

The Council Ledger

Winter 2020

Upcoming Community Events

- **Stow-Munroe Falls Community Showcase** Saturday, March 14 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, March 15 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. @ Stow-Munroe Falls High School
- **Nordonia Hills Expo** Saturday, March 21 @ Nordonia High School 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Cuyahoga Falls Expo** Saturday, March 28 @ Falls Natorium 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Akron Ward 4 Our City Our Ward Open House** Saturday, March 28 @ Buchtel Community Learning Center 10a.m. to 1 p.m.

Council Appoints Sims for District 5 Seat

Wilhite and Walters re-elected to lead Council in 2020

At the January 6th Organizational Meeting, Summit County Councilmembers appointed **Veronica Sims** as District 5 Representative for 2020.

Sims formerly served as an At Large Member of Akron City Council from 2015-2019. Before City Council, she served on the Akron Board of Education. She fills the Council seat formerly held by **David Hamilton**, who resigned in December 2019 after being elected as a Judge on the Akron Municipal Court in November.

Sims was selected from a field of six candidates and she will run for the permanent seat in the 2020 March primary election. She's currently the director of community relations for Stewart & Calhoun Funeral and Cremation Services and a consultant for nonprofit and government organizations. She previously spent several years with Akron Summit Community Action Inc. and with the Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board.

To begin the meeting, Summit County Councilmembers re-elected Councilman **Jeff Wilhite** as President and Councilwoman **Elizabeth Walters** as Vice President for 2020.

Wilhite and Walters both joined Council together in 2016. Wilhite's district term runs through 2020 and Walters was recently re-elected for her second term at Large.

Wilhite serves as executive director of Family Promise of Summit County, a program serving homeless children and their families. Walters is a senior associate at the Morino Institute.



Former Akron City Councilwoman **Veronica Sims** (center) was appointed to serve as District 5 Representative for the Summit County Council in 2020. She is pictured with 2020 Council President **Jeff Wilhite** (District 4) and Council Vice President **Elizabeth Walters** (At-Large). District 5 Covers Bath, Copley,

Inside this issue:

- Council Establishes Three Task Forces to Convene in 2020 **2**
- Council Recognizes USA U16 FIBA Boys Basketball MVP **2**
- Commendation for 95 Year Old WWII Navy Veteran **3**
- Akron Zoo Presents Annual Update to Council , Seeks Levy Increase **3**
- Council Meeting Schedule Council District Map **4**
- Council Office Staff Directory **4**

Council Establishes Three Task Forces to Convene in 2020

In the last quarter of 2019, Summit County Council passed legislation to establish three task forces to address specific needs in the county in 2020.

The **Summit County Environmental Sustainability Task Force** led by Council Vice President **Elizabeth Walters (at-large)**, will consider how Summit County can be more environmentally sustainable as the planet continues to face the wide-ranging effects of climate change. Over the next six months, a group of more than two dozen people will meet for six months before making recommendations to the county executive and council next summer on practices, policies and legislation to ensure environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient construction, improvement, repair, management and operation of county-owned facilities; a more fuel-efficient county vehicle fleet; and a more sustainable and environmentally sustainable food system in the county.

Monthly meetings, which are open to the public, are scheduled for Feb. 3, March 2, April 6, May 4 and June 1, all 8:30-10:30 a.m. in the Russ Pry Building, 1180 S. Main St., Akron.

The **Summit County Nursing Homes and Facilities Task Force**, led by Council President **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** will focus on three areas over the next six months: reviewing current conditions of nursing homes and facilities in Summit County, assessing possible solutions and best practices, and making recommendations. The group will then present its findings and recommendations to Summit County Council and the county executive in a written report.

The 18 task force members include local nursing home administrators, an elder care attorney and representatives from the county's Department of Job and Family Services, the county's Probate Court, the Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Summit County Public Health, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Health. The group also includes community members who have had family members in nursing homes. **Their next meeting is Jan. 21, and future meetings are scheduled for Feb. 18, March 24, April 21 and May 19, all at 10 a.m. in the Greater Akron Chamber conference room in Akron's AES Building, 388 S. Main St., Suite 205. The meetings are open to the public.**

The County of Summit **Stormwater Management Committee**, led by County Councilman at-large **Clair Dickinson** will focus on a countywide approach to stormwater management, in response to a deluge of flooding this past summer that shut down streets, damaged roads and destroyed basements, possessions and businesses. The group would review existing stormwater management programs and practices for the county, plus the county's cities, villages and townships; along with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, two other entities addressing stormwater management at the local level. The committee will deliberate until the end of the year and submit a report that includes the best methods to create a county stormwater management program designed to drain 300 acres or more, a proposed funding stream to support staff to carry out the program and a capital improvement and maintenance program, along with either a proposed stormwater master plan for all watersheds in the county or a proposal to develop a stormwater master plan. Members of the committee include a county council member, the county engineer, the county executive, a representative of a Summit County township, a representative of a Summit County municipality and two representatives with extensive knowledge of stormwater management. **The first three meetings of 2020 are scheduled on January 16, February 13 and March 12 from noon to 1:30 in the Council Chambers, located in the Ohio Building, 175 S. Main St. in downtown Akron.**

Council Recognizes Student-Athlete for Outstanding International Achievement



In one of his final acts as a member of Summit County Council, David Hamilton presented a Commendation to high-school student Athlete, **Chris Livingston**, a 6'6" sophomore guard from Akron Buchtel High School, who was named Most Valuable Player for the 2019 FIBA Americas U16 Basketball Championship in Belém, Brazil over the summer. Livingston led the USA Team to a 94-77 win over Canada in the gold medal game with 23 points, six rebounds and two assists making 10-of-15 field goals, 1-of-3 three-pointers, and both of his free-throw attempts in 25 minutes. He averaged nearly 15 points, eight rebounds, two assists, one block and one steal per game for Team USA in the bi-annual tournament and was also chosen for the FIBA U16 All-Tournament Team featuring outstanding players from the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic. As a freshman, Livingston helped Buchtel reach the OHSAA state semifinals in Columbus. This season, he and his twin brother Cordell attend and play for Western Reserve Academy, the top coeducational boarding and day school in Ohio, located in Hudson. Livingston currently averages 35 points and 12 rebounds per game for the Pioneers basketball team.



