A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Blue Ash, Ohio, was held on February 28, 2008. Mayor Robert J. Buckman, Jr. called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 7:00 PM.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Members of Cub Scout Pack 189 led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. Also in attendance at the meeting were members of American Heritage Girls Troop 25.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Rick Bryan, Mayor Robert Buckman, Councilman Lee Czerwonka, Councilman Henry Stacey, Councilwoman Stephanie Stoller, and Vice Mayor Mark Weber

MEMBER ABSENT: Councilman James Sumner

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to excuse Councilman Sumner from the meeting (as he is traveling on business). A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Solicitor Mark Vander Laan, Clerk of Council Jamie Eifert, Deputy Clerk of Council Sue Bennett, Treasurer/Administrative Services Director James Pfeffer, Parks & Recreation Director Chuck Funk, Fire Chief Rick Brown, Service Director Dennis Albrinck (retiring Feb. 29, 2008), Service Director Mike Duncan, Assistant Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Fire Captain Greg Preece, member of the press, and interested citizens

PUBLIC HEARING – 7:00PM – Ordinance No. 2008-11 – consideration of a request from citizens/property owners for rezoning of certain residential parcels on Alpine Avenue and Blue Ash Road from R-3 Residential to C-1 General Commercial

The Clerk of Council was asked to read Ordinance No. 2008-11 in its entirety.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ IN ITS ENTIRETY:

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-11

AMENDING THE DISTRICT MAP ESTABLISHED IN THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUE ASH, PART ELEVEN, PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, CHAPTER 1141, AND THUS THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICTS AS APPROVED ON MARCH 13, 2003, BY PLACING CERTAIN REAL ESTATE, CURRENTLY ZONED R-3 RESIDENTIAL AND LOCATED NEAR THE NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST CORNERS OF BLUE ASH ROAD AND ALPINE AVENUE, IN THE C-1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, INCLUDING PARCELS 273, 336, 343, 272, AND 241 OF BOOK 612, PAGE 60 OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE RECORDS AND PORTIONS OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY ADJACENT TO THESE PARCELS

Ms. Maxine Casada, representing 9110 Blue Ash Road, explained that she and the other applicants for this rezoning request believe a change in zone from residential to commercial in this area would be best for Blue Ash as it could result in a quality, attractive commercial development.

Assistant Community Development Director Dan Johnson explained that this rezoning request went to Planning Commission in early December. At that meeting, the Commission tabled it in order to gather more information. A special meeting later in December was held, and at that meeting, Planning Commission recommended approval to Council in a four to one vote. The rezoning request involves five lots (about one acre total, not including right-of-

way), all of which are identified in the Comprehensive Plan as being appropriate for commercial zoning at some point.

In addressing questions from Council, Mr. Johnson explained that a concern of Planning Commission was notification to area property owners, which was accomplished by his office prior to this public hearing. The Commission was also concerned about the fact that there is no clearly defined natural buffer between the commercial and residential zones. The C-1 zoning requires the C-1 properties to contain a buffer of 50 feet between the residential zone. All public properties involved (streets), would remain public properties. Concerns were also expressed about not knowing what development was planned on the property.

Mr. Johnson further explained that the applicants are requesting this rezoning without any noted anticipated future development. In addressing a question from Councilman Bryan, Mr. Johnson confirmed that developments suggested by him (such as a Long John Silvers, automotive repair shops, gasoline station, etc.) could indeed be permitted uses within a C-1 zoned area. Mr. Johnson also noted that the southeast corner of Kenwood and Cornell Roads is another area in Blue Ash zoned C-1.

Some discussion was had regarding the size of the lots in question. Mr. Johnson commented that they range in 80-feet deep to 150-feet deep, and that it does not include the City-owned lot at Belleview and Blue Ash Road. That corner property and the adjacent Blue Bell Tavern property are currently zoned C-1.

Mr. Johnson commented that his office has received two calls after sending out the required property owner notification letters, and he described the nature of those calls as persons having questions, rather than offering comments.

City Manager David Waltz commented that when considering the required 50-foot buffer upon the C-1 properties, and a need to provide for parking, the remaining property would allow, in most scenarios, only a modest size building. Mr. Johnson displayed a graphic outlining where the buffer lines would fall and the resultant remaining properties able to be built upon.

In addressing a question from Councilman Stacey, Mr. Johnson commented that the idea of not knowing what would be on this property did arise at Planning Commission. In his recollection, some members seemed concerned, while others did not appear to be.

Councilman Bryan commented that he could recall no other instance where rezoning was approved by Council speculatively.

Mr. Murphy of 4637 Alpine Avenue, about four houses from Blue Ash Road, commented that as a nearby resident, he would want to know what is planned for this property before Council rezones it to commercial.

One of the involved property owners who resides in Milford (her name could not be heard) commented that their intent is not to sell to just anyone. In her opinion, a gas station would not be interested because it is not close enough to a main route, and also in her opinion, a small office building would be appropriate. She commented that possibly a doctor’s office would be interested.

Councilman Bryan explained that once the zoning is changed, then the City could not stop a development that conforms to the requirements of the Code, even one which may not be a desirable use for this area in the opinion of Council and nearby citizens.

There being no further questions or comments, the hearing was declared closed at approximately 7:34PM.

Mayor Buckman appointed Parks & Recreation Director Chuck Funk and Service Director Denny Albrinck to read the legislation in its entirety in the rear of Council Chambers and invited anyone interested in hearing the legislation being read in full could join Mr. Funk and Mr. Albrinck to do so.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to accept the agenda. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

"1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

2. OPENING CEREMONIES

3. ROLL CALL - Clerk of Council Jamie K. Eifert

4. PUBLIC HEARING – 7:00PM – Ordinance No. 2008-11 – consideration of a request from citizens/property owners for rezoning of certain residential parcels on Alpine Avenue and Blue Ash Road from R-3 Residential to C-1 General Commercial

5. APPOINTMENT OF PERSON(S) TO READ ORDINANCES IN FULL IN REAR OF COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   a. Meeting of January 24, 2008
   b. Meeting of February 4, 2008

8. COMMUNICATIONS
   a. Communications to Council - Clerk of Council Jamie K. Eifert
   b. Reports From Outside Agencies
   c. Mayor's Report – January 2008 – Honorable Robert J. Buckman, Jr.
   d. Financial Report – Motion to accept the report for January 2008
   e. Annual Report – Motion to accept the Annual Report of 2007

9. HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS
   a. Planning & Zoning Committee, James W. Sumner, Chairperson
      1. Ordinance No. 2008-11, rezoning certain R-3 Residential properties on Blue Ash Road and Alpine Avenue to C-1 General Commercial
   b. Finance & Administration Committee, Rick Bryan, Chairperson
      1. Ordinance No. 2008-15, amending portions of Chapter 131 of the Blue Ash Code of Ordinances
      2. Motion approving citizen appointments to the Tax Incentive Review Council
   c. Parks & Recreation Committee, Lee Czerwonka, Chairperson
      1. Motion authorizing the Administration to notify Ursuline Academy of intent to commit to placement of artificial turf at a Sports Center soccer field
   d. Public Works Committee, Henry S. Stacey, Chairperson
      1. Ordinance No. 2008-17, authorizing contract with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to extend the current water service arrangement
   e. Public Safety Committee, Stephanie Stoller, Chairperson
      1. Ordinance No. 2008-18, authorizing purchase of vehicles for the Fire Department through the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

11. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Property Matters

13. ADJOURNMENT"

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Stacey moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to approve the minutes of the meetings of January 24, 2008 and February 4, 2008. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to Council

The City received notice of a new liquor permit, as described below:

Permit #: 4740758

Type: NEW

Permit Classes: C1

TO: Gregory Knue, DBA Peter Gregory Florist, 9214 Floral Avenue, Blue Ash, 45242

The Police Department has reviewed this request and has expressed no objections. A C-1 permit is for beer only for carry out sales. No Council person expressed objection to this permit.

Reports From Outside Agencies

There were no representatives from outside agencies present at the meeting.

Mayor's Report – January 2008

RECEIPTS:

Fines	$ 13,439.00
Bonds & BMV fees carried over	$ 0
Interest Earned	$0.46
Bonds collected	$100.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS:	$ 13,539.46

DISBURSEMENTS:

To Blue Ash (fines/costs/interest/Expungements/forfeitures)	$10,408.46
To the State of OH	$2,936.00
Refund of Overpaid Fine	$0.00
Bond Money applied	$100.00
Refund of Ronald Klare Fine	$80.00
Bond Money returned	$ 0.00
BMV	$15.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	$13,539.46

BALANCE IN BONDS:	$0
Mayor's Court traffic citations	108
Mayor's Court criminal citations	19
Total Mayor's Court cases	*126*

January revenues from Mayor's Ct. Cases: $10,408.46

Financial Report – January 2008

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to accept the Financial Report for January 2008 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

CITY OF BLUE ASH FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT - MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2008

MONTH TO DATE	2007		2008	
START OF MONTH/YEAR FUND BALANCE: 1-1-08		$17,286,456.32		$24,395,221.48
Revenues:				
Earnings Tax Collections:	2,140,197.37		3,008,618.27	
Debt Financing (long term)	0		0	
Debt Financing (short term)	0		0	
Other Revenue Received:	495,992.58		466,737.06	
= Total Monthly Receipts		2,636,189.95		3,475,355.33
Expenditures:				
Bond Retirement	0		0	
Short term debt refinancing	0		0	
Other Expenditures:	3,910,104.04		3,147,256.72	
= Total Monthly Expenditures:		-3,910,104.04		-3,147,256.72
ENDING FUND BALANCE: 1-31-08		16,012,542.23		24,723,320.09

100% of the fund balance was invested as of 1-31-08. Interest paid to date on matured investments: $92,198.80. Receipt and expenditure figures do not include interfund transfers.

BLUE ASH INCOME TAX DIVISION INCOME TAX RECEIPT SUMMARY FOR MONTH ENDING JAN. 31, 2008

MONTH-TO-DATE STATUS	2007		2008	
Business Net Profit	246,982.65		638,962.02	
Resident Net Profit	75,544.96		82,189.74	
Non-Resident Net Profit	25,972.32		22,154.45	
Subcontractor Net Profit	1,896.84		2,096.38	
Net Profit Total		350,396.77		745,402.59
Withholding	1,727,430.22		2,193,806.43	
Subcontractor Withholding	62,370.38		69,409.25	
Withholding Total		1,789,800.60		2,263,215.68
Monthly Collection Totals		2,140,197.37		3,008,618.27
YEAR-TO-DATE STATUS	2007		2008	
Business Net Profit	246,982.65		638,962.02	
Resident Net Profit	75,544.96		82,189.74	
Non-Resident Net Profit	25,972.32		22,154.45	
Subcontractor Net Profit	1,896.84		2,096.38	
Net Profit Total		350,396.77		745,402.59
Withholding	1,727,430.22		2,193,806.43	
Subcontractor Withholding	62,370.38		69,409.25	
Withholding Total		1,789,800.60		2,263,215.68
YTD Collection Totals		2,140,197.37		3,008,618.27
YTD Refund Totals		13,282.89		22,827.85

Annual Report - 2007

Councilman Czerwonka moved, Councilman Stacey seconded to accept the Annual Report for 2007 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried. (The annual report will be spread at the end of these minutes.)

HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Mark Quarry, Director of Government Affairs for the Commercial Real Estate Council of Greater Cincinnati, was present to express concern with the City's current Code requirements relating to real estate signs. He explained that his organization has approximately 5,000 members, and includes representatives from both the residential and commercial real estate markets. He expressed concerns with changes approved by Council to Blue Ash's Code Section 1181.05, via passage of Ordinance No. 2007-23 last year. He introduced Ken Murawski of CB Richard Ellis and John Meyer of Meyer signs who were also present to discuss their concerns.

Mr. Quarry asked that Council consider the possibility of amending the Code to allow larger temporary signs. He explained that the industry standard for real estate signs is 4' x 5', and

Blue Ash's Code restriction to 2' x 4' allows too small of a sign. He commented that an eight square foot size sign could also negatively impact public safety since it is difficult to read from the road.

Mr. Murawski added that signage is always a part of commercial development, and he is receiving feedback from clients that an eight square-foot size sign is simply too small to see. He noted an example of a current sign now in place at the Northmark III building which is in compliance, however, difficult to see (the sign advertises "Equity"). He commented that the sign size represents not only a problem for property owners, but also for those trying to read the sign as well, and asked Council to reconsider this requirement. He also noted the downturn in the market and economy and the anticipated rise in future office vacancies because of market conditions.

Mr. Meyer commented that his sign company has been in business about 50 years, and he has been in the business about 30 years. He confirmed that a 4'x5' sign is standard for the industry in all parts of Cincinnati, and noted that eight square feet is not much larger than a residential real estate sign. He confirmed that an eight square-foot sign is not readable from distances in which it should be.

In addressing a question from Mayor Buckman, the representatives could not say with certainty what percentage of their calls were based upon persons reading the signs as compared to persons researching available properties on the internet and through other means.

Councilman Czerwonka commented that a concern of Blue Ash's before the change of Code associated with real estate signs also related to signs that remained in place, even when a building was nearly or fully leased. Mr. Murawski agreed that in such circumstance, signage should be removed.

Vice Mayor Weber commented that his business, a small law firm, is a Duke tenant, and he doubts much business is derived via persons driving by seeking office space. It is his belief that most work through brokers to find appropriate locations. He expressed concern also with the "for lease" signs remaining even after the building is fully or close to being fully leased, with the signs then serving only an advertising purpose. Vice Mayor Weber expressed support for the current Code provisions.

