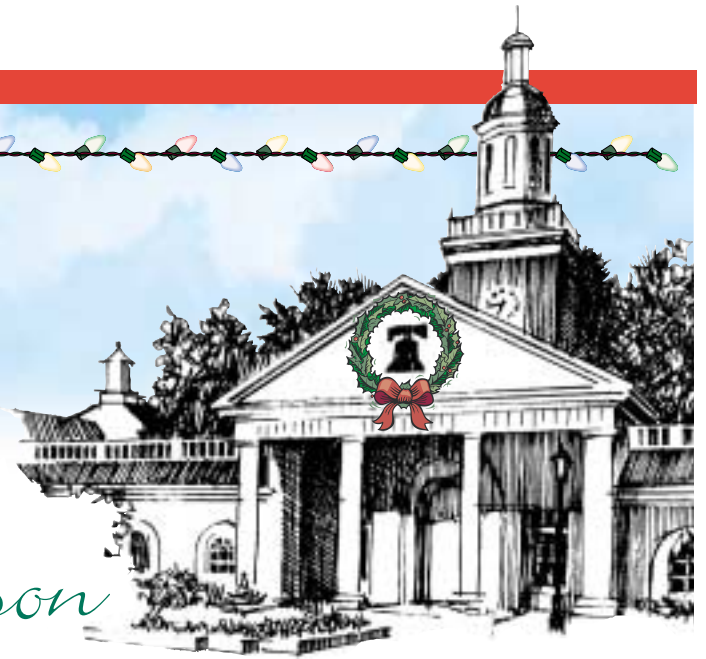


JANUARY, 2007

Independence Community newsletter



Celebrating the Season

TREE LIGHTING/HOLIDAY FEST

“Christmas Magic”...was the theme for the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony held Saturday, December 2nd, 2006. Over 500 residents and children attended this holiday event that has traditionally kicked off the Christmas season here in Independence. In addition to the excitement of the crowd waiting to see the Square lit up with the glow of the holiday lights, there was one person in the crowd that everyone anxiously anticipated to see, especially the children – Santa Claus!

After Santa arrived on his Candy Cane Train, he was given a warm welcome by the many children who waited their turn to whisper their secrets to Santa for under their tree. Each child was grateful to receive a coloring book, popcorn ball and Christmas Stocking filled with goodies from Santa. All were invited to roast marshmallows by the fire to keep warm or enjoy a cup of hot chocolate or warm cider along with cookies and donuts.

A big Thank You goes to Reverend Donna Barrett from Rockside Church who most graciously delivered an opening spiritual message to our attendees and also to our Mistress of Ceremonies, Miss Nicole Cuglewski for doing a fantastic job as “MC” and also for sharing her beautiful voice with us. To highlight the evening, we were mesmerized and delightfully entertained by the dancing and vocal talents provided by The DNA of Dance Studio, 6954 Brecksville Rd. under the coordination of owner, Poppy Dinsie. The participation of these fine people helped make this special holiday event a wonderful success.



And of course before Santa drove out of sight....the residents dropped off their canned good, picked up their ornaments and expressed their delight!!!! A big thank you to all those holiday elves who worked so hard to make “Christmas Magic” such an extraordinary evening to usher in the season.



Dear Resident:

Happy New Year!!!! I hope each and every one of you experienced a Holiday Season filled with much love and joy. As usual, we had an extremely busy December with the traditional Tree Lighting Ceremony and Holiday Fest. Both events had record attendance as residents and their families enjoyed the delight of the Christmas season. I would like to thank all of the staff, volunteers and City organizations for their tremendous effort to make these events such a success.

At the beginning of each year, we try to evaluate what our goals for the previous year were and whether or not we met our goals. This past year we successfully completed Phase I of the Rockside Road Project and initiated Phase II, we designed and constructed a beautiful gateway sign at the intersection of Rockside and Brecksville Roads for all to enjoy. We also, created a very dedicated committee to help us move forward with our plans for downtown renovation and we implemented a Reverse 9-1-1 call system to alert our residents in the event of an emergency, just to name a few. We have a lot to be proud of but our work is not done, so with that, please know we are looking forward to a New Year with many more outstanding accomplishments!!!

Fred P. Ramos
Mayor



YOUR CITY OF INDEPENDENCE Directory

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E-mail: cityhall@independenceohio.org

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Veresj@independenceohio.org

GREG O'BRIEN
Law Director

DONALD ELEWSKI & ASSOC.
City Engineer

JEFF MARKLEY
City Planner

RON WHITE
Executive Assistant/Econ. Dev.

DEBORAH NICASTRO &

JENNIFER WEILER
Judges of the Garfield
Heights Municipal Court

JOHN NICASTRO
Police Chief

PETER J. NELSON
Fire Chief

ED KOSTYACK
Recreation Director

DAVID SNYDERBURN
Service Director

CARL OPATRYN
Building Commissioner

SUE KURSHUK
Clerk of Council

ANGELA T. ZELEZNIK
Clerk of Court

TOM AVSEC
Technical Services Director

ROBERT WILLIAMS

Purchasing Coordinator

CHARLENE ARMENTI
Human Resources Director

NATALIE BUC
Community Services Director

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Coordinator of Senior Services

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CITY MEETINGS
Recorded Message of City's
Scheduled Meetings
328-1477

Architectural Review Board
1st & 3rd Wed. each month - 8:30 a.m.
Chairman - Norman Casini

Civil Service Commission
1st Thursday each month - 7:00 p.m.
Chairman - Thomas Priebe

Council
2nd Tuesday each month - 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission
1st Tuesday each month - 7:00 p.m.
Chairman - Dale Lytkowski

Board of Zoning Appeals
3rd Thursday each month - 7:00 p.m.
Chairman - Mark M. Moreal

Council Workshop
4th Tuesday, TBA, City Hall

Meals on Wheels Program
Community Services Department

Rita Glover 524-7373
Carol Stokar 524-4131

Drivers Needed to Deliver Meals
Please call Natalie Buc at 524-7373

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

POLICE/FIRE EMERGENCIES...9-1-1		HOTLINE ...524-2085	
Animal Control	524-3033	Library	447-0160
Building Department	524-1019	Maple Shade Cemetery ..	524-9191
City Meetings	328-1477	Mayor's Office	524-4131
Community Services	524-7373	Outdoor Pool	524-3711
Council Clerk	524-1008	Police Department	524-1234
Economic Development.....	524-4131	Post Office	800-275-8777
Elmwood Recreation Ctr	524-7322	Purchasing	524-4131
Finance Department	524-4131	Recreation Department...	524-3262
Fire Department	524-4001	Service Department	524-9191
Human Resources	524-4131	Tech Services Dept	524-9200
Indy Fieldhouse	524-0088		

Monthly Dates to Remember

See Our City Calender for a Complete List of Events
www.independenciohio.org

- Jan. 8 Mayor's Listening Night 7:00 pm Mayor's Office
- Jan. 9 City Council Meeting 7:00 pm Council Chambers
- Jan. 10 Deadline for Architectural Board of Review Mtg. Jan. 17th
- Jan. 11 Deadline for Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg. Jan. 18th
- Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Day (City Hall Closed)
- Jan. 17 Architectural Board of Review Mtg. 8:30 am City Annex
- Jan. 18 Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg. 7:00 pm Council Chambers
- Jan. 23 Council Workshop TBA City Hall
- Jan. 30 Deadline for Planning Commission Feb. 6th
- Jan. 31 Deadline for Architectural Board of Review Mtg. Feb. 7th
- Feb. 6 Planning Commission Mtg. 7:00 pm Council Chambers
- Feb. 6 Senior Advisory Council 10:00 am Civic Center
- Feb. 7 Architectural Board of Review Mtg. 8:30 am City Annex
- Feb. 8 Deadline for Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg. Feb. 15th
- Feb. 12 Mayor's Listening Night 7:00 pm Mayor's Office
- Feb. 13 City Council Meeting 7:00 pm Council Chambers
- Feb. 14 Happy Valentine's Day
- Feb. 14 Deadline for Architectural Board of Review Mtg. Feb. 21st
- Feb. 15 Board of Zoning Appeals Mtg. 7:00 pm Council Chambers
- Feb. 19 Presidents Day (City Hall Closed)
- Feb. 21 Architectural Board of Review Mtg. 8:30 am City Annex
- Feb. 27 Deadline for Planning Commission Mtg. Mar. 6th
- Feb. 28 Deadline for Architectural Board of Review Mtg. Mar. 7th

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

On December 8, 2006, at an official agreement signing ceremony, Mayor Fred P. Ramos (top photo) and John M. Veres, (bottom photo) CPA, CPFA jointly signed numerous documents that finalized months of negotiations, project financing arrangements, and City of Cleveland and CAVS agreements. The documents you see them signing close everything that needs to be in place to complete this high profile construction project that should be completed by August 2007. In your travels on Brecksville Rd. north of Rockside Rd. look to the east, just north of Maple Shade Cemetery, to see the large image on the construction site sign to get a sneak preview of the structure that will be the Cleveland Cavaliers' new home away from home as they prepare for their Winning Season next year!!! GO CAVS!!!



DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Enough progress was made within the last month of 2006, to complete the first DRAFT of the preliminary recommendations to the Mayor, Council, and the Planning Commission for their review. The actual documents were completed and distributed to members of the above groups by the end of December.

In the near future, a series of workshops will be presented to the public to view the draft document. Residents will be invited to attend and listen to the initial concepts, ideas, and thoughts from the Task Force of citizens. Please look for the schedule of these meetings in upcoming newsletters and on the Public Service Stations. Time Warner Cable Channel 23 & WideOpenWest Channel 21

Swearing In Ceremony Held

Congratulations to the following members of our Police Force who took the Oath of Office on Friday, December 15, 2006 for their newly assigned positions in the Independence Police Department.



Pictured above from L to R: Police Chief John Nicaastro, Jr., Deputy Chief John Kotabish, Deputy Chief Jim Polak, Lieutenant Jim Kroeger, Lieutenant Leonard Mazzola, Lieutenant John Smith

Cuyahoga Valley Genealogical Society

CVGS Publishing Committee is in the process of publishing "A Pictorial History of Independence" from the beginning to the present. And now we need your help in locating those special photos of old Independence Township. All photos will be considered for this publication. So please "dig" through those old photo albums and see what hidden treasures may be lurking there. The photos may be of public events, political events, sports and theater, businesses, century homes, and etc.

If you have any photos please contact our Publishing Chair person Sandra Stoika at 216-524-3472 or by e-mail at cuyahogavalleygensoc@juno.com

All photos will be scanned and returned to the owners.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

All About Town

“We the People” Contest



“We The People” – The Citizen and the Constitution, is an instructional program on the history and principles of American constitutional democracy based on materials developed by the Center for Civic Education. The culminating activity for high school students is a competitive competition in which the students give oral answers to extremely complex questions in a simulation of a Congressional hearing. Unlike other competitions in which only a select number of students are chosen, an entire class must participate. On Friday, December 8, 2006, a Regional “We The People” competition was organized by Councilman George Klepacz, a former “We The People” teacher, whose Cleveland Public School students were champions of the State of Ohio and finished 12th in the nation at the National Finals held in Washington D.C.

There are six units for each class which require three judge panels for each unit. Judges for this competition included: Mayor Fred P. Ramos, Councilpersons, David Grendel, Charles Cichocki, and Patricia Wisnieski, State Representatives, James P. Trakas, and Josh Mandel, Municipal Court Judges Deborah Nicastro, and Jennifer Weiler, Law Director Greg O’Brien, Finance Director John M. Veres, Economic Director Ron White, a representative from both Congressman Kucinich’s and LaTourette’s offices and last but not least, parent activist Margaret Balewski. The winning school was the class from Archbold High School who had traveled for over two hours to get here by 9:00 am. The class from Cuyahoga Heights finished in second place. The judges were impressed by the knowledge and poise demonstrated by the student competitors. They were able to think on their feet and answer follow-up questions using logic and sound reasoning. It was a pleasure to interact with our young citizens and...the future for our country is bright if these students are typical of this generation.

Avenue of Trees

Thank you to all of the following organizations who lit up “W” Pete Wisnieski Parkway in our annual Avenue of Trees this past holiday season. This year is the first year we awarded \$100 to the “Best Dressed Tree” (First Place) and \$50 to the Second Place Tree. This proved to be an extremely difficult task because each

tree was unique and beautifully adorned with ornaments relating to their organization. Taking into consideration the creativity and the originality of the ornaments used to embellish this tree, first place went to the Cuyahoga Valley Genealogy Society. Second place was awarded to the students in the After School Program held at the Field House. This tree was a one of a kind as each child participated by designing their own individual ornament to place on this special tree.

Congratulations to our winners and to all of our entries...we wish we could have given each and every one of you a prize!

Our participants this year included the following organizations and businesses:

- Quad City C.E.R.T
- Volunteers in Police
- Independence Garden Club
- Red Hat Society/Independence Belles
- Girl Scout Troop #1671
- Independence Florist
- St. Michael’s Junior Troop #1568
- Cuyahoga Valley Genealogy Society
- Cub Scout Pack #297
- Chase Bank
- Independence Art Guild
- Independence Brownie Troop #1371
- Independence Coop Preschool
- Independence After School Program
- Independence High School Football Team
- Independence Finance Department
- St. Michael’s Altar and Rosary Society
- Boy Scout Troop #297
- Rockside Church
- The Dana Lauren Salon



Seniors Celebrate Christmas



About 360 of our young at heart population joined together on December 8th, 2006 at the Pokrova Parish Banquet Hall on Broadview Road for their annual Christmas celebration. Decked out in their fanciest holiday attire, our senior residents enjoyed an elegant lunch, a short program and an afternoon of music and dancing. As you can see from the smiling faces in the photos, this was a successful event that was loved by all who attended! A big holiday thank you to the officers of the senior organization for putting this special holiday program together, John Nicastro, Senior, President, Tom Priebe, Vice President, Gerald Knittel, Financial Officer, Frances Burant, Secretary, and Gene Chodzin, Treasurer. See you all next year!!!

Senior Corner

1099s Mailed

If you received Social Security benefits in 2006, you should receive a Social Security Benefit Statement, or Form SSA-1099 this January. You will need this 1099 Benefit Statement to complete your federal income tax return and to find out if your benefits are subject to income tax. This statement is also beneficial when applying for certain benefits, such as the Heating Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The Statement shows the gross amount of benefits that were due and the net amount of benefits paid. The 1099 also shows the amount of any payments (such as Medicare premiums) that were made. If you did not receive your 1099, or if you need a replacement copy, you can request one online at the Social Security website or call the office at (800)772-1213.

When you get this statement, *remember to keep it with your important documents*

Gift Program

On November 30th, the Civic Center was bristling with activity, as almost 200 Middle School 8th graders and Senior residents gathered for the conclusion of yet another successful GIFT (Generations in Independence Fostering Togetherness) Program. This highly successful program has been conducted annually, since 2001, as a joint effort of the City of Independence and the Independence School District. It allows generations, whose paths might rarely cross, to spend time together, to learn about each other and to form friendships. The program was also honored to once again be selected for the Ohio School Board Conference in Columbus, this past November. At that conference of over 10,000 participants, the Program was one of only 100 participants in the Student Achievement Fair. This is quite an honor, and an accolade to all involved, including Mrs. Beth Haas, 8th grade Math teacher, who accompanied the students for the presentation. Hopefully all our Seniors will be involved again in the program in the Fall of this year. New participants are also always welcomed.



2007 Medicare Rates

For Services Covered by Medicare.....Your Cost or Co-insurance Coverage

Part A ... In Hospital	
Initial deductible	\$992.00
61st - 90th day	\$248.00
91st - 150th day	\$496.00
Part A ... Skilled Nursing Facility	
1st - 20th day	No cost
21st - 100th day	\$124.00
Part B... Medical Services	
Annual deductible	\$131.00
Medical expenses and outpatient hospital treatment after deductible	20% of approved amount
Premiums	
Part A Premium 30-39 qtrs.	\$226.00
Part A Premium 30 qtrs or less	\$410.00
Part B Monthly Premium	\$ 93.50 **

**Part B Premium may be higher based on income.

Ohio Pension Rights

Ohio Pension Rights Project is a part of the Pro Seniors' Legal Hotline, which is a program of Pro Seniors, Inc., a private, non-profit organization based in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is funded in part by the U.S. Agency on Aging. Pro Seniors is dedicated to helping older Ohioans maintain their independence by empowering them, by protecting their interests, and by helping them access resources.