Prior to Veteran's Day, Council presented a Commendation to 95-year old Navy Veteran **Daniel Buzek**, who received the French Legion d'honneur medal along with five other men who served in World War II from the Consul General of France in Chicago, Guillaume Lacroix. The medal was presented at the 20th Annual D-Day reenactment which is held each August in Conneaut, Ohio. This event is the world's largest World War II living history event. Over 1,700 reenactors from around the world tell the story of the men and women and families that made up "The Greatest Generation." Mr. Buzek is pictured with his daughter Danese Fisher and County Council Members at the presentation.

Council Members Get Updates and Levy Request from Akron Zoo



In October, The Akron Zoo visited Council and asked the county to place a tax levy increase on the ballot to help pay for an expansion to an exhibit that opened in 2019.

Akron Zoo President and CEO Doug Piekarz presented an update on the zoo and presented the request for the renewal of an existing 0.8-mill tax levy plus an increase of 0.4 mill, for a total tax levy of 1.2 mills. The zoo also requested a 10-year duration for the levy, starting in 2021 for collection from 2022 through 2031.

Piekarz said along with keeping the zoo affordable, the additional millage is expected to help fund an expansion of the Pride of Africa exhibit that opened over the summer. The expansion could include giraffes, zebras and African primates — a popular request from visitors. The Pride of Africa exhibit, which currently features new habitats for African lions, Speke's gazelles and white storks, plus a new contact area to feed sheep and goats and an extended train ride, opened in June, attracting 10,000 zoo visitors during opening weekend.

Wild Asia, scheduled to open this summer, will provide new habitats for Sumatran tigers, red pandas and white-cheeked gibbons. The two exhibits are part of a \$17 million project funded by a combination of levy funds and private donations from the zoo's ROAR campaign.

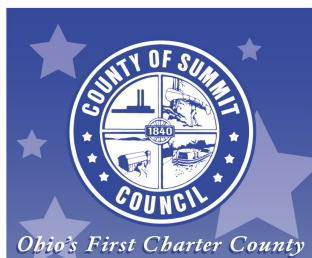
Voters passed the first property tax for the Akron Zoo in 2000. The seven-year, 0.8-mill levy, which committed \$8.1 million a year to the zoo, was renewed in 2006 and 2013.

Council passed legislation for the tax levy be placed on the ballot for the November 3, 2020 general election for county voters to decide.

Pictured at Left:

Hoot the Owl makes a visit to County Council (top) and County Council Members **Ron Koehler (District 1)** and **Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** enjoy a visit to the Grizzly Ridge Exhibit at the State of the Zoo event.





Summit County Council

Ohio Building
175 S. Main St., Ste. 700
Akron, OH 44308-1314
Phone: 330-643-2725
Fax: 330-643-2531

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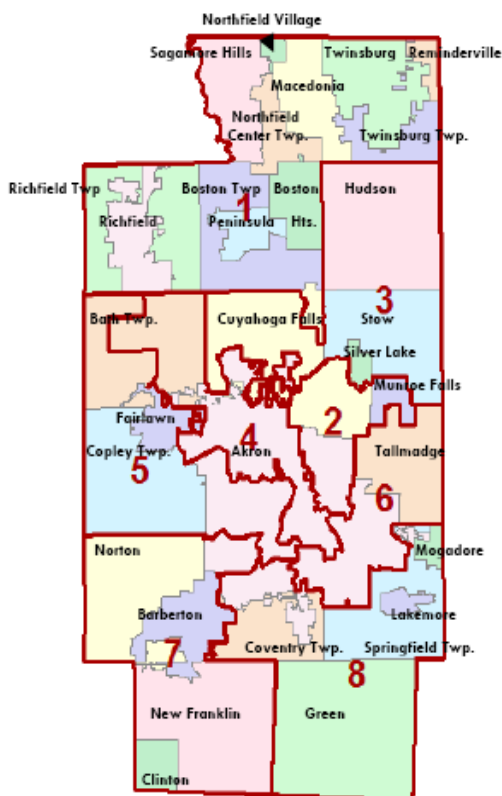
W. Kent Starks II — Editor
Phone: 330-643-2074
E-Mail: kstarks@summitoh.net

2020 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
January 13	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
January 20	Council Offices Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
January 27	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 3	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 10	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 17	Council Offices Closed for Presidents' Day		
February 24	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 2	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 9	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 16	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 23	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 30	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 6	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 13	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

2020 County Council Members

- Jeff Wilhite**
President
District 4
- Elizabeth Walters**
Vice President
At-Large
- Ron Koehler**
District 1
- John Schmidt**
District 2
- Gloria Rodgers**
District 3
- Veronica Sims**
District 5
- Jerry Feeman**
District 6
- Bethany McKenney**
District 7
- Paula Prentice**
District 8
- John Donofrio**
At-Large
- Clair Dickinson**
At-Large



County Council Staff

- Mark Potter**
Chief of Staff
- Jennifer Novakovic**
Clerk of Council
- W. Kent Starks, II**
Senior Research Analyst

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