

The Council Ledger

Fall 2021

Council Welcomes Two New Members

Two new County Council Members were elected in November 2020. In **District 1**, Democrat **Rita Darrow** defeated incumbent Republican **Ron Koehler** and in **District 8**, three term Democrat incumbent, **Paula Prentice** was defeated by Republican **Anthony DeVitis**.

Darrow, comes to Summit County Council as a former council member and past president of Macedonia City Council.

Ms. Darrow is also a member of the Federated Women of Summit County, where she serves as third vice president. Her children are graduates of Nordonia High School and Bowling Green State University. Her daughter Brooke graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, and her son Luke is a Senior seeking a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Management.

DeVitis joins Council after serving in the Ohio House of Representatives, representing the 36th District since his appointment in 2011 and election in November 2012.

Prior to serving in the House, DeVitis was a council member in Green. He is currently the co-owner of a real estate partnership, an Italian food distribution company, and an Italian retail store.

DeVitis is married and has two children, including current Green City Council member Clark Anthony DeVitis. His daughter Evelyn is the Office Manager for DeVitis Italian Market.

****Councilmembers Elizabeth Walters (at-Large) and Clair Dickinson (at-Large)** were elected President and Vice President at the 2021 Organizational Meeting in January.



Newly elected Summit County Council Members, Rita Darrow (District 1) and Anthony DeVitis (District 8).

New Clerk of Council Hired

At its August 30th meeting, Summit County Council appointed Jennifer Dantz as the new Clerk of Council.

Ms. Dantz comes to the Summit County Council office from Kent State University where she was the Administrative Secretary for the School of Foundations, Leadership, and Administration in the College of Education Health and Human Services.



New Summit County Clerk of Council Jennifer Dantz.

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Council Moves Forward with Racism as a Public Health Crisis Work

At the final Summit County Council meeting of 2020, Councilwomen Veronica Sims and Elizabeth Walters presented their findings after several months of internal interviews and discussions within Summit County in the aftermath of Resolution 2020-174 declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis in June of 2020.

In the Resolution initiated by Councilwoman Sims, Summit County Council recognized that racism is a public health crisis that affects all members of society both on a local and national level and deserves action from all levels of government and civil society. Council established a Special Review Committee co-chaired by Councilwomen Sims and Walters to determine how best to address racial equity issues and to:

- Seek solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work;
- Continue to work to build alliances with organizations that are confronting racism and encourage partners to recognize racism as a public health crisis;
- Continue to promote racially equitable economic and workforce development in Summit County;
- Continue to promote racially equitable hiring and promotion of all employees including County employees; and

- Advocate and draft relevant policies that prioritize the health of people of color and mitigate exposure to adverse childhood experiences and trauma in childhood

After meeting with several members of Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro's leadership team and many of the County's elected officials, the Councilwomen came away with several recommendations to move forward including:

- The development of a universal data collection standard policy for all Summit County Departments and Offices
- The development of better data review and use practices for all Summit County Departments and Offices
- The creation of plans for each county department on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practices in hiring, training and cultures, and access to more robust and frequent training for County staff
- Convening the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Special Review Committee with additional members in the first quarter of 2021; and
- Hiring a consultant or designate a staff position to

take the big picture view, pull down silos, and help convene the Task Force with a work plan and outcomes.

The Special Review Committee was officially established in February and began to meet in March of 2021. The County hired UPD, a consultant based in Baltimore, MD to facilitate the process in July.

In their conclusion, the Councilwomen stated, "exploring racism from an inside out lens, we would submit, was the most responsible way to take on this enormous historically transforming opportunity. While the inward glance was rewarding and revelatory, there were still areas that remind quite poignantly how far we still have yet to go. There is not a lot of room, not should such valuable time be taken to point fingers, but there is certainly room to grow and absolutely room enough for all who would desire to do so."

For a complete copy of the report, please visit the Summit County Council website at <https://council.summitoh.net>.

Councilwoman Veronica Sims Named Local Food Hero



Councilwoman Sims is then presented with a Commendation from Council President Elizabeth Walters for her being named the 2021 Liam Murray Food Hero in Summit County.

Prior to the September 13, 2021 Summit County Council Committee Meeting, **Councilwoman Veronica Sims (District 5)** was honored with a Commendation from Council and Executive Ilene Shapiro for being named the 2021 Liam Murray Food Hero Award recipient by the Summit Food Coalition.

Councilwoman Sims was officially honored with her Local Food Hero Award at the 5th Annual "Savor the Summit" event on Thursday, October 7, 2021.