Additional discussion was had regarding conditions that led up to Council's desire to change the Code in 2007. Mr. Waltz commented that while a 2'x4' size sign might be a bit small, he noted that another major goal of the Code change was to discourage temporary signs altogether in hopes of incorporating such "for lease" information within permanent, more attractive, monument-style building signage. As part of a permanent monument-style sign, such "for lease" information could be as large as 30 or 40 square feet in some circumstances. Mr. Meyer noted that not every building has a tenant identification sign, and a land owner might not be willing to invest in such.

Councilman Bryan commented that prior to tonight's meeting, he did drive through the City and acknowledged that a 2'x4' size sign is relatively small, especially when out in front of a large building. He would be comfortable in sending this issue back to the Planning Commission for further review. Councilwoman Stoller agreed with Councilman Bryan, and added that she would not want to deprive businesses from getting tenants because of this Code restriction.

Councilman Stacey commented that he would be less inclined to send it back in that it is his opinion the City has not yet had enough time to judge the impact of this change (as business owners were required to comply with the smaller sizes only since mid December). Vice Mayor Weber, Mayor Buckman, and Councilman Czerwonka agreed with Councilman Stacey's comments.

Mr. Murawski also commented that when the Code change was being discussed, they were not a part of the discussion and were not involved with the process.

Mr. Waltz commented that at some point this year, Mr. Johnson will be recommending overall updates and fine-tuning of various Code provisions, and suggested that this sign size issue be revisited at that time.

Hearings from Citizens was declared closed at approximately 8:10 PM.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Prior to the Council meeting, Council members received the following report describing agenda items:

"The following offers a brief description of the topics included on the revised February 28th Council agenda:

4. & 10.a.1. Ordinance No. 2008-11 - Rezoning certain R-3 Residential properties on Blue Ash Road and Alpine Avenue to C-1 General Commercial

The City has received a request from several Blue Ash property owners to rezone certain properties from their current R-3 Residential zoning to C-1 General Commercial District. The Planning Commission has reviewed this item two times – at its meetings on December 6 and December 20, at which time they recommended approval to City Council.

The properties involved are summarized below, and a map showing the affected properties is attached to the ordinance (all Book 612, Page 60):

- Parcel 273, located on the east side of Blue Ash Road, south of Alpine Avenue
- Parcel 336, located on the east side of Blue Ash Road, south of Alpine Avenue (north of Parcel 273)
- Parcel 343, located on the south side of Alpine Avenue, east of Blue Ash Road
- Parcel 272, located at the southeast corner of Blue Ash Road and Alpine Avenue
- Parcel 241, located at the northeast corner of Blue Ash Road and Alpine Avenue

During their December 20th discussion, the Planning Commission requested that Council be made aware of concerns about issues relating to rezoning of developed residential uses to a Commercial district. Generally, where the area adjacent to a proposed rezoning is not separated by an existing natural or manmade buffer, there is concern that the adjacent residential properties that would remain residential would not be adequately protected by the existing Code. Specific to this request, there is no existing buffer, or area available for a significant buffer, between these properties and the adjacent properties to the east, along Alpine Avenue that would remain in the R-3 zone. If the area is rezoned as requested, any new commercial use would be required to satisfy the buffer requirements on the commercially zoned property, which is a minimum of fifty feet in the C-1 District.

Please direct questions regarding this issue to the Assistant Community Development Director Dan Johnson at 745-8528 or djohnson@blueash.com.

10.b.1. Ordinance No. 2008-15 - Amending portions of Chapter 131 of the Blue Ash Code of Ordinances

Ordinance No. 2008-15 amends a portion of the Code (pay plan) relating to the retirement of a full-time member of Facilities Maintenance. In the process of evaluating this vacancy, a need has been identified to create the position classification of Maintenance Technician Specialist. This position will call for specialized training and expertise to perform work using a specific skill set in one of the trades such as HVAC, carpentry, electric, etc. This classification will broaden the City's ability to hire and make job assignments based on a very specific set of competencies. Though this is a new classification, it will not create a new position -- it simply reassigns a position. The number of positions at the Maintenance Technician classification will be reduced from two down to one, and the number of positions as the Maintenance Technician Specialist will be established at one. Furthermore, the position of Maintenance Technician Specialist will be compensated at the same grade level as that of Maintenance Technician.

Please direct any questions regarding this ordinance to the Treasurer.

10.b.2. Motion approving citizen appointment to the Tax Incentive Review Council

Following the City's first utilization of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) economic development tool to enable Duke Realty's "The Landings" project, Ordinance No. 2006-74 passed by Blue Ash Council on

December 14, 2006 authorized the creation of a Tax Incentive Review Council. Ohio Revised Code Section 5709.85 requires the creation of this review board to oversee certain aspects of the implementation of the TIF statutes.

ORC requires that this review board be comprised of certain delegates. On December 14, 2006, City Council reviewed and approved Ordinance No. 2006-74 which created the Blue Ash Tax Incentive Review Council and authorized the City Manager to move forward with the required meetings related to the tax exemption under the TIF statutes. Section II further explains the delegates required to be appointed to the committee under the ORC. The Incentive Council must consist of the following (with the proposed appointee named afterwards):

- The City Manager or his designee.
- One member of Council – Mayor Buckman*.
- County Auditor Dusty Rhodes or a designee from his office.
- The Blue Ash Treasurer or his designee.
- One individual appointed by the Sycamore School Board – Treasurer Beth Weber*.
- Two Blue Ash citizens appointed by the City Manager and approved by Council (one to be a minority) – Charles W. Thompson* of Cornell Road and Bruce Brown* of Woodlands Way (who also works for Procter & Gamble in Blue Ash).

The statute also stipulates that at least four of the members be residents of Blue Ash. Those persons indicated above with a "*" would satisfy this requirement. This group is expected to meet only once a year.

The Administration is requesting a formal motion confirming the City Manager's appointment of the two Blue Ash citizen representatives listed within the last bullet item above. Please direct questions regarding this ordinance to the City Manager or Treasurer.

10.c.1. Motion authorizing the Administration to notify Ursuline Academy of intent to commit to placement of artificial turf at a Sports Center soccer field

Council was provided written information from the Parks & Recreation Director at the February 4th meeting regarding a cost-sharing opportunity associated with placement of artificial turf on Soccer Field A at the Blue Ash Sports Center.

In an effort to accommodate the growing needs of the soccer community and other sports such as youth football, lacrosse, and field hockey, the Recreation Administration has been examining the possibility of installing artificial field turf on one of the soccer fields at the Sports Center. The Center is currently the home fields for Ursuline Academy, Mt. Notre Dame, and Moeller, in addition to the Sycamore youth recreational and competitive level (Arsenal) teams.

Installation of such turf is relatively costly, estimated to be about $450,000 per soccer field. In considering the initial investment, the Recreation Administration has talked with all three schools noted above, as well as with Sycamore Arsenal, the competitive youth soccer program, about the potential of partnering with the City on this venture. Moeller is currently constructing a new turf field on their campus. Mt. Notre Dame has an interest, but is unsure about ability to provide funding. Ursuline Academy is very interested, and has verbally committed $250,000 towards the project. Also, the Arsenal club estimates rental income for a turf field of $25,000 to $35,000 per year.

Another important factor in this decision is the reduction of maintenance costs for a synthetic field versus current natural surface. While the synthetic surfaces are not maintenance free, it would significantly reduce overall maintenance costs – an estimated savings of $25,000 per year in irrigation, fertilization, mowing, and staff hours. Considering the cost-sharing opportunity with Ursuline and the other factors listed above, the Parks & Recreation Director has stated that the project would result in an approximate four- to five-year payback to the City.

The Rec Administration recommends we take advantage of this opportunity to work with Ursuline to fund installation of turf on Soccer Field A. The Ursuline Administration is requesting formal notification of the City's intent to move forward with this project so that they can continue their planning associated with improvements being done at their Blue Ash campus. The Blue Ash Administration is requesting formal motion from Council indicating such intent.

Please direct questions regarding this project to the Parks & Recreation Director.

10.d.1. Ordinance No. 2008-17 - Authorizing contract with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to extend the current water service arrangement

The City's water service is provided by the Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW), a utility owned by the City of Cincinnati, with the most recent agreement authorized by Ordinance No. 87-99. The duration of the current agreement is through the Year 2017.

About three years ago, the City of Cincinnati and suburban Hamilton County communities entered into an agreement which revolved around conversations related to the Hamilton County lodging tax and expansion of the Cincinnati Convention Center. The agreement was a part of a compromise enabling expansion of the Convention Center, while guaranteeing water rates for the next 30 years. In that agreement, the City of Cincinnati agreed to extend the current formula for determining water rates in the areas outside of Cincinnati corporate limits for an additional 30 years (1.25 times the rate paid by consumers inside the City of Cincinnati). Without any agreement in place, other metropolitan areas (i.e., Columbus, Ohio) have used water rates to force annexation of the remaining suburbs into the larger urban core.

The compromise agreement reached about three years ago requires that each community take action on this option to extend the water services contract before the end of 2010, or the extension agreement would not apply to them. If Blue Ash did not exercise this option, then it would have to renegotiate rates with GCWW at the end of the 2017 contractual period. This ordinance is being presented this evening, after informal discussion/direction provided by Council at the early February meeting.

Ordinance No. 2008-17 authorizes the City Manager to enter into a multi-year agreement/ contract associated with the action to exercise the option to extend or renew the current water service contract with GCWW beyond the contract's current period. In coming weeks, an agreement formalizing the City's desire to exercise this option will be drafted with assistance from the Solicitor's Office, and will be in accordance with Blue Ash's Code and Charter.

Please direct questions regarding this ordinance to the City Manager or Solicitor.

10.e.1. Ordinance No. 2008-18 - Authorizing purchase of vehicles for the Fire Department through the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

Ordinance No. 2008-18 authorizes the purchase of two budgeted (replacement) vehicles for use by the Fire Department, including an ambulance and a sports utility vehicle to be used by the Fire Command staff. The Fire Chief recommends purchase of both vehicles from the State's Cooperative Purchasing Program, including a 2008 Type III Ford Horton Ambulance from Horton Emergency Vehicles for an amount not to exceed $150,000, plus an estimated $7,000 for related equipment and accessories, and a 2008 Ford Expedition from 32 Ford Mercury, Inc. for an amount not to exceed $30,500, plus an estimated $400 for related equipment and accessories. The ambulance unit will replace an existing 1999 unit intended to be sold at an on-line auction or later disposed of after the new vehicle is in service, and the utility vehicle will replace a 2000 Crown Victoria intended to be sold on an on-line auction once the new vehicle is in service.

Please direct questions regarding these vehicles to the Fire Chief."

Planning & Zoning Committee, James W. Sumner, Chairperson

In Councilman Sumner's absence, Vice Mayor Weber was asked to preside.

The Clerk of Council was asked to read Ordinance No. 2008-11 by title only (it having been read in its entirety during the public hearing).

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-11

AMENDING THE DISTRICT MAP ESTABLISHED IN THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BLUE ASH, PART ELEVEN, PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, CHAPTER 1141, AND THUS THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICTS AS APPROVED ON MARCH 13, 2003, BY PLACING CERTAIN REAL ESTATE, CURRENTLY ZONED R-3 RESIDENTIAL AND LOCATED NEAR THE NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST CORNERS OF BLUE ASH ROAD AND ALPINE AVENUE, IN THE C-1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, INCLUDING PARCELS 273, 336, 343, 272, AND 241 OF BOOK 612, PAGE 60 OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE RECORDS AND PORTIONS OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY ADJACENT TO THESE PARCELS

Vice Mayor Weber moved, Councilman Bryan seconded to suspend the rules of Council requiring a second reading of the ordinance. The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Stoller, Weber, Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Motion carried.

Vice Mayor Weber moved, Councilman Stacey seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 2008-11. In addressing a question from Councilwoman Stoller, Mr. Waltz explained that there may be some appeal to have C-2 Planned Commercial zoning in this area. Planning Commission was concerned with the potential of spot zoning in recommending C-2 zoning in lieu of C-1.

Councilman Bryan explained that the reason for his upcoming "no" vote is because of the fact that the City does not know what use the property will result in, and because it could result in uses less desirable than the residential zoning in place currently. Councilwoman Stoller added that she also plans to vote no to protect nearby residents on Belleview and Alpine, and noted that she also would like more information as to what would be built on this property. Mayor Buckman agreed that he too is uncomfortable with not knowing what would be built on the rezoned property. Vice Mayor Weber agreed and commented to the residents in attendance that he would not be against a rezoning, but would strongly encourage a plan to be brought forth at the time of such a rezoning request. Councilman Czerwonka agreed with fellow Council rep comments and added that he might also be more comfortable with an overall development plan, and perhaps the more restrictive C-2 Planned Commercial zone.

There being no further discussion, the Clerk called the roll for the motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2008-11. Councilpersons Weber, Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, and Mayor Buckman voted no. Six no's. Ordinance No. 2008-11 failed. In addressing a question from City Manager Waltz, it seemed the consensus of Council that they would be more comfortable in reacting to a specific development plan associated with such a request for rezoning. It was clear that Council would be open to rezoning in this area; however, not associated with a "blind" or unknown future development.

Finance & Administration Committee, Rick Bryan, Chairperson

Councilman Bryan asked the Clerk to read Ordinance No. 2008-15 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-15

AMENDING SECTIONS 131.07-1 AND 131.07-46 OF CHAPTER 131 OF THE BLUE ASH CODE OF ORDINANCES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to suspend the rules of Council requiring a second reading of the ordinance. The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, Weber, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Motion carried.