Do you understand your pension plan? Do you know what benefits to which you are entitled?

The Ohio Pension Rights Project assists Ohio residents of any age with pension issues such as:

- Providing basic advice about pension laws and pension rights
- Providing information on survivor benefits, defined benefit plans and rights of divorced persons
- Resolving pension problems
- Providing referrals to experienced pension attorneys as needed

For more information, contact Pro Seniors at: (800) 488-6070.

Helpful Tips for Seniors

1. It takes just a little more time to prepare twice the food and freeze the extra for another meal.
2. To prolong the life of flowers in a vase, add 1/4 teaspoon of Clorox to each quart of water or use a clear carbonated soft drink in place of water.
3. To get tarnish off of the bottom of a copper pan or pot cover the copper with ketchup. Let it sit for ten minutes and rinse.
4. Liquid soap in a dispenser is easier to use than a bar of soap and there is no messy soap scum to clean up.
5. Replace difficult twist tops on shampoo or lotions with pump tops. Toothpaste also comes in pump containers. 38. Electric toothbrushes and water pics are quicker and easier to use than manual products.

Police Department

Sledding Safety

- Always sled in a familiar territory.
- Never sled alone, go with family or friends.
- Check out the terrain before you sled. Walk the area to



- check for rocks, debris or other obstructions.
- Do not sled where there is a drop off, road or stream at the bottom of the hill.
- Make sure you sled a safe distance away from trees, tree trunks or other potential hazards.
- Let others know when and where you intend to go sledding so that they know your whereabouts and give our expected time of return.
- Look for posted signs, which may indicate whether or not sledding is safe or even recommended in the area.
- Wear proper attire, dress in layers.
- Do not sled when the weather reports warn against wind chill.
- Never overcrowd a sled.
- Never sled while standing or kneeling.

Make sure that your sled is in good condition and not a safety risk.

Make It Your Resolution

January brings you the opportunity to review your bills (after the holiday season expenses), purge your files, and set up new files or envelopes for the bills of the up coming year. In reality, it's a chance to change the way you protect yourself against the fastest growing crime in America that affects half a million new victims each year – *Identity Theft*.

Identity theft or identity fraud is the taking of a victim's identity to obtain credit cards from banks and retailers, steal money from a victim's existing account, apply for loans, rent an apartment, file bankruptcy, purchase a vehicle, or obtain a job using the victim's name. Thousands of dollars can be stolen without the victim knowing about it for months or even years.

The imposter obtains your social security number, your birth date, and other identifying information such as your address and phone number. With this information and a fake driver's license, they can apply in person for instant credit or

through the mail, posing as you...using your established credit background. They will often claim that they have recently moved and provide their own address. Once the first account is opened, they will get offers and establish additional accounts.

They can get some of this information from something called *Dumpster Diving*. In this, someone can pick-up information you may have thrown away, such as utility bills, credit card slips, new offers for credit cards, old letters, and other documents. When a credit card offer is intact, they simply sign as you and change the address.

To help prevent this from happening and to protect your good name and your good credit history, here is some great advice;

- Do not give any personal information over the telephone, through the mail, or especially over the Internet unless it was YOU that initiated the contact or know whom you are dealing with. Identity thieves will pose as bank representatives, Internet service providers, and even government officials to get you to reveal identifying information.
- Shred all documents, especially pre-approved credit applications received in your name, insurance forms, bank checks and statements that you are discarding. If you don't already own one, invest in a shredder.
- Do not use your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last 4 digits of your social security number, or similar series of numbers as a password for anything.

What is the Amber Alert?

On occasion, police departments are asked about what the AMBER Alert is all about and where did they get that name? The AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Plan is named for Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped and murdered in 1996 in Arlington, Texas. It is a network to alert citizens of abducted children in the hope of gaining information on the whereabouts of these children and hopefully return them home safely. Radio Stations broadcast the initial alert, and motorists are advised of alerts through electronic message boards placed on well-traveled highways by the Department of Transportation. A rash of high-profile child abductions in California, Utah and Virginia has increased public awareness and support for the AMBER Plan. Nationwide, more than 300,000 children are reported missing annually (about 2,000 children per day). Yet the majority of them are runaways or children or children taken by a family member. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which has spearheaded the development and implementation of the AMBER Plan, reports that the AMBER Alert has helped to locate 32 children nationwide since it's inception.

Fire Department

Winter Weather Awareness

This year, Mother Nature has been going easy on us here in Independence ... so far!

However, be prepared before the storm strikes. Primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, telephone service, and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day.

Have Available:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio
- Extra food and water. High energy food, such as dried fruit or candy, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration.

If You Must Go Outside:

- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather itself, without any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on the heart. If you add to this the heavy strain of shoveling snow, pushing a car, or even walking too fast or too far, you risk damaging your body.
- Dress warmly in loose fitting, layered, light-weight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Wear a hat. Protect your face and cover your mouth to protect your lungs from very cold air. Wear mittens instead of gloves.
- Watch for Frostbite and other symptoms of cold-weather exposure. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance of extremities such as fingers, toes, tip of nose, ear lobes. If such symptoms are detected, get medical attention immediately. Do not rub with ice or snow. The best treatment is re-warming the tissue.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages. Alcohol causes the body to lose heat more rapidly, even though one may feel warmer after drinking.
- Check on the kids and the older adults when they are outside.

Wintertime Quiz

1. When cold weather activity requires physical exertion, layering is the best approach.
 - True
 - False
2. In cold, wet, windy weather a good choice for outer clothing would be:
 - a. Goose down insulation
 - b. Wool
 - c. A synthetic fleece

3. Hypothermia results from frostbite.
 - True
 - False
4. Hot coffee laced with brandy is a quick cure when chills set in.
 - True
 - False
5. Frost Bite is most similar to:
 - a. A bruise
 - b. A burn
 - c. A scrape
6. In extreme cold weather, one of the most important items is a warm.....
 - a. pair of gloves
 - b. coat
 - c. hat
7. First-aid for frostbite includes vigorously rubbing affected areas.
 - True
 - False
8. If you're caught out in frigid weather, a snow cave can save your life.
 - True
 - False
9. Dehydration is a common physical problem in cold weather.
 - True
 - False
10. It's below freezing and your feet get wet crossing a stream. You should:
 - a. Head for camp immediately
 - b. Build a fire and get dry
 - c. Walk briskly until your feet are dry



Answers

1. True - trapped perspiration is the enemy
2. B. wool retains warmth when wet
3. False - hypothermia can set in at 50 degrees
4. False - adversely affects circulation
5. B. burn treatment is similar to burns
6. C. hat tremendous heat is lost through top of head
7. False - causes tissue damage
8. True - packed snow is superb insulator. One candle in a snow cave supplies amazing warmth
9. True - dehydration can be a severe problem
10. B. build a fire wet feet is an invitation for frostbite

Service Department Building Department

Christmas Trees

After the holiday season, used, live Christmas trees should be put on the treelawn with all decorations removed including ornaments, lights, tree stands, and plastic bags. Trees will be picked up on your regular garbage pick up day. Christmas trees do not need to be called into the Service Department

Yardwaste & Leaf Pickup

Yardwaste pick up and leaf pick up have been discontinued until April. Small amounts of yardwaste, less than 30 gallon container, can be placed in bags and put out for rubbish pick up.

**Branches will still be picked up – please call 524-9191 to schedule a branch/chipper pick up.

Corrugated Cardboard

Cardboard pick up will be done during the FIRST FULL WEEK of each MONTH. The days of cardboard pick up for the year “2007” are as follows:

February 5, 2007	through	February 9, 2007
March 5, 2007	through	March 9, 2007
April 2, 2007	through	April 6, 2007
May 7, 2007	through	May 11, 2007
June 4, 2007	through	June 8, 2007
July 2, 2007	through	July 6, 2007
August 6, 2007	through	August 10, 2007
September 3, 2007	through	September 7, 2007
October 1, 2007	through	October 5, 2007
November 5, 2007	through	November 9, 2007
December 3, 2007	through	December 7, 2007

Please mark these dates on your calendar or cut out and post in your home.

Corrugated cardboard is the only type of cardboard that we can recycle at this time. Pizza boxes ARE NOT acceptable because of the food residue on them. Cereal boxes are made from flat stock and are not recyclable at this time.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR
SERVICE DEPARTMENT
EMPLOYEES FOR ANOTHER
FANTASTIC YEAR OF
DECORATING OUR CITY
FOR THE HOLIDAYS!!!



