and the Executive for the Commendation recognizing Habitat for Humanity's 40th Anniversary serving Summit County.

"We want to thank Rochelle and her team and recognize Habitat for Humanity of Summit County on their 40th Anniversary. Their commitment to strengthening local neighborhoods, empowering individuals and families to achieve the dream of homeownership and providing essential housing solutions is a vital asset for our community," said **Councilman Brandon Ford (District 5)** who Chairs the Council's Health and Human Services Committee.

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Council Honors Retiring Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition Leader Dan Rice



Summit County Councilmembers and Executive Office Leadership Staff with Retiring Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition President and CEO, Dan Rice and wife Nancy (holding commendation) prior to Council Meeting, May 18th.

Prior to it's May 18tth, Council Meeting, Summit County Council and Executive Ilene Shapiro honored retiring Ohio & Erie Canalway leader, Dan Rice. For the past 32 years, Rice has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, the regional non-profit organization working for the conservation, development and interpretation of the natural, historical and recreational resources along the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. Since 1994, Rice has worked with over 150 community partnerships and raised over $75 million in development funds for the development of the 101-mile multi-use Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area. His efforts have been recognized with numerous regional and national awards.

Since 2015, Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition has conducted over 500 community gatherings, engaging 5,000 residents, and leveraged $40 million dollars of private, local, state and federal investment in Lock 3, Ohio & Erie Canal and Summit Lake Parks, with the goal of developing authentic relationships with neighborhood residents, promoting socioeconomic mixing, encouraging environmental stewardship, and creating valued spaces for all. Rice has provided leadership and served on numerous local, state, and non-profit boards and committees including, Leadership Akron Alumni, University of Akron Dean's Council, Development Finance Authority, Summit County, District 8 Natural Resource Assistance Committee for Clean Ohio, Cuyahoga Falls Planning Commission, Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Commission and Summit Lake Community Development Corporation. Additionally, Mr. Rice and his staff have been key partners in support of Council's Let's Move Summit County Bike & Hike Event held annually in May at Summit Lake, a lively, fun-filled day of activity encouraging individuals, children and families to build and maintain healthy lifestyle choices and habits. Under his leadership, OECC has preserved historic buildings like the Richard Howe House, restored trust with neighborhood residents and developed high-quality public spaces at Lock 3 and the brand new Summit Lake Northshore Park. "This Council recognizes the many valuable contributions that Dan Rice has made to the citizens of this community and beyond, and with great pleasure wish him all the best in his retirement," said **Councilman Jeff Wilhite (District 4)**.

Council Celebrates WWII Veteran on D-Day Anniversary





In June, Councilwoman **Christine Higham (District 6)** presented a Commendation to World War II Veteran John Colver, a graduate of North High School in Akron. Mr. Colver, age 99, graduated on D-Day on June 6, 1944 and month later was enlisted in the Navy on his way to serving on a U.S. aircraft carrier in the South Pacific. He later played Varsity Basketball at Kent State University and is believed to be the oldest living former student-athlete at KSU. He attributes his longevity to great genes and his commitment to exercise. A long-time member of the Akron Area YMCA, Mr. Colver played hoops well into his 70s and still works out at the Riverfront Branch in Cuyahoga Falls. Councilwoman Higham is pictured with Mr. Colver at North High School (left) where he celebrated the 82nd Anniversary of his graduation with his family (right).

Council Recognizes APD Officers for Outreach Work With Youth

In June, Council recognized Akron Police Community Engagement Officers for their outstanding work with their "10-Second Challenge" program. The 10-Second Community Challenge is a pop-up event where APD officers go to an Akron Public School and surprise students and their parents with a trip to a local convenience store to have a chance to grab some treats on behalf of the officers. APD held four challenge events with great success as all believe this is a very positive and memorable way for young children to hold a lifelong positive memory of the Police Officers who are there to protect and support them. **Councilman Jeff Wilhite (Disrtict 4)** is pictured with APD Officers and Akron City Council President Margo Sommerville (left). APD Community Engagement Officers are pictured (right).





In The Community



Council President Erin Dickinson was on hand to recognize the Bicentennial Anniversary of Western Reserve Academy in Hudson. The Councilwoman is pictured with WRA Head of School, Suzanne Walker Buck. (top photo).

Councilwoman Bethany McKenney (District 7) recognizes Joe Lenzy also known as "Mr. Marie" the owner and operator of Marie's Family Restaurant on the occasion of his 100th Birthday.



Council Honors First Girls Flag Football State Champions



On Saturday, May 16, 2026 at Tom Benson Stadium at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, the Nordonia Knights girls flag football team won the Inaugural Ohio High School Athletic Association Girls Flag Football State Championship, defeating Cincinnati Mount Notre Dame, 20-19. The Lady Knights finished the regular season 10-0, won their division, and compiled an outstanding 15-1 overall record. Flag football started in Ohio in 2021, when the Cleveland Browns launched a girls high school flag football league in Northeast Ohio. Early participation was modest, with just six teams participating in the first year. Nordonia was one of them. The numbers have grown every year since. There were 121 teams in the Browns' region this season. The Cincinnati Bengals, who got the ball rolling in 2024 in the Southwest part of the state, had 41 participating schools. Girls flag football is the fastest-growing sport in Ohio, and the OHSAA sanctioned the sport last summer. Flag football will make its Olympic debut at the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

Senior quarterback and safety Haydn Paul, who led the Knights offense and sealed the game with a late interception on defense won the Tournament MVP and freshmen Ava McClendon, who scored the winning TD, and Landry Holtz, who gained several critical all-purpose yards were also named to the All-Tournament team.

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2026 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
October 12	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR COLUMBUS/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY		
October 19	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
October 26	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 2	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 9	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 11	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY		
November 16	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 23	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 26-27	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY		
November 30	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
December 7	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

LAST MEETING BEFORE WINTER BREAK

On Monday, December 21, Council offices will move back to 175 S Main St. Downtown Akron (The Ohio Building). Council Meetings will resume in Council Chambers on January 4, 2027.

2026 County Council Members

Erin Dickinson
President
At Large
Christine Higham
Vice President
District 6
Rita Darrow
District 1
John Schmidt
District 2
David Licate
District 3
Jeff Wilhite
District 4
Brandon Ford
District 5
Bethany McKenney
District 7
Joseph Kacyon
District 8
John Donofrio
At -Large
Elizabeth Walters
At -Large