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilwoman Stoller seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 2008-15. There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, Weber, Stacey, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Ordinance No. 2008-15 passed.

Councilman Bryan moved, Councilwoman Stoller seconded to approve the two citizen appointments to the Tax Incentive Review Council (Charles Thompson of Cornell Road and Bruce Brown of Woodlands Way). A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Parks & Recreation Committee, Lee Czerwonka, Chairperson

Councilman Czerwonka moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to authorize the Administration to notify Ursuline Academy of intent to commit to placement of artificial turf at a Sports Center soccer field. In addressing several questions from Council, the following information was noted:

- The type of turf planned is similar to the high-quality type utilized on the Cincinnati Bengals Paul Brown Stadium.
- The Administration commented that they believe more public access can be available to the field with artificial turf, and that residents would not lose access to the field. The Administration believes the artificial turf will allow the field to be used more frequently, and at times when natural turf is not generally in high demand (such as this time of year). Rental groups would be interested in using fields this time of year when it is not convenient for, or of interest to, our residential citizens. Artificial turf is also expected to increase opportunity for use by local youth sports organizations as well.
- Parks & Recreation Director Chuck Funk commented that there would be some issues with this turf and the current configuration of the July 4th event. However, he noted that while the current configuration of the fireworks event may not work, having a 37-acre sports center could allow for reconfiguration for that event. He noted that other stadiums with similar turf do have special events, and reiterated his confidence that the July 4th event can stay at the sports center, perhaps with some reconfiguration.
- Mr. Funk noted that with normal use of the turf (used daily for recreational purposes), its estimated life would be ten to 12 years. He noted that it could be longer; however, cautioned Council that the issue of replacement will need to be visited within that approximate period. The Ursuline contract would be for ten years. Renegotiation at that time would have to account for eventual turf replacement.
- Talks continue with other entities as potential contributors. If the City would secure a second commitment similar to the level obtained from Ursuline (i.e., $250,000), then the City would consider converting a second soccer field to artificial turf.
- Mr. Waltz explained that ordinarily, he would not bring such a request to Council for a decision so quickly. However, the financial partnership opportunity with Ursuline was one which he did not want to let pass without further discussion, and timing was critical for Ursuline as this decision would affect improvements currently underway at their Blue Ash campus.

A voice vote was taken on the motion of intent to commit to placement of artificial turf at a soccer field at the Sports Center. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Public Works Committee, Henry S. Stacey, Chairperson

Councilman Stacey asked the Clerk to read Ordinance No. 2008-17 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-17

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT WITH THE GREATER CINCINNATI WATER WORKS TO EXTEND THE CURRENT CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF WATER SERVICE TO WATER CONSUMERS WITHIN THE CITY OF BLUE ASH

Councilman Stacey moved, Councilwoman Stoller seconded to suspend the rules of Council requiring a second reading of the ordinance. The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Bryan, Stoller, Weber, Stacey, Czerwonka, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Motion carried.

Councilman Stacey moved, Councilman Bryan seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 2008-17. There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Stoller, Weber, Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Ordinance No. 2008-17 passed.

Public Safety Committee, Stephanie Stoller, Chairperson

Councilwoman Stoller asked the Clerk to read Ordinance No. 2008-18 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-18

AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT VEHICLES FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING AN AMBULANCE AND A FIRE COMMAND VEHICLE, UTILIZING THE STATE OF OHIO'S COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Councilwoman Stoller moved, Councilman Bryan seconded to suspend the rules of Council requiring a second reading of the ordinance. The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Weber, Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Motion carried.

Councilwoman Stoller moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to adopt Ordinance No. 2008-18. There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Stacey, Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, Weber, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Ordinance No. 2008-18 passed.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Service Director Denny Albrinck gave a brief update on the Blue Ash/Hunt Road projects, as well as the Greater Cincinnati Water Works water main replacement project in the Arcadia subdivision, and the upcoming Water Works project in the Floral Avenue neighborhood.

Mr. Albrinck noted that tonight is his last meeting as the City's Service Director, and tomorrow is his last day at work. He expressed his thanks to the City and Council for the opportunities to be a part of the Blue Ash team and mentioned that it has been an honor for him to be Blue Ash's Service Director for the past 12 years. He also noted the wonderful colleagues he has had the privilege of working with at Blue Ash, including a progressive and proactive City Council. He believes the City made an excellent choice in his predecessor (Mike Duncan), and wishes nothing but the best to Mike and the City in the future. Mayor Buckman thanked Mr. Albrinck for a job well done, and wished him well in his retirement.

Parks & Recreation Director Chuck Funk commented that the City opened bids on the Recreation Center Phase II project last Friday, and has decided it best to delay the recommended bid awards until the March 13th meeting. The staff and project team are still in the process of reviewing all bids, which in total involve 14 trades/categories of work.

Project Architect Michael Schuster of Michael Schuster Associates and Construction Manager Doug Murdock of Schumacher Dugan were present to discuss the project's status. Mr. Schuster commented on the complexity of the project and the 14 bid packages/ categories of work. Many bids were received, with the exception of bid package #8 (aluminum glass & glazing), which no individual bids were received. Several bidders also submitted "combination" bids, involving multiple categories of work. He mentioned that currently, they are within an estimated $100,000 of the budgeted amount of the project; however, this estimate does not include the alternates in the bid, which included several of the aesthetic improvements such as canopies, trellis work, etc. Mr. Schuster commented that their current recommendation is that Blue Ash not accept the alternates as received, with the intent to reevaluate those elements (including materials, etc.). Once that reevaluation is complete, they would like to resolicit requests for pricing of these elements, with the intent to also look closer at opportunities associated with substitutions.

In addressing a question from Council, Mr. Schuster commented that this reevaluation process should not affect the start of the project or otherwise hold things up.

Doug Murdock, Construction Manager from Schumacher Dugan Construction, commented that their intent is to bring recommendations to Council at the March 13th meeting. He mentioned that given there were no individual bids received for bid package #8 (aluminum glass & glazing), he would like permission to rebid that category. Their intent is to work with bidders on issues relating to the scope of work related to that category. From a pricing standpoint, he believes it would be in the best interest of the City to rebid. In addressing a question from Councilman Stacey, Mr. Murdock did confirm that it is his opinion that to accept the bid from the company that submitted a quote for bid package #8 as part of a combination bid would not be in the best interest of the City.

Councilman Czerwonka moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to authorize rebidding of bid package #8 (aluminum glass & glazing) associated with Phase II of the Recreation Center project. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

Treasurer Jim Pfeffer expressed his thanks to retiring Service Director Denny Albrinck for his years of service to Blue Ash and mentioned that Mr. Albrinck will be missed.

City Manager Waltz commented that Ms. Osler is attending a public hearing tonight at Hamilton County relating to the City's seeking of State capital funds for a future Performing Arts & Conference Center. Another public hearing is scheduled in Madeira in two weeks.

Mr. Waltz commented on the hotel tax article in a recent *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Though it remains to be seen whether Blue Ash will receive a portion of those tax revenues, at least Blue Ash appears to be on the list of potential recipients.

Mr. Waltz thanked Mr. Albrinck for his dedication and years of service as Blue Ash's Service Director.

Vice Mayor Weber thanked Mr. Albrinck for his service to Blue Ash and mentioned that residents have been able to see the accomplishments of his department.

Councilman Bryan thanked Mr. Albrinck for his loyal service, and mentioned Mr. Albrinck's continuing involvement with the nearby community of Reading (where Mr. Albrinck resides).

Councilman Czerwonka expressed thanks to Mr. Albrinck for his service to Blue Ash as well, and mentioned that his department was one of the first he ever had direct exposure with after the tornado damaged his neighborhood in 1999. Their performance during that difficult time was impressive.

Councilman Stacey wished Mr. Albrinck well in his retirement and mentioned that he was always responsive to Council and always sincere in that response. He concluded also that Mr. Albrinck will be missed.

Mayor Buckman wished the best of luck to Mr. Albrinck in his retirement, and reminded all of Mr. Albrinck's retirement gathering planned for tomorrow from 2 to 4PM in the Service Director's office area at the Municipal & Safety Center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

After all items on the agenda were acted upon, Mayor Buckman moved, Councilman Bryan seconded to convene to Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to property. The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Czerwonka, Bryan, Stoller, Weber, Stacey, and Mayor Buckman voted yes. Six yeses. Motion carried.

After matters pertaining to property were discussed, Councilman Bryan moved, Vice Mayor Weber seconded to convene to the regular meeting. A voice vote was taken. All Council members voted yes. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

All items on the agenda having been acted upon, Vice Mayor Weber moved, Councilman Czerwonka seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

_____
Robert J. Buckman, Jr., Mayor

_____
Jamie K. Eifert, Clerk of Council

MINUTES WRITTEN BY:

_____
Susan K. Bennett, Deputy Clerk of Council

CITY OF BLUE ASH, OHIO

2007 Annual Report

ASPIRE. ACHIEVE. ADVANCE.

4343 Cooper Road Blue Ash, OH 45242-5699 • ph. 513.745.8500 • fax 513.745.8594 • BlueAsh.com

January 2008

Honorable Mayor & Council Members:

It is with pleasure that Blue Ash's City Manager and Administrative team submit the 2007 Annual Report.

Year 2007 was an exciting one for Blue Ash. Please note that this report is intended to summarize highlights of significant accomplishments of each department and division of the City during the year and is not intended to provide a comprehensive listing of all that Blue Ash has to offer to those who live, work, and visit our community. Instead, the report simply summarizes major highlights and achievements.

It truly is a privilege to work for and be associated with the City of Blue Ash and its City Council. We look forward to continuing efforts associated with the many exciting opportunities that face our community and its residential and corporate citizens in the future. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

BLUE ASH CITY ADMINISTRATION

David M. Waltz
David M. Waltz
City Manager

James S. Pfeffer
James S. Pfeffer
Treasurer/Admin. Ser. Director

Charles D. Funk
Charles D. Funk
Parks & Recreation Director

Dennis E. Albrinck
Dennis E. Albrinck
Service Director

Chris D. Wallace
Chris D. Wallace
Police Chief

Richard R. Brown
Richard R. Brown
Fire Chief

Susan K. Bennett
Susan K. Bennett
Public Information Officer

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ADMINISTRATION ▶ Council & City Manager's Office

2007 was an exciting year for Blue Ash, featuring a number of significant accomplishments involving multiple City departments and divisions. With City Council leadership and guidance, the team members based within the City Manager's and Treasurer's Offices were involved with these major projects on an ongoing basis. These pages offer a summary of these major City-wide successes.

PROGRESS ON ISSUE 15 RELATED CAPITAL PROJECTS

The passage of Issue 15 in November 2006 by Blue Ash voters set in motion efforts towards a number of large capital projects, including the Recreation Center renovation and expansion project, the future 130-acre park near the Blue Ash Airport, and future improvements at the Blue Ash Golf Course. As promised to voters, work began in 2007 on the $12 million renovation and expansion of the Recreation Center, including the beginning and near completion of Phase I of those improvements (construction of the new gym behind the existing newer gym), and continued planning and refinement of designs associated with Phase II of the project. (More details of these planned improvements are included within the Parks & Rec section of this report.)

Significant progress was also made in 2007 towards the 130-acre park, including the official finalization of this property purchase in late August. After over 20 years of on-again, off-again discussions with the City of Cincinnati, on August 31, 2007, Blue Ash formalized the purchase of this 130 acres, marking a truly historic day in our community (pictured below).

In 2007, the City Manager and Administration also worked diligently to lay the ground work for a future Performing Arts & Conference Center (PACC), just one concept to be incorporated within the future 130 acre park near the airport. The Administrative team, led by the City Manager, explored potential revenue sources to fund this multi-million dollar community amenity, that will benefit not just the residential citizens of Blue Ash, but also the corporate community as well. Frequent communication and personal meetings occurred throughout the year with County, State, and Federal legislators to assure that Blue Ash's PACC project remains "top of mind" when future capital expenditure decisions are to be made.

Pictured, L to R, are Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory & Blue Ash Mayor Jack Buckman at the August 31st signing of the documentation associated with Blue Ash's purchase of 130 acres of park land from Cincinnati.

ADDITIONAL COUNCIL & CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE ACTIVITY IN 2007:

- City Council elections in November 2007 resulted in the re-election of all incumbent members. No Council offices were contested.

2007 BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL
L to R, Sitting: Vice Mayor Mark Weber (Ward 5); Mayor Jack Buckman (Ward 4); & Stephanie Stoller, Ward 2. Standing: Henry Stacey, At Large; Jim Sumner, Ward 1; Lee Czerwonka, At Large; & Rick Bryan, Ward 3.

- After completing an informal request for proposal process early in the year, the newly-redesigned BlueAsh.com general website was launched in late August, and has been well received both internally and externally. This effort, coordinated by the Public Information Officer and Technology Officer, is truly a collaborative one, involving representatives from all departments of the City. The new site contains substantially enhanced information and graphics, and will allow staff from each area of the City to maintain and update their respective information. A customer service response feature for the website is planned for 2008, allowing additional communication conveniences for citizens. (See more web info within the Technology Office portion of this report.)

- Mrs. Kelly Osler was appointed to a new position in the City Manager's Office -- Assistant to the City Manager. Kelly joined the Blue Ash team in mid April.