How To Get Rid Of Mice

House Mouse Facts

House mice are small rodents with relatively large ears and small black eyes. They weigh about 1/2 ounce and are usually light gray in color. Although house mice generally feed on cereal grains, they will eat almost anything. They are sporadic feeders nibbling bits of food here and there. Mice can squeeze through openings slightly larger than 1/4 inch in diameter. In a single year, a female may have five to ten litters of usually five or six young each. Mice are active mostly at night, but can be seen occasionally during daylight hours. Droppings, fresh gnaw marks, and tracks are good indicators that mice have moved into your home with you.



Protect Your Home

- Keep your lawn mowed.
- Remove wood piles, trash and debris from your home's perimeter. Elevate wood piles 18 inches above ground level.
- Check all vents and repair damaged screening with 16-20 gauge 1/4 inch hardware cloth. Check the crawl space doors to ensure that they fit tightly. Check where pipes enter the building. In wooden walls, place sheet-metal collars around those entrances. In stucco, stone or brick walls, use cement fill.
- Fill cracks and crevices around the foundation and eaves with caulk or foam. Steel wool can be used, although it rusts.
- Remove food sources by placing all food items, including pet food and bird seed, in tightly sealed containers. Clean up fallen bird seed. Keep trash in containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Avoid vacuuming or sweeping mouse droppings due to the dangers of hantavirus, a deadly virus spread to humans through contact with rodents and rodent urine and droppings. Droppings should be misted with a strong household disinfectant (chlorine bleach) and wiped up with paper towels.



House Mouse Control

Effective control involves sanitation, mouse-proof construction, and population reduction. When a mouse infestation already exists, some form of population reduction is almost always necessary. Reduction techniques include trapping, poisoning, and fumigation.

- 1) **Sanitation:** Proper sanitation is an important step in controlling house mouse populations. In particular, eliminate places where mice can find shelter. They cannot survive in large numbers if they have few places to rest, hide, or build nests and raise their young. Total elimination of mice through sanitation, is almost impossible. Mice can survive in small areas with limited amounts of food and shelter.
- 2) **Rodent-proof construction:** Mouse proof construction is the most successful and permanent form of mouse control. "Build them out" by eliminating all openings larger than 1/4 inch through which they can enter your home. Steel wool makes a good temporary plug. Seal cracks in building foundations and openings for water pipes, vents, and utilities with metal or concrete. Doors, windows, and screens should fit tightly. Cover the edges of doors and windows with metal to prevent gnawing. Latex, plastic, rubber, wood, or other gnawable materials are unsuitable for plugging holes used by mice.
- 3) **Traps:** Trapping is an effective control method for controlling house mice. Although time consuming, it is the preferred method in homes and garages. Trapping has several advantages: 1) it does not rely on hazardous rodenticides; 2) it permits the user to view his or her success; 3) it allows for disposal of trapped mice, thereby eliminating dead mouse odors which may occur when poisoning is done within buildings.

www.betterpestcontrol.com • www.ehow.com



WHAT'S HAPPENING

All About Town

Historically Speaking

By Wes Gaab

Alvin Part II – As you may remember, we left Alvin as a freshman at Independence High School where he had made a noticeable change. He had a regular haircut, dressed in regular teenage clothes, and no four-buckle artics. Alvin had transformed into a regular guy and classmates accepted him. While no one said it, I think we all realized that he had gone through a very tough six or eight years. I liked him. He was my lab partner in chemistry, and without him I might not have gotten through Ken Feick's class. It always helps if your friend is smart. Could this be the end of the Alvin story? No, not yet!

I have just described Alvin from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm on a school day. When that last bell rang, he was out of there and on his way home. I don't think he was ever in the Snack Shop across from the school. I don't ever remember him attending any football games, which were always played after school on a Friday. No night games then, no lights. One exception, the "Big One" with our archrival, that school just south of Independence, was always played on a Saturday afternoon. I never saw him at a basketball game and for sure, never at a dance which included our two proms. Alvin still played the violin so when there was a band and orchestra concert in the evening, he was there and so were his parents to see that he came straight home after the last note was played. He had no social life.

You'll recall I said he never played ball with us, but he did play pitch and catch with his father in the backyard. He never swung a bat, and I don't believe he ever shagged a fly ball – just pitched to his father.

On the first spring like day in March of our senior year (1942), Norm Lambacher who was our gym class teacher and also our baseball coach, announced that anyone who was planning to go out for baseball could go outside and play catch. Well everyone went out including Alvin. Playing catch and hitting "grounders" became our gym class, weather permitting. Alvin brought his glove to class. He was a lefty, which means he couldn't throw a straight ball. Every pitch he threw had a hitch to it. After watching him throw for a couple of weeks, we tried to convince him to come out for the baseball team. To our shock and surprise he did. Here was a kid who had never, ever, played a game of ball; he just played catch with his father. Coach had him pitch batting practice and we found him tough to hit. When a ball was hit back to the mound, we'd all close our eyes fearing Alvin was going to get hurt. The few times he took batting practice were something you didn't want to watch. He had never played in an actual game of baseball – until the second last game of the season.

I don't recall what our record was, but it wasn't good enough for the County Championship and this was before State Playoffs. We asked the coach if he would start Alvin, and he agreed. The game was at North Royalton. I thought Alvin would faint when he was told he was the starting pitcher. He was really nervous, as were the first two Royalton batters because the ball was flying in all directions. My best buddy Alio "Jinx" Fontana came from this 3rd base spot put his arm around him and told him something that seemed to relax him. The next three batters went down 1,2,3. I'd like to tell you the final score. But I'm out of space.

Kiwanis Korner

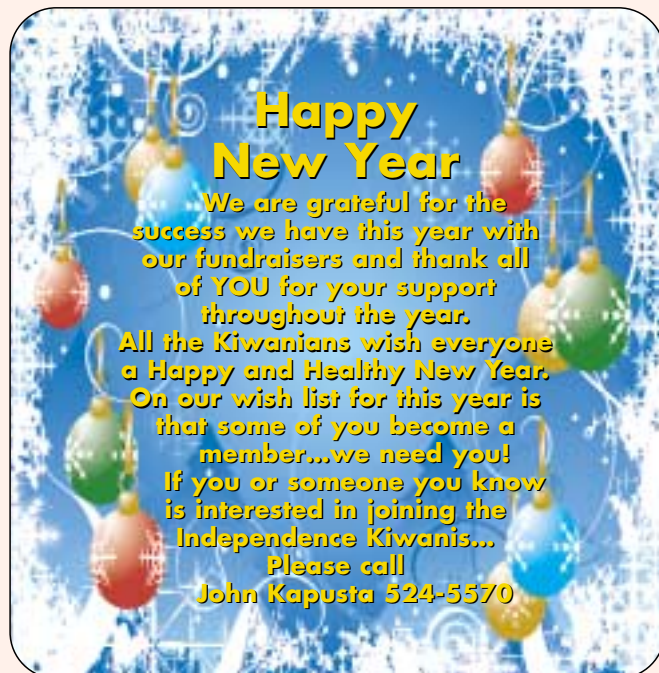
By Deborah Nicastro



Kiwanis' "Elves" Help Santa

Jolly Old St. Nick stopped in at the Kiwanis Christmas Party with a "Ho Ho Ho" and gave presents to children and grandchildren of members of Kiwanis. There is just no stopping Santa and his Kiwanis' Elves as he visited University Settlement House in Cleveland and took pictures with the children and passed out candy canes.

On December 17, Santa was very busy, getting a head start delivering packages to good little boys and girls in Independence. His reindeers were resting until the big delivery day on Christmas Eve, so the Kiwanis' Elves took the reins and stopped at 158 homes delivering over 400 gifts to children with Santa.



YOUR UPDATE OF City Council News



Gregory Kurtz
Vice Mayor



Vernon Blaze
Councilman



Charles Cichocki
Councilman



Jim Crooks
Councilman



David Grendel
Councilman



George Klepacz
Councilman



Patricia Wisnieski
Councilwoman

Council Meeting

December 12, 2006

MEETING

Mayor Fred Ramos called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m. Present were Council Members Blaze (arrived 7:25 p.m.), Cichocki, Crooks, Grendel, Klepacz, Kurtz and Wisnieski. Also present were Finance Director Veres, Law Director O'Brien, Engineer Elewski, Community Services Director Buc, Technical Services Director Avsec, Service Director Snyderburn, Building Commissioner Opatrny, Fire Chief Nelson and Police Chief Nicastro. Absent was Recreation Director Kostyack.