She is a member of the Summit Food Coalition Advisory Committee and has long been a champion of a just, sustainable, and vibrant local food system for all, particularly in District 5, a traditionally underserved area of Summit County.

"I want to thank my Summit County Council colleagues, and the County Executive for this special recognition. What a thoughtful and much appreciated gesture."

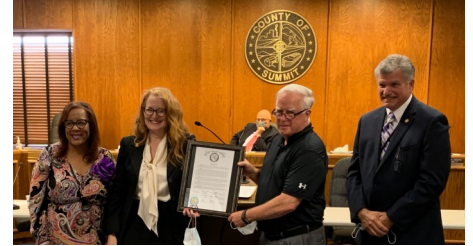
Commendations

Fall 2021



Prior to the August 23, 2021 Council Committee Meeting, Council Members **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** and **Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** recognized Stow Mayor John Pribonic and Stow-Munroe Falls School Superintendent Tom Bratten for their quick response to aid more than 200 residents who were forced to find alternative living arrangements after the sudden closing of Stow-Glen Retirement Village in the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic. The City of Stow and the Stow-Munroe Falls Schools coordinated more than 75 volunteers who assisted with the move and the preparation and serving of meals to the residents in need.

At the August 30, 2021 County Council Meeting, Councilwoman **Bethany McKenney (District 7)** presented a Commendation to Tom Fuller, Executive Director of Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, who retired after 45 years of leadership of the Akron non-profit development and management corporation of affordable housing for low and moderate-income families and the elderly. Alpha Homes owns more than 2,400 units, maintaining 18 rental and for-sale residential properties for senior and family housing in 11 communities including two major U.S. cities (Cleveland and Chicago).

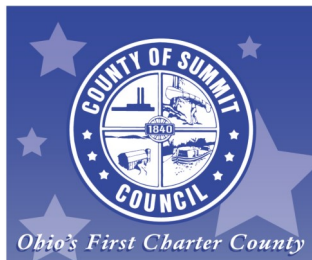


Council In The Community

(Bottom Left photo) On September 23, **Councilwoman Veronica Sims (District 5)** presented a Commendation to Akron Legends Barbershop for its Grand Opening at 1326 Copley Road in West Akron. Akron Legends is owned and operated by Mr. Eric Garrett. Councilwoman Sims is pictured (center) with Mr. Garrett (red vest on left) and other local officials cutting the ribbon to open the shop.

(Bottom Right Photo) On September 25, the County Council Office participated in the Cuyahoga Falls Community Expo at Cuyahoga Falls High School. Normally held in the Spring indoors at the Falls Natatorium, the event was postponed to the Fall and moved outdoors to the High School Stadium Parking Lot. The Council Office was among several local vendors and organizations to participate in the new format. **Councilwoman Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** and Senior Research Analyst Kent Starks attended the event.





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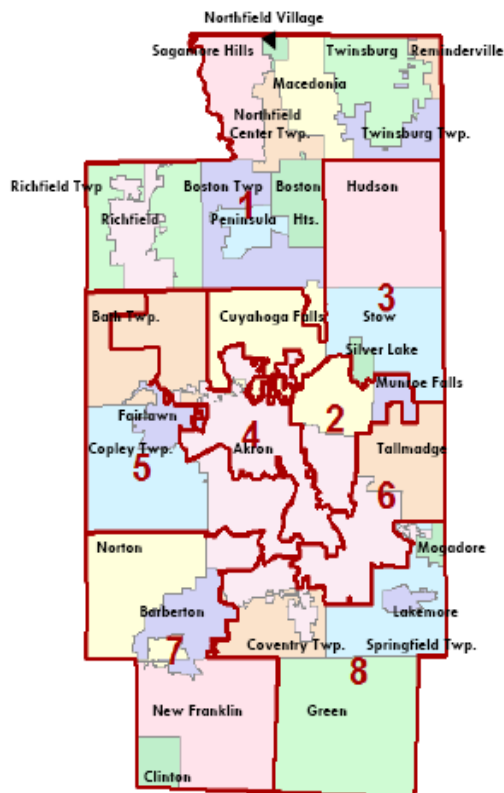
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2021 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
October 18	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
October 25	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 1	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 8	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 15	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 22	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 25-26 COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY			
November 29	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
December 6	Council/Committee Meeting (last meeting before Winter Break)	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
December 23-24 COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY			
December 31 COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY			

2021 County Council Members

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



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Clerk of Council

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Senior Research Analyst

The Council Ledger is also available online.

For this edition and past issues go to: www.co.summit.oh.us

Click on "County Council" then select "News" and then "Newsletter" from the menu.