(continued)

ADMINISTRATION

Council & City Manager's Office ... continued

- The Admin team, with help from Rec staff member Tiphanie Crane, coordinated another successful Student Government Day event in March for area high school students. Given increasing competition with other school activities, holidays, and student work and school commitments, it was determined that it may be advantageous to schedule this event during the fall in 2008.
- Public information outreach continued through 2007, including the creation of three community newsletters and the 2008 Community Calendar. Newsletters were mailed to all residences and businesses in May, August, and December, with the December mailing also including the 2008 Calendar. These publications are also used year-round for promotional purposes.

- Completed an analysis with SORTA of public transportation access to the City of Blue Ash and an evaluation of potential future upgrades and changes.
- Completed an initial needs assessment and building facilities study for the Municipal & Safety Center/South Fire House complex. This was a team effort spearheaded by the Project Coordinator and Assistant to the City Manager, with assistance obtained from Michael Schuster Associates. This analysis resulted in the gathering of useful info about these facilities, and also helped determine the need for an additional report micro study planned in 2008 to look more closely at facility and workspace issues within the Police Department.
- Staff closely followed the passage and implementation of Senate Bill 117 relating to the centralized State control of cable franchises within Ohio. This became effective in September, and upon any termination of our current franchise agreement, places the State as the franchising authority over video services.
- Work completed by the Assistant to the City Manager resulted in a successful challenge, along with other Hamilton County jurisdictions, of the U.S. Census population figures, which were originally indicative of a loss of residents. Blue Ash's official Census population was changed to 12,689 from the previous figure of 11,537.
- In response to HB 9, the Assistant to the City Manager led efforts and worked with the Administration and Solicitor's Office to assure City compliance with current public records law, including records retention and public accessibility. The Public Information Officer and Assistant to the City Manager also attended required training sessions sponsored by the Auditor of State's office on behalf of Council.
- The City Manager continued his quarterly informative publication, the "Blue Ash Bulletin," continuing this initiative to keep Council and staff advised of activities and accomplishments across all City departments and divisions.
- Members of the City Manager's Office coordinated efforts associated with the Sister City program. See more information below regarding this program.
- The City's residential tree program was offered again in 2007, with these efforts coordinated through the City Manager's Office. The number of trees purchased and planted during the 2002 through 2007 phases of the program totaled 533, with 38 of those planted in 2007. The program offers residents the opportunity to subsidized costs of trees planted through the program and viewable by the public.
- Administration of the inscribed brick program at the Veterans Memorial is coordinated through the City Manager's Office. In May 2007, 75 bricks were inscribed and placed at the world-class Memorial. To date, over 4,800 inscribed bricks honoring American veterans are in place.
- The City Manager's Office, with help from Parks & Rec staff, coordinated efforts associated with the City's annual Memorial Day Parade and ceremonies (the community's 55th annual). The 338th Army Reserve band (pictured below) based in Columbus, Ohio, was the featured military band, and they also performed on Towne Square the Sunday evening before. Keynote speaker for Memorial Day ceremonies was Lt. Col. Ken Currell (Ret.) of WPAFB.
- Veterans Day activities in November, representing Blue Ash's 15th such event, were coordinated by the all-volunteer Veterans Day Committee, with assistance through the City Manager's Office.

The Columbus based 338th Army Band in the 2007 Memorial Day Parade.

ADMINISTRATION

Sister City & Additional Treasurer's Office Activity

SISTER CITY PROGRAM

Members of the City Manager's Office coordinated, with Blue Ash Sister City, Inc., activity related to Blue Ash's Sister City relationship with Ilmenau, Germany. In 2007, a delegation from Blue Ash traveled to Germany in late September/early October. The 23-member delegation included government representatives from the State of Ohio and Blue Ash; educational sector representatives from UC/Raymond Walters College, Sycamore High, Ursuline Academy, and the Great Oaks vocational district; representatives from Blue Ash businesses; and interpreters. In 2008, it is expected that a private tour group of Ilmenau citizens will be visiting the Blue Ash/Cincinnati area, among other portions of the Eastern United States, and a visit from a traditional Ilmenau delegation is expected in mid September. A student exchange is also anticipated between UC/RWC and Ilmenau Technical University.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2007 TRIP TO ILMENAU, GERMANY

Pictured above, L to R: A visit with the Thuringian State "Governor" in nearby Erfurt; Police Captain Jim Schaffer practicing at the Ilmenau shooting range; an Ilmenau fire truck; & a visit to the Thuringia State Capitol building. Thuringia is the German "state" in which Ilmenau is located, with Erfurt as its capitol city. More pictures from this trip were included on the November page of the 2008 Community Calendar.

ADDITIONAL TREASURER'S OFFICE ACTIVITY IN 2007

Though the Treasurer, a key member of the Administrative team, was involved on a daily basis with most efforts described in preceding sections, a summary of additional activity performed by the Treasurer not captured in those descriptions is offered below:

- General supervision and support for Finance, Tax, Technology, and Human Resource offices and staff.
- Overseeing of the City's risk management functions, including involvement and leadership within the insurance pool, Miami Valley Risk Management Association (MVRMA). MVRMA-determined average loss experience for Blue Ash is $79,409 in 2003; $58,725 in 2004; $121,048 in 2005; and $23,158 in 2006.
- Continual review of the City's overall financial position and updating of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which is extremely helpful for Council and the Administration in long-term planning efforts.
- Resolution of numerous complex real estate issues, including the City's purchase of 130 acres near the airport from the City of Cincinnati. This involves countless hours associated with finalization of the purchase agreement, "due diligence," surveys, environmental assessment requirements, etc.
- Coordination of work involved with property affected by the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) economic development tool, involving real estate and other legal issues were coordinated by the Treasurer, while working with the City Manager's Office, Finance Office, Community Development office, Sycamore Community Schools, and Solicitor's Office. In 2007, a TIF was implemented for Duke Realty owned property, consisting of 29 acres and acquired by Duke in 2007, adjacent to Osborne Boulevard.
- Working with the U.S. Postal Service to renew the lease of the small annex post office located within the Municipal Center. It is expected that a new lease will be completed in early 2008.
- Overseeing of the $9.975 million bond issuance associated with the Recreation Center expansion and renovation project - to fund most of Phases I and II of that capital project. More detail regarding this bond issuance and major capital project is provided within the Finance Office and Parks & Recreation Department sections of this report.

Projects such as Duke Realty's "The Landings" development are possible in part due to the implementation of the TIF economic development tool. Pictured above are buildings 1 and 2 of the eventual 3 to be included in this office campus. Thanks to long-time Blue Ash resident & pilot Bill Sikute for his assistance in securing this photo taken in late Sept. 2007.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ▶ Earnings Tax Office

The Blue Ash Tax office is responsible for the collection, reporting, and enforcement of the City's Tax Code, including the City's earnings tax. 2007 represented the first year of implementation of the earnings tax rate change from its prior rate of 1.0% to 1.25% effective January 1, 2007. The Office has three full-time employees, in addition to the Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner who also oversees the Finance office operations. 2007 Tax office highlights include:

- As a part of the ongoing combination of the Tax and Finance functions under the Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner, the Tax office staff was relocated into a newly renovated and reconfigured office area adjacent to the Tax Commissioner and Finance office. (Read more about these office changes within the Facilities Maintenance portion of this report.) Significant improvements continue to be made relating to overall efficiency, staffing adjustments, an expanded focus on customer service, and improvements to the effectiveness of the Tax/Mayor's Court activity.
- Long-time Tax employee Jeanne Hartung retired at the end of 2007 after 25 years of service. This retirement, coupled with the upcoming retirement of another experienced member of the Tax team, spurred an opportunity for hiring and training of two full-time replacements in 2008 to assure appropriate succession planning and consistent and efficient training within this office.
- In 2007, the Tax office processed about 5,677 income tax returns and reconciled nearly 2,000 withholding accounts.
- 2007 gross income tax collections totaled $27,564,397, representing a 19.2% increase over actual 2006 collection levels. Of these collections, $5,035,831 or (18.3%) were net profit related, and $22,528,565 (or 81.7%) represented withholding tax collections. Overall, collections during 2007 were less than originally anticipated in the 2007 Final Budget, which indicated expected collections of $28,000,000. Most of the differential is reflected in the net profit area, which is not unexpected given the highly variable nature of that tax collection category. Given the effective date of the Issue 15 tax rate adjustment, and delays involved in filing of payments, only 11 of the 12 months of 2007 of withholding are reflected in the totals. In the net profit category, the effective date of the rate change has the impact of being delayed even further given its tie to the beginning of the 2007 fiscal tax year for the various businesses located in Blue Ash. It is expected that 2008 will be the first full year in which nearly all residents and businesses are subject to the Issue 15 adjustment. Income tax collection trends over the past 10 years are summarized in the chart below.

INCOME TAX COLLECTION TRENDS - BY CATEGORY 1998 - 2007

YEAR	INDIVIDUAL NET PROFIT	BUSINESS NET PROFIT	WITH-HOLDING	TOTAL COLLECTIONS	% CHANGE	REFUNDS
1998	$822,975.47	$4,128,524.93	$14,066,294.17	$19,017,794.57	-2.33%	$621,510.77
1999	924,925.96	2,941,725.95	14,768,702.92	18,635,354.83	-2.01%	666,147.98
2000	1,082,803.34	4,476,554.62	15,568,769.89	21,128,127.85	+13.38%	910,460.46
2001	991,648.81	3,717,073.33	16,951,098.00	21,659,820.14	+2.52%	972,764.89
2002	930,788.21	2,875,284.22	15,850,948.03	19,657,020.46	-9.25%	3,132,837.05
2003	952,778.24	3,542,606.89	16,099,710.59	20,595,095.72	+4.77%	1,118,006.61
2004	965,027.60	3,308,918.23	16,209,336.25	20,483,282.08	+0.54%	867,244.45
2005	1,062,636.94	5,061,717.32	16,295,486.48	22,419,567.74	+8.6%	658,119.96
2006	1,034,640.68	5,124,122.72	16,969,099.58	23,127,862.98	+3.2%	785,997.15
2007	1,288,605.77	3,747,225.59	22,528,565.40	27,564,396.76	+19.2%	1,529,796.04

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ▶ Finance Office

The Finance Office is responsible for overseeing all areas of financial administration, including revenue recording, investments, expenditure tracking, financial records administration, budgeting, debt financing, auditing, payroll administration, and financial reporting. In 2007, the Division had one part-time and three full-time employees, in addition to the Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner (who also oversees the Tax Office). Highlights of 2007 activity include:

- Long-time employee Carol Combs retired in July. Shortly thereafter, part-time employee Peggy Noggler was reallocated to fill that full-time vacancy.
- Prepared and loaded the 2007 Final Budget and payroll accounts; prepared, presented, and delivered to the County the 2008 Tax Budget; and also prepared the 2008 Proposed Budget and related Capital Improvement Program/Maintenance effort document for presentation to Council.
- Cooperatively handled the required audit of the 2006 financial year and prepared and submitted the 2006 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Late in the year, the City learned that it earned the prestigious excellence in financial planning award -- representing the 20th consecutive year the City has received this award, and the ninth consecutive for the current Deputy Treasurer/Tax Commissioner. This award is presented by the Government Finance Officer Association of America and represents the highest award and recognition available for governmental reporting.

CITY OF BLUE ASH GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS 2007

Beginning 2007 Gen. Fund balance	$ 9,314,622*
Add: Revenues in Gen. Fund	$36,082,351
Total Gen. Fund Resources	$45,396,973
Less: Gen. Fund expenses	($21,515,918)
Less: transfers to other funds:	
Streets (SCMR)	($ 1,611,131)
Parks & Rec	($ 3,343,773)
"New" transfers - Issue 15 projects	($ 1,641,119)
Golf operations	($ 416,411)
Debt retirement	($ 3,940,057)
= End of 2007 Gen. Fund balance	$ 12,928,564*

*Note: includes all reserves

- The City's new bank purchasing card program, first implemented early in 2007, proved to be very beneficial city-wide. The system provides for accurate record keeping and expense control, accurate encumbering, on-line documentation, and a significant reduction in paper work and staff time associated with purchase orders.
- The Treasurer's Office and Finance team worked together to provide for the issuance of General Obligation Bonds in the amount of $9,975,000 to provide most of the funding for the multi-phase expansion and renovation of the Rec Center. Those bonds, which were issued through Fifth Third Securities Inc. as the underwriter, carried a maximum maturity of 15 years and were closed at a net interest cost of 4.115%. The proceeds of those bonds will be utilized during 2007 and 2008 for the Recreation Center renovation and expansion project described in more detail within the Parks & Recreation section of this report.
- In conjunction with the bond issuance effort, the City completed the necessary application and provided information to Moody's Investors Service for a rating on the bonds. The rating issued for these bonds, and thus for the City of Blue Ash, was Aa2. That bond rating has been beneficial in maintaining the City's low borrowing costs relating to such project financing.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources team has two full-time members (including the Human Resources Officer) and one part-time staff member. In addition to the routine internal support functions performed by the Human Resource office on a daily basis, the following offers a summary of 2007 achievements:

- HR teamed up with the Health and Wellness Committee to coordinate several health-related events for the benefit of employees. Examples include the 2nd annual Health Fair in early 2007, the Healthy Ohioans Walk-N-Lunch event in April, and opportunity for individualized employee health assessments (with over 50 employees participating). The Health and Wellness Committee also produced regular health and wellness newsletters which were distributed and E-mailed to employees.
- Employee health insurance coverages were bid and renewed, with medical insurance received at a 4.85% increase, and dental and optical coverage resulting in no cost change.
- The HR office participated in the Safety Committee, which meets regularly. A major 2007 success of the committee included implementation of a uniform accident review process to be used city-wide to pinpoint areas where safety procedures and training can be improved.
- HR staff coordinated the periodic blood drives, on-site mammogram van visits (open to the community), and flu shot program.
- The Human Resources office coordinated the annual holiday luncheon in December. City employees raised more than $1,143 in donations towards the creation of military care packages and made significant donations of toys and clothes to “adopted” needy families in Blue Ash.
- An additional employee appreciation event, the annual summer luncheon and golf outing, was held in July. This event is coordinated by the Golf Pro and Golf Maintenance Superintendent.
- Hiring and testing activities coordinated by the Human Resources group was intensive during 2007. Activity included finalization of new three-year contracts with the Service Department bargaining unit (AFSCME) and the Police Sergeants. Police Patrol Officer negotiations resumed in September. The Patrol Officers have left the Fraternal Order of Police to form their new bargaining unit: the Blue Ash Patrol Officers Benevolent Association.
- Exams were administered involving Police Patrol Officer, Police Sergeants, Firefighter III, Account Clerk, and a promotional process for Police Lieutenant.
- HR coordinated efforts associated with hiring of a new Fire Captain, Assistant to the City Manager, IT Technician, the new Service Director (scheduled to start in February 2008 upon retirement of the current Director), and several part-time positions.