The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Ramos stated, I congratulate Vic DiGeronimo on the fact that his family and his business have been operating for 50 years. Operating a business and establishing a business for 50 years is a very difficult task, especially in today's business world, but what makes it so exceptional is because of the impeccable reputation of Independence Excavating. They were able to operate this business with integrity and with honesty.

I am sure that there are many of you who have traveled outside of this area and when you mention about being from Independence you often times hear a response that they know members of the DiGeronimo Family as well as Independence Excavating. They always say that they were a pleasure to deal with, honest and have an impeccable reputation.

Consequently, I would like to honor them today, on their 50th Anniversary.

Mayor Ramos read and presented Vic DiGeronimo a Proclamation honoring the 50th Anniversary of Independence Excavating.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Cichocki, seconded by Blaze, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2006 Regular Council meeting. Council polled: 7 yes/0 no; motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Ramos stated, I want to congratulate the Crooks' on their new baby boy. Congratulations Jim.

We have a report from Hydrosphere, a hydrology engineering firm that we hired several months ago. They were asked to look at the areas with the most flooding problems within the City. Those areas were identified as Brookside Road, Riverview Road, Kingscote, Dalebrook, East Pleasant Valley Road east of I-77 and the Old Rockside Road/Commerce Park Oval area.

Please understand that this was not an extensive list. This was identification of the worst flooding problems. They were also asked to prioritize

what areas need the most immediate attention. That was based upon the number of individuals most affected, as well as which problem area we would most like to reduce future flooding by the construction of storm water management facilities. Based upon that criterion, the areas have been ranked. Please understand that their goal is to do a study of that area, make recommendations and the City Engineer will be drafting plans and giving us cost estimates as far as addressing those problem areas. The Brookside Road/River Road area is the number one area followed by Kingscote, Old Rockside Road, Dalebrook and East Pleasant Valley. The Dalebrook area does have the most residents affected, however, at this time we are doing an extensive amount of cleaning and construction in the sanitary sewer area currently. Consequently, work has already begun in that area. They are going to be continuing their studies and making some recommendations as far as what needs to be done in each one of these areas.

I notice that there is legislation regarding negotiating with Concordia for purposes of purchasing their land. I applaud this legislation. We have had discussions with Concordia since around 1998, and we've had several agreements that we exchanged with them over the past six years. I hope that we'll be able to work something out so that we can provide some aesthetically pleasing properties for purposes of senior housing.

I want to wish everyone on behalf of Cheri and myself and my family a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year. May God Bless you with health and happiness.

FINANCE DIRECTOR - (VERES)

Finance Director Veres reported, congratulations to Councilman Crooks and his wife on the birth of their son. All the best to them.

Tonight on the agenda we have Resolution 2006-162 for Second Reading. This is the 2007 TranSystems Agreement. Originally it was at \$470,000 and after a thorough review by the Vice Mayor, it has been reduced to \$402,000. I thank him for his thoroughness. Not only was the price reduced, but there was an increase in the Errors & Omissions protection for the City. After reviewing the overtime charges they were also changed.

We have Ordinance 2006-61, an amendment to the 2006 Appropriation, the final amendment for December.

We also have 2006-62, which is the Annual Appropriation for 2007. This is a first for the City. In my memory, it never happened in my tenure here. Typically a temporary appropriation is passed that lasts until March 31st. Then a third of the way through the year an annual appropriation is passed.

I commend Finance Committee Chairman Blaze for his diligence in having meetings and getting a 2007 Annual Appropriation on the agenda. His Committee Members, the Mayor and I sat down and hammered out the overall budget. It makes things run a lot smoother in the Finance Department when you don't have to work with a temporary budget. I applaud the efforts of the Finance Committee and everybody involved.

CITY ENGINEER - (ELEWSKI)

Engineer Elewski reported, there is work going on in the Filip/Archwood area with walls and landscaping which will complete the project. Finishing the landscaping is dependent on the weather.

The utilities need to be installed at Cascade Creek – gas, electric, telephone.

We're monitoring the gas line construction on Rockside Road. It will probably be another week or so before they finish.

At the Cavs' Facility, the sanitary, storm and water construction is still going on. It will be awhile before that is finished.

In the Commerce Park area most of the large storm sewers have been cleaned and/or replaced. We still have some work to do in that area.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

Officials' Reports

SERVICE DIRECTOR - (SNYDERBURN)

Director Snyderburn reported the Tree Lighting Ceremony went off very well. Four men worked on it for about a month. These guys are diligent. They make sure all the lights are in the right place. They do a great job every year. I hear how happy the residents of Independence are to have the Tree Lighting and look forward to it every year.

We had two inches of rain two weeks ago. We experienced flooding on Old Rockside and Commerce Park Oval. That is the only flooding that we experienced. The Cuyahoga River reached flood stage. The roads were flooded. The only business whose building was affected was All Erection Crane.

We received an additional half inch overnight, so we had a total of two and a half inches of rain. I didn't receive one resident phone call. After the floods I was happy to see that we were successful in cleaning all the creeks and sewers. We did receive notice of some flooded yards but nothing in the homes. That is good.

As far as the approximately 130 homes in the Dalebrook area, the Mayor sent out a letter stating that we would smoke test and dye test the sewer lines. We received 18 phone calls from residents who were concerned because of water in their basements. We will smoke test and dye test every one of those residents. Sanitaries are being cleaned right now. About 30% of them have been done. I have received no further reports of sanitary backups. Whatever we did receive, we responded immediately. There could be some problems with sanitary sewer mains but as of right now, everything is running. Some of our problems are in laterals of the residents themselves. We'll identify them and between the City and residents hopefully we will repair all of them.

CEI is trimming a lot of trees along their transmission lines. They hold an easement on those transmission lines. That easement allows them to trim those trees and to remove certain trees. The City does not have jurisdiction. We cannot control them. If they are on private property, state property, that is CEI, the Illuminating Company and First Energy. He's receiving a lot of calls from residents who are saying that the City is allowing them to do this, they had permission from the City. That is incorrect. CEI has an easement and has the right to trim and/or remove these trees.

I would also like to say that Independence Excavating has great people. Merry Christmas to everyone.

RECREATION DIRECTOR - (KOSTYACK)

No Report.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR - (BUC)

Community Services Director Buc stated, congratulations to Jim Crooks and his wife on the birth of their baby boy.

I want to reiterate that if you didn't sign up for snowplowing and are eligible, you need to sign up again this year. We've been receiving a lot of calls about this.

Holiday Fest was a big success. We had a couple thousand people there.

Everyone had a good time. I want to thank all the departments that helped out, especially the Rec Department. They're always involved in these special events and do a great job. I want to thank Paul Kershner for helping us out with our castle.

I want to wish everyone a nice Holiday and the best for the New Year.

BUILDING COMMISSIONER - (OPATRNY)

Commissioner Opatrny congratulated Councilman Crooks and his wife on their new addition.

They are setting steel at the Cavs' Facility right now. The anticipated completion is June of 2007. They're also working on their utilities.

The Podiatric College is working on the foundation for the new addition. They are also conducting interior renovations to suit their needs.

Fortuna Funeral Home is wrapping up construction. We expect them to open later this month or early in January.

Happy Holidays to all.

TECHNICAL SERVICES DIRECTOR - (AVSEC)

Director Avsec reported that the Tree Lighting Ceremony was a success. We just completed tying up some last minute lighting additions at the Gateway sign and at the Gazebo. I wanted to thank Donna Rutkowski for all the time she spent helping her husband, Les, getting the candy cane train prepared for this year's event. I also want to thank Rich Crain and Brian Elek for taking the lead as they always do for these special events and for working so well with the Service Department in the process.

With Jim Gibbs we are planning on the relocation of the server room at the Annex. The server has been delivered and completion is scheduled for around the end of the first quarter of 2007.

The Civic Center shingled roof replacement project was scheduled for 2006. It is still on hold. The Law Director is in negotiations with the shingle manufacturer regarding the warranty. We hope to get started on that in early 2007.

Happy Holidays to everyone.

