

# The Council Ledger

Summer-Fall 2022

## Council Adopts Legislation to Initiate Summit County Gun Buy Back/Safety Program

At the end of August, Summit County Council adopted legislation creating the voluntary Summit County Gun Buyback and Safety Training Program. Resolution 2022-248 allowed the County Executive to procure up to \$55,000.00 worth of gift cards for a gun buyback, gun locks, educational materials, advertising and other related program expenses and authorized the Sheriff to operate the program.

In conjunction with the Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, the Summit County Sheriff, the Prosecutor's office and in partnership with the Arlington Church of God and Akron NAACP, Council will host a Gun Buyback and Safety Initiative on Saturday, December 3, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Arlington Church of God, 539 South Arlington Street in East Akron.

Gift Cards to either Dave's Supermarket or Acme Fresh Market will be given out to people who turn in guns - \$150 for operable guns and \$25 for inoperable guns (limit 3 guns per person) no questions asked while supplies last. Organizers have asked that guns please be unloaded prior to arrival for turn in. FREE gun locks and safety materials will also be available that day.



Summit County Council in conjunction with the Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, the Summit County Sheriff, the Prosecutor's office and in partnership with the Arlington Church of God and Akron NAACP, will host a Gun Buyback and Safety Initiative on Saturday, December 3, 2022. See more on Page 2.

There has been a nationwide surge in significant cases of gun violence in the United States with 2,000 incidents in June of 2022 alone, resulting in 877 deaths (as reported by the Gun Violence Archives a not for profit corporation formed in 2013 to provide free online public access to accurate information about gun-related violence in the United States). In the State of Ohio there have been 779 deaths over the past year with 41 of those occurring in Summit County (as reported by the Gun Violence Archives).

"Through my work in our communities as a leader with Moms Demand Action, I've seen how devastating it is when guns fall into the wrong hands," said Councilmember **Erin Dickinson (At-Large)**, who co-sponsored the legislation with fellow County Council Members

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# Summit County Gun Buyback/Safety Program cont.

**Veronica Sims (District 5), John Schmidt (District 2)**, Council as a Whole and Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro. “Firearm-related deaths surpassed auto accidents as the leading cause of death in children in 2020, according to the New England Journal of Medicine. It is my hope that the gun-buyback and safety training program will help mitigate such awful firearm-related incidents.”

“It’s time that we take more active measures to curb gun violence and stop the senseless loss of lives in our communities,” said Sims. “Providing incentives to turn-in guns, educating gun owners and providing safety locks are ways we can be more proactive.”

## Councilwoman Sims Selected as Council Vice President

Upon resuming Council Meetings on August 1, 2022, following its annual Summer Recess, Summit County Council unanimously approved the appointment of Councilwoman Veronica Sims (District 5) as Vice President for the remainder of the year. Sims takes over the leadership position from former Summit County Councilman Clair Dickinson (At Large) who retired in May.

Councilwoman Sims is the first African American female to serve as an officer on Council. She is the second African American female to serve on Council and the fifth African American to serve on Council since its current “charter” form of government was established in 1979 and the first Council Members convened in 1981.



“I appreciate the support of my colleagues for their continued vote of confidence. I will remain steadfast and faithful to the call to serve people. I am so grateful to every person that has supported me on this amazing journey and I look forward to all that lies ahead,” Sims concluded.



Summit County  
**GUN BUYBACK  
 AND SAFETY INITIATIVE**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022 - 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.**

AT THE  
**ARLINGTON  
 CHURCH OF GOD**

**539 SOUTH ARLINGTON STREET, AKRON**

**OPERABLE GUN - \$150 GIFT CARD**  
**INOPERABLE GUN - \$25 GIFT CARD**  
 Limit 3 guns per person

**PLEASE UNLOAD GUNS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL**

**FREE** gun locks and gun safety materials available

GIFT CARDS FOR

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

## Councilman Wilhite Participates in Tree Planting Ceremonies

To honor the memory of Jesse Owens (1913-1980), Councilman **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** joined the Celtic Club in planting four pin oak trees throughout Portage and Summit counties, including Kent State University, Visitation of Mary Catholic Church in Akron, the Riverfront Family YMCA in Cuyahoga Falls and Sept. 30 at The University of Akron (UA), in memory of Owens as well as the first male and female black track athletes at the school (Emmer Lancaster from 1919 to 1921 and Tracie Haynes from 1982 to 1986.) Shown at the event (photo left) are: the Rev. Dismas Byarugaba; UA track members Avalonn Harper, Janay Bass, Adaeze Nwokike and Fegor Clifford and track and field coach Kendra Reimer; Tim Yeager; Celtic Club Vice President John Colver and President James Colver; and UA Grounds Department Superintendent Gregg Parks; Akron City Council Member Nancy Holland; Councilman Wilhite and UA Grounds Crew members Tara Smiley-Pollitt, Jeff Pollitt, Tony Zita, Dan Wallis and Wes Dyer. (photo courtesy of the Celtic Club)

# Council Honors Arts Now DEIA Advisory Board

Summer-Fall 2022



Prior to its August 15 Committee Meeting, Summit County Council honored the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) advisory board for arts and culture through the countywide nonprofit ArtsNow.