SCENES FROM EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION EVENTS IN 2007
JULY GOLF OUTING/LUNCH & DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY

TECHNOLOGY & PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Technology office includes two full-time employees - the Technology Officer and the newly hired (in 2007) IT Technician. This office plays a major support role city-wide, and is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the City's technology for all City departments and divisions, including all 150 desktop and laptop computers, copiers, faxes, printers, telephone systems, cell phones, internal and external websites, and much more. The following offers a summary of major accomplishments of this office:

- Hired a full-time IT Technician in May to provide support to City-wide technology objectives, equipment upgrades, emergency response, and help-desk duties.
- Worked extensively, along with the Public Information Officer, in the request for proposal process, design, and creation of the City's newly redesigned general website BlueAsh.com.
- Revised and distributed a new cell phone policy to all affected employees.
- Worked with the Recreation Center renovation expansion team relating to the design and installation of communication, digital, training, and other requirements in the multi-phase project.
- Replaced 38 computers, four laptops, and upgraded 23 computers to get all computers running on Windows XP. The team also replaced all CRT monitors with new energy efficient LCD monitors.
- Upgraded all computers to Office 2003, network backup software, network wiring infrastructure and switches, and time keeping software.
- Upgraded the Fire Department copier to a networked color/BW laser copier/printer.
- Installed new horticulture drafting program for Parks Maintenance.
- Installed Web Filtering software.
- Upgraded the Police Department server and storage capacity.
- Completed 826 work orders.
- Assisted with the technology aspect of the Tax/Finance office construction project.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- In summer 2007, the Project Coordinator, working with the Economic Development Office, completed the replacement of two office park/city identification signs on the northern corners of the Glendale-Milford/Reed Hartman "signature" intersection. The new signs reflect the City's newer branding colors, logo, and "Aspire. Achieve. Advance" slogan, and were placed in cooperation with Duke Realty.

- The Project Coordinator continued to play a key role on the Rec Center renovation team, and assisted with the preparation and finalization of bid documents, scrutiny of prints and specifications, and "on the job" inspection and coordination with the project's Construction Manager, Schumacher Dugan. Similar efforts related to the project's Phase II began later in the year.
- The Facilities Maintenance team and Project Coordinator cooperatively prepared the bid specs and bid award for the replacement and installation of the roof membrane and insulation over the entirety of the structure at 6131 Interstate Circle, the City's Service garage.
- The Project Coordinator, working with Facilities Maintenance, completed work associated with required inspections, testing, and permitting relating to the City's backflow devices, boilers, detection systems, underground storage tanks, and elevators.
- The Project Coordinator worked with the Assistant to the City Manager to coordinate the facilities review study completed for the Municipal & Safety Center/south Fire complex.
- The City's certified preventive maintenance contract for HVAC equipment with Peck, Hannaford + Briggs was renewed.
- The Project Coordinator serves as a key member of the City's storm water response team and was active throughout 2007 on a number of private and public drainage issues. Just one example included preparing an inventory and a response to a group of Sycamore Trace residents who had expressed concerns about the potential of increased drainage from the City's nearby facilities.

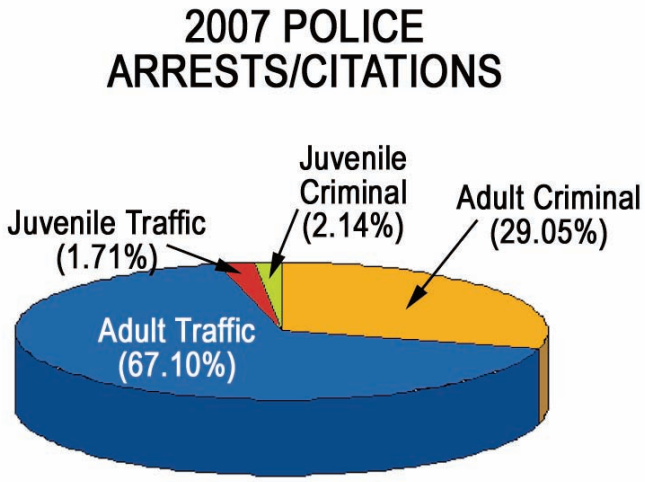
POLICE DEPARTMENT

In 2007, the Police Department employed 58 full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel, 38 of whom are full-time sworn officers. The Department consists of one Chief, two Captains, one Lieutenant, eight Sergeants, 26 Patrol Officers, six Dispatchers, one Mayor's Court Coordinator, two Mayor's Court Clerks, and four staff personnel. The Department operates under two bureaus: Operations and Administrative. Operations performs all primary police functions, and Administrative performs a variety of functions that support the operation of the Department. Of the total full-time police officers, 92.1% are assigned to Operations and 5.26% are assigned to Administrative.

The operating budget for the Department in 2007 was about $6.61 million, with actual expenses being about $6.2 million. As was the case in 2006, significant increases were experienced in expenditures associated with maintenance of equipment and gasoline.

2007 POLICE STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1,326 criminal and non-criminal reports were taken by the Department, compared to 1,744 in 2006. The three largest categories for these reports were non-criminal reports (19.83%), thefts (19.53%), and drug offenses (16.37%). Of all reports, the Department successfully cleared 77%. This compares favorably to national statistics as the FBI Uniform Crime Report for 2006 shows that in metropolitan counties nationwide, 50.7% of violent crimes and 15.6% of property crimes were cleared. Blue Ash cleared 83.3% and 39.5% respectively in 2007.
- The Department made 1,241 criminal arrests, compared to 1,249 in 2006. Of the arrests, 93.15% were adult. The Department's arrest statistics also compare favorably to national statistics, as Blue Ash made twice the Midwest's average number of arrests (based upon population). See chart describing composition of 2007 Police arrests/citations.
- The Department handled 13,840 calls for service and details in 2007, compared to 16,177 in 2006. About 8.3% of these involved proactive patrol strategies, such as bike patrol, positive citizen contacts, etc. About 11.6% of the calls reflect service type details, such as public fingerprinting, background checks, bank runs, vacation house checks, etc. About 12.4% of these details involved providing assistance to the Fire Department.
- The busiest times of day for the Police Department were between 3 and 4PM, 4 and 5PM, 5 and 6PM, and Noon and 1PM respectively. These time periods aggregately accounted for over 25% of total calls.



MAYOR'S COURT...

Blue Ash's Mayor's Court is allowed to hear only traffic or misdemeanor cases. No DUI, DUS, or felony cases are heard at this level. An officer can base a charge on either Ohio State law, or the Blue Ash Municipal Code. Whether a case is heard in Mayor's Court depends upon how the Officer writes the charge. If based upon Blue Ash Municipal Code, and if it is a misdemeanor or traffic violation, then the case may be sent to Blue Ash. Otherwise, the case must be sent downtown to be heard by the Hamilton County Courts. In 2007, 50% of the total adult criminal and traffic cases were cited to Mayor's Court.

Mayor's Court convenes generally two times each month. The total number of Mayor's Court cases in 2007 was 1,929, compared to a total of 2,385 in 2006. Of those 2007 cases, 1,697 were traffic citations and 232 criminal citations, compared to 2,253 and 132 in 2006. Mayor's Court collected $117,415 in fines, $10,116 in costs, and $474 in forfeitures in 2007, compared to $154,488, $14,087, and $860 respectively in 2006.

Police Department Continued

OVERALL DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS & NOTABLE EVENTS:

- The Department helped to solve eight aggravated robberies throughout Hamilton County. The crimes were committed by two different groups of youth, and many of those arrested were juveniles. Recognition was received from the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, and several officers were nominated for the annual Hamilton County Police Association Awards.
- The Department worked with officers from Amberley Village, DART, Montgomery, and Springdale to uncover a "murder for hire" plot involving a Blue Ash businessman soliciting another person to kill a former business associate.
- The non-profit Matt Haverkamp Foundation selected the Blue Ash Police to receive funds to replace a police K-9 (Ozzy) who had to be euthanized early in the year for medical reasons. Handler Chris Zielinski completed training with his new K-9 partner Nico later in the year.

Reps from the Matt Haverkamp Foundation presented the City with a $5,200 check at a Council meeting in 2007. The funds were used towards the purchase & training of a new Police K-9 (Nico, pictured).

- Dozens of hours were spent working follow-up after a manufacturing company was broken into three times. Property valued at over $114,000 was recovered from a scrapyard in Dayton, Ohio.
- Blue Ash assisted the Sharonville PD following the mid-air collision of two small aircraft. The two aircraft crashed to the ground in two Sharonville locations.
- Ryan Dieterle was convicted and sentenced to 77 years in prison for aggravated murder, aggravated burglary, rape, and violation of a temporary protection order for the death of Michelle Dieterle at the Fox Run Apartments in June 2006.
- In August, Blue Ash Police were involved with the shooting death of a vehicle theft suspect following a high-speed pursuit and attempt to hit two officers. The Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office cleared the three officers involved.

- After a lengthy Civil Service process, two Sergeants, Rich Riley and Paul Hartinger, were promoted to Lieutenant, and were administered their Oath of Office by Mayor Buckman in December.
- In June, the annual Bike Safety Rodeo was held at the Nature Park. Employees from multiple departments assisted with the free event attended by more than 100 citizens. See photos from this event below.

Events such as the annual Bike Safety Rodeo provide excellent opportunities for positive direct interaction between our police and fire personnel & the community, especially its youth. Two (donated) new bikes were raffled at this event this year.

AUTO ACCIDENT STATISTICS:

In 2007, the Blue Ash Police Department handled 648 auto accident reports. A total of 504 of those accidents occurred on public roadways and 144 occurred on private property. This compares to 620 total in 2006. Of the 648 total crash reports, 81, or 12.5%, involved injuries, seven (1.1%) were DUI related, and none involved a fatality. Auto accident reports on public roadways decreased from 509 in 2006 to 504 in 2007.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

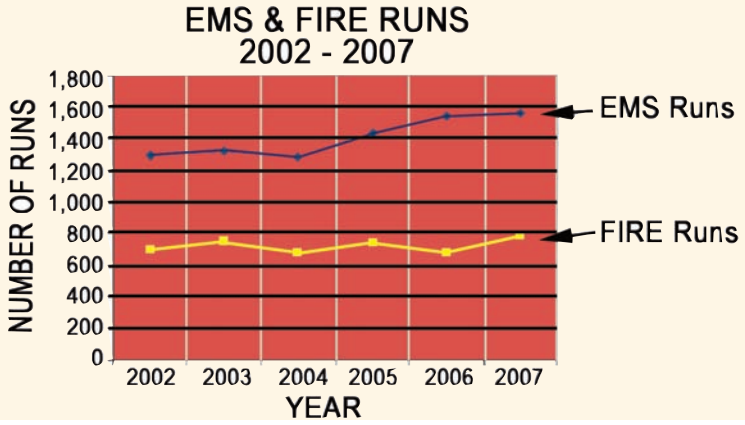
The Fire Department operates its 24-hour services out of two stations - the North (main) Station at 10647 Kenwood Road, and the South Station at 4343 Cooper Road. Organizationally, the Department offers its scope of services and programs through four operational divisions, including Administrative, Fire Prevention & Life Safety, Training, and Fire & EMS.

In 2007, the Department had 31 full-time Firefighter/Paramedics (including the Chief and officers) and one full-time secretary. However, during much of 2007, the department was short two, as one was out on medical disability and the other resigned. The number of part-time firefighters averaged 12 most of the year, short of the Department's goal of 21 (due to people leaving for full-time positions elsewhere).

FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS:

In 2007, there were a total of 2,348 runs -- 787 of those being Fire Runs and 1,561 EMS. Fire runs per month ranged from a low of 59 in July to a high of 83 in October; EMS runs per month ranged from a low of 108 in March to a high of 151 in November. 2007 dollar value saved & loss analysis shows a total saved value of $14,188,685 and total loss value of $581,385, representing a total percentage saved of 96.06%.

The chart to the right offers a summary of run patterns from 2002 through 2007.



FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS...