FIRE CHIEF - (NELSON)

Chief Nelson reported our paramedics transport many children to area hospitals for one reason or another. Many of these children stay at the hospital for extended periods of time for treatment. That being said, I would like to acknowledge our firefighters for the donation of a Sony Playstation to the Marymount Hospital Pediatric Ward. This relieves not only some of the tension that the kids are feeling, but the parents as well. This is the fourth unit that our medics have donated to Marymount Hospital. It is a benefit to children and their families. The Hospital really appreciates that. I would like to send a special thank you to Phil Sedlon, one of our firefighters, for coordinating that project.

On behalf of all the firefighters, I would like to wish all the residents a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Safe New Year.

POLICE CHIEF - (NICASTRO)

Chief Nicaastro reported, this past Friday we had an opportunity to promote several members of the Police Department. Lieutenants John Kotabish and Jim Polak have been promoted to Deputy Chiefs and Sergeants John Smith, Jim Kroeger and Lenny Mazzola will be promoted to Lieutenants. We're looking forward to that.

I would like to recognize a member of our department who retired last month, Sergeant Dave Kata. Dave was with us for ten years. He came here from Bradford, Michigan. He worked as a patrolman, a patrol supervisor and two years with the Caribbean Drug Task Force which covers most of Northeastern Ohio. When he returned, he was our Detective Bureau supervisor. Eventually he had a third back surgery and this is a real loss to our department. He was a good supervisor and a great person to have in the community and I would like to recognize him.

LAW DIRECTOR - (O'BRIEN)

Law Director O'Brien stated I would also like to congratulate Councilman Crooks and his family on their first of many healthy sons.

Congratulations to the gentlemen who will be promoted in the Police Department on Friday. All of them are well equipped for their increased rolls in the Independence Police Department. I have gotten to know

most of them over the years and they are wonderful police officers to have in the City.

I would like to report on the settlement of the Rockside One lawsuit as far as the access road to the Gold Building. The suit was resolved for essentially what the appraised value was. The building owner was claiming that, that public roadway was not necessary for the City to build. Eventually, they realized that it was essential to the Rockside Road widening. The case was settled for a little bit more than we originally offered.

The City has also settled the True North litigation which was as a result of the Rockside Road widening. The City acquired additional land there. Through a resolution with the property owner, along with an engineer hired by the county, the property owner agreed to lower the tanks which will allow for the Brecksville Road entrance to be reopened when True North lowers the tanks. That driveway will be more level with the street.

Finally, as of this morning I received a notice that the Cavs' bonds have been finalized and, therefore, all the financing is put in place and transferred. We look forward to the opening in 2007.

Standing Committee Chairman Reports

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – (CICHOCKI)

Councilman Cichocki stated, my report today is not going to be on any particular piece of legislation or any committee meeting or anything like that – more a reflection on this year ending and the new year beginning.

I thought that I wanted to talk about what a great job the Service Department did and the Technical Services did on the lighting here in town. It was Dave Snyderburn's suggestion that we put outlets on the poles on Rockside Road so we can add Christmas decorations. It makes a very nice, festive area. But then I thought it was like a parent complimenting one child and not commenting or rewarding all the other good children.

I think it was since the last Council Meeting that I attended an Employee Appreciation Luncheon. It was a very nice affair that Charlene Armenti, our Human Resources Director, put together. It really brought home to me how many fine people we have here that work for our community, and they are people that I don't see on a daily basis. A lot of them are behind the scenes kind of people, but they all amount to what makes our City what it is. To see them all together and to see the acknowledgement was a good feeling. It was a very nice program.

I also wanted to commend Natalie Buc on the Holiday Fest. I missed the Tree Lighting Ceremony this year. My son was playing basketball and I couldn't be in two places at the same time, but I took a walk up to the Square on the first cold, snowy day. It always gets bigger and better and always makes me proud to live here in Independence. Thank you everyone.

I would like to acknowledge Councilman George Klepacz. Aside from being a feisty, fiery Councilperson, he also has an interest in educating our young people. I was fortunate enough to participate in a program that he works on called We the People. It is essentially a program that instills some civic virtue and knowledge about our Constitution to students. It was a very worthwhile program. I commend George for taking the time to participate and put it together.

Finally, Interim Chief John Nicastro in his own modest way made you aware of the Swearing In Ceremony on Friday. Jim Polak and John Kotabish are going to become deputy chiefs. Jim Kroeger, John Smith and Lenny Mazzola will become lieutenants. He didn't mention that he's going to be sworn in as Police Chief. Congratulations John. Congratulations to all the men. We have an excellent police department. It operates smoothly. Things get done and there is no fanfare. You guys do a tremendous job.

PUBLIC LANDS AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE – (CROOKS)

Chairman Crooks reported the Public Lands & Buildings Committee will meet one week from today to discuss a variety of topics including downtown redevelopment, cemetery planning and goals for the Committee in 2007. I encourage everyone to attend.

As Council's representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals I wish to update Council and the Mayor on some of the more important situations the Board has been confronted with and decisions that the Board has made in the past year, which consequently, led to establishing a precedent for future decisions.

Granite Development came before the Board. Rather than offering blanket approval for all the requested variances, the Board weighed each one. They denied several variances and granted several others.

The Bilinovic request was to build a traditional structure on a property with an existing structure. After some research, the Board found that since the existing structure straddled two lots owned by the resident, it would not set precedent if it permitted the additional dwelling. The existing structure will be coming down upon completion of the new home.

The Marek request for a lot split resulted in the Board granting the variance with the condition that the applicant meet specified requirements of the Board, including style of home, height of home and drainage of both homes.

The Metzger request where several neighbors signed off on a relatively minor variance but the Board felt that there was a resolution for the variance without agreeing to it. The request was more or less for five feet. We found alternative solutions to it. As you drive by the Metzger property today on Sprague Road, you'll see that it is nearly complete.

Finally, there were requests for variances from several applicants in the last three months where the projects were completed and then the respective variances were asked for. In both cases, the Board remained firm on its position that the procedure for application must be followed and not following the procedure was a factor in their final decision. Each of these circumstances presented a unique opportunity for the Board where they would decide and set a reasonable course of action in the future.

I've enjoyed my time on the Zoning Board this past year and wish to salute the members for their hard work – Chairman Mark Moreal, Carol Fortlage, Bob Gordon and John Klingshirm.

Though not a member of the Safety Committee, it's worth noting that in response to the request that the Police Chief be offered a fallback provision, I submitted several memos to the Committee because I was unable to attend the scheduled meeting. I would like to thank Chairman Grendel for accepting these memos and reading them into public record.

On the agenda tonight is Ordinance 2006-62, the 2007 Annual Appropriation. I wish to congratulate the Finance Committee and Chairman Vern Blaze for setting the goal of seeing this through.

Finally, when I was putting together thoughts for my report tonight that I'd be hearing the fact that we had a son last week for the first time. I wish to thank everyone up here for their kind words. I've received phone calls, e-mails, gifts, cards and just want to say that I really appreciate it.

RULES AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE – (KLEPACZ)

Chairman Klepacz stated, congratulations to not only Councilman Crooks and his wife, but every other family in the City who has increased the population.

The Rules & Ordinances Committee met this past month to consider updating our bond requirements for new residential construction. The bond amount has not been modified for over sixteen years and the Building Department requested that this amount be increased so they could better protect the City in keeping our Building Codes enforced.

According to our Building Department, several builders and homeowners have ignored the directives of the Building Department and for-

feited their bond because the cost of making the corrections was greater than the bond amount. The new bond amount will be \$2,500, from which inspection fees will be deducted as the job progresses. This figure represents a compromise agreed to in Committee. In my opinion, the bond should be large enough to insure that developers perform according to our Code and to discourage them from leaving the project in anything but a pristine state. I am not sure that the new bond amount will have the desired affect, but good government requires compromise, so I urge my colleagues to pass Ordinance 2006-30 as modified in Committee.

The Mine continues to build a high-tech dust collection and slurry building. When this system goes online, it is projected to be state of the art technology with a very sophisticated computer system controlling the process. The target date for completion is late January 2007. The Mine will then suspend operations for about three weeks for maintenance and inspection of other operational equipment such as kiln.

This spring when the Mine reopens, it will be a stop on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway for students. The Mine will demonstrate their state of the art processes once each month as part of school programs.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – (BLAZE)

Chairman Blaze reported, Ordinance 2006-61 should be the final amendment to the City's Annual Appropriation Ordinance this year. As for the "operating" portion of the City's 2006 Budget, which is where the bulk of the City spending occurs, there is no change proposed tonight.