The DEIA advisory board is a direct response to the community's call to action to create a task force that assists cultural organizations in diversifying their boards, leadership, and programming while also collaborating with social service partners to ensure events and programs are planned with accessibility and inclusion in mind. The DEIA advisory board was formed with guidance from diversity and equity leader Dr. Marlon Moore and support from Akron Community Foundation, GAR Foundation, and Ohio Arts Council. The board meets regularly as a trust of thought-leaders and advocates to assist in developing priorities to advance equity in Summit County's arts and culture sector. **Council President Liz Walters** presents the Commendation to DEIA Advisory Board Chair, Dr. Sheldon Wrice, PhD along with several Arts Now DEIA Advisory Board Members and County Executive Ilene Shapiro (top photo). Council Members **Rita Darrow (District 1)**, **Liz Walters (At-Large)**, **Veronica Sims (District 5)** **Bethany McKenney (District 7)**, **Christine Wiedie Higham (District 6)**, **Erin Dickinson (At-Large)**, **Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** and **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** joined Executive Shapiro and the Arts Now DEIA Board for a reception at the Akron Civic Theater following the meeting (from left, bottom photo).



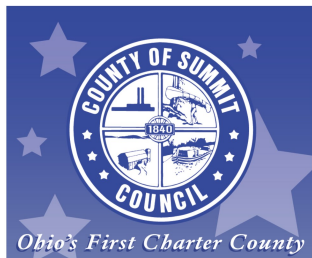
## Commendations



On August 8, Councilwoman **Bethany McKenney (District 7)** honored Dorothy Suchka-Sommerville for her work with the Barberton Area Community Ministries (BACM). BACM is a local food pantry that provides services to Barberton, Norton, New Franklin, Clinton and Doylestown residents and distributes food to over 10,000 families and seniors a year.

Council President **Liz Walters (At Large)** presented a joint Commendation on August 29 from Council and the Executive to Martin H. Belsky, dean emeritus at the University of Akron School of Law. Dean Belsky recently retired from the University, but plans to return to the classroom as an adjunct professor, teaching constitutional and administrative law courses.





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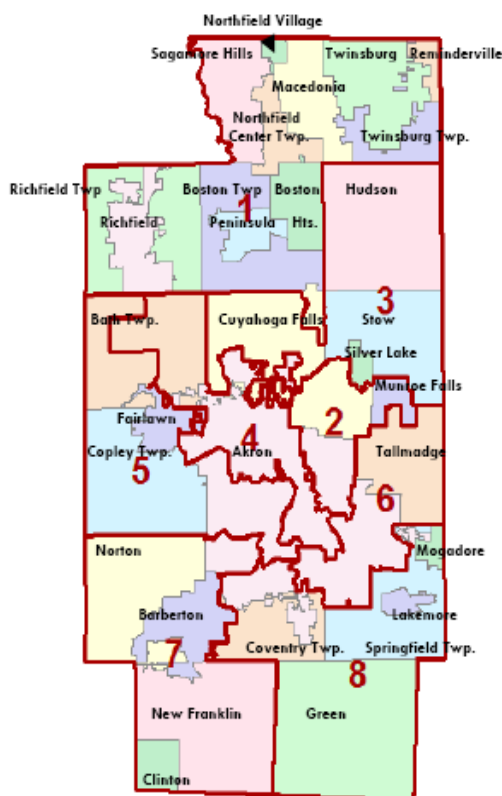
**2022–23 Council Meeting/Event Calendar**

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
November 7	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 11	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY</b>		
November 14	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 21	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
November 24-25	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>		
November 28	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
<b>December 3</b>	<b>Summit County Gun Buyback and Safety Initiative Arlington Church of God - 539 S. Arlington St. Akron, 44306 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.</b>		
December 5	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
	<i>Last Meeting before WINTER BREAK</i>		
December 23	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE HOLIDAY</b>		
December 26	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS DAY HOLIDAY</b>		
January 2, 2023	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY HOLIDAY</b>		
January 9, 2023	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

*\*Following Organizational Meeting*

**2022 County Council Members**

- \*Elizabeth Walters**  
*President*  
At -Large
- Veronica Sims**  
*Vice President*  
District 5
- Rita Darrow**  
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
- Erin Dickinson**  
At -Large



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Chief of Staff

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Senior Research Analyst

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