Training for fire personnel is required at federal, state and regional levels. In 2007, a total of 4,955 hours of training was conducted -- 3,884 hours involving full-time personnel and 1,071 hours involving part-time personnel. Examples of training sessions include:

- GEMS (Geriatric Emergency Medicine Services)
- PEPP (Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals)
- Strategy and Tactics for Initial Company Operations (offered by the National Fire Academy)
- Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) training (in-house, conducted by Cleveland State University), including two members receiving Haz Mat Technician Certification by the State (bringing the department to a total of 34)

- Live burn training (two sessions)
- VFIS Emergency Vehicle Driving Instructor Certification
- A new EMS training series, initiated by the new Assistant Medical Director (Dr. Ben Bassin), began in September involving 12-lead heart monitor classes, auto extrication, and cadaver training.

- Hands-on training at Blue Ash's Toyota facility to learn more about what's involved with a crash involving hybrid vehicles.
- RAT (Rapid Assist Team) training
- SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) endurance training

FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS...

82 public education classes were offered in 2007, and included a total of 3,671 attendees. Examples of these public education efforts include tours of the fire station; CPR classes; fire extinguisher training; "what to do before the squad arrives"; fire safe house; and special education classes such as fire safety talks, tornado safety training, fire gear demos, neighborhood block party participation, truck/squad visits to schools, and school/business fire drills.

Fire Department Continued

OVERALL DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS & NOTABLE EVENTS:

- In January, two part-time members, David Sauer and Justin Burress, were successful in moving to full-time Firefighter/Paramedic positions.
- In February, the Department received its new 100-foot aerial platform truck from Pierce Mfg. (replacing the 1982 Mack).

- New Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) were placed in all City buildings, offering early emergency care in cardiac crises. CPR/AED training was also available to City employees prior to their implementation.
- Captain Chris Theders began with the Blue Ash Fire Department in June. Chris comes with 17 years of fire service background.
- Staff assisted with the website redesign process, and now has the capability to directly update their portion of the website daily.
- The annual community open house was held in October in conjunction with National Fire Prevention Week. Over 150 citizens attended the event (see photos, bottom right).
- A new pickup truck and technical rescue trailer were purchased in December, replacing an '88 Mack (Support 13), which was sold. The new units will carry hazardous materials and technical rescue equipment, and the truck will also be used daily by shift inspectors.
- 2007 represented an unusual year in several regards. Inclement weather conditions during the first quarter required the Department to handle downed power lines eight times. Inclement February weather also caused an incident of 25 emergency runs in less than 3 hours due to snow and ice. Many Blue Ash homes were without power, and the North station opened as emergency shelter. Extreme temperatures and dry conditions also caused 14 grass/mulch fires during the second quarter of the year. Examples of other unusual runs included a chemical spill at Xomox in January, several residential fires, recovery of a murdered body (murdered in another jurisdiction), and back-to-back suicides. Mutual aid was provided to Sycamore Township, Reading, Woodlawn, Sharonville, Montgomery, Deer Park/Silverton, and Indian Hill. Mutual aid was received from Montgomery, Evendale, Sycamore, Deer Park/Silverton, and Sharonville.

- The department continued to offer to citizens carbon monoxide (CO) detectors at a subsidized cost of $15, free smoke detectors, free child car seat installations and the Fire Explorer and Junior Fire Setters programs. Staff also participated with local schools (including all levels of Sycamore and Ursuline Academy) with various training and emergency planning.

LIFE SAFETY DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS...

2007 was a busy year as more sets of plans were reviewed and more acceptance tests at new or renovated structures were conducted -- all while inspecting more occupancies than ever over the past 10 years. Additional prevention stats for the year include:

- 1,732 inspections, representing a 23% increase over 2006 and three times the 2005 levels.
- 350 sets of plans were reviewed, 22% more than in 2006.
- Reviewed 120 third-party fire protection system inspection reports (including required follow-up).
- Completed 317 acceptance tests on new or modified fire protection systems and permit applications, 31% more than 2006.
- Consulted with 40 business owners, most involving assistance with emergency plans now required by the Ohio Fire Code.
- Found and required correction of 7,261 violations.
- The Knox Box ordinance adopted early in 2006, requiring all occupancies with fire alarms and/or sprinkler systems to have a Knox Box installed by January 1, 2008, led to several new boxes being ordered and installed during 2007. As of the end of 2007, about 75% of our businesses are in compliance, with 100% expected by mid 2008.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Progress continued in the economic and community development arenas in 2007. This office is staffed with four full-time employees and one part-time Administrative Clerk. In February, the newest team member, Rich Dole, was transferred to the office from the Service Department to serve as the Program Administrator implementing property maintenance services, handling citizen issues related to drainage, and assisting with downtown redevelopment and business retention initiatives. Highlights of office activities are summarized on these pages.

BLUE ASH
ASPIRE. ACHIEVE. ADVANCE.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

In 2007, Blue Ash received fdi Magazine's prestigious City of the Future award in the Business Friendly category. Blue Ash ranked second in the Most Business Friendly Micro City in North America category. Additional recognition was received when the BlueAshAdvance.Com website, designed and launched in 2006, received the International Economic Development Excellence in Economic Development Award for population category of less than 50,000. In 2007, Blue Ash was also featured in an article titled "Relationship-Building and Business Retention: The Community Call Blitz Program in a national publication titled **Economic Development America**. Blue Ash's 2006 business call blitz process was highlighted.

fDi
North American Micro Cities of the Future 2007/08
Most Business Friendly Second Place
BLUE ASH, OH
UNITED STATES

BLUE ASH AMBASSADORS

Research has indicated that over 65% of new jobs are created through the expansion of existing firms. The Blue Ash Ambassadors Committee, created in 2007, assists the City by developing strong relationships with current Blue Ash companies through personal visits with business leaders. Each member of the Committee, comprised of volunteers from several Blue Ash firms as well as City staff, meets with two to four local firms each month. In 2007, Ambassadors visited and surveyed 130 business leaders. Info gathered from these sessions will provide insight to allow Blue Ash to be more competitive and to uncover barriers to business expansion.

BUSINESS LUNCHEONS

Blue Ash continued to invite local business people to quarterly luncheons to personally thank them for their investment in our community. In 2007, the program hosted 55 local professionals who were honored to be a part of these small gatherings of City of Blue Ash and business leaders.

CINCINNATI USA PARTNERSHIP - Regional ED Participation

Blue Ash continues to work closely with the Cincinnati USA Partnership on economic development efforts. The City participated in several business development missions (in New York, Boston, and Dallas) to promote the region and community to site selection professionals. One site selection firm stated that while they study trends and see the Cincinnati region as a whole being sluggish, Blue Ash seems to be progressing, and mentioned Citigroup as one of the indicators of our success. In 2007, Blue Ash selected Citigroup as the recipient of the Partnership's Growth Award program, recognizing them for their decision to invest in their new Blue Ash headquarters and state-of-the-art IT facility within Duke Realty's The Landings development.

Cincinnati USA
Regional Chamber

EXPANSION/ATTRACTION HIGHLIGHTS

A sample listing of new or expanding Blue Ash firms in 2007 include the Hunt Road Kroger retail store; a new 108 room Hilton Hotel at Cornell Park Dr./Cornell Rd., expected to be complete in early 2008; Oracle Systems' move to the Landings II building; Swiss-owned Omya Industries' announcement to move its North American headquarters to the Landings II building; HDR Engineering's office expansion from 7,000 to 16,000 square feet; French-owned Sogeti, an international IT consulting firm, adding fifty employees to their Lake Forest Dr. location with plans for an additional 100 more in 2008; and expansion/investment by Wilmington College, Premier Manufacturing Services, LCA Vision, ST Media, and more.

Economic & Community Development Continued

BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

In 2007, there were a total of 584 permits issued,including 161 residential and 423 commercial permits, representing an estimated construction value of $51,524,808. Of the 584 permits, 13 were for new residential and five were for new commercial. This compares to a total of 612 permits issued in 2006, with an estimated total value of $86,323,414.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT

As mentioned earlier, a staff member previously assigned to the Service Department, Rich Dole, was transferred to Community Development to focus on addressing property code violations throughout the City. There were 157 property maintenance cases handled by our on-site staff in 2007, and progress is being made on problematic violations which impact the visual appearance of our neighborhoods.

Pictured above is just one example of many improvements that can be seen.

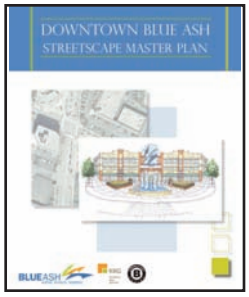
HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In 2007, there were 16 applications for the City of Blue Ash Home Repair Assistance Program (HRAP). The total year-to-date amount of purchase orders processed for HRAP is $35,799. This program continues to be a viable means to enable assistance for qualifying homeowners who desire to keep their property attractive, but require some assistance.

SIGNAGE

Early in the year, Council voted to change the Code relative to temporary real estate signs, largely in an attempt to deal more effectively with existing commercial buildings that have had perpetual "temporary" signs. The new law allows permanent, more attractive, signage in place of the temporary signage. The December deadline for compliance has passed without total conformity; however, most companies with the now illegal signs are in the process of applying for permits and installing new signage in order to meet the new requirements. An effort began towards the end of the year to more strictly enforce the existing temporary advertising sign regulations, and most have voluntarily complied.

DOWNTOWN BLUE ASH



City Council adopted the **Downtown Blue Ash Streetscape Master Plan** on December 13, 2007. The Plan supports the concepts of the **Blue Ash Town Center Concept Redevelopment Plan** that was adopted by Council in 2006. Implementation of elements of the Streetscape Plan is expected over a period of several years, based upon Council-determined priorities for City-funded developments.

The continued development of Park Manor, the newer residential development near Cooper Road and Monroe Avenue adjacent to downtown (pictured), and the beginning of development of the Towne Square Lofts condominium project on Towne Square Avenue clearly support the goals and design standards described within the above mentioned planning documents. The opening of InCahoots restaurant at the northern end of Downtown on Kenwood Road and the continued success of other existing restaurants and stores that draw visitors to Downtown Blue Ash also have contributed to growing levels of activity that will make Downtown a vibrant place even more attractive to future development.

Occupancy began in 2007 of the Park Manor townhomes at Cooper & Monroe adjacent to Downtown, featuring Kurlemann-built homes.

SERVICE DEPARTMENT / PUBLIC WORKS

Major responsibilities of the Service Department include street and drainage maintenance, refuse collection administration, recycling, equipment maintenance, traffic signal maintenance, and building maintenance support. The Department attended to these and many other duties in 2007 with an equivalent staff of eighteen full-time and 2½ part-time employees. Long-time employees Steve Thomas, Art Long, and Billy Gardner retired during the year, and the Service Director, Dennis Albrinck, will be retiring in February 2008. Highlights are summarized.

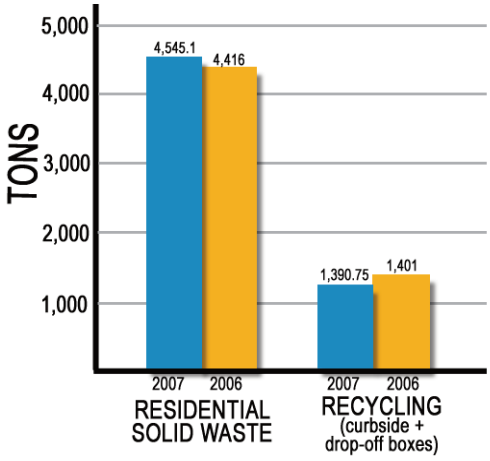
SNOW & ICE CONTROL

The 2006-07 snow/ice season was just a bit above normal after a relatively mild 2005-06 season. Department supervisors recorded 20.5 inches of snow, and Service Department crews responded 29 times for anti-icing pretreatment or deicing salting. There were three snowfalls of 3.75" or greater, and crews spread 2,231.01 tons of salt and 5,908.90 gallons of calcium chloride. Over 1,728 staff hours were spent treating the roads, driving 14,153 miles. Comparisons of these statistics with similar ones during the more mild 2005-06 season are shown in the chart.

SNOW & ICE STATISTICS

	SEASON 2005-06	2006-07
# of response times	24	29
Inches of snow	9.13	20.5
Salt used (tons)	1,288.1	2,231.01
Calcium chloride used (gal)	3,005	5,908.9
# hours treating roads	1,054.24	1,728.75
Miles driven treating roads	8,832.50	14,153

WASTE DISPOSAL & TRASH/BRUSH DROP-OFF PROGRAM



Residential waste & recycling - The Service Department administered the second year of the current five-year solid waste contract with Rumpke. In 2007, Rumpke picked up and disposed of 4,545.41 tons of residential solid waste and 57,980 lineal cubic yards of selected business and commercial trash. Rumpke collected 1,390.75 tons of recyclable material under our residential and community drop-off recycling programs. (See chart for collection comparisons with 2006.) Also continued in 2007, residents utilized the dumpsters at the Service garage approximately 1,621 times in 2007. This continues to offer a convenient service for residents who wish to dispose of items not normally picked up by Rumpke with regular curbside pickup or when residents wish to dispose of such items on a non pickup day.

CURBSIDE LEAF & BRUSH COLLECTION

Curbside **leaf collection** is offered one day in the spring and continuously between mid-October and mid-December. In 2007, City crews spent 2,007.5 staff hours picking up and disposing of 3,053.75 cubic yards of leaves. The City's **curbside brush pickup** program, reinstated in April 2005, resulted in the pickup and disposal of 1,227 cubic yards of chipped brush and tree limbs. This service offers convenient regular weekly curbside pickup (the weekday following the resident's regular garbage pickup) between March and November, with pickup available on a call-in basis from December through February. Many residents also requested and received the chipped brush to reuse within their yards and gardens.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & FREON-CONTAINING APPLIANCE DISPOSAL

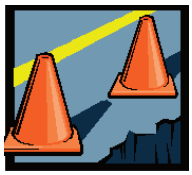
The City continued its free service to residents to properly dispose of **household hazardous waste** items brought by residents to the Interstate Circle facility, and in 2007, spent approximately $22,250 for these services. Examples of items disposed include oil, batteries, paint, antifreeze, tires, etc. Also continued was the City's free service to residents offering curbside **pickup of freon-containing appliances**, such as refridgerators, freezers, and AC units. In 2007, the City picked up 79 units, with another 71 dropped off at the Interstate Circle facility. The City arranges and pays for proper freon removal and appliance disposal, at a cost of $3,200 in 2007.