I would like to personally thank the Mayor, Finance Director, my two Finance Committee colleagues, Vice Mayor Kurtz and Councilman Grendel, my colleagues on Council who attended any of the 2007 Budget Hearings during the last month, and all of the department heads for their participation in getting Ordinance 2006-62 on this evening's agenda.

Ordinance 2006-62 is the City's 2007 Annual Appropriation Ordinance. You may recall my comments last month that traditionally, this piece of legislation would normally not even have begun to be discussed and debated until after January 1st of 2007.

With the City's 2007 Annual Appropriation Ordinance being on tonight's agenda for adoption, I can't begin to tell you how thrilled I am for the City to be in the position of having financially planned for 2007 before 2007 has begun.

There are a few finishing items that we will get to after the New Year, and with the Finance Director's diligent eye, the 2007 Budget will constantly be monitored for deviation, both positive and negative, from what we are planning for during 2007.

I thank everyone once again for helping us achieve a landmark in Independence for financially planning for the City in a prudent and responsible manner for 2007, before 2007 has started.

SAFETY COMMITTEE – (GRENDDEL)

Chairman Grendel reported, the Safety Committee held a meeting on November 30th. In that meeting we had three topics for discussion.

The first topic was discussion was led by resident Ed Baznik regarding the deer issue in the Dalebrook area. It was very informative. He talked about a special Nuisance Permit that a resident can obtain for thinning the deer population. He promised to work with Chief Nicastro as far as development of guidelines.

We also had discussion of Ordinance 2006-44, reorganization of the Fire Department. Chief Nelson provided the Committee with various pieces of information that had been requested. The Committee studied it for at least three or four months and gave it a thorough review, but the Committee felt at that time that it was not in the best interest to recommend it to Council so it ended in Committee.

Likewise, Ordinance 2006-52 regarding the fallback provision for the Police Chief was also thoroughly discussed and reviewed. Again, the Committee felt that what we have in place in the Charter was sufficient.

I want to thank Jim Crooks for providing us with some information regarding the fallback provision in other departments. Thank you for your efforts.

I am looking forward to attending the Swearing In Ceremony for John Nicastro, as well as the other fine men in our Police Department. We are very fortunate to have quality men that we were able to promote to these positions. The reorganization that John Nicastro led through Council is going to work very well. I think it will be a very productive year ahead.

I also want to congratulate Jim and Jessica Crooks on the birth of their son. He'll bring you much joy.

I want to also thank George Klepacz for giving the opportunity to myself as well as others up here to be a judge for the We the People Program. So many times you hear negative things about students. It was really informative and I was very impressed with the students and their ability to speak in front of adults with titles such as Mayor, Judge, Council and to talk about our Constitution, and things that are very important in our day to day living. The students did a great job and enjoyed being there. They came from as far as two and three hours from here. It was a very well run program. Thank you, George.

Now for some sports updates. We were fortunate. Steve Hitch was the First Team All State Quarterback, Division 5. He had a fantastic season where he had well over 1,000 yards rushing and well over 1,000 yard tackling. He is also a quality student with a 3.9 grade point average.

The basketball teams have started their season. The Girls Varsity is 2-2. The Boys Varsity is 1-2. We have very young teams and we're hoping to see improvement as the season goes on.

A group of swimmers have broken the school records. Allison Seitz, Elizabeth Juran, Linda Teare and Stephanie Rizzarda broke a school record in the 200 meter Medley Relay. I believe Alli also broke the school record in the 100 meter breaststroke. My commendation to the girls swimmers.

The wrestlers took part in the Hawken Invitational this past weekend. Two wrestlers, 190 pound Raymond Lui and 145 pound Alex Sutherland were champs in their weight class. This was quite an accomplishment as they were competing with some pretty big schools in that tournament.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

I want to commend the City on the lights. Not only do we have our main downtown area, but also the Rockside Road area and the Gateway sign. My commendation to the departments who are responsible for that.

UTILITIES COMMITTEE - (WISNIESKI)

Councilwoman Wisnieski asked Councilman Klepacz if he would talk a little bit about We the People. It is such a fantastic program.

Councilman Klepacz responded he did want to compliment the Community Services Department for setting up. It was a more complicated thing. We received a lot of cooperation from the Community Service.

"We the People" is a national program. Students compete at the high school level. The idea is to simulate a congressional hearing. We had four schools participate here. They came from as far away as the Ohio River area. It was very impressive because it can be difficult for adults to deal with adolescents in a non-threatening way. Our Judges gave excellent feedback. The kids were so impressive. The teachers were impressed and very, very pleased with the feedback given to the kids.

Chairwoman Wisnieski stated, as far as the Utilities Committee, we will start off the new year by reviewing the items that we were not able to accommodate this year under the 2006 utilities contracts. In addition, it is my hope that the recommendation for a comprehensive master plan relating to the City's pending flooding issues will be presented next year.

Relating to the City's longstanding flooding issues and legislation on tonight's agenda, I will be voting against Ordinance 2006-62, the 2007 Annual Appropriation ordinance. While I wish to thank the members of the Finance Committee for the countless amount of time spent checking the line items and projections, unfortunately, I have yet to see the residents' flooding issues being planned for so they will be addressed and finally solved. While I realize that this budget passed tonight can be amended continually throughout the year, I am looking at the City's

entire financial picture. This issue must be planned for in the budget.

Back in October I sent a memo to the Finance Committee asking them to set the residential flooding issue as a priority in the budgeting process. With this Appropriation, in my opinion, this has not been done. Without this planning, it is my opinion that the budget is going in the wrong direction.

Congratulations to Jim and Jessica Crooks on the birth of their son, Samuel James.

Our sympathy also goes out to the Gaab and the Kurtz Families on the death of their mother, grandmother and great grandmother, Florence Walker. My husband and I had an opportunity at their invitation to attend the Steak Roast several times. This was when my kids were first-born. She would hold them and walk them in the stroller just as if they were her own grandkids. She loved children. Her and her husband, Tom, were good souls and had a great love for family and their community. She will be truly missed.

Today, December 12th, marks the third anniversary of the death of my father-in-law, Pete Wisniewski. As many of you know, no matter how much time passes after you lose someone who is a major part of your life, or someone who has made a major impact on your life, the hole in the heart remains. It's just never the same. So from this day forward, make it priority to tell your family and friends you love them and never take them for granted.

Happy Holidays to all.

Mayor Ramos stated I would also be remiss in not extending our condolences to George Klepacz on the passing of his uncle.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS COMMITTEE – (KURTZ)

Vice Mayor Kurtz stated, reporting from the December 5th Planning Commission meeting, the Public Hearing on the request of Royal Manor Health Care off Lombardo Center Drive was postponed. The continuation of the Public Hearing on the request of St. Maron's Church concerning 7800 Brookside Road was postponed, and the Public Hearing on the proposed 37-lot subdivision south of Hillside was also postponed.

Twin Creeks came before the Commission seeking final approval for its proposed 11-lot subdivision off Hillside, east of Brecksville Road. The City's professional staff will meet with the developer to review the requirements and conditions set forth by our staff, and they will report their findings at the next Planning Commission meeting.

The City purchased land near Rockside Road and Summit Drive and received approval of a lot split that will be part of the Rockside Road Widening Project and the Marginal Road configuration at the current location of the BP Station.

LeBec Homes presented a proposal for a minor subdivision on MacKenzie Drive consisting of two lots. They will return for further consideration at the next meeting.

Also before the Planning Commission were two amendments to the City's Codified Ordinances. They relate to increasing the amount of insurance required and information to be provided for a major subdivision. The proposed amendments were approved and were recommended for approval by City Council, and are on the agenda this evening.

Speaking with regard to Streets & Sidewalks Committee, the Rockside Road Project is continuing with the majority of the work in the area of the Seven Hills border. I am hopeful that shortly after the first of the year we will present a Street Improvement Master Plan to address the roughly 100 lane miles of roads we are responsible for in the City.

Progress is underway on the installation of storm sewers on the north side of Stone Road from the top of the hill to Tulip Trail.

Tonight we have Resolution 2006-162 concerning the contract extension with TranSystems to manage the Rockside Road Project. This is the sixth year we are contracting with TranSystems to manage the Rockside Road Upgrade Project. I am pleased that through Council's leadership, we were able to reduce the proposed funding by nearly 15%, approximately \$70,000, double the amount of Errors & Omissions Insurance required, and increase the City's ability to audit the contractor.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership and hard work of the Finance Committee Chairman, the Finance Director, and those whose efforts have resulted in Ordinance 2006-62, which is a comprehensive budget for 2007. This is the first time in a long time that a comprehensive budget has been passed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. In business, you don't wait for the year to start before you start planning for the year. I am pleased that the Finance Committee, under the leadership of its Chairman, is bringing private sector practices to the public sector.

Finally, Resolution 2006-184 authorizes the City to option certain property from Concordia Lutheran Church and Independence Research Park. By optioning the easterly portion of these properties, I believe the City puts itself in a better position to plan its future today.

I hope everyone enjoys the Holidays. Thank you and God Bless.

Mayor Ramos commented to Vice Mayor Kurtz, on behalf of myself and Council, I want to express my sympathy to you on the passing of your grandmother, Florence Walker.

Vice Mayor Kurtz thanked Mayor Ramos.

LEGISLATION SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2006-30 An Ordinance amending section 1307.10 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence relating to grade fees and bond and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (5-1-1).** (YES: Ci,Cr,G,Kl,W) (NO: B) (ABSTAIN: Ku).

ORDINANCE 2006-54 An Ordinance amending section 1113.17 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence relating to insurance and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (7 - 0).**

ORDINANCE 2006-55 An Ordinance amending section 1115.03 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence relating to preliminary plan; major subdivision and declaring an emergency.

Ordinance 2006-55 was removed from the agenda without objection.

RESOLUTION 2006-162 A Resolution authorizing an agreement with Transystems Corporation for professional program management and administrative services for 2007 for the Rockside Road widening project and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 - 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-169 A Resolution authorizing the City of Independence to become a member of the Cuyahoga Valley Regional Council of Governments, directing the Mayor and the Finance Director to enter into the membership agreement, and approving the proposed laws of the organization and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 - 0).**

FIRST READING

ORDINANCE 2006-61 2006 Annual Amended Appropriation Ordinance and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (7 - 0).**

ORDINANCE 2006-62 2007 Annual Appropriation Ordinance and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (6 - 1).** (YES: B,Ci,Cr,G,Kl,Ku) (NO: W).

ORDINANCE 2006-63 An Ordinance extending the City's temporary moratorium set forth in Ordinance nos. 2005-53 as extended by Ordinance no. 2006-21 for one hundred twenty (120) days on the issuance of plan approvals for all property within the boundary of the City of Independence which abuts land owned by the United States Department of the Interior A/K/A the Cuyahoga Valley Recreation area and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (7 - 0).**

ORDINANCE 2006-64 An Ordinance amending sections 2,4(c)(d) and 6(b) of Ordinance no. 1994-49, as amended, regarding compensation and benefits for all regular full-time non-bargaining supervisory Fire Department employees and declaring an emergency. **Enacted (7 - 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-177 A Resolution approving the 2006 transfers and advances and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 - 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-178 A Resolution approving the maximum dollar amount for blanket certificates and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 - 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-179 A Resolution accepting the proposal of Creative Information Services for the maintenance and support services for the dispatch system for the Police Department and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 - 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-180 A Resolution authorizing the purchase of

furniture for the Civic Center atrium through the State Cooperative Purchasing Program and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-181 A Resolution accepting the bid of Universal Oil, Inc. for the providing of gasoline to the City of Independence pursuant to the Joint Municipal Improvement Consortium and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-182 A Resolution accepting the unit price bid of the Tire Distributor, Inc. for the purchase of tires and related products and services for City vehicles and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-183 A Resolution accepting the terms and conditions of the donation agreement with Alpha Property Holdings, LLC (PPN 562-28-002) and declaring an emergency.

Resolution 2006-183 was removed from the agenda without objection.

RESOLUTION 2006-184 A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and Law Director to negotiate and enter into an option to purchase certain lands from Concordia Lutheran Church and Independence Research Park, LLC and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-185 A Resolution authorizing Change Order No. 1 to Resolution No. 2006-139 for the retention of Elewski & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for work related to storm damage for the entire City and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-186 A Resolution authorizing Change Order No. 2 to Resolution No. 2006-136 for the retention of Elewski & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for miscellaneous Planning Commission and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-187 A Resolution authorizing the retention of Elewski & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for the playground and additional parking near the Field House and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-188 A Resolution authorizing Change Order No. 1 to Resolution 2006-154 for the retention of Elewski & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for storm/sanitary work on Commerce Park Oval relating to the Cavalier's Training Facility and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

RESOLUTION 2006-189 A Resolution authorizing the retention of Elewski & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for Cavalier's Training Facility site and utilities inspection and declaring an emergency. **Adopted (7 – 0).**

LIQUOR CONTROL:

Miscellaneous Business

Change of Corporate Stock Ownership:

Janus American Services Corp.
6001 Rockside Road Patio & Pool
Independence, OH 44131

Mayor Ramos asked if there were any objections to the change in stock ownership relative to the Holiday Inn.

There were none noted.

Moved by Cichocki, seconded by Klepacz, to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting. Council polled: 7 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the Regular Council Meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Minutes for the December 12, 2006 Council Meeting are unapproved at the time of this publication. These minutes will be available in their entirety at the Clerk of Council's Office after they have been approved.

Zoning Board of Appeals

December 14, 2006

1. **6101 Brecksville Road, Cleveland Cavaliers Practice Facility** – Requesting a variance to 1151.06 (c) of 64 sq. ft. to allow a 8' x 12' temporary project ground sign by the Cleveland Cavaliers (32 sq. ft. permitted, 96 sq. ft. requested) **Approved**

2. **6101 Brecksville Road, Cleveland Cavaliers Practice Facility** – Requesting a variance to 1151.06(c) to allow a second temporary project ground sign by the Cleveland Port Authority (not permitted), and a variance to 1151.06(c) of 12 sq. ft. to allow a 8' x 5'6" temporary project ground sign by the Cleveland Port Authority (32 sq. ft. permitted, 44 sq. ft. requested). **Approved**

Planning Commission

December 5, 2006

Public Hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. to consider the request by Royal Manor Health Care for an amendment to its Special U-3 Permit and preliminary plan approval to construct and operate a licensed nursing home and rehabilitation facility on property located at 5711 Lombardo Center. POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Continuation of a Public Hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. to consider the request by St. Maron's Church for approval of a Special U-3 Permit to operate a church and community center on the property located at 7800 Brookside Road. POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Continuation of a Public Hearing will be held to consider the request by George Gacom for the approval of preliminary plans for a major subdivision to build 37 single-family homes on property situated between Hillside, Brecksville and North Renwood Roads (PPN 563-10-013 and 563-09-005). POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

1. **Duke Realty Corporation** – Request for zoning change to mixed use overlay on approximately 7 acres adjacent to proposed Frontage Road "D". **WITHDRAWN**

2. **Twin Creeks, Hillside Road** – Requesting final site plan approval for proposed single family residential development consisting of 11 lots located behind existing homes on Hillside Road east of Brecksville Road. **Tabled**

3. **Summit Drive/Rockside Road** – Proposed lot split of Permanent Parcel No. 562-32-003 as part of the Rockside Road widening and marginal road project. **Approved**

4. **LeBec Homes, Mackenzie Drive** – Proposed minor subdivision consisting of two sublots. **Tabled**

5. Amendment to Section 1115.03 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence Relating to Preliminary Plan; Major Subdivision. **Approved**

6. Amendment to Section 1113.17 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence Relating to Insurance. **Approved**

"Indy Board"

Coloring Contest Winners Are:

5-8 YEARS CATEGORY Emily Magas

9-11 YEAR CATEGORY Joey Bernstein

Winners were presented with a stocking stuffed to the brim with Christmas Toys and Goodies at the Annual Tree Lighting.

Congratulations to our Winners!!!



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INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131

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MAY NEW YEARS
BLESSINGS COME TO YOU...
WITH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS THE
WHOLE YEAR THROUGH.

Happy New Year
2007

from

Mayor Fred P. Ramos

Finance Director John M. Veres... City Council

City Hall Closed

January 15th – Martin Luther King Day

February 19th – Presidents Day



THE CITY OF
Independence