Service Department / Public Works Continued

PAVING PROGRAM / CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2007 Paving Program consisted of repaving Hunt Road from the westbound exit ramp of Ronald Reagan Highway (RRH) to the west entrance ramp to RRH; Plainfield from the bridge over RRH north to Peppermill; Glendale-Milford from Plainfield to just east of McKinley; McKinley from Glendale-Milford and 525 feet north; Cooper Woods; Cooper from Cooper Woods and east 1,175 feet; and Carpenter's Run from Cooper and north 360 feet.
- An eight-foot wide sidewalk/bike path was constructed on the south side of Creek Road between Techwoods Circle west to McKinley and on both sides of Creek from McKinley and 340 feet west on the north side and 140 feet on the south side. An initial installation of curb and gutter was made in the area on Creek west of McKinley. Ethicon Endo-Surgery contributed to the project by having the contractor install additional sidewalk on the east side of McKinley Road as well as a short piece near their east drive on Creek near Reed Hartman Highway.

- An eight foot wide sidewalk/bike path, curbs, and gutters were constructed on the north side of Hunt Road from Kroger west to Bluewing Terrace and in front of the Chabad Jewish Center on the south side.



- The Blue Ash/Hunt Road Project was bid in late 2007, with work starting in early 2008. Additional 2007 work in this vicinity included a Greater Cincinnati Water Works project to install a new 36" water transmission main in the entire length of Blue Ash Road and on Cooper from Blue Ash to Kenwood Road.
- Capital equipment purchases totaling $9,563 in 2007 by the Department were very modest, and included a variety of smaller items such as a 12" bucket for the mini-excavator, a gas fuel pressure tester kit, vehicle diagnostic software, tire bead seater, three Vactor nozzles, a treadmill, two-drawer lateral file, a break drum dolly, four portable stop signs, an industrial paper cutter for the sign shop, a 22-ton jack stand, and a 25-ton jack stand.

STORM WATER

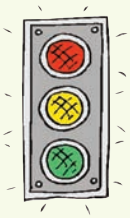
The City of Blue Ash is a member of the Hamilton County Storm Water District (HCSWD). This allows the City to be in compliance with the requirements of the Phase II National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to improve and safeguard the quality of storm water. Some of the activities included in this endeavor have been completed by the City for many years. In 2007, Department personnel spent 406.75 hours sweeping 1,933 lane miles of street; 16 hours installing 16 lineal feet of new storm sewer lines and constructing one new catch basin; and 1,664.75 hours repairing 14 catch basins, maintaining 84 feet of storm sewer line, and inspecting/cleaning 2,319 catch basins.

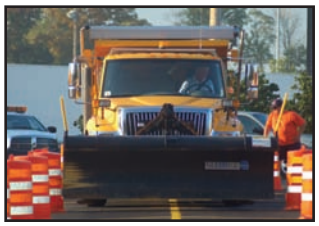
The City began documenting all public and private retention and detention basins in the City, including listing ownership and responsibility for each. An inspection program will begin in 2008.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

New LED lenses were installed at the entrance to westbound Ronald Reagan Highway on Hunt Road near Kroger. LED lenses will also be installed at the Kenwood and Pfeiffer Roads intersection.

Plans have been made to install two video detection cameras for east- and west-bound traffic at Glendale-Milford Road and Reed Hartman Highway. This will make the intersection fully-actuated and will hopefully reduce waiting time for motorists.





Members of the Service Department take safety & training matters seriously. Pictured are photos from the annual Blue Ash Snow Plow Rodeo where Department members have a friendly competition amongst themselves, & also later against other area public works departments in a regional competition held in Dayton.

PARKS & RECREATION ▶ Recreation Center & Pool

The Parks & Recreation Department had a busy and exciting 2007 as it continued its tradition of offering an abundance of quality recreational programs and facilities throughout the year. The Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for the operation of the Recreation Center, Towne Square and Veterans Memorial areas, Nature Park, Hunt Park, White Oak Park, Hazelwood Center, Golf Course, and Sports Center, as well as grounds maintenance throughout the City. The Department also oversees and coordinates the City's many special events and concerts held year-round. Several times throughout the year, the Department mails a brochure to all residences and members describing classes, events, leagues, etc.

Life with a recess™

▷ RECREATION CENTER & POOL

2007 was an especially exciting year for the Rec Center, with construction on Phase I of the expansion and renovation project beginning, and nearly complete, by the end of the year. More info on this project is included later in this report. Other Rec Center highlights are summarized below:

- As of the end of 2007, there are 3,012 Recreation Center memberships, comprised of 1,511 residential family, 595 residential single, 462 business family, and 444 business single.
- About 210,867 persons utilized the Center in some manner, including ±147,144 members checking in, room rentals, classes, tot room and special events held in the building. Even with construction, this is up from 2006 levels of an estimated 207,500.
- The City's six park shelters remained busy, with an estimated 15,337 rental patrons.
- The Rec Center offered 20 adult sports leagues, including basketball, volleyball, softball, racquetball, dodgeball (new this year), and ultimate frisbee. Leagues had 191 teams comprised of 1,563 players, with revenue of $27,415. Due to construction, some fall leagues had to be cancelled.
- Projected revenues in memberships, program fees, recreation concession and catering, and Sports Center concessions were exceeded in 2007.

Recreation Center programming and staff highlights include:

- Hired one new part-time camp counselor for the summer program who has a specialty background in working with special needs children.
- Staff members were updated with new CPR/AED training required by the new standards published by the American Red Cross.
- The combination swim and camp registration (without a lottery) proved very successful. (Camp Blue Fish picture bottom center.)
- The instructor evaluation process was continued for all Recreation program instructors.
- Offered new "Friday Night Flicks" program targeted for kids 6-12 years.

- A Dive-In Movie was held and well attended in August at the pool.
- The 4th annual Ladies Distance Classic was hosted, featuring 1,300 participants.
- Dinner and a Movie was offered on Towne Square in September.
- The sixth annual Dog Day at the Pool event was held in September, and is later described in more detail.
- Swim lessons were provided to an estimated 480 participants (pictured bottom left).
- Staff participated in the Red Cross Regional Lifeguard Olympics and qualified a number of teams for the State competition.
- The early morning lap fitness swim and support to the Sycamore Schools "Flying Fish" and boys and girls water polo teams was continued in 2007.

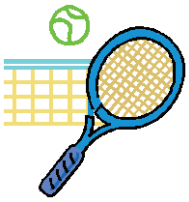
PARKS & RECREATION — Fitness, Tennis, Concessions & Hazelwood

FITNESS CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Added new cardio equipment, including two Precor EFX Ellipticals, two Woodway treadmills, and one Airdyne bike.
- Staff highlights including the reallocation from PT to FT of Dan Guthrie as the Fitness and Aquatics Supervisor. Kristina Faulkner was also hired as a PT Assistant Fitness Coordinator.
- The Fitness staff offered many popular incentive programs for patrons (236 participating), including Mt. Blue Ash, Iron Man/Iron Woman, Ultimate Cardio Challenge, Early Bird Lap Swim, Strong Man/Strong Woman, Turkey Trot, and the Million Pound Club.
- Personal Training was offered to members for the first time in 2007. The goal is to keep three to four trainers on staff. In 2007, over 1,000 hours of training to members was provided (pictured).

- Several fitness classes were offered free of charge to fitness members. A popular example is boot camp, with participation more than tripling 2006 levels. Aquatic exercise was also added this year, offered two times a week, and serving 610.
- The fitness staff provided 164 fitness orientations and also tracked all equipment repairs and maintenance.

TENNIS HIGHLIGHTS



- From June through August, an estimated 2,333 hours of court reservations were made.
- High quality tennis instruction was continued in 2007, offering classes for all ages.
- Participation in adult and youth camps and clinics and leagues exceeded expectations. Teaching pros for the evening clinics had to be added in order to serve all interested patrons. Youth leagues were also very successful as the girls team placed second in league and won tournament and the boys team won the league and placed second in tournament.
- Blue Ash courts continued to be the home court for both Moeller High and Ursuline Academy tennis teams.

CONCESSIONS - Rec Center, Amphitheatre, Sports Center & Sandtrap Sandwich Shoppe

Concession operations are offered at the Recreation Center (pool, gym, and lunchtime "SmartCart" in the lobby area), Amphitheatre (Tuesday evening Concerts in the Park and East Side Players productions), Sports Center, and the Sandtrap Sandwich Shop in the Golf Course clubhouse (approximately March through November).

CONCESSION REVENUES - 2007	
Rec Center pool, gym, "SmartCart", Amphitheatre	$79,000
Sports Center	$68,777
Sandtrap Sandwich Shop (including outings*)	$130,755
*Outings totaled 30, servicing 1,276, with revenue of $17,746.82 (included in the total above)	

HAZELWOOD CENTER & OAKWOOD PARK

Located in the northern part of the City within the Hazelwood neighborhood, this facility is used as a drop-in center, offers a variety of activities, and is operated on limited hours. The facility is also available to rent for events such as graduation parties, etc. 2007 highlights include:

- Continued relationship with the non-profit group Operation Giveback, which sponsored the weekly reading hour on Thursdays, Girls on the Run program, and afternoon tutoring at their nearby location (as they transported students to and from).
- The first annual "Untouchables Car Show" was held the same day as the annual the Hazelwood Reunion. An impressive 65 cars participated in this first-year event.

PARKS & RECREATION

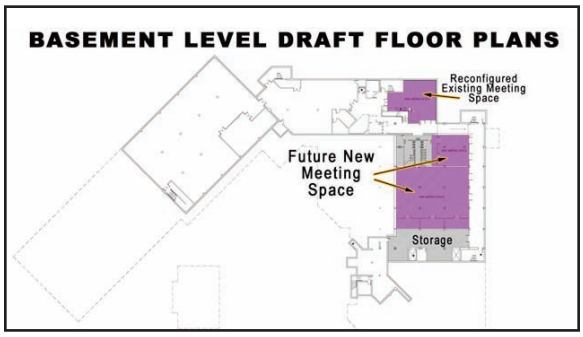
Rec Center Expansion & Renovation

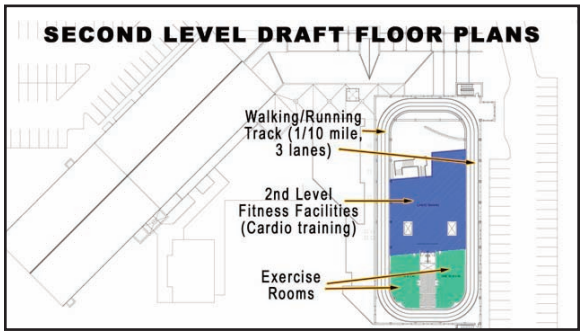
The passage of Issue 15 by Blue Ash voters in November 2006 made it possible for the City to move forward with planned improvements at the City's extensively used Recreation Center.

The project is being completed in two phases to limit the impact upon building operations. Phase I consists of construction of a new gymnasium (behind the existing newer gym), and Phase II will comprise the bulk of the renovation project occurring along the Cooper Road portion of the building. Council awarded bids associated with Phase I in July 2007, and construction began in August. Also in July, Council approved the issuance of general obligation bonds to finance this multi-phase improvement. Bonds will have a maturity of up to15 years, and the City received a very favorable net interest cost of 4.1%. Plan refinement associated with the Phase II improvements continued throughout 2007, with this portion of the project scheduled to be bid in early 2008.

The Phase II plans show demolition of the older (1979) portions of the Cooper Road elevation and reconstruction of a new area to accommodate a two-story fitness center; an elevated three-lane walking/running track (one-tenth of a mile in length); and new locker room areas towards the east. The plans also feature a second entrance facing Cooper Road and a new open centralized lobby-type space, including family café, and community lounge areas. This centralized area, essentially where the locker rooms exist today, will be very open, light, and will be accessible to all activity, including to the pool. Plans for Phase II will also include the potential for additional basement space.

The estimated cost of both phases of the project as proposed is $12 million, and the hope is for both phases of construction to be complete by late 2008 or spring 2009.





Above are architect's renderings & floor plans associated with the Recreation Center expansion & renovation project. Much effort was put forth to communicate the latest regarding this project to residents throughout the year. Plans & updates were posted within the Recreation Center lobby area year-round, on the City's website BlueAsh.com, & within each Community Newsletter mailed to residences and businesses. All renderings by MIchael Schuster Associates.

PARKS & RECREATION ▶ Special Events

Year-round special events were continued in quality fashion throughout 2007. Though these events are coordinated and managed through the Parks & Recreation Department, none could be produced without substantial assistance and support provided from staff based within ALL City departments and divisions. The City's special events program is exemplary of the City's true team spirit as they are illustrative of all departments and divisions working together to produce first-class events and to accomplish major goals for the City as a whole. The City's major (regional level) special events include SummerBration; Red, White & Blue Ash; and the Taste of Blue Ash. Other smaller special events are also described on these pages.

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships continue to be crucial to virtually all of the City's special events, and in 2007, staff secured new media sponsors for all three major events, including B105.1 & 97.3 The Wolf for SummerBration; WCPO Channel 9 TV for Red, White & Blue Ash; and 700 WLW for the Taste of Blue Ash. Media sponsors gave $300,000 of in-kind promotions.Sponsorship revenues secured in 2007 were $258,411. Additional 2007 event sponsors included Academy Rentals; Cincinnati Concession & Catering; Coca Cola; Donatos Pizza; Doubletree Guest Suites; Cricket Communications; Dr. Eric Ornella; Fifth Third Bank; Go Bananas Comedy Club; GutterShutter; Hills Communities Development; Horan Associates, Land Rover of Cincinnati; Larry's Lock Safe & Security Center, Inc.; LSI Industries; Miller Brewing Company; Ohio Lottery; Owens Corning Basements; Parker's Blue Ash Grill; Phillips Supply; Renewal By Andersen; RiverCity Remodeling; Romano's Macaroni Grill; Rozzi's Famous Fireworks; Samurai Sams; SmarTravel; The Beach Water Park; The Community Press; Time Warner Cable; Toyota; Louis Trauth Dairy; Trio Restaurant; and Wal-Mart.

SUMMERBRATION

This year's SummerBration took place June 1 through 3, with an estimated total attendance of 75,000. In addition to local entertainment, national level country artists were featured each evening, including Jamie O'Neal, Lonestar, and Joe NIchols. Six restaurants offered their popular barbeque fare, and the family fun area featured festival rides, games, and much more. Title sponsor for the event was Fifth Third Bank.

Pictured L to R, SummerBration 2007 country entertainment Friday, Saturday & Sunday respectively: Jamie O'Neal, LoneStar, & Joe Nichols. Photos by Mic Chandler.

RED, WHITE & BLUE ASH

Blue Ash's largest one-day event is held at the Sports Center on July 4th - Red, White & Blue Ash. This year's sponsor was WCPO Channel 9, and national entertainment featured Head East and Heart (pictured). Though weather was overcast and rainy most of the day, including a bad storm mid afternoon, estimated attendance (on site) was 100,000. In addition to the world-class fireworks produced by Rozzi's, a family fun area and variety of food booths were offered as well.

TASTE OF BLUE ASH

Blue Ash's largest special event is the Taste of Blue Ash, and was held the weekend of August 24, 25 and 26, with attendance estimated at 150,000. Twenty restaurants participated offering a wide variety of fare, and national level entertainment was featured each evening, including Peter Cetera (formerly associated with Chicago, and backed up by the Blue Ash/Montgomery Symphony), Dennis DeYoung (former Styx lead singer), and America. New this year was the Hunt Road stage, featuring great local entertainment, and the Go Bananas Comedy tent featuring local comedians. Presenting sponsors included Fifth Third Bank, Time Warner Cable, Ohio Lottery, and Toyota. The "Best of Taste" competition, held earlier in August, included 12 of the 20 restaurants.

Pictured L to R, this year's Taste of Blue Ash national entertainment Friday, Saturday, & Sunday respectively: Peter Cetera (formerly with Chicago), Dennis DeYoung of Styx, & America. Photos by Mic Chandler.

OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

Though SummerBration, July 4th, and the Taste represent Blue Ash's largest special events, there is more offered year-round. Examples are summarized below.

CONCERT SERIES - The Tuesday evening Concerts in the Park, and the Friday evening Concerts on the Square continued through the summer months. In addition, Lunchtime Thursday Concerts at the Square were held in September. Presenting sponsor for the series is Fifth Third Bank, and estimated attendance for the series was 36,702.

HUNT HOUSE - The City's historical Hunt House, first open to the public in 2006, remained open for tours throughout 2007. Six open houses were held beginning in February, with each featuring a different theme. An estimated 675 guests toured the historic home in 2007.

DOGGIE DOO-ATHLON - The City's sixth annual "dog day" at the pool took a new twist in 2007, featuring a 1.5 mile run/25-yard swim competition with 50 human/dog teams participating. This event, held in 2007 on Sat., Sept. 8th, has become a favorite, with this year's event attracting over 300 participants. The event, in addition to the "doo-athlon," also featured the traditional end-of-the-season open swim and festival. This event won the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association's Award of Excellence with a superior rating in the Family Program & Events Category.

HERITAGE DAY - The City's annual Heritage Day event took place in October, with attendance estimated at 4,000. This event is held in the Amphitheatre/Nature Park area, and features many hands-on activities, entertainment, demonstrations, and concerts, centered around the "late 1800s Blue Ash" theme. The Hunt House was also open for tours, including transportation from the Park to the House via horse-drawn carriage through the nearby Ravenwood neighborhood.

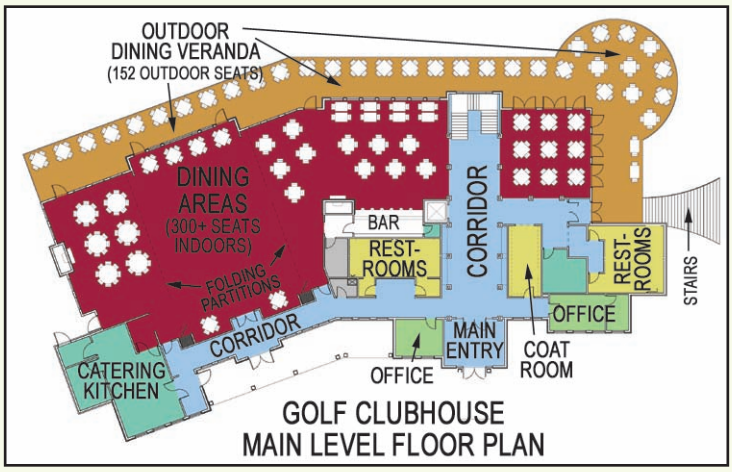
HALLOWEEN WALK IN THE WOODS - Sat., Oct. 27th, marked the day for this annual Halloween event geared for kids under ten. Attendance was estimated at 650, and the event featured fun Halloween activities, including trick-or-treating, face painting, and other family-friendly entertainment.

GOLF COURSE - Programming & Maintenance

GOLF COURSE -- PROGRAMMING

2007 was an exciting year for the Blue Ash Golf Course and represented the Course's 29th full season. Work in 2007 continued towards future improvements for the Blue Ash Golf Course, made possible by the passage of Issue 15 by Blue Ash voters in 2006. Future improvements will include not only direct improvements to the course itself, but also a new multi-purpose clubhouse to feature expanded banquet and food service operations. In 2007, the selection of an architect for these future improvements was made. After following an extensive proposal and interview process, Steed, Hammond, & Paul was awarded the contract. Planning meetings were held year-round, and a conceptual design for a new clubhouse was presented to City Council in October. As of the end of 2007, various options for these improvements continue to be evaluated, including consideration of a driving range, its potential location, and its affect on current course layout. The adjacent future 130-acre park near the airport sits just east of Plainfield Road across from the Golf Course, and that future park property is also being considered as a part of the Golf Course expansions.

Pictured above & below are architect's renderings of a proposed new Golf Clubhouse, the top showing the front (Cooper Road) view, & the bottom showing the view from behind. Renderings by Steed Hammond Paul.



In 2007, Golf rounds increased by 2%, with an estimated 37,700 rounds. This increase happened despite one of the hottest summers on record. Revenue from golf operations were also up 2%, with an estimated $985,100, and food/beverage revenues at the course increased 8% to $130,755.

GOLF COURSE -- MAINTENANCE

The staff of the Golf Maintenance Division also had another productive year, and also participated in the planning meetings for the future Golf Course improvements. The entire 2007 season was affected by the weather and the record heat, with more than 88 days having temperatures in excess of 90 degrees, and 18 days with temperatures over 100 degrees. The year's lack of rain compounded the situation, with records for lowest rainfall totals in June, July, and August. Rainfall between July 27 and September 9 was less than one inch. Over 32 million gallons of water, almost double the average amount, was used to irrigate the Course. Despite the extreme weather conditions, the Course remains in good condition; however, long-term tree damage is yet to be known. 2007 will be recorded as one of the driest and hottest seasons in the history of the Course.

Projects at the Course include the second and final phase of the OSMAC irrigation controller upgrade which also included installation of GPS of the course, providing accurate account of the exact footage and layout of the Course. GPS is also used for irrigation programming and to calculate cost estimates on construction projects.

PARKS MAINTENANCE

The Parks Maintenance Division of the City is responsible for the maintenance of all public City-owned grounds, except for the Golf Course. This division, like the Golf Maintenance Division, was adversely affected by the extremely warm and dry season. Extreme weather conditions required watering every day.

A highlight of 2007 for this division were the beautiful displays throughout Downtown Blue Ash, including the hanging baskets, wall planters, and large containers. Many compliments of this year's display from citizens and visitors were received.

The 37-acre Sports Center featured several new tournaments which were a big success. Additional work at the Sports Center included the installation of safety netting on the premiere Crosley Field.

Renovation continued and is almost complete at the division's new "home" at 6171 Interstate Circle. This facility provides space to store all equipment, as well as office space for staff.

The division continued to maintain the median areas of several major roads, and older landscaping in several areas of the Glendale-Milford/Pfeiffer Road median areas was replaced.

Downtown Blue Ash blooms, including within the right-of-way & at the Towne Square & Veterans Memorial Parks, were especially beautiful & plentiful in 2007.

Parks Maintenance activities in 2007 at Blue Ash's 37-acre Sports Center, a premier sports center facility in the region, also resulted in showcase park areas for Blue Ash. Thanks to pilot & long-time resident Bill Sikute for his assistance in securing the aerial photo of the Sports Center.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

The Facilities Maintenance team is responsible for the routine, day-to-day maintenance of all City-owned facilities affecting all departments of the City. In 2007, the Division had eight full-time employees and about 18 part-time employees. Many of these part-time employees work just a few hours each week.

In 2007, the Facilities crews responded to over 1,064 scheduled and unscheduled maintenance requests City-wide. In addition to normal preventative maintenance tasks year-round, examples of this divison's work includes monthly checks; annual opening and closing of all parks, restrooms, concessions, pools, and fountains; and assistance at all special events sponsored by the City, including the summertime concerts and other recreational programs and events. Ongoing effort continued towards identifying and implementing cost savings measures to comply with the budget funding allocated. Those goals were accomplished within the budget constraints while successfully maintaining quality of service.

The Facilities Maintenance Superintendent was also a key member of the Recreation Center renovation and expansion design team working on both Phases I and II of that project. He was also extensively involved in planning associated with the future Golf Course Clubhouse improvements.

The following offers a summary of other 2007 accomplishments of the Facilities team:

MUNICIPAL & SAFETY CENTER (EAST WING) - Facilities crews relocated items from the former History Room to the historic Hunt House, and renovated the vacated space to create a newly-combined Finance/Tax Office area. The new office supports the goals for efficiency in operations, greater supervision capability, and a more confidential and secure place for citizens to work with Tax Office staff. Work also began in the space vacated by the Tax Office to create an additional conference room area, which will be accessible from the front lobby as well as from the hallway near HR. Additional non-routine work in this building included replacement of two heat pump air handlers.

The City's Municipal & Safety Center was first built in 1974, & later expanded in 1991 as a part of the City's Bicentennial celebration.

FIRE DEPARTMENT - At the Cooper Road south station, Facilities crews replaced damaged concrete areas on both the east and west pads. Also at the South station, carpet was replaced in the foyer and living quarters areas. At the Main North Station, crews added an office work area.

POLICE DEPARTMENT - The Facilities crews replaced the Police Dispatch area's heat pump air handler, updated tile grout in the women's and men's shower and restroom areas, and improved the back-up generator for automation in the event of a power failure.

SERVICE DEPARTMENT - the Facilities team stripped flaking paint and repainted the outside of the Service Department garage at 6131 Interstate Circle.

HUNT HOUSE - Facilities staff installed outside uplighting and sign lighting at the City's historical Hunt House.

PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE - Facilities oversaw the sealing and patching of several public parking areas, including in Downtown lots (off Cooper near Blue Ash Road and areas off Towne Square Avenue), and at the Nature Park, White Oak Park, and Hazelwood Park areas.

MEETING SET-UP AND TEAR-DOWN - The janitorial staff set up and broke down over 512 meetings held just at the Recreation Center in 2007, including certain special events such as dances. Set up was also coordinated in 2007 for several uses in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Building, including increased usage of the room by the Hamilton County Board of Elections.

STREET LIGHTS - Facilities Maintenance is responsible for maintaining City-owned street lights. There are approximately 1,217 total street lights in Blue Ash, not including structures, parks, and parking lots. Duke Energy is responsible for 1,048 of those lights and Blue Ash is responsible for 169. In 2007, Duke repaired 110 lights and Blue Ash repaired 34.

STAFFING - Long-time (25+ years) City employee Pancho Noggler, Maintenance Technician within the Facilities Maintenance Division, retired at the end of 2007 due to a medical disability. In addition to his daily responsibilities within the Division, Mr. Noggler was also a key player in planning and setting up of the City's special events since their inception.

BLUE ASH TEAM VISION STATEMENT

We will continuously improve the quality of community life for all residential and business citizens to ensure Blue Ash is always the "City of Choice" through an enlightened, efficient, and dynamic unified municipal government.

BLUE ASH TEAM MISSION STATEMENT

To provide superior services, facilities, and activities for all citizens utilizing key guiding principles of integrity, compassion, innovation, professionalism, and commitment.

This 2007 Annual Report was produced by the Blue Ash City Manager's/Public Information Office in January 2